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CRIME AGAINST WOMEN

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INTRODUCTION

Women constitute half of our population and play a significant and crucial role in society and history as well either visible or invisible. A woman creates life, nurture it, guard and strengthen it. A woman as a mother plays a vital role in the development of nation¹.

But since history women's status has been generally held to lower in comparison to their male counterparts. She is the mother, wife, sister, daughter of a man. She receives her identity through her relationship to a man.

In our country, where womanhood has been put on pedestal for worship, incidence of wife bettering, molestation of women in a various forms like rape, eve-teasing, abduction and bride burning keep on increasing year to year. Women find no security anywhere, they are ill treated by husbands and in laws, men colleagues, bosses. There is no safe territory left for women not even in their mohallas.

In Bihar, Women face from the time of their birth. Boys are always preferred over girls. Basically, in my region, the birth of a girl child is not welcomed by society, not even by the parents of child, on other hand, the birth of son is celebrated with a lot of enthusiasm by family members, friends and relatives.

MEANING OF CRIME AGAINST WOMEN

¹ Nehal Ashraf, Crime against women, p.1, (Commonwealth Publication, New Delhi, 2020)

The literal meaning of “crime against women” is direct or indirect physical or mental cruelty to women. Crimes which are “directed specifically against women” and in which only women are victims are characterized as “Crime Against Women”².

The concept of crime against women is also as violence against women. Violence is also known as abuse and include any sort of physical aggression or misbehave. It includes threats, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, controlling, intimidation, stalking, passive/covert abuse and economic deprivation, rape, abduction, kidnapping, murder, bride burning, wife battering, prostitution and eve-teasing.

CLASSIFICATION OF CRIME AGAINST WOMEN

Although Women may be victims of any of the general crimes such as Murder, Robbery, Cheating, etc., only the crimes which are directed specifically against women are characterised as “Crimes Against Women”. Generally, crime against women may classified into followings categories: -

- i. Sexual offence
- ii. Offence for gain
- iii. Customary practices

I. SEXUAL OFFENCE

Virginity is valued by society, and a man destroy it. Sexual offences are like rape, assault to outrage modesty, molestation, unnatural offences involving women (Sec 377 IPC) and many more.

Rape is by no means accidental. Rape is the only crime for which the victim cannot have a revenge. The word rape, in many Indian languages, is “balaatkar” derived from root word “bal” meaning strength, basically in a physical sense. But it is also a beastly crime because the place where the rape is committed, finds the victim defenceless, weak, alone, or vulnerable³.

Kidnapping and abduction are very common offences practised against minor girls or woman. Minor girls are enticed away by unscrupulous persons while young women irrespective of age, fall prey to the use of deceit of force. Kidnapping or abduction with

² Awadhesh Kumar Singh and Jayanta Choudhury, Violence against Women and Children-Issues and Concerns, p. 1(Serials Publications, New Delhi, 2012)

³ Nehal Ashraf, Crime against women, p.17, (Commonwealth Publication, New Delhi, 2020)

the intention or knowledge that she may be compelled or seduced for illicit intercourse would punishable under section 366 IPC.

Eve-teasing has been a serious menace in our society. Eve-teasing which involves the verbal and physical harassment of women is the scourge of the urban society.

II. OFFENCE FOR GAIN

In an offence of prostitution, some victims are a willing participant whereas most of them were kidnapped, abducted, forced or seduced to illicit intercourse with anyone or export outside India. Also, minor girls are buying and selling for prostitution at a large scale for monetary gain. According to NCRB, a total of 7376 minor girls were kidnapped by their lovers in 2021 and they were sold out for money.

Trafficking of women and girls has become a highly organised and inter-state business. A gang engaged in kidnapping girls from Bihar and Assam⁴ and selling in many districts of U.P has come to light. A gang of kidnappers engaged supplying the girls to middle east has been noticed⁵.

III. CUSTOMARY PRACTICES AND CUSTOM

Since history, in our country, a custom developed to abduct a girl for the purpose of marriage in certain areas. Girls are kidnapped and sold in specific areas in hand of specific person for marriage purpose. They are forcefully force to marry. These crimes generally come under section 366 of Indian Penal code, 1860.

According to NCRB, at least 46 minor girls are kidnapped every day in 2021 to be forced into marriages⁶. A/C to the records, a total of 12788 minor girls were kidnapped for marriage against their wish.

CONCLUSION

Crime against women is not a myth, but reality. It exists and exists everywhere. The problem of crime against women is not new. Women in Indian society have been victims of humiliation, torture and exploitation for as long as we have had written records of social organisation and

⁴ Bihar girls in U.P, The Hindustan Times, September 17, 2023, p. 4

⁵ Kidnapped girls are sent to middle east, The Hindustan Times, October 26, 2022, p.1

⁶ NCRB, Report/ Crime against women/2021/pdf

family life. There are many records of episodes like rape, abduction, battering, and so forth of women.

In my opinion, a need to bring change in the structure of the society to make women economically self-dependent, educated, well-aware and treat them as equal members of society