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# Crime against Women

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## ABSTRACT

*Crime against women is a pervasive issue that persists in societies worldwide, crossing boundaries of geography, culture, and socio-economic status. This abstract explores the various aspects of crime against women, including its definition, types, causes, and consequences. The objective is to provide an overview of this critical issue and highlight the need for concerted efforts to address and prevent such crimes. The abstract begins by defining crime against women as any act or omission that causes physical, sexual, or psychological harm to women, specifically due to their gender. It encompasses a wide range of offenses, including but not limited to domestic violence, sexual assault, rape, human trafficking, dowry-related violence, honour killings, female genital mutilation, and forced marriages. These crimes occur in both public and private spheres, impacting women of all ages and backgrounds. Deep-rooted patriarchal attitudes, gender inequality, societal norms, and power imbalances contribute to the perpetration of violence against women. The consequences of crime against women are far-reaching and devastating. Women who experience such violence often suffer physical injuries, emotional trauma, and long-lasting psychological effects. Their ability to participate fully in society, access education and employment, and enjoy a life free from fear and violence is severely hindered. The consequences also extend to families, communities, and societies, creating a cycle of fear, discrimination, and diminished social cohesion.*

**Keywords:** *Crime, Women.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Crimes against women are a grave concern that persists in societies worldwide. These crimes encompass various forms of violence, exploitation, and discrimination targeted specifically at women based on their gender. Such offenses include but are not limited to domestic violence, sexual assault, rape, dowry-related violence, human trafficking, female genital mutilation, and honour killings. Crimes against women not only violate their fundamental human rights but also impede their social, economic, and political empowerment. Despite efforts to address this issue, crimes against women continue to be prevalent in many societies, resulting in devastating consequences for individuals and communities. The impact of these crimes extends beyond the immediate victims, affecting families, communities, and society as a whole. It is crucial to

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understand the causes, consequences, and preventive measures to combat this pervasive problem and strive towards creating a safer and more equitable world for women. This discussion aims to delve into the causes of crimes against women, both at the international and Indian legal framework levels. It will further explore the preventive measures and strategies that can be employed to tackle these crimes effectively. By understanding the root causes and implementing comprehensive prevention strategies, we can work towards eliminating violence and discrimination against women and fostering a society that values and respects the rights and well-being of all individuals.

## **II. HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

A historical perspective on crimes against women reveals the existence of gender-based violence and discrimination throughout various civilizations and time periods. In ancient societies, women were often considered subordinate to men and subjected to various forms of violence and oppression. Practices such as forced marriages, dowry-related violence, and restrictions on women's rights were prevalent. During the medieval period, women were often subjected to various forms of violence, including witch-hunts, domestic violence, and rape. Women's sexuality and reproductive choices were heavily controlled, and accusations of witchcraft were used as a means to target and oppress women. Colonialism further exacerbated the vulnerability of women. The impact of colonial rule on women's lives varied across regions but often resulted in exploitation, sexual violence, and forced labour. The late 19th and early 20th centuries saw the emergence of the women's suffrage movement, which fought for women's right to vote and challenged gender inequalities. This movement laid the foundation for future advocacy against violence and discrimination. The 20th century witnessed significant progress in women's rights and recognition of crimes against women. The establishment of international legal frameworks and movements such as feminism brought attention to issues like domestic violence, sexual assault, and gender-based discrimination. Despite significant advancements, crimes against women persist in modern times. Factors such as gender inequality, patriarchal norms, socio-cultural attitudes, and systemic failures contribute to ongoing violence and discrimination against women globally.

Understanding the historical context helps in recognizing the deep-rooted nature of crimes against women and the need for comprehensive efforts to address them. It highlights the importance of challenging harmful cultural practices, promoting gender equality, and advocating for legal reforms to protect women's rights and ensure their safety.

Today, individuals, organizations, and governments continue to work towards creating a society

where women can live free from violence and discrimination. By learning from history and building upon the progress made, we can strive to eliminate crimes against women and create a more equitable and just future for all.

### **III. TYPES OF CRIME AGAINST WOMEN**

Crime against women refers to various forms of offenses and violence committed specifically against women due to their gender. It is a widespread and persistent issue that violates the basic human rights of women, restricts their freedom, and undermines their physical, psychological, and emotional well-being. These crimes occur in various settings, including the home, workplace, public spaces, and online platforms.

The types of crimes against women encompass a wide range of behaviours, including but not limited to:

- **Domestic violence:** This refers to any form of physical, sexual, emotional, or economic abuse inflicted by intimate partners or family members. It includes acts such as physical assault, marital rape, emotional manipulation, and financial control.
- **Sexual assault and rape:** Sexual assault involves any non-consensual sexual act, including rape, molestation, groping, or harassment. These crimes severely traumatize women and leave lasting physical and psychological scars.
- **Human trafficking:** It involves the recruitment, transportation, and exploitation of women through force, coercion, or deception for various purposes such as forced labour, sexual exploitation, or organ trade.
- **Acid attacks:** Acid attacks involve throwing corrosive substances on women, resulting in severe physical injuries, disfigurement, and emotional trauma. These attacks are often motivated by revenge, jealousy, or as a form of punishment.
- **Honour killings:** Honour killings are acts of violence committed against women who are perceived to have brought shame or dishonour to their family or community. These crimes are typically carried out by family members or acquaintances to restore their perceived social standing.
- **Dowry-related violence:** Dowry is a traditional practice in certain cultures where the bride's family provides gifts or money to the groom's family during marriage. Dowry-related violence occurs when the demands for dowry escalate into harassment, physical abuse, or even murder.

- Cyber harassment and stalking: With the rise of technology, women also face various forms of harassment and stalking online, including cyber bullying, revenge porn, online harassment, and threats.

#### **IV. CAUSES OF CRIME AGAINST WOMEN**

There are various causes and contributing factors to crimes against women. It is important to note that these causes can vary across different societies and cultures. Here are some common factors that contribute to crimes against women:

- Gender Inequality: Deep-rooted gender inequality and discrimination contribute significantly to crimes against women. Societies that marginalize women and deny them equal rights and opportunities are more likely to experience higher rates of violence against women.
- Patriarchy: Societies with patriarchal systems often perpetuate a culture of male dominance and entitlement, which can lead to the mistreatment and violence against women. Traditional gender roles and expectations can reinforce power imbalances and normalize violence.
- Social and Cultural Norms: Certain social and cultural norms can perpetuate violence against women. Norms that condone male aggression or control over women, such as "honor" killings, dowry-related violence, or female genital mutilation, contribute to the prevalence of crimes against women.
- Lack of Education: Limited access to education for women can perpetuate their vulnerability to crimes. Education plays a crucial role in empowering women, enhancing their awareness of their rights, and providing them with skills to protect themselves.
- Economic Factors: Socioeconomic disparities and poverty can contribute to crimes against women. Women in financially vulnerable situations may be more susceptible to exploitation, human trafficking, or forced labour.
- Weak Legal Systems: Inadequate implementation of laws, lenient punishments, and a lack of proper legal redress can discourage women from reporting crimes or seeking justice. This can perpetuate a culture of impunity and further victimize women.
- Cultural Stigma and Victim Blaming: Societal attitudes that blame the victim and stigmatize survivors of violence often discourage women from reporting crimes. Fear of social judgment, rejection, or retaliation can deter women from seeking help or pursuing legal action.

- **Lack of Support Services:** Insufficient availability of support services, such as shelters, counselling, and helplines, can limit the options and resources available to women who experience violence. Accessible support systems are vital for women seeking safety and assistance.
- **Media Influence:** Media portrayal of women, especially in objectifying or degrading ways, can contribute to a culture of violence. Misrepresentation, normalization of gender-based violence, and the reinforcement of harmful stereotypes can perpetuate harmful behaviours.

## **V. INTERNATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF CRIME AGAINST WOMEN**

International legal frameworks play a crucial role in addressing crimes against women and promoting gender equality.

- **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR):** Although not specifically focused on women, the UDHR establishes the fundamental principles of human rights, including the right to life, liberty, and security of person, which are essential for combating crimes against women.
- **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW):** Adopted by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in 1979, CEDAW is often referred to as an international bill of rights for women. It addresses various forms of discrimination against women and calls for measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women.
- **Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women:** This UN declaration, adopted in 1993, defines violence against women as a violation of human rights and emphasizes the need for governments to take action to prevent and address such violence.
- **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action:** Adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, this landmark document highlights the importance of addressing violence against women as a critical issue. It outlines strategic objectives and actions for achieving gender equality and empowering women.
- **Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC):** While not exclusively focused on women, the CRC recognizes that girls are particularly vulnerable to various forms of violence. It calls for measures to protect children, including girls, from all forms of abuse, exploitation, and harmful practices.

- Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC): The ICC is the first permanent international criminal court with the jurisdiction to prosecute individuals for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and the crime of aggression. It includes provisions addressing sexual and gender-based crimes as part of its jurisdiction.

## **VI. NATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF CRIME AGAINST WOMEN**

India has a comprehensive legal framework to address crimes against women. Here are some key laws and legal provisions in India:

- The Constitution of India: The Indian Constitution guarantees fundamental rights and equality for all citizens, including women. It provides provisions against discrimination, right to life, and personal liberty, which form the basis for addressing crimes against women.
- The Indian Penal Code (IPC): The IPC contains provisions related to crimes against women, including offenses like rape (Section 375), dowry death (Section 304B), cruelty against women (Section 498A), acid attacks (Section 326A and 326B), and stalking (Section 354D), among others. It criminalizes various forms of violence and mistreatment against women.
- The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 (PWDVA): This law specifically addresses domestic violence and provides protection and support to women facing abuse within their homes. It covers physical, emotional, verbal, sexual, and economic abuse and enables women to seek protection orders, residence orders, and maintenance.
- The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013: This law aims to prevent and address sexual harassment of women in the workplace. It requires employers to establish internal complaints committees to receive and address complaints of sexual harassment and ensures a safe working environment for women.
- The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961: This act prohibits the giving or taking of dowry, which is a prevalent social issue in India. It aims to prevent the harassment and violence faced by women in connection with dowry demands.
- The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006: This act prohibits the marriage of girls below the age of 18 and boys below the age of 21. Child marriage often leads to various forms of exploitation, abuse, and violence against girls.

- **Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013:** This act was enacted in response to the nationwide outrage following the Nirbhaya rape case in Delhi. It amended various provisions of the IPC, including enhancing punishment for offenses like rape, acid attacks, and stalking. It also introduced new offenses like voyeurism and disrobing a woman without consent.
- **The National Commission for Women Act, 1990:** This act established the National Commission for Women (NCW) as a statutory body to safeguard and promote the rights of women in India. The NCW works towards preventing and addressing various issues related to crimes against women and provides assistance and support to women in distress.

## **VII. PREVENTION OF CRIME AGAINST WOMEN**

Preventing crimes against women requires a comprehensive approach that involves individuals, communities, governments, and organizations working together.

- **Education and Awareness:** Promote gender equality and educate both women and men about women's rights, consent, respect, and healthy relationships. Comprehensive sex education programs in schools can help in challenging harmful gender norms and addressing issues related to violence against women.
- **Empowerment and Skill Building:** Empower women through education, vocational training, and economic opportunities. Enhancing women's skills and independence can help reduce their vulnerability to violence and exploitation.
- **Legal Reforms and Implementation:** Strengthen laws and legal frameworks related to crimes against women and ensure their effective implementation. This includes timely investigation and prosecution of cases, as well as providing support and protection to survivors within the legal system.
- **Safe Public Spaces:** Create safe public spaces through adequate lighting, improved urban planning, and increased presence of law enforcement. Encourage community participation in maintaining safe environments and address harassment and violence in public spaces.
- **Technology and Safety Measures:** Leverage technology for women's safety, such as emergency helplines, mobile applications, and panic buttons. Encourage the use of safety measures like self-defence training, pepper sprays, and personal alarms.
- **Engaging Men and Boys:** Involve men and boys in prevention efforts through education,



awareness campaigns, and initiatives that promote positive masculinity and respectful behaviour. Engaging men as allies can help challenge traditional gender roles and norms that perpetuate violence against women.

- **Support Services:** Establish accessible and responsive support services for survivors of violence, including helplines, counselling, shelters, and legal aid. Ensure that survivors have access to safe spaces and necessary support to heal and rebuild their lives.
- **Media and Cultural Sensitization:** Promote responsible and gender-sensitive media representation, challenging harmful stereotypes and objectification of women. Encourage the media to raise awareness about crimes against women, highlight survivor stories, and advocate for gender equality.
- **International Cooperation:** Foster international cooperation and collaboration to address crimes against women, including sharing best practices, exchanging information, and advocating for women's rights globally.
- **Community Engagement and Social Norms:** Engage communities in preventing crimes against women by challenging harmful social norms and promoting gender equality. Encourage community dialogues, awareness campaigns, and programs that address gender-based violence and promote respectful relationships.

## **VIII. CONCLUSION**

Crimes against women are a serious issue that requires urgent attention and action. They are rooted in deep-seated gender inequality, societal norms, and cultural practices that perpetuate violence and discrimination. Preventing and addressing these crimes necessitates a multi-faceted approach that includes legal reforms, education, awareness, empowerment, and community engagement. Similarly, India has established a comprehensive legal framework to address crimes against women, including laws on domestic violence, workplace harassment, dowry prohibition, and more. Prevention strategies involve educating individuals about women's rights, promoting gender equality, and challenging harmful social norms. Empowering women through education, economic opportunities, and support services is crucial in reducing their vulnerability to violence. Engaging men and boys as allies and promoting respectful behaviour are also important in fostering a culture of gender equality and non-violence.

Creating safe public spaces, leveraging technology for women's safety, and providing responsive support services are essential components of prevention efforts. It is equally important to promote responsible media representation and sensitization to challenge

stereotypes and objectification. Preventing crimes against women requires a collaborative effort involving governments, communities, organizations, and individuals. By addressing the root causes, changing societal attitudes, and enforcing laws effectively, we can create a society where women are safe, empowered, and treated with dignity and respect. Only through such collective efforts can we strive towards a future free from violence and discrimination for all women.

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