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AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN IN INDIA

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INTRODUCTION

The principles of gender equality and the safety of women serve as essential pillars for the social, economic, and cultural prosperity of any society. Nonetheless, in spite of international commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals, which underscore the importance of gender equality as a fundamental aspect of advancement, the issue of violence against women continues to be a widespread and significant challenge. This matter not only contravenes essential human rights but also obstructs societal progress, thereby undermining initiatives aimed at attaining sustainable development and inclusive growth on a global scale.

The phenomenon of violence directed towards women and girls incurs considerable social and economic repercussions for individuals, communities, and nations alike. The phenomenon significantly impedes women's engagement in educational pursuits, professional endeavours, and civic involvement, thereby limiting their potential and obstructing initiatives aimed at poverty alleviation. This leads to a decline in productivity, constrained professional advancement, and adverse economic consequences. The ramifications are pervasive, impacting various sectors and placing significant strain on social services, justice systems, healthcare providers, and employers. These entities face considerable financial and operational challenges in addressing violence, which encompasses the costs associated with medical care, legal proceedings, and rehabilitation efforts.

The justice system additionally contributes to the minimization of gender-based offenses. The prevalence of low conviction rates, in conjunction with procedural inefficiencies, serves to dissuade victims from pursuing justice. The phenomenon of political apathy regarding the formulation and implementation of gender-sensitive policies, coupled with the lack of established protocols—such as uniform care standards for survivors of sexual

violence—significantly erodes public confidence in the system. Individuals who have experienced victimization frequently encounter critical perceptions, insufficient confidentiality within governmental healthcare institutions, and a deficiency in supportive resources. These factors exacerbate their trauma and serve as a deterrent to the reporting of incidents.

Furthermore, societal factors such as stigma, shame, and a lack of social support discourage many women from speaking up. Distrust in law enforcement, along with procedures such as delaying or denying the registration of First Information Reports (FIRs), impedes access to justice from the start. Victims of domestic violence may stop from reporting for fear of social repercussions and a lack of institutional support, further skewing the data. Addressing these issues requires systemic improvements, increased social awareness, and strong support mechanisms to ensure victim justice and accurate crime reporting.

In addition to this, the society we live in is becoming more and more knowledge-based, and literacy is essential in order to equip citizens with the ability to criticize injustice and discover new avenues for sustainable development. Literacy, in particular with regard to the empowerment of women, is an essential component that not only results in the transformation of women's lives but also contributes to the creation of safer communities by reducing the fundamental causes of inequality, suppression, and oppression. In addition to empowering women to make decisions that are independent and well-informed, it also empowers them to pursue financial independence and participate as equal citizens in socio-political and economic spheres. Women are more able to advocate for themselves and their family when they have equal chances. This is because they are better able to develop ideals of equality, fairness, and justice, which in turn reduces their vulnerability and susceptibility to crime, violence, and exploitation. In light of this, the empowerment of women is not only a societal necessity, but it also has the potential to be an essential approach for the protection and well-being of women. It is a significant factor that enables women to challenge traditional gender roles, which ultimately results in more equitable opportunities, less discrimination, and improved respect within cultures.

Violence has a negative impact on women and prevents them from participating fully in society. This has implications for health care, childcare, the functioning of families, and a reduction in economic production. Crimes committed against women, often known as

CAW, pose a threat to their safety and make it more difficult for them to pursue education and employment. Despite the fact that it is simple to dismiss CAW as an age-old problem that is associated with patriarchal views and functional societal norms that are present all over the world, the alarming rise in the number of such crimes as well as the increasingly violent and cruel nature of such crimes calls for a more in-depth investigation. Which type of society is more prevalent, urban or rural? Does the incidence of this phenomenon occur more frequently in authoritarian or democratic societies? Does it occur in countries that are more liberal and modern, or in societies that are more traditional and conservative? Has the empowerment of women been shown to be a factor in reducing crime? The concept upon which this essay is based is that a more in-depth examination of these topics may yield insights into the factors that have contributed to the rise in CAW and may also shed light on potential solutions to the problem. The authors felt compelled to investigate whether or not an increase in the literacy rate of women has an effect on the occurrence of CAW. The nation of India, which is characterized by a diverse range of economic, geographical, and social conditions, was selected for the purpose of examining the trajectories of female literacy and CAW at both the national and state levels in order to validate any potential links.

TYPES OF CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN

In India, the term "offences against women" refers to a wide variety of physical and psychological abuses that are the result of deeply ingrained historical, cultural, and economical frameworks that continue to perpetuate gender-based inequity and violence. Because of the systemic nature of these offences, which are entrenched in deeply ingrained patriarchal views, cultural attitudes, and institutional failures, it is impossible to see them as isolated instances when they are committed. In spite of constitutional guarantees of equality and the passage of progressive laws, women continue to be subjected to serious dangers to their lives, as well as to their dignity and personal safety. This section takes a look at the many crimes that women in India have been subjected to, analysing them through the lens of statistics, legal frameworks, societal circumstances, and the difficulties that are connected with seeking solutions to these problems.

Rape and sexual assault

The act of rape is one of the most deplorable abuses of a woman's physical autonomy and dignity that may occur in a relationship. In reaction to the Nirbhaya case that occurred in 2012,

Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) was redefined by the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013. This new definition expanded the definition of rape to encompass non-penile forms of penetration as well as a variety of other sorts of sexual assault. In spite of recent legal reforms, the underreporting of rape continues to be a problem because of the continuing problems of fear, humiliation, victim-blaming, and a lack of faith in the court system.

Domestic Violence

In India, the experience of domestic abuse is a reality that is endured by a large number of women who come from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds. An emotional, verbal, sexual, and financial hurt are all included in this category, in addition to the bodily harm that is included. Civil remedies, such as protection, residence, and maintenance orders, are made available to victims of domestic violence under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA), which was passed in 2005.

Dowry Harassment and Dowry Deaths

In spite of the fact that the Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961 was passed, there is still a concerning high number of instances of violence that are associated with dowry. When families are unable to pay the demands of dowry, they frequently indulge in harassing behaviour, mistreating women, and in the most extreme situations, even murdering them. Sections 304B and 498A of the Indian Penal Code include the laws that handle cruelty and dowry-related fatalities. These provisions are wrapped inside the provisions. There are times when the probable death of a woman after seven years of marriage might give rise to legal assumptions regarding the violence that is linked with dowries.

Human Trafficking and Forced Prostitution

Abducted, tricked, or sold into forced work and sexual exploitation are the primary victims of human trafficking. Women and girls are the most vulnerable victims of this crime. The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act (ITPA), coupled with Sections 370 and 370A of the Indian Penal Code, as well as a number of additional legislative measures, are all included in the goal of preventing trafficking.

Cybercrimes Targeting Women

The proliferation of digital connection has resulted in a huge surge in the number of crimes that are committed against women. These crimes include doxing, extortion, online stalking, image modification, revenge pornography, and sexual assault. Specifically, these offences are

addressed under the Information Technology Act of 2000, as well as by Sections 354D, 509, and 66E of the Indian Penal Code.

Workplace Harassment and Discrimination

The problem of harassment in the workplace continues to be a significant obstacle between women and their ability to participate in the workforce. Internal Complaints Committees (ICCs) are required to be created in every organisation in accordance with the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013. This act is based on the principles that were set by the Supreme Court in the Vishaka Guidelines.

Honour Killing and Other Culturally Rooted Crimes

Particular attention should be paid to women who make the decision to marry, particularly those who do so across religious or caste boundaries, or who affirm their sexual autonomy. Honour killings, which are defined as murders done by members of a family in order to maintain what is seen to be the family's honour, are a growing problem. These offences are handled in accordance with regular murder laws, despite the fact that they are not specifically written out in the Indian Penal Code. A suggestion for separate legislation has been put up by the Law Commission, despite the fact that work has been moving at a snail's pace from the beginning.

LEGISLATIVE PROVISIONS

- **Section 376 of the Indian Penal Code**

Section 376 of the Indian Penal Code addresses the offense of rape, which is considered to be one of the most terrible crimes committed against women. The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act of 2013 dramatically expanded the definition of rape under Section 375 to include non-penile penetration, oral sex, and object insertion. This was carried out in order to make the term more comprehensive. The provisions of Section 376 were also modified to include the imposition of more severe punishments, such as the death sentence and life imprisonment in certain circumstances, such as the group rape of minors. In addition, the clause presents the idea of aggravated rape, which takes into consideration circumstances such as rape committed in a correctional setting, rape committed against pregnant women, and repeated rape. The landmark verdict in *Mukesh & Anr v. State for NCT of Delhi* (2017), which was connected to the Nirbhaya case, marked a turning point in rape jurisprudence. It affirmed the resolve of the judiciary to punish such crimes in a severe manner.

- **Sections 363–373 of IPC**

There are several different types of kidnapping and abduction that are discussed in sections 363 to 373. The act of kidnapping or abducting any woman with the intention of persuading her to marry against her will or to coerce her into engaging in sexual activity against her will is punishable under Section 366. The acquisition of a juvenile girl for the purpose of sexual exploitation is a criminal offense, and Section 366A, Section 372 and Section 373 deal with the selling and purchasing of children for the purpose of engagement in prostitution. These provisions intend to address the issue of women being exploited via the use of coercive methods such as kidnapping and trafficking.

- **Sections 302 and 304B of the IPC**

Dowry deaths are expressly addressed under Section 304B, which makes it relevant in situations when a woman dies under unnatural circumstances within seven years of marriage and it is demonstrated that she was exposed to abuse or harassment by her husband or in-laws for the purpose of receiving dowry. The prosecution's case is strengthened by the presumption that is established under Section 113B of the Indian Evidence Act's provisions. The United States Supreme Court, in the case of *State of Punjab v. Iqbal Singh* (1991), stressed the need of conducting investigations into dowry-related deaths in a prompt and efficient manner.

- **Section 498A of the IPC**

The issue of domestic abuse and cruelty committed by the husband or his family was intended to be especially addressed by the introduction of Section 498A in the year 1983. This clause encompasses both physical and mental cruelty, and it is capable of being cognizable and not subject to bail. Judicial rules have been established to avoid arbitrary arrests, such as in the case of *Rajesh Sharma v. State of Uttar Pradesh* (2017). This is because there have been concerns over the misuse of the law, despite the fact that it plays an essential role in treating domestic violence. However, the provision continues to be an essential instrument for the protection of women within the context of marriage.

- **Section 354 of the Indian Penal Code**

Assault or the use of illegal force against a woman with the intention of outraging her modesty is the subject of Section 354, which addresses the matter. 'Modesty' has been defined by the courts to encompass both bodily integrity and human dignity. This

meaning has been clarified. This clause, which has a minimum punishment of one year, is frequently utilized in incidents of public harassment, which include unwanted touching and groping, among other types of harassment.

- **Section 509 of the IPC**

The words, gestures, and actions that are meant to offend the modesty of a woman are considered to be criminal offenses under Section 509, which also includes voyeurism, stalking, and making sexually tinged remarks. Whenever there is an instance of harassment in the workplace or internet harassment, this provision is frequently mentioned with other sections. The psychological pain that such acts create has been acknowledged by the courts, and they have been viewed as major abuses of personal dignity.

- **Section 366B of IPC**

Importing females under the age of 21 from other countries or even from different states in India with the intention of coercing them into prostitution or unlawful sexual activity is a criminal violation that is penalized under Section 366B of the Information Technology Act. India's international duties under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child are aligned with this clause, which acts as a legislative tool to reduce human trafficking and comes in line with those commitments.

- **The Child Marriage Restraint Act (Amendment) Act, 1979**

Due to this Act, the minimum age for girls to legally enter into marriage is now 18. It is essential in keeping girls from having pregnancies at a young age and from dropping out of school, and it involves penalizing guardians and other individuals who are involved in the practice of child marriage.

- **The Factories (Amendment) Act, 1986**

It is a requirement that women be provided with safe working conditions, and it also includes provisions for maternity leave and child care facilities in manufacturing plants. It is an effort to establish a workplace that is sensitive to gender issues.

- **Sexual Harassment of Women in the Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013**

This Act, which was derived from the Vaisakha Guidelines, authorizes the establishment of Internal Complaints Committees in workplaces and offers a comprehensive framework for dealing with sexual harassment. In addition to ensuring that employers are held accountable, it provides a system for the resolution of grievances that is time-bound.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the rise of digital media has significantly transformed the commercialization of sporting events, enabling event organizers to establish information monopolies through exclusive broadcasting rights and stringent intellectual property protections. While these legal mechanisms serve to protect commercial interests and foster innovation in content delivery, they also raise critical concerns regarding the accessibility, diversity, and democratic dissemination of information. The legal strategies employed—ranging from geo-blocking to restrictive media licensing—highlight a growing tension between private control and public interest. To address these evolving challenges, it is imperative for policymakers and stakeholders to develop balanced legal frameworks that not only safeguard economic rights but also promote equitable access, media plurality, and the broader cultural significance of sports in the digital age.