

RAPES: BECOMING THE NEW NORMAL IN INDIA; ACROSS ALL THE STATES

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In recent years, India has seen pathetic normalisation of sexual violence against women. It's becoming the part of our daily news cycle. From metropolitan cities to rural villages, from colleges to hospitals, the plague of rape and sexual assault has spread like a fire through the wind. This normalisation is not a sudden phenomenon; it's a complex outcome of socio-cultural downfall, institutional failure and psychological distortion.

We Indians often introduce ourselves as a progressive democracy- a land where women are worshipped as goddesses and we keep promoting so called gender equality. However, under this great show of modernity lies a regressive mindset that continues to view women as a mere object of male desire. The much celebrated 'progressive' narrative is eroding rapidly replaced by performative liberalism that exists only on social media and political speeches. In real life, there is always a deep-rooted patriarchal attitude that speaks in most of the cases. The normalisation of rape and victim-blaming reflects about a society that talks about women empowerment on paper but fails to deliver it.

If we further look deep into this matter, we will find that one of the most major contributors of this crisis is the absence of proper sex education in India across all the states. Schools and even most of the colleges in higher education, shy away from discussing topics related to sexual ethics or emotional relationships. In my school and even early days of my college life, we boys and girls used to seat in different rows. I think of it as a very problematic culture. The taboo surrounding sex leaves young minds to rely on misinformation, pornography or lots of unscientific myths to understand sexuality and gender related behaviour. The ignorance give birth to wrong perception of consent and relationships. When sex is treated as a forbidden subject rather than a natural biological and physiological aspect of human life, it sparks an unorganic curiosity. We can address this series of problem by introducing structured, age-appropriate sex education from basic to advance level so that one could learn about respect empathy and boundaries.

Parenting play vital role in shaping the moral identity of a child. Unfortunately, in many Indian households, discussion about gender sensitivity, respect towards women, and emotional intelligence are virtually non-existent. In my household my grandma often says that men are like gold whether it is in shape or not it will always be a gold; and I found these kinds of statements very wrong in terms of building a foundation of a child specially a male child. On the other hand, daughters are taught to be submissive and not so incautious. Parents fail to model healthy gender behaviour or address issues like consent, anger management, and empathy. In many cases rather most of the cases, children internalize what they see- be it domestic violence,

sexism, or toxic masculinity-ventrally manifesting it in adulthood. Ideal parenting should not just ensure academic success but also shaping moral responsibility and respects others autonomy.

The rapid consumption of unfiltered digital content especially pornography and hyper commercialised cinema has elevated the problem. Mainstream films like 'Animal' and 'Kabir Singh' and all the item songs loudly displays toxic masculinity, male aggression and dominance over women. Such portrayals condition young minds to associate violence with power and sex with submission. On the other hand, easily accessible online pornography even to teenagers, create unrealistic expectations about women's bodies and sexual behaviours. On social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram, misogynistic trends, objectifying memes, and influencer driven sexually provocative content stupefy to boundaries and consent. The effect of this digital aggression is a generation struggling to differentiate fantasy from reality.

Rape is not truly an act of last. The foundation of this act is power, control, and psychological imbalance. Many culprits exhibit deep-seated frustration, inferiority complexes, or suppressed rage stemming from personal social or economic factors. Unemployment, loneliness, abuse and exposure to violence in early stage of life often contribute to the formation of this kind of mindset. Unfortunately, India lacks proper amount of medical infrastructure about mental health to identify individuals showing early signs of digressive behaviour.

Despite public fury following brutal incidents like Nirbhaya (2012), the implementation of stricter laws has been inconsistent; victims often face harassment during police reporting, delay in forensic procedures and endless trials that slow down the process of justice. The government's impassivity is reflected in the poor conviction rates and the lack of victim protection. The absence of political will to prioritize women safety sends a dangerous message-that rape is no longer a national emergency but a routine administrative statistic.

One of the most disturbing aspects of current situation is the political shielding to the accused rapists. Across States politician and party workers have been accused of sexual crimes, yet they continue to enjoy protection and influence. From the Unnao case Uttar Pradesh to incidents in Bengal Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, the correlation between crime and politics is evident when political leaders defend or silence rape allegations to preserve their party's image, it erodes away justice and for this democracy loses its charm.

The recent R G. Kar college case in West Bengal, where a junior was brutally raped and murdered within the hospital Premises, exposed the current scenario of law and order in the capital of the state Kolkata (the safest city of India). Similarly, The Kasba Law College incident also happened in Bengal reflected the toxic masculinity in academic Spaces. In another shocking event a few members from Australian women's cricket team who has come here to play ODI women's cricket world cup faced molestation during their casual outing; the incident that embarrassed the nation on an international level. These cases are not isolated and after all of these the political parties are busy blaming each other.

The growing normalization of rape in India indicates a Nation in moral crisis despite the fact that we are the third largest economy in the world. What is most horrifying is the child rape cases that indicates the collapse of humanities itself. The epidemic cannot be addressed only through harder laws, more importantly India needs moral construction through early sex education, responsible parenting.

A country that cannot protect its women and children from sexual violence cannot claim progress or civilization. The real fight is not only for justice in the courtroom but for restoring empathy, conscience, and collective responsibility in society.

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