

PROTIBAAD Forum Newsletter



Protesting Violence Against Women

Vol. 1 • Issue 7 • November 2013

OPINIONS

Karina: I find it sad that violent crimes go on against women around the world. Although many say that we have gained equality we have not yet gained it. Just like many people protested for these demented individuals to be arrested and find justice for the poor victim, we should all take a step toward raising awareness on discrimination and violence women all over the world have to endure simply because they are women. This way we can start to progress and find better solutions to fix the problem, and be able to diminish it. The community needs to be educated about the subject so that more and more laws can be passed and enforced in efforts to stop the violence against women in our world. We need to start treating women and young girls as equals and give them the same opportunities and rights that all of us as humans should have.

John SW, US: India does not have a 'rape epidemic'. But the India's traditions & some cultural mentalities made

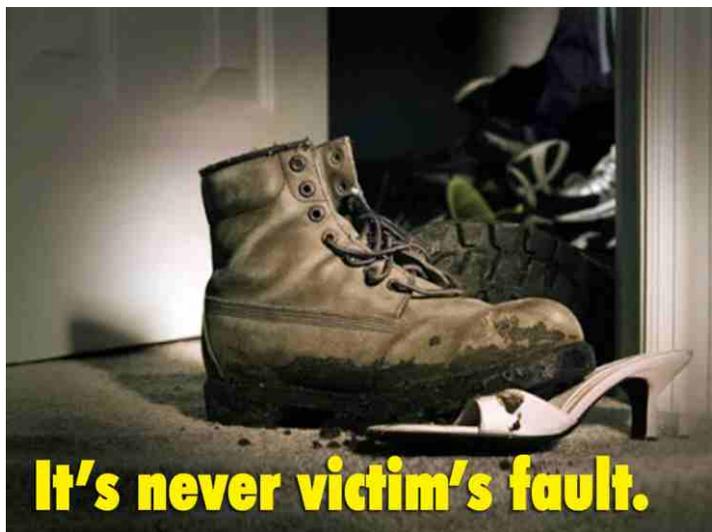
it a very sensitive topic. There are 'untouchables' in India and for majority of India, girls and boys are 'untouchables' to each other till they get married. Recently there were many deadly communal clashes and many get killed. Such communal clashes get lesser coverage than a rape. So the issue of Rape is very sensitive and sensational for Indian media (and to the society) than the killings. It is a contrast from American Society where Killings are more sensational than rapes. This is because there are no 'untouchables' for one during his/her growing period. (It doesn't mean there are less percentage of rapes in US than in India). Indian Society should give more freedom to its girls and boys to intermingle, so that we can eradicate one kind of untouchability. India should improve elementary education and introduce sexual education to high schools. Though other parts of India shares similar problems, it is much acute in Northern Hindi belt than other parts of India. Gender imbalance and human development related issues are more pathetic in northern Hindi belt than other parts of India. So being a big city in northern Hindi belt, Delhi becomes the best example for the 'Modern' India clashes with the under nourished under privileged India.

Mohan Dudh, San Gregorio, California: First, violence against women in India is correlated pretty heavily with violent crime in general. Note that many cases involve an attack on a man who is killed or seriously injured followed by an attack on the woman accompanying him. Simultaneously, murders of seniors by gangs have also increased. India has more crime against women than Saudi Arabia. India of 2013 has more crime against women than the India of 1963. Why? It is actually directly traceable to the collapse of policing in the country. India is dramatically

under-policed, with last I read one-tenth the policing intensity as the US. Politics too has become criminalized, with many politicians that have murder, kidnapping and rape charges continuing to contest elections. The police are governed under British era laws which were meant to protect the British in India. Now they are used to protect politicians. The remainder of the country has no security. This is why trains are hijacked, violent robbery is common and traveling at night has become a really dangerous affair. Politicians and bureaucrats in India regularly use this "society must reform its mindset" argument to cop-out of their responsibility to provide basic security. Changing social mindsets is not the job of the police. Now, the India of the 1960s and 1970s has begun to look like a woman's paradise compared to the India of today. Sad irony is that was a far more misogynistic period!

Sunetra Choudhury, Anchor/reporter for NDTV:

In 2012, out of the 24,915 women who got raped across the country, 24,470 were acquainted with the rapists. That means 98.2% of the time, Indian women are being raped by their relatives, close family members, neighbours or some other acquaintance. Men we know . . . who are rapists in disguise, which means Patil's offer of a police bodyguard means nothing at all. The time I went to Etawah in Uttar Pradesh to report on elections, and they were so surprised to see a woman attend a political meeting at night, that they literally tried to break the wooden platform I was standing on! Problem is what would I have said? Give me a police officer so I can hear political speeches till whatever time in the night? The police in charge would have rightly told me to 'Go to hell' (or maybe, go home) as he would have better things to do, and he'd be right! By the way, I don't know what the experts suggest to change the majority mindset about women. Maybe, they should change our textbooks finally for a good cause and teach gender equality from nursery. Recall how children are refusing to use firecrackers during Diwali because they've been taught pollution is bad. Till then let's teach our sons and daughters no always means no and a woman's body isn't public property.



It's never victim's fault.



"Women are not incapable. Things are not any different because I am a woman. Patience, concentration, quick decision making, alertness, discipline and resilience are required by any motorman irrespective of gender."—**Surekha Yadav**, first Asian female loco-train driver

CHILD MARRIAGE A LOSING GAME



Graphic source:
www.concernedforworkingchildren.org

Child marriage in India has been practiced for centuries, with children married off before their physical and mental maturity. The problem of child marriage in India remains rooted in a complex matrix of religious traditions, social practices, economic factors and deeply rooted prejudices. Regardless of its roots, child marriage constitutes a gross violation of human rights, leaving physical, psychological and emotional scars for life. Sexual activity starts soon after marriage, and pregnancy and childbirth at an early age can lead to maternal as well as infant mortality. Moreover, women who marry younger are more likely to experience domestic violence within the home.

With support from the National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD), this study's major objectives were to:

- ▶ Assess the prevalence and incidence of child marriages, especially in the selected states of Rajasthan, UP and MP.
- ▶ Analyze the various socioeconomic and cultural factors leading to child marriage.
- ▶ Analyze constitutional and legal measures against child marriage and their implementation.

The study used both secondary sources and primary data in order to establish attitudes and beliefs regarding child marriage within communities, as well as attitudes and practices of key institutional actors such as police, government departments, community workers and Panchayat members.

Field visits and discussions revealed a multitude of factors that help sustain and even endorse the custom of child marriage, despite legal barriers. First, social groups follow traditions from previous eras without questioning contemporary relevance. Early marriage allows parents to waive 'responsibility' of settling their children.

Secondly, economically weak and large families encourage the practice as it helps send off girl children early, while marriage of a boy brings an additional hand to assist in household and economic activities.

Third, members of communities practicing child marriage tend to have little to no formal education. Belief in

On World Stage, India lets down its Child Brides

India has once again failed its under-age brides. India has refused to sign the first-ever global resolution on early and forced marriage of children led by the UN. The resolution was supported by a cross-regional group of over 107 countries, including almost all countries with high rates of child marriage—Ethiopia, South Sudan, Sierra Leone, Chad, Guatemala, Honduras and Yemen.

India has the record of having the highest absolute number of child brides: about 24 million. This represents 40% of the 60 million world's child marriages.

Facts about child marriage:

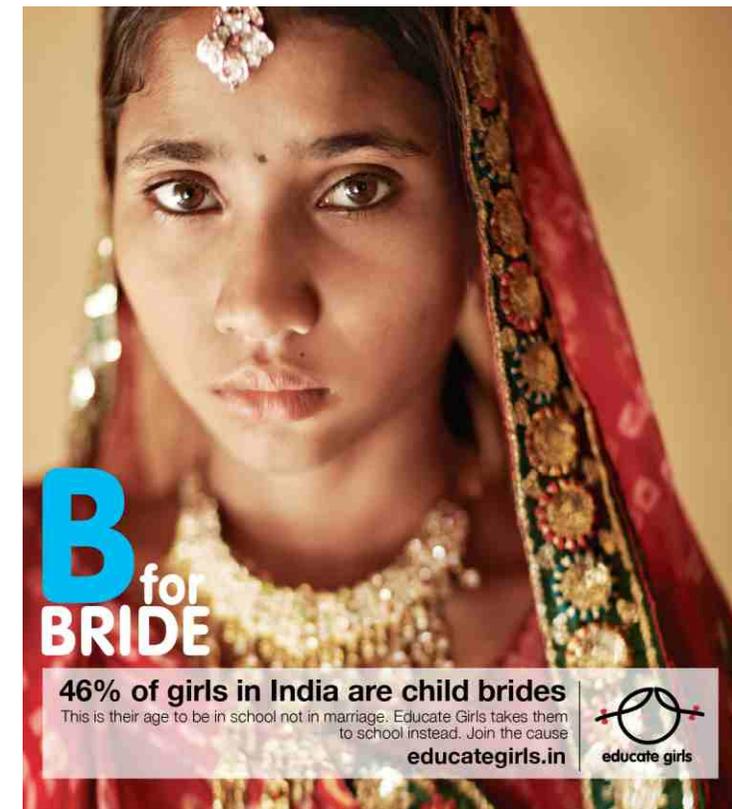
- Every year, 13.5 million girls around the world marry before their 18th birthday.
- An estimated 142 million girls will be married in the current decade (ending in 2020).
- Girls living in poor households are twice as likely to marry before 18 than girls in higher income households.
- Once married, girls experience intense pressure to bear children as soon as possible which can have devastating consequences on their health.
- Girls below the age of 15 are also five times more likely to die in childbirth than women in their 20s.
- Globally, perinatal deaths are 50 per cent higher among babies born to mothers under the age of 20 than among those born to mothers aged 20–29 years.

religious scriptures and the idea that these contain prescription for early marriage drive families to fulfill this 'obligation'.

Fourth, early marriage ensures full 'utilization' of fertility and childbearing capacity. Last but not least, strong caste ties limit the availability of suitable marital partners. As soon as parents identify a match, they make haste in conducting the marriage.

As a result of the findings, the study recommends the following:

- ▶ Increase awareness generation: All stakeholders should be sensitized and convinced about the negative impacts of child marriage.
- ▶ Gender sensitization programs: Gender training programs should be spread throughout the district for police and NGOs. Primary and secondary education for girls should be promoted.
- ▶ Checking loopholes in the law: Shortcomings must be corrected to strengthen the law.
- ▶ Training: Child Marriage Prevention Officers need to be trained for vigilance.
- ▶ Special police cells: Task forces must be set up to focus on cases of child marriage.
- ▶ Increased authority for NGOs: NGOs should be given the authority to report and intervene in cases of child marriage.



CHILD MARRIAGE

A global problem too long ignored

Child marriage robs girls of every opportunity to thrive. A human rights violation, child marriage denies girls their health, education and the choice of when and whom to marry.

Child marriage directly hinders progress on 6 of the 8 Millennium Development Goals. Unless the international community tackles child marriage, it will not fulfil its commitments to reduce global poverty.



What does child marriage mean for girls?

- POVERTY**: Child brides do not receive the educational and economic opportunities that help lift them and their family out of poverty. **THEY ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE POOR AND REMAIN POOR.**
- EDUCATION**: Child brides are likely to **DROP OUT OF SCHOOL**, hindering their personal development, preparation for adulthood and their ability to contribute to their family and community.
- INEQUALITY**: Child brides normally have **LITTLE SAY IN WHEN OR WHOM THEY WILL MARRY**. Marriage often ends girls' opportunities for education, better paid work outside the home and decision making roles in their communities.
- HEALTH**: Child brides face high risk of death or injury: girls who give birth before the age of 15 are **5 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO DIE IN CHILDBIRTH** than girls in their 20s. Their children are less likely to live beyond their 1st birthday.
- HIV/AIDS**: Child brides lack the knowledge or power to abstain from sex or negotiate safe sexual practices, leaving them at increased **RISK OF HIV/AIDS AND OTHER SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES.**
- VIOLENCE**: Child marriage puts women and girls at increased risk of violence throughout their lives. Child brides are **MORE LIKELY TO DESCRIBE THEIR FIRST SEXUAL EXPERIENCE AS FORCED.**

TOGETHER WE CAN END CHILD MARRIAGE. JOIN THE MOVEMENT.
www.GirlsNotBrides.org #EndChildMarriage



West Bengal government has taken some steps to curb the menace of child marriage with the help of local bodies. An awareness campaign among parents and village elders is being launched with active involvement of Panchayet bodies and other grassroot organisations in villages and towns for the purpose. Women and Child Development Minister Sabitri Mitra said, "We must realise that child marriage gives rise to trafficking of girls and women and I am confident that if all districts develop an action plan by the end of this year and implement it."

UNICEF data shows that a staggering 53.9% of girls are married off before they reach 18 in West Bengal.

Source: www.pinterest.com

Online Abuse of Women is on the Rise, but not many approach Cops



With more people taking to the internet to voice their opinion, online abuse of women has been on the rise in India. Despite this, very few cases are being reported to the cyber crime cell. As per Internet and Mobile Association of India's 2013 report, 52% of working women and 55% of non-working women use social media in India.

"We receive an average of 2-4 cases daily. Some of them serious," says inspector S.M. Babar of the Pune cyber crime cell. In instances of online abuse or harassment, cases can be registered with both the cyber cell or at the police station. "When the incident is of a serious nature, a case can be registered under section 43 and 66A of the IT Act and section 509 of the IPC," says Babar.

Namit K Shankar, marketing head with an auto major in the city, talks of a friend who was constantly stalked online by two men. They would comment and post sexually explicit links on her page. Despite reporting it online many times, the harassment continued. The comments were moderated a few times and the handles were also disabled once, but abusers were soon back under new identities.

Finally, the woman decided to contact the cyber cell but her family intervened. They felt going to a cop would make the situation worse with uncomfortable questions being asked. So, she had no option but to quit the forum. Human rights activist Yasmin Ali, too, is unsure if involving the police would help. "I really don't know whether it would be of any use. I'm very skeptical of the cops acting on it."

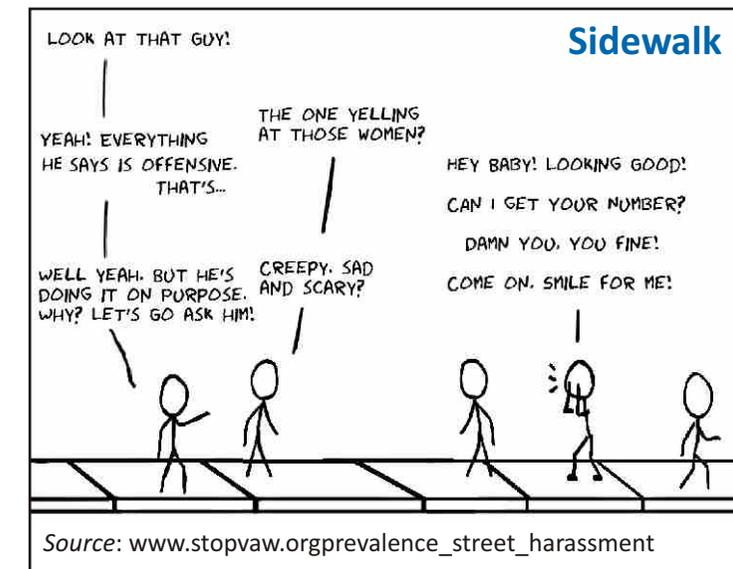
Halt Online Abuse (WHOA)—a volunteer organisation founded in 1997 to fight online harassment through education of general public, education of law enforcement personnel, and empowerment of victims, says, "Online

abuse, online harassment, cyberstalking or cyberbullying can be simply defined as repeated online communications after the harasser has clearly been told to stop."

"Every state/country has different laws, so it depends on where the harasser lives—not where the victim resides. If there is a law, and the situation has escalated, the victim needs to contact law enforcement where the harasser is located and provide them with the evidence they have saved. It's also a good idea to write up a timeline or log of all of the incidents, such as when it started, the dates of each incident, what happened, etc. to make it easier for law enforcement to pursue. Some victims may have to hire a lawyer if police don't get involved."

However, in most cases where law enforcement personnel find that an incident is not of a serious nature, the abuser is let off with a warning. "In cases where the abuser wants action, we come up with punishments centred around community service," says Inspector Babar. "Sometimes, when a case is reported it is found that the victim and the abuser are known to each other. Often, after such a case is registered with the police, we find that a compromise has been reached by both the parties and the case is mutually withdrawn," he adds.

Sometime ago a teenage schoolgirl took her own life after being subjected to online bullying by internet trolls. Hannah Smith, 14, was found dead after she received a series of abusive messages on the Ask.fm website, telling her to 'drink bleach', 'go get cancer' and 'go die'.



Source: www.stopvaw.orgprevalence_street_harassment

Don't Look Away : Video on Child Prostitution in India



Delhi-based NGO, **Bachpan Bachao Andolan** has helped to produce a shocking, eye opening video on child prostitution in India and uploaded the same on YouTube. Directed by Jaydeep Sarkar, the video **Don't Look Away** has struck a chord with millions of viewers and has gone viral since it appeared online in mid-November.

The video informs us near the end, 40 girls less than 15 years of age are forced into prostitution every day in India. Director Sarkar hopes that the video will motivate people to react more, instead of just playing the blame game. "It's easy to point a finger at state machinery," he said. "And they do fall short in many aspects but what do we do as observers? We express our anger against rape by rallying at Jantar Mantar, but we do not channelize it. So it is really important to know what to do in situations such as these. Whom to inform and how to help."

The inspiration for **Don't Look Away** came from an

incident that happened in Sarkar's own life. "I was stuck in a horrible traffic jam one day when a girl came in front of my car. I looked at her, it seemed she wanted to say something, but before I could react, she went and got into another car," recounted Sarkar. "I knew the car number and everything, but I didn't know what to do or whom to call. But that girl's face kept haunting me, so I thought of making this video."

One of the organisations you could call if you see something like this is Bachpan Bachao Andolan, a Delhi based NGO that supported Sarkar's video and has been campaigning to stop human trafficking and child labour in India. Established in 1980, the NGO has been working concertedly with children in different kinds of servitude over the past decades.

"In cases of child trafficking it is just not restricted to rescuing the children," explained Sarkar. "The children rescued have to be rehabilitated as well and a lot of work has to be done." It's ironic that this video about a young girl being forced into prostitution went viral on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. According to the latest government data, over 1.26 lakh of child trafficking cases were registered in country during 2011-12. Many of these cases may well have happened in our presence, on busy streets. Keep an eye out for such situations and remember the plea in Sarkar's vide **Don't Look Away**.

You can watch the video here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dR2sJ9Vtcjl>

93 Schoolgirls, Teachers molested on Patna Train

Women, individually or in groups, are not safe in India. A group of 93 schoolgirls traveling in the company of three teachers faced this cold fact on a train from Patna to Dhanbad on Sunday, November 24th. The group belonging to Carmel School in Dhanbad and Digwadih in Jharkhand was returning from an environmental camp. Upon boarding the Ganga Damodar Express at Patna Junction, the girls found their reserved seats were occupied by a large group of men claiming to be examinees of the railway recruitment team.

After the train left Patna, these men refused to yield and began harassing and molesting the girls. The teachers were reportedly assaulted when trying to intervene. Their ordeal ended four hours later when the men got off at Kodarma station.



Out to buy Sex, but ends up rescuing Minors

A DNA-Mumbai report published on November 27 tells an unbelievable, but true, story that reads like a film script. Two minor girls who were forced into prostitution were recently rescued with the help of their customer. Mohammed Akhtar Iraqi, 27, who orchestrated the trafficking, has been arrested in a joint effort by the Anti-Human Trafficking Cell of Thane rural police, an NGO and the customer.

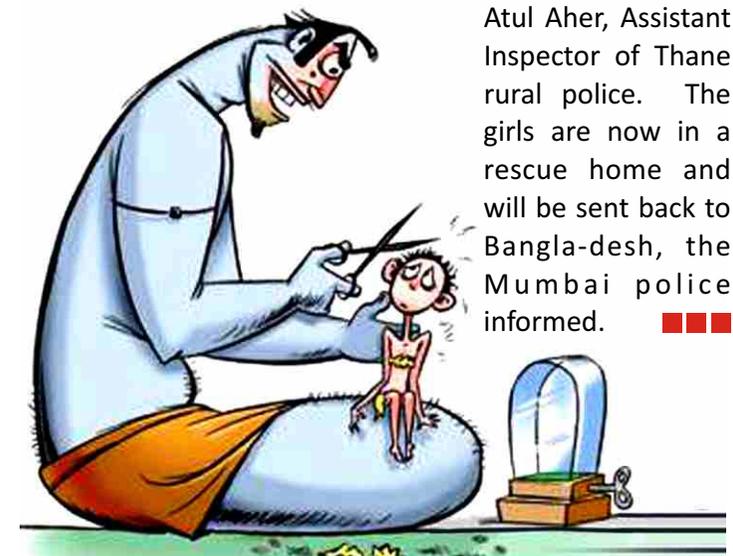
The two girls, aged 16 and 17, were cajoled by a man with dream jobs to come to India from Bangladesh. Iraqi, who was in cahoots with him, received them at this side of the border and brought them to Mumbai. He then sold the unsuspecting girls to an agent for ` 50,000 each.

Initially, the girls were put up in Kurla for a few days. Later, they were taken to the red-light area of Kamathipura. On many occasions, the girls requested their customers to help them escape from the hell-hole but all their pleas had fallen on deaf ears. The customer who finally empathised with them had apparently made a deal with their agent to take the girls to a lodge in Nalasopra. He had paid ` 500 for each of them.

The man, who is in his mid 20s, contacted an NGO after hearing their story. "He informed us about the girls and told us that they were crying inconsolably," said a member from the NGO. The NGO informed the police. The police and the NGO then laid a trap with the help of the customer. As planned, the customer again made a similar deal for the girls with their agents the next day.

"We laid a trap, arrested Iraqi and rescued the two

minor girls," said Atul Aher, Assistant Inspector of Thane rural police. The girls are now in a rescue home and will be sent back to Bangla-desh, the Mumbai police informed. ■■■



THE CLOTHESLINE PROJECT



The Clothesline Project is a visual display of shirts with graphic messages and illustrations that have been designed by women survivors of violence or by someone who loves a woman who has been killed. The purpose of the Project is to increase awareness of the impact of

violence against women, to celebrate a woman's strength to survive and to provide another avenue for her to courageously break the silence that often surrounds her experience.

Since its inception, Clothesline Project organizers have been moved by the power of the stories contained in these shirts. The impact of the Project has been widespread, thus realizing our goal to expand the Project across this nation and beyond.

If you wish want to start your own Clothesline Project. At some time in our lives, everyone will be touched by the threat of this most intimate of violences. This Project provides one way to give every woman a voice and a place to be heard. The project serves as both a moving tribute and a vital means of conveying the enormity of the problem of violence against women.

Learn more at: www.clotheslineproject.org.

UN study finds some Indian Laws Reinforcing Gender Inequality

A study by the UN World Population Fund (UNFPA) found that some Indian laws promote a preference for sons over daughters. The study report highlights the country's struggle to reverse a long-term decline in the number of girls. Ban on child marriage, pre-natal sex selection tests and dowries are poorly enforced, while laws excluding daughters and widows from inheriting land still exist.

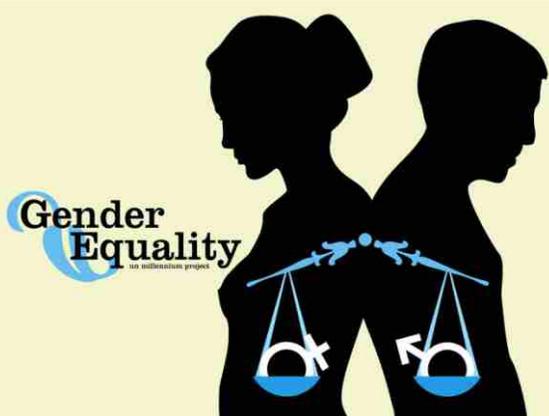
India has skewed child sex ratios. The number of girls under the age of 6 has fallen over the past 50 years. There are now 919 girls to every 1,000 boys, compared to 976 girls in 1961, according to the 2011 census.

Twelve million Indian girls have been aborted in the last three decades, a 2011 study in the British medical journal Lancet found. Kirti Singh, a lawyer and author of the UN study entitled 'The Law and Son Preference in India: A Reality Check', said a lack of political will meant many gender laws are not enforced. Others are blatantly discriminatory and encourage the view that a male child is more valuable.

There is, for example, the Goa polygamy law which actually permits a second marriage for the husband when there is no son from the first marriage.

There are also laws in some states which do not allow daughters and widows to inherit land.

According to the latest U.N. Gender Equality Index, India has one of the worst gender differentials in child mortality of any country, ranking 132 out of 148 nations, worse than Pakistan and Bangladesh.



“The political positioning and the agendas of feminism and the autonomous women’s movements have been systematically subsumed and relegated to the margins by the blatant ‘misuse’ of the concept of gender, a concept that ironically sought to enrich an understanding of patriarchy and sharpen the politics of the movement.”—**Nighat Said Khan**, the executive director at Applied Socioeconomic Research (ASR) Resource Centre, Pakistan.

Global survey shows the Newsroom too can be a Hostile Environment



A recent survey by the International News Safety Institute (INSI) and the International Women’s Media Foundation (IWMF) found that the majority of threats, intimidation and abuse directed towards female media workers occurred in the work place and were committed by male bosses, supervisors and co-workers. Majority of women who are harassed do not report what has happened to them, despite the fact that more than half of them confirmed that the experience had a psychological impact on them.

This ground-breaking survey of—a first of its kind—shows that women journalists are often at risk in their own work places as well. More than half (64.48%) of the 822 women journalists who responded to this survey have experienced some sort of intimidation, threat or abuse at their work place.

Read full report at www.newssafety.org/news.php?news=20711&cat=press-room-news-release.

“**EDUCATION ISN'T SIMPLY ABOUT LITERACY, IT'S ABOUT GIVING GIRLS BACK THEIR POWER.**”

SHIZA SHAHID,
FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
THE MALALA FUND

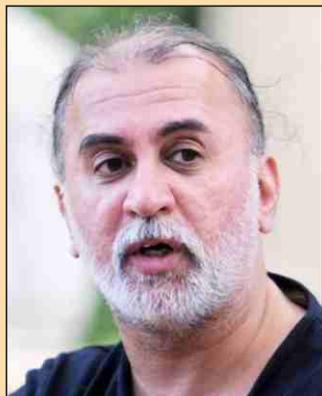
Social Good
Summit

Powerful Predators are Everywhere

News of Tarun Tejpal's adventure with a junior journalist and a former intern's accusations against a retired Supreme Court judge has dominated headlines in India for last many days. Tarun Tejpal is one of India's most powerful journalists, and Justice (Retd.) A.K. Ganguli was considered one of the brightest judges the apex court had. For Additional Solicitor General Indira Jaising, both cases show how hard it is for women to



Justice (Retd.) A.K. Ganguli



Tarun Tejpal

press complaints against colleagues in the workplace, particularly if they are powerful individuals not used to having their authority challenged. She also rightly pointed out that the two cases—one of the intern and the journalist—shows a failure of the institutions. In the process, above incidents are reviving the debate about how India treats sex crimes in particular and women in general.

Yet these cases also present authorities with a rare opportunity to demonstrate that no one is above the law that sexual abuse, no matter who it involves, will be dealt with thoroughly.

About three months ago, a popular guru Asaram Bapu was arrested for sexually molesting an ailing girl child. The arrest of former Rajasthan minister Babulal Nagar in a rape case is also fresh in our minds.

But the truth is vast majority of victims are still too scared to speak up, say rights activists, despite the high-profile sexual abuse cases in the headlines.

Discrimination and violence towards women in India has a major economic impact. Out of 131 countries ranked by the International Labor Organization, India stands 11th from the bottom for female participation in the workforce.

Why some men Rape: They think they have a right to sex even without consent

A new UN study in selected Asia and Pacific countries shows that violence against women by men starts at much younger ages than previously thought, and the most common motivation of rapists is their belief that men have a right to have sex with women even without their consent.

The study, which covered 10,000 men in Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Papua New Guinea also found that 72-97% of the men who raped women were never punished. Significantly, many of them who have admitted to rape were repeat offenders, most probably because of the impunity that they enjoyed. Half of the self-admitted rapists said the first time they committed the crime was when they were teenagers. 23% of men who raped in Bougainville in Papua New Guinea, and 16 percent in Cambodia were 14 years or younger when they first raped a woman. Overall, 4 percent of the men said they had participated in gang rapes.

It asked men about their use and experiences of violence, attitudes and practices towards women, childhood, sexuality, family life and health. Nearly half the men interviewed for the study reported using physical and/or sexual violence against a female partner—ranging from 26% to 80%. And a quarter of the men admitted that they have raped a woman or a girl. At one place, it was as high as 62%.

"This study reaffirms that violence against women is preventable," said James Lang, Program Coordinator, Partners for Prevention. "Prevention is crucial because of the high prevalence of men's use of violence found across the study sites and it is achievable because the majority of the factors associated with men's use of violence can be changed."

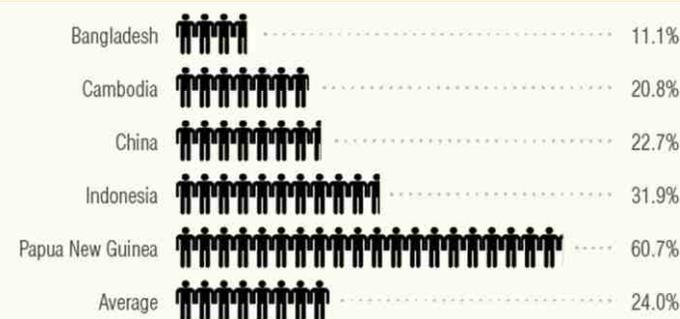
Besides path-breaking new data, the study also highlights the socio-cultural determinants of violence against

women. For instance, data from Bangladesh and Cambodia show that men who have "highly controlling behaviour" are more than twice as likely to perpetrate partner violence than those who do not use controlling behaviour.

The rapists also reported to have experienced physical, sexual or emotional abuse as a child, or witnessed the abuse of their mothers. The men also grow up in a milieu that celebrated male toughness and sexual performance. To prevent violence against women, the study recommended policies and programs that target boys and men, sustained socio-cultural interventions and legal reforms: promotion of non-violent and caring ways to be a man (for example through sustained school-based or sports-based education programs); parenting programs, comprehensive child protection systems and policies to end corporal punishment; legal reforms to ensure effective access to justice; and full empowerment of women and girls.

The study clearly shows why mere street-outrage, policing and punishment do not prevent rape in India and why a number of rapists are juvenile. The underlying factors are deep-rooted and complex and the knee-jerk quick fixes by governments do not address them.

MEN WHO'VE COMMITTED RAPE



U.N. study in Asia delves into why men rape

HELPFUL LINKS ON VAW

<http://protibaadforum.wordpress.com> • <https://www.facebook.com/SaveNavaruna>
http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2013/violence_against_women_20130620/en/
<http://www.un.org/en/women/endviolence>
<http://indialawyers.wordpress.com/category/crime-against-women/>

CONTACT US

Protibaadforum@gmail.com • <http://protibaadforum.wordpress.com/>
<https://www.facebook.com/#!/groups/protibaad/>

Editorial inputs by Subhudev Das, Aparajita Sen, Arin Basu, Debasis Bandyopadhyay and other members of Protibaad Forum.
Designed by Subrato Mitra at AAKAR (aakarpatna@gmail.com)