

A Critique of Causes and Measures of Rape: A Systematic Review of Literature

**Sakshi Singh (Research Scholar), Eva Sharma and
Madhav Dubey (M.A. English)**

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Abstract

Violence against women has been a matter of utmost concern for many years now. The brutality of the act is indicative of the corrupt mentality of the patriarchy trying to subdue the free existence of women in the society. Men have grown so obsessed with their muscular power that they search for an instrument to exercise their authority and the easiest instrument that comes their way is a woman. While beating, thrashing, abusing are common way of assaulting women, the most frequent and dangerous of all is rape. Rape has taken the form of an indirect agency to cage women within the permissible limits defined by the patriarchy. The culture of rape has become a common instrument for men to hegemonize women and to use them as a vent for their aggression. The article attempts to review the existing literature concerning sexual assault dealing with issues like rape myths, causes, marital rape, rape taking place during the times of war and its grave consequences to be faced by the victims. The article concludes with the observation that while the government and other social organizations have contributed in bringing the reforms, the persistent occurrence of rape is still on the rise making the safety of women a major issue of concern.

Keywords: Violence, Rape, Hegemony, Patriarchy, Culture

Introduction

Over the years, violence against women has been increasing at an alarming rate which is indicative of the most demeaning and undignified manner with which the women are treated all around the world which is evident in the number of cases recorded in the recent times, for instance, a statistics of 2014 from Krebs and Lindquist (2014) shows that, “1 in 5 women on college campuses in the United States has been sexually assaulted or raped”. Rape becomes the most accessible instrument for men to exhibit their supremacy and exercise control. It is defined by US declaration as “any act of gender based violence that results in , or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life” (Grantz & Moreno, 2005, p.2).

Nonetheless, intense practice of such brutality not only harms women physically but also has graver and long lasting effects psychologically causing a manifestation of constant fear in their minds. Infliction of violence can take various forms ranging from physical beating and

thrashing to emotional torture. But sexual violence is considered to be the most dangerous yielding disastrous consequences. It includes “forced sex through the use of physical force, threats and intimidation, forced participation in degrading sexual acts as well as acts such as the denial of the right to use contraceptives or to adopt measures to protect against sexually transmitted diseases” (Grantz & Moreno, 2005, p.3). It is a direct violation to the basic human and body rights of women whose repercussions ruin their life crushing them from inside. Sexual violence may include a sexual assault, abuse, molestation, the most common is rape.

Widespread Occurrence of Rape

Rape has become a widespread pervasive phenomenon perpetuating in every corner of the whole wide world. It has become a common instrument for men to hegemonize women and use them either for their pleasure or as a vent for their aggression. The fact that a man can easily control and use a woman’s body according to his freewill gives rise to a fixation of being undefeated and most powerful. Brownmiller (1975) mentions the falsity of being supreme that is deeply rooted in the minds of men. She asserts:

rape became not only a male prerogative, but man's basic weapon of force against woman, the principal agent of his will and her fear. His forcible entry into her body, despite her physical protestations and struggle, became the vehicle of his victorious conquest over her being, the ultimate test of his superior strength, the triumph of his manhood (p.14).

Brownmiller’s observation gives an important detail regarding man’s misogynist attitude towards a woman. Therefore, men targeting and preying on women with absolute surety of not being questioned has become a major characteristic of the ongoing rape culture in the world.

Structure of This Article

The article is divided into various sections beginning from the significant prevalence of rape myths in the society which are disgusting and infused heavily in the minds of people. It can be deduced that patriarchy has a big hand in keeping the rape myths still alive because it helps them to their benefit of confining and controlling women in their own vicious ways. Another section deals with the intimate marital rape which has been in the debates for quite some time now. A husband forcefully raping his wife considering her his own personal property is not recognized as a crime. The article traces the major reasons behind the frequent occurrence of rapes ranging from obsession of men to control women to use them for personal pleasure. The article highlights the condition of women raped openly by the soldiers at the time of war without any fear. The article also stresses upon the consequences as a result of rape which are extremely severe and often neglected after the crime takes place.

Rape Myths

The incidents of rape are generating an effective awareness among people and they have also managed to create and spread certain myths about the same, which unfortunately have been deeply ingrained in our society. Rape myths have been integral in shaping people’s attitude and perceptions of rape narrowing down their understanding to a confined perimeter. Rape has never been a new phenomenon and its inescapable effects continue to reflect in most parts of the world.

For instance, a lot of discourse has come out in light regarding the rapes that took place in apartheid and post-apartheid system in South Africa and the inclusion of different rape myths in the society.

Posel (2005) writes about the sexual abuse such as rape during apartheid system which was not openly talked about and preferred to be relegated to the margins of the mainstream society either due to orthodox mentality of the people or some political reasons involving the failure of the existing government. During apartheid, the understanding of rape and other sexual assaults had been different from the present times. For example, it was thought that rapes could only happen outside by a stranger or subjects like marital and homosexual rapes do not exist in the society. The only definition of sexual violence during this era was a man forcefully involving a woman in the act of sexual intercourse. Also, issues were forced into secrecy due to the pressure from the families and society.

Another important issue which the author takes up is that of child sexual abuse which didn't catch much attention until late 1990's when men suffering from AIDS started raping young girls assuming that being physical with a virgin would cure them. It came to be known as a 'virgin myth'. Such kind of ridiculously insane mentality depicts the savagery and desperation of men who would go to the extent of abusing and harming girls sexually to get rid of their disease. One more important aspect that the article deals with is what the author calls 'baby rape' in which babies as young as months old were being raped. Such cases didn't emerge in the public eye for a very long time. The reason for such heinous crime to remain hidden could be the fact that it was mostly the family members who commit the grave sin and can easily suppress the matter. And the babies raped and assaulted would be too young to understand or speak for themselves.

The society has been heavily blinded by various myths regarding rapes that its severity continues to get extreme.

In another article, Wise (2012) mentions the Myths like "women ask to be raped", "she was walking alone in the night", "she is promiscuous", "she was dressed provocatively"(Wise, 2012, p.4), they shift the whole blame on the victim and these myths are so heavily ingrained in the minds of the people that they tend to accept and practice such myths. Media too has a major role to play in presenting the misconceptions and misrepresentations of rape causing women to incorporate the falsity of these myths in their lives.

In an article, Winn (2011) stresses on the role of media in spreading the false myth that rapes are committed more frequently by the strangers than the acquaintances. Therefore, "society as a whole gains a misconception about the reality of rape and what constitutes the "typical" rape from this skewed media portrayal"(Winn, 2011, p. 4-5).In view of this, to educate women about the actualities of rape become of utmost importance. Media literacy is one such platform which can contribute in fulfilling such an initiative. Media literacy refers to the "analytical tools required to critically evaluate and communicate messages in various mediums"(Winn, 2011, p.10) which will help women become a part of a world-wide phenomenon to "promote fair, balanced, and truthful depictions of women and girls"(Winn, 2011, p.10).

Acceptance of Rape Myths

It is also observed that the acceptance of such rape myths is not uniform in the society. Boakye (2009) tries to find out the level of acceptance of rape myths in Ghana using feminist theory. The study is based on the field study conducted by distributing questionnaires among a group of people to examine their responses about the same. The author did a survey among men and women and found that the level of acceptance of such rape myths is more in men than women. Even some male members don't accept that there is an increase in the rape cases in the society or the fact that concepts such as marital rape exist. These fallacies about rape are so deeply engraved in the society that it is nearly impossible to change them. The article also throws light on the relationship between the age and level of rape myth acceptance. The acceptance level is very high among the children and less among the young generation and again begins to rise with the old age. This kind of irregular graph can be due to lack of education or the adamant refusal to tolerate that the patriarchy is at fault.

Indian Situation and Skewed Indian Beliefs

The politicians and high profile people in India have also given certain remarks which reveal the very existence of rape myths even in the most educated and responsible citizens of the country. Babulal Gaur, the BJP politician and Madhya Pradesh Home Minister said that "rape is a social crime which depends on the man and the woman. It is sometimes right and sometimes wrong... Unless the person wants, no one can dare touch her. The item numbers in films create a bad environment" (Rizwan,2015). Vibha Rao, chair of the Chhattisgarh State Women Commission has, too, mention some ridiculous reasons as the cause of rape stating, "Women display their bodies and indulge in various obscene activities. Women are unaware of the kind of message [their actions] generate" (Rizwan, 2015). According to Vibha Rao, the young generation, especially girls, are not been instilled with cultural values. Hence, rape myths are extremely harmful which continue to exist in the society and are used as indirect weapons to carry out the most devilish crime against the women. These myths also function as unquestioned justifications to the repeated phenomena of rape to support the patriarchy.

Region	Myths	Consequences
South Africa	Virgin Myth: Men suffering from Aids raping virgin girls to get cured	Young girls harmed brutally, raped and left to die
South Africa	Marital or homosexual rapes do not exist.	Men, women assaulted and raped could never find justice and the savagery continued
Ghana	Level of acceptance of myths more in men than women, less in younger generation and begins to rise with old age	The prevalence of myths continues, people remain unaware and women keep suffering
India	Women display their bodies and indulge in obscene activities Item numbers create a bad environment	Instead of supporting the women and punishing the violator, the blame shifts on the women itself, thus encouraging such crimes
America	Women ask to be raped, she was walking alone in the night, she was	Shifts blame on victims, myths heavily ingrained and people practice

	dressed provocatively	them. media too plays important role in spreading misconceptions about rapes and assaults committed against women
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Fig. 1

The above table summarizes the different kind of myths prevailing in different regions and their respective consequences.

Causes of Rape

Considering a major question arising out of this discourse is as to why rapes occur? What are the reasons behind such brutality and what instigates men to commit such a horrifying act. The fact that patriarchy is obsessed with being in power operating with their unshaken supremacy becomes one of the major causes behind this irrational deed.

Tracing the historical trajectory of representations of rape in US films from 1903 to 1972 through feminist perspective, Projansky (2001) has mentioned different reasons and logistics as to why rapes are committed and their consequences with reference to various American films. If a woman comes out as strong, individualistic, she is raped to turn her into a submissive and vulnerable human being. Some other film narratives depict that the fact that the girl elopes with her lover betraying her parents leads her to face such a horrifying episode. Women would face rape even they attempt to leave their husband which eventually forces them to come back to them. An interesting point that the author makes is “no matter how independent and self-sufficient the woman is, the rape heightens her vulnerability” (Projansky, 2001, p.9). Rape is undeniably a regressive agency which never fails to help men have an overall dominance over women.

Another analysis seen in the films is the uprising and revolt from the indigenous community against the white colonizers because they too preyed on the native women to satisfy their lust. An interesting observation on part of the author comes from his analysis of films made on rapes in 1910 in which colonialist women who were attracted to colored men had threats inviting danger of rape. The article rejects the notion of single representation of rape and focuses on the ways rape works through intricate roles of gender, race and class.

In another article, Asaah (2007) analyses the frequent occurrences of rape to draw our attention to the acute seriousness of the issue. No matter the circumstances, rape is still a widespread phenomenon which is unavoidable. The study attempts to portray the recurrent manifestation of images of rape in literature with special reference to the African novels. The article also seeks to create awareness to fight against this ferocious body violation by the patriarchy and the need to curb the indecent assaults. The author maintains the increasing rate of the infamous crime of rape still faces the hindrance of not getting a much needed attention and awareness, for instance, the African/ diasporan community. An African-American scholar Hines states that, "One of the most remarked upon but least analyzed themes in black women's history deals with black women's vulnerability and powerlessness as victims of rape and domestic violence" (Asaah, 2007, p.3). The root of extreme violence comes from gender discrimination which has placed patriarchy at the top of hierarchy allowing them to exercise their dominance on

women. The author too asserts, “Rape becomes then a form of phallocratic violence, that is violence prompted by the use of force and the dictates of male hegemony” (Asaah, 2007, p.5).

Because men deem themselves superior in all the spheres, they also tend to believe that their muscular strength can help them extract everything according to their will including sexual favors. The other perception which is instrumental in high headed behavior is the awareness that he is physically stronger and can easily overpower the victim and the fact that he would always relish the indefinite aid from the government, law, society etc. Moreover, the situations like war and conflict further aggravate the probability of frequent occurrence of rape.

An Indirect Tool to Hegemonize

As is evident through the discussion, rape is an indirect tool to hegemonize the so called inferior gender for their pleasure or as a vent for aggression. Other factors that have been taken into account are power play of race, caste or economic background which becomes the major reason behind the horrifying act. Rape is also used to curb and confine women who come out as strong and individualistic and who men see as a threat of breaking the shackles of their dominance.

Intimate Marital Rape

One important misconception that has further given heed to the offensive crime is the non-existence of marital rape. Many times, husbands take their wives to be a personal property whose bodily rights are exclusive to them by virtue of their marriage. Living in this misconception often leads men to brutalize their women in the worst way possible regardless of whether women are comfortable being in that particular state or not. Many countries do not recognize marital rape as an offence simply because they too are a prey to the flawed misconception that husbands have legal rights on their wives.

Intimate Partner Rape (IPR)

Intimate Partner Rape (IPR) is an uncommon phenomenon prevalent in the society which is often relegated into secrecy or considered fictitious. It is often taken non seriously with the belief that marriage is a lawful union of two people and the fact that a husband has the legal right over his wife’s body negates the concept of marital rape completely. However, this is not true and many women suffer the pain of body exploitation at the hands of their own husbands. Esere, Idowu., Durosaro, & Omotosho (2009) try to investigate various reasons and repercussions of Intimate Partner Rape on women of Nigeria by adopting the qualitative approach. Domestic violence is a pervasive practice which is prevalent in the community of Nigeria. Women are easily raped, assaulted and beaten by their husbands thus causing serious damage to their bodies as well as personality. But, surprisingly, the husbands accused of such assaults are not punished because the laws of Nigeria do not consider them guilty. A husband forcing his wife to have an intercourse is not seen as an offence by the government authorities, thus, giving him the privilege of being superior.

Women are beaten, married young, mutilated, raped, and in most of the cases, it is the husband, the father or the partner who is responsible for their miserable condition. But the police and the government negates such accusations calling them personal matters. Such scenario leads

to the physical, mental and social degradation of women making them feel inferior and weak. Through qualitative data analysis done on selected number of women aging from 22-40 years, the causes of intimate partner rape or violence have turned out to be drugs and alcohol addiction, intolerance, less patience and unequal power relations. The study has also analyzed the self-reported consequences of such violence which happen to be health related problems, depression and proneness to suicides. Through the article, the author proposes to have some mandatory laws for safety of married women and grooming the boys from early childhood to have respect and regard for women in the society.

Intimate Partner Rape reflects the cruelty which falls upon the wives by their own husbands. The disappointing fact is that inter marital rape is not recognized as an offence in the judicial system which leaves women whining and crying over exploitation of their bodies with no law to come to their rescue and it also gives husbands a free pass to continue the savagery and brutality. A recent debate on marital rape dealt with the major question of not criminalizing such a severe issue. It mentioned the defense argument which the government has put forth stating that criminalizing marital rape “will destabilize the institution of marriage” (NDTV 2017) and the fact that the “marital rape will become an easy tool for harassing husband”(NDTV 2017).

However, these arguments have been ridiculed by Shubashini Ali, Vice President, AIDWA stating that the reasons given by the government are rubbish which only exhibits how flawed the system of the country is. She avers that, “vast majority of women are denied justice in the name of protection of institution of marriage”(NDTV 2017). According to Ali the government is risking the safety of women at the cost of defending the sanctity of marriage. Nonetheless, the debate still continues with no substantial outcome.

Rape during War

A different perspective in the discourse of sexual violence is rape as a weapon of war. Rape, the most frightening offence is a pervasive phenomenon which is often used as a tool to create havoc in the and clearly has managed to keep women, young girls, infants etc. in fear. Rape is the most common tool to sustain the superiority and control of patriarchy and it is often used as an indirect weapon in war to rob the losing side off their honor and prestige. Kivlahan and Ewigman (2010) suggests that the Rome Statue of the International Criminal Court declares, “that rape and other forms of sexual violence by combatants in the conduct of armed conflict are war crimes and can constitute genocide” (Kivlahan & Ewigman, 2010, p.2). This explains clearly that it is never the prerogative of the soldiers to prey upon young women whenever they feel like. Rape is an agency to hegemonize women considering them a weak gender and “it is not an attack on the body, it is attack on the body politic” (Kivlahan & Ewigman, 2010, p.2).

Since the World War II, military from various countries have adopted implicit policy of using rape as a weapon in worldly disputes. Kivlahan and Ewigman (2010) suggest that it is used as “a reward for victory in battle, a boost to troop morale, as punishment and humiliation to both men and women, to incite revenge ...to eliminate or cleanse the religious or political groups and to destabilize entire communities by creating terror” (Kivlahan and Ewigman, 2010, p.2). Rape is seen merely as an instrument in bringing wrath upon whom the war is waged against but its consequences on the victims are most alarming.

The extreme torture and abuse on the innocent public especially women has also gained wide attention on the account of the brutality exhibited by the Indian Armed Forces. Aggarwal (2007) has observed various investigations of cases which have been filed against the Indian Army by the people of Kashmir. The public has been beaten, harassed and many are even disappeared and the evidences are on the record of the same. However, no action has been taken because the whole system from the police to judiciary is flawed exempting the officers from legal punishments. The hopes of traumatized families continue to shatter due to the failed justice and the brutality of the forces continues to harm them and hence, “the province continues to be ruled by the sword of the Indian state”(Aggarwal, 2007, p.2). It turns out that the ones pledging to protect the people have otherwise ended up injuring and ill-treating them.

A lot of discussion continues as to what incites such irrational behavior from highly responsible officials. This kind of audacity comes from the impunity bestowed upon them by the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) which allows them to “arrest, to search and, to seize without a warrant. Aggarwal (2007) too mentions about the authority, extending to the right to shoot to kill:

if he is of the opinion that it is necessary to do so for the maintenance of public order; The authority to destroy any structure or place that is suspected (or is likely) to be used as an arms dump or, position or shelter from which armed attacks are made or are likely to be made or, is used (or likely to be used) as a “training camp” or, is utilised as a hideout by armed gangs or absconders wanted for any offence (p.2).

Therefore, such powers give the officers the legal authority to exercise control over people, rape and torture women at their own free will without getting questioned. Though the Supreme Court clearly states that the special powers granted do not entertain the offensive crimes, yet it has become a general misconception that the forces are spared from all the allegations and complaints.

Suffered by the Innocent Families

Nonetheless, the brunt of these privileges is suffered by the innocent families whose petitions are not given any heed and the police too refuses to investigate stating, “they were not to investigate or take any action on complaints against security forces”(Aggarwal, 2007, p.2) or making a lazy attempt to do the same. In many cases, the accused unit does not respond to the orders of the court for investigation exhibiting negligence and carefree attitude. This also brings in a lot of bitterness and resentment among the people who become the victim of the vicious and cruel actions of the Armed Forces. The article reports many incidents where civilians have been taken in detention and injured heavily. Many have been brutally beaten in front of their wives and small children and many women are raped for the pleasure. But sadly, the struggle for justice against the system remains futile, hence encouraging even more such events in the state of Kashmir.

Perceived as the Reproductive Machinery of the Enemy

The same issue has been taken by Asaah (2007) brings forth the aspect of rape taking place during civil wars where soldiers regard raping women from the enemy clan is justified in the conditions of war. Amnesty International, a 2004 report suggests that “women are perceived as the reproductive machinery of the enemy...war generals and strategists see in the rape and killing of women a military tactic, an ethnic cleansing method that they hope will eventuate in the annihilation of the enemy” (Assah, 2007, p.18). Committing violence or rape becomes more like an opportunity for the young soldiers to prove their manliness and leadership is granted to them on the basis of the level of violence they commit in the war.

The above mentioned section discussing rapes during war brings out the ugly picture of soldiers committing the grave offence in spite of the fact that they swear to protect the people. There is so much of turmoil and devastation in the war that sexual crimes committed by the soldiers often takes a backseat and are never highlighted. Even if they are, the soldiers are never convicted due to the impunity granted to them by the government and other high officials.

Consequences of Rape

No doubt the brutality of rape has been a matter of utmost concern and the fact that its consequences are most severe also becomes an important issue to be taken into consideration. Tsun-Yin Luo (2000) discusses the interview of 35 rape survivors to observe and analyze the painful experiences which these women were forced to undergo. The study also takes into account the way these disturbing encounters have managed to perpetuate in the mainstream culture of China. It is discerned that the repercussions of such cases often lead women to develop what is called a Rape Trauma Syndrome which “was coined by Burgess and Holmstrom (1974) to describe the physical, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and interpersonal trauma experienced by rape victims in the aftermath of rape” (Tsun-Yin Luo, 2000, p.3). The effects of the syndrome may last from few months to many years.

It is discerned that the virginity of a woman has been accorded with the highest value which becomes an integral component in formation of rape culture. In fact rape is viewed as, “the illegitimate deprivation of women's cherished chastity by men” (Tsun-Yin Luo, 2000, p.4). Rape has also been declared as the crime against propriety and honor and the obsession with women’s maidenhood becomes a characteristic feature of the prevalent rape culture in Chinese society. The author has discussed several themes which contribute in the most significant way in sustaining the culture of rape in China. The fact that an unknown man is responsible for ruining them off their purity has a severe impact on women who believe that virginity is very important for unmarried woman” (Tsun-Yin Luo, 2000, p.6). It also leads them to feel extremely ashamed of their bodies thinking that nobody would probably marry them or those who are already married have a fear of getting abandoned by their husbands.

Depression also becomes too acute, deteriorating mental well-being of the victims. Some women often feel that their body is polluted and they will not be accepted anywhere considering their worth has been reduced to nothing. The sense of shameful manifests itself so deeply that the victims blame themselves for bringing a bad name to their families just because they are raped. Women have often been conditioned to think and internalize that they become impure if there is an attack on their body or violation of the vagina. In many cases, the case is reversed

where the victims are held responsible by their own loved ones. One more important observation that the author discusses is that in many cases the victim is married to the rapist either to save the family honor or to settle legal issues. The study intricately focuses on the dreadful consequences and traumatic experiences of the rape survivors which becomes a major significant part in being a part of existing culture in China.

Rape has also been discerned as an instrument in bringing wrath upon whom the war is waged against and its consequences on the victims are most alarming. Kivlahan and Ewigman (2010) analyze that apart from physical and mental breakdown, they may suffer from “sexually transmitted diseases, victims experience serious acute and chronic medical problems, forced pregnancy, higher maternal mortality, miscarriage, infertility, and chronic sexual dysfunction” (Kivlahan & Ewigman, 2010, p.2). The sufferer is also prone to cervical cancer, recurrent infections, etc. due to the insertion of various objects like rods, sticks etc. the repercussions are psychological too, where the victim deals with acute trauma and constant fear. Even families have troubles to come to terms with the situation that the victim goes through. Many of them abandon the rape survivors for the fear of getting shunned from the society. Clearly, it is the negligence and insufficient awareness in the society that encourages such crimes.

A Historic Tool of Suppression

A different aspect has been brought up by Asaah (2007) who observes rape as tool of suppression during the times of colonization and slavery. Manu Herstein’s *Ama: A Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade* (2005) reflects the insensitivity of the masters forcefully assaulting the slaves and exploiting women in Africa. Talking about the plight of the raped woman, Credo Mutwa who avers, “that since African society is basically matriarchal and women are considered to have two souls, one in their head and the other in their womb, the rape of a woman is an attack on her womb and therefore, unforgivable” (Asaah, 2007, p.15). It is a derogatory attack on the most intimate part of an African woman which is offensive and irreplaceable.

Feminist Dilemmas

Dutta and Sircar (2013) deal with the major feminist dilemmas involved in the way the cases of sexual assault and violence against women are represented and they demand to censor such representations. The constant increase in dreadful assaults and rape cases have shaken the people of the country causing an extreme public rage and aggressive demonstrations. One of the most infamous case of Jyoti Pandey who got gang-raped in Delhi provoked several protests and marches from all people and middle classes in particular. In the past, there have occurred many incidents leading to public demonstrations, be it the Pink Underwear Campaign by upper middle class women or the Slut Walk marches demanding justice. While feminists have been focusing on the issues of women’s safety, the demands for castration, and death for the assailant have become more intense and severe. That’s when feminist face the dilemma of choosing between the two grounds.

Framing Laws Against Rape

Over the years, the constant protests and movements by women have forced the government to reconsider the already framed laws in the constitution. Some prominent cases like that of Mathura, Rameeza Bee, Suman Rani, Bhanwaridevi, etc., have exhibited the major power

play of caste, religion, class that are instrumental in causing such severe incidents. The other major issue that the article focuses on is that, “ the previous victims/survivors in Delhi have not easily met the identity criteria that could outrage its middle class citizens in the way Pandey’s rape and murder did” (Dutta & Sircar, 2013, p. 7). There have been rape cases and its survivors earlier too, but just because they belong to either marginalize sections of society or not so recognized area of the country do not get them the required attention either from media or the people. Thus, location and identity seem to be essential qualifiers in determining whose rape is worth being the subject of urban, middle class concern and rage (Dutta & Sircar, 2013). The famous Gulabi Gang from Uttar Pradesh, North India fits in as a prominent example where a group of women from eighteen to sixty years joined hands to fight the growing abuse and domestic violence in Uttar Pradesh.

The author also contests whether the victim of usual violence would receive the same amount of rage and demonstrations in his/her support as the victim of sexual assault. While women demand changes in the laws for security, the government mainly focuses the laws on safeguarding women’s sexuality. In fact, the transgenders and queer are not given any provisions in such laws. The prestigious Verma Committee was given the major role in making considerable changes in the already existing laws. However it did bring a lot of amendments in the current constitution of laws, a grave issue like marital rape was exempted and the army too was provided immunity in cases like these. Hence, there remains an unending difficulty for feminists to go about some extremely grave issues of rape and assault in the country and no doubt, it is still a long way to go to help and improve the conditions.

An Easy Toy To Be Preyed Upon

Women become an easy toy to be preyed upon by anyone, and unfortunately what goes unnoticed is the serious consequence of rape on women which are both physical and emotional. Many women become a victim of depression on account of being isolated by the family and the society. In many cases, the husbands and in-laws to abandon the victim thinking she is no more pure. Many women blame themselves for becoming the sufferer and commit suicides. Physical injuries too become prevalent, from broken bones to internal bleeding and sometimes catching Sexually Transmitted Diseases. Instead of helping the rape victims to come out of the traumatic experiences, they are otherwise blamed for their miserable condition and pushed out of the society.

Researcher	Research
Tsun Yin Luo	Women develop Rape Trauma Syndrome i.e. physical, emotional, behavioral trauma experience by rape victims Women believing that they have become impure Women go into deep depression
Kivlahan and Ewigman	Physical and mental breakdown of victims Suffer from sexually transmitted diseases, chronic medical problems, forced pregnancy, infertility Victim prone to cervical cancer, infections due to insertion of rods, sticks etc. Shunned by the family and society

Asaah	Rape as a tool of suppression used during slavery of African women Masters exploiting slaves and exploiting women
Dutta and Sircar	Sexual assaults led to aggressive protests and demonstrations Demand for castration, death of violator Sufferers from marginalized section of society do not get the required justice and attention

Fig. 2

The above mentioned table gives a brief overview about various consequences of rape which have been analyzed by different researchers.

Conclusion

The article sheds light on various facets of sexual violence particularly rape, against women in the present scenario. Rape, a dreadful agency works in the benefit of men to sustain their hegemony as a superior gender over women. Beating, thrashing, molesting, abusing etc. become major tools in keeping women in a state of terror and submission to have an easy control over them. Being muscularly powerful generates a superiority complex in men which leads them to believe that they can rule the society according to their free will and elicit any and every kind of favors from women including sexual. Thus, there comes in a grave disparity which creates a divide between the two genders, one being the assailant and the other, the victim.

Rape has become a major pervasive phenomenon which has been constant threat to the women all around the world. In recent times the government and many other social activists have taken major steps to bring about a significant change to curb the menace of rape. In view of this, a lot of strong and effective measures have been taken by different countries in the world to ensure safety of women in the country. For instance, Government of the United States of America has been working towards the goal of women empowerment through incorporating various policies. For instance, the Department of the State and USAID work together “addressing issues of gender, including: gender equality/women’s empowerment; gender-based violence; women, peace, and security”(United States Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence Globally 2016 update, 2016).

Similarly, the Government of India constituted Justice J.S Verma Committee “to look into possible amendments to the criminal law for quicker trial and enhanced punishment to those accused of committing sexual assault” (FirstPost, 2013). There has been an incorporation of GPS in all the public transport vehicles and the treatment of the victims has been made mandatory in the hospitals. A helpline number 181 has been introduced for women in the country and a special act called The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act has been implemented to punish those who commit sexual violence against children (FirstPost, 2013). The punishment for the rapist is seven years and that of gang rape is ten years under section 375.

It has been observed that while the government and other social agencies are attempting to contribute in controlling the frequent occurrence all around the world, the graph of sexual violence, rape to be specific, is still rising in India. Rapes in India have been occurring persistently against poor woman, a low caste, tribal or even an independently working woman.

Not only women but small children are also being victimized. A recent news reported that a young girl as young as five years old has been raped by the peon in the school hours. Another case came out when a child studying in second standard got murdered by the conductor who tried to assault him sexually (Ashmika Singh, 2017 ,NDTV).Even the government fails to subdue the growing rates of rapes. Although there have been reforms in rape laws as posed by the Verma Committee, a major disparity still exists. The laws do not criminalize the marital rape nor do they offer any changes in the Armed Forces Special Power Act. Dwivedi (2014) indicates the flaws in the ordinance of the government of India. He suggests that, “The ordinance fails to draw a distinction between the harm caused by penetrative and non-penetrative offences, e.g. the act of touching another person’s sexual part is given the same punishment as penetrative sexual offences” (Dwivedi, 2014, p.6). The law also does not include any provisions for the LGBT community which has received a lot of protests from the same community. Another complication mentioned by Dwivedi which has received a lot of flak and criticism is “the exception no. 2 in 375 which states that the sexual intercourse or sexual acts by a man with his own wife, the wife not being under fifteen years of age, is not rape” (Dwivedi, 2014, p.6). With so many discrepancies in the law making, it is evident the frequency at which the rapes are occurring has continued to grow at an alarming rate. The fact that there is a lot that has to be done in this field and that there is an urgent need to find some serious solutions to help women and prevent them from the severe outcomes.

Limitations of the Article

The present article reviews the existing literature dealing with sexual violence committed against women by the patriarchy. However, the paper does not include the instances of homosexual rapes where a man is assaulting a man or a woman raping a woman. The article does not take into consideration the events where a woman is using her power and strength for her own benefit and convenience, for example, a 30 year old women assaulting a 14 year old boy. The article does not discuss the possibility of women misusing the laws formulated for their safety for their own personal benefits.

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Sakshi Singh, Eva Sharma and Madhav Dubey
Department of Languages and Literature
Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University
Network Centre, Sub-Post Office, Katra182320
Jammu and Kashmir
India
sakshi3344@gmail.com