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Roots, Nature and Extent of Gender Violence and Women Empowerment: Discourse and Reality in India

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Abstract

Violence against women is a deep-rooted phenomenon that can be traced back to the history of civilization. The restrictive socio-religious norms in India limit women's choices and access to opportunities. Economic globalization has enhanced job opportunities for both men and women that has increased the number of women in the job market in India defying social norms. Nevertheless, violence against women has become an alarming concern in India. On one hand women's increased access to job market appears as an indicator of enhancing their financial empowerment, freedom of movement etc. but violence against women, a sheer violation of human rights, undermines that empowerment. Hence, the co-existence of these positive and negative forces twined together create a very complex socio-economic environment in India. Emphasis is given to women's empowerment because women are not just a subset of socially disadvantaged groups, but they are a crosscutting category that overlaps with all other disadvantaged groups.

This paper worked with secondary (NBCR, NFHS) and primary data reveals that women empowerment and violence against women is highly positively correlated.

Keywords: *Crime, Human Rights, Women Empowerment, Violence*

Introduction

Historically, women have been deprived of from their rights and privileges in almost all parts of the world. Now, United Nations (1993) has ascertained that violence on women is the materialization of unequal power relationship between men and women. In true sense, women's deprivation as well as violence against them is sheer violation of human rights. In India, the prevailing deep- rooted socio-religion restrictive norms in fact limit women's choices and access to opportunities. However, after economic globalization, significant expansion has been observed in various sectors, which enhance job opportunities for both men and women. In fact, globalization motivates increasing number of women in India to join the job market defying social norms. Nevertheless, violence against women happens to be a common phenomenon throughout India. According to National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) statistics, violence against women has become an alarming concern in India in recent years. Hence, it appears that on the one hand, due to globalization women's access to job market has increased may folds which are the indicator of enhancing their financial empowerment, freedom of movement etc. and on the other hand, the significant increase in violence against women is truly undermining the status of women empowerment and also restricting them to attain their expected goals. Hence, the co-existence of these positive and negative forces twined together create a very complex socio-economic environment in India.

Under the present globalized hypercompetitive markets, human resources are considered as the prime factors towards maintaining or achieving competitive economic advantages. Therefore, there is no reason to keep nearly half of any economy's potential human (women) resources unutilized or underutilized. But, the Indian reality is that women are not given proper opportunities here, rather they are deprived from revealing their true potentiality. Despite rising levels of women

education, gender awareness as well as stringent pro-women laws, the age-old perception that women have less potential than men still prevails in India.

The national and international policy makers have advocated women empowerment as a means to overcome from the clutches of poverty as well as women deprivation and have emphasized the concept of inclusive growth in their development policy formulation. The term 'empowerment' broadly refers to the proliferation of freedom of choice and action to shape one's life. It implies more control over resources and decisions. Three important ideas are inherent in the concept of empowerment. First, empowerment is context specific. Second, empowerment is not power over others (i.e. domination) but power to achieve goals and ends. Third, the concept of empowerment is generally applicable to the powerless, irrespective of gender, class and caste. Therefore, there is nothing about the concept of empowerment per se, which applies to women alone. It becomes imperative to know why we are interested in introducing women's empowerment in the study of gender violence.

As a bottom-up approach, empowering the disadvantaged groups is considered as a means to enhance the wellbeing of those groups. Emphasis is given to women's empowerment because women are not just a subset of socially disadvantaged groups, but they are a crosscutting category that overlaps with all other disadvantaged groups. At the same time women empowerment has some additional unique features, like, (i) women's disempowerment is ingrained in the household and interfamilial relations which is not true for other disadvantaged groups and (ii) general empowerment requires institutional transformation but women's empowerment requires social reform.

This study is an endeavor to explore the roots of violence against women

and its nature and extent in India since the initiation of economic globalization. This paper also tries to evaluate the impact of violence against women to the changing social and economic environment, especially on the women empowerment discourse in India.

Literature Review

Roots of Violence against Women

In the Indian civilization violence against women is ingrained in its patriarchal form embedded in its cultural norms and conservative social structure where interpersonal relationship including gender relationship is dictated by cultural values and religious beliefs. Therefore, separate codes of conduct have been created for both men and women, even with respect to their daily life activities (Roy, 2003). Such difference of code of conducts originates following Manu (Sage of later Vedic age) who assigned women the subordinate position and made them destined to serve the men and the family. This masculine biased code of conduct leads to indulgence of violence on women to keep them under control (Sugarman & Frankel, 1996; Yick, & Agbayani-Siewert, 1997). In patrilineal families, gender socialization train children with different sexes to be socialized into their gender roles (Giddens, 1993). As a result, existing laws, women's education, their social and economic hierarchical background etc. become ineffective in reducing violence on women.

According to the Marxian feminist theory, as explained by Engels (1884), the concept of patriarchal family is linked with the development of agriculture and this has led to the emergence of private property. To ensure the proper heir of the acquired property, a patrilineal line of inheritance was established. For implementing this line of inheritance, control on women became inevitable and eventually they began to be treated as property. Women became instruments for producing children and serving the family as well as a source of cheap labour for generating

surplus of production. That, in turn, led to the establishment of male dominance within the household and society and the then social conditions become so strong that any threat to this male dominance invited violence on women. *Social learning theories* (Bandura, 1977) explain that both husband and wife consider family as the “cradle of violence”, where violent behavior is intergenerational. Socio-political critique theories explain that domestic violence is used as a tool to protect patriarchal and hierarchical social structure (Millet, 1971).

According to social learning theories male children learn aggression from their parents and replicate this behavior in their own adult relationships (O'Leary, 1988). For girls, this same theory edifies them to become overtly feminine and bear silently their male partner's aggressions (Rahamatian, 2009). Again, status inconsistency theory states that family is a power system with variation in the distribution of resources among its members. Traditionally, power and right to earn for the family are assigned to man; if any threat arises to this status, which is inconsistent to prevailing social norms it instigates him to start violence to protect his position. Endeavor on part of the woman towards economic independence is regarded as a challenge to the man's customary authority which coerces men to retort (Goode, 1971; Hornung, McCullough & Sugimoto, 1981; Macmillan & Gartner, 1999; McCloskey, 1996; Yick, 2001). Backlash theory is based on the notion of anti-feminism, it denies women's aspirations, achievements and demand for equality (Faludi, 1991), and explains the reasons of violence on women particularly economically independent women. On the other hand, exchange theory pinpoints that male generally uses money and violence as two controlling devices (Molm, 1990). For unemployed women, men use their money power to keep them under grip. However, for employed women, money power appears to be less effective, which provoke men to exercise their muscle power as an alternative device. Like western societies, Indian women cannot stop this

violence inflicted on them by ending their marriage relation with men because Indian social norms are against divorce/separation and women are compelled to bear cruelty against them silently (Chaudhary, 1988). Indian girls since their childhood are socialized to believe that any sort of negligence of duty or disobedience towards family will inflict punishment, which they should bear without protest. This attitude can be explained by social bond theory, which describes the role of social norms and social organizations behind socializing individuals.

In Indian society domestic violence is a common phenomenon. Its male dominated conservative social characteristics encourage and condone violence on women. Here seed of violence lies in the concept of family, based on the ideology of subordination of women to men and junior to senior. In patrilineal families, gender socialization train children with different sexes to be socialized into their gender roles (Giddens, 1993). Guided by such social structure Indian women are discouraged to opt for jobs because of the fear that economic independence may help them escape from family control. As a result, only 40 percent women are found in the job market and surprisingly they are subject to more domestic violence than jobless women (Third National Family Health Survey, 2005-06). RTI studies show that employed women have more than 80 per cent higher chance of being abused by their husbands than that of unemployed women and this incidence increases further if husbands of those women lose job or face problems at work place (The Hindu, 2009). This observation contradicts the hypothesis that job helps women to achieve autonomy, which in turn will help to reduce violence on them (Tauchen, Witte & Long, 1991; Watts, 2006; Kjersti, Bente & Valborg, 2009). Some probable explanations of this are found in the status inconsistency theory, backlash theory and exchange theory.

Women Empowerment

One important aspect is the integration of women empowerment in the poverty analysis but the major problem involves how to measure levels of empowerment and its progress. In terms of capability functioning achievement framework, functioning of empowerment is an achievement of an individual that would reflect, as it were, a part of state of that individual. Capability of an individual, on the other hand, is a derived notion that reflects an individual's freedom of choice through his/her decision making and action.

Most of the studies on women empowerment are based on percentage distribution of various indicators that focus on the circumstances of women's lives and reflect the available opportunities for them vis a vis their counterpart men. Mason (1986) focuses on the negative effect of women's early marriage on empowerment by way of denying access to formal education. Studies by Dyson and Moore (1983) and Dixon-Mueller, Ruth (1989) have revealed that residence in non-nuclear families is likely to have negative effect on women's ability to access resources directly as well as control in the decision-making. One should acknowledge the fact that within a given circumstances the degree of empowerment varies among the concerned women.

Objectives of the Study

This study is an endeavour to unveil the discourse and reality of violence against women. The objectives of the study are:

1. to find out the root(s) and unveil the present nature and extent of violence against women.
3. to assess the present nature of women's empowerment.
4. to suggest some plausible effective means to minimize violence against women.

Data and Methodology

This study is based mostly on data collected from secondary sources, like National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB), Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India; National Family Health Survey (NFHS), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, for assessing crime against women and women empowerment respectively. For the sake of simplicity, the data on violence against women as well as women's empowerment are presented in this study in the form of two way statistical tables, percentage distribution, line chart and bar diagrams for better understanding of the gravity of the issue.

Analysis and Discussion

Extent of Violence against Women

This study takes into account of the nature and extent of violence against women in India over the period from 1990 to 2021. The data are collected from the published reports of NCRB. It is known that the NCRB collects crime data as per supplied by the governments of respective states and union territories. The actual scenario might be graver than what is depicted in this study.

For the sake of analysis, the entire period covering this study has been divided into seven phases, each phase consists of five years, except the last phase, i.e. 2020-21. It is clearly evident that in each phase, starting from 1990-1994 to 2020-21, the average number of incidents of crime against women in India has increased significantly (see table-1 and diagram-1). In each period the percentage change in the number of incidents of crimes against women in India over the period is depicting a very fluctuating and irregular trend. This may happen due to censored data on crime supplied by states and union territories (see table-1).

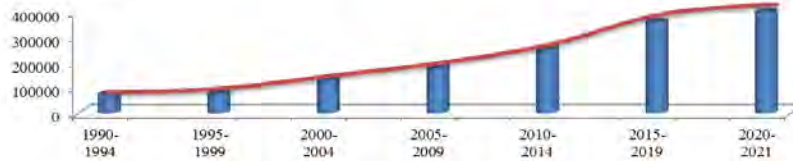
Table-1: Average Number of Incidents of Crime against Women in India during 1990-2021

Number of incidents of crimes against women	Period						
	1990 - 1994	1995- 1999	2000- 2004	2005- 2009	2010- 2014	2015- 2019	2020- 2021
	74090	82665	135297	181105	256529	362330	399891
Percentage Changes of incidents of crime against women over the Period							
1995-1999 over 1990-1994	2000-2004 over 1995-1999	2005-2009 over 2000-2004	2010-2014 over 2005-2009	2015-2019 over 2010-2014	2020-2021 over 2015-2019		
11.57	63.67	33.86	41.65	41.24	10.37		

Source: Reports of NCRB; Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India

Diagram-1

No. of Crimes



The average number of crimes per year against women has steadily increased in India over the period from 1900-1994 to 2020-21 (see table-1 and diagram-1).

Table-2: Average Number of Violence against Women per year in the Major States in India

State	Average Incidents of violence against women over the period					
	1990-93	2001-04	2005-08	2009-12	2014-17	2018-'21
Andhra Pradesh	6518	18165	22788	27308	16691	17256
Assam	1533	5087	6949	11581	21621	28288
Bihar	1932	6273	7242	9684	14352	17204
Delhi	3510	2867	4409	4991	15399	12851
Gujarat	3472	5781	7625	8633	8824	8126
Haryana	1331	4056	4641	5592	9932	14667
Himachal Pradesh	604	820	896	973	1323	1621
Jammu & Kashmir	937	2011	2348	2927	3168	3462
Jharkhand	0	2424	3006	3444	6005	7896
Karnataka	2555	5857	6400	9155	13747	13623
Kerala	1156	5854	7568	9933	10577	11400
Madhya Pradesh	12229	14890	14782	16432	27345	28204
Maharashtra	11965	11822	14652	15717	30350	36030
Odisha	1709	5080	7170	9511	17447	25075
Punjab	348	2247	2383	2841	5137	5422
Rajasthan	6296	12291	13338	19123	28214	36172
Tamil Nadu	2578	9532	7542	6723	5534	6722
Tripura	287	545	1072	1528	1217	915

Uttar Pradesh	12253	16050	18953	22408	45025	56192
West Bengal	3973	8242	15532	27377	33812	33144
Total (all-India)	76350	145504	175423	222624	341876	395846

Source: NCRB Reports; Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India

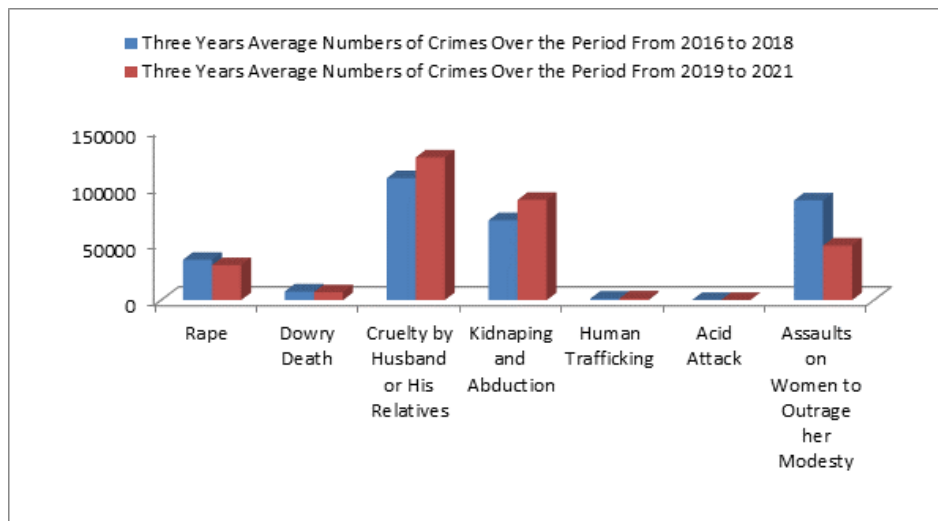
It has been observed that the number of crimes against women per year, since 1990-93 to 2018-21 has increased significantly in each of the major states in India (table-2). In numerical terms the highest average number of crimes against women, in 1990-93, has occurred in Uttar Pradesh (12253), that followed by Madhya Pradesh (12229), Maharashtra (11965), Andhra Pradesh (6518), Rajasthan (6296) and West Bengal (3973). However, in 2018-21, a change in ranks has been observed. In 2018-21, the highest number of crimes against women per year has occurred in Uttar Pradesh (56192), followed by Rajasthan (36172), Maharashtra (36030), Madhya Pradesh (28204), Assam (28288) and Odisha (25075). It is interesting to note that in this comparison of the major states in India, the state Tamil Nadu appears to be very insignificant in terms of number of crimes against women. But, if one takes into account the rate of growth of crimes against women from 1990-93 to 2018-21, Tamil Nadu tops the rank (25.1 percent). It is also observed that the states where average number of crimes against women per year happens to be very high, their growth rate of crimes against women is significantly lower than that of all India growth rate (e.g. from 1909-93 to 2018-21, the all India average growth of crimes against women is 4.2 percent, but the growth rate of crimes against women in Uttar Pradesh is 3.6 percent, Maharashtra- 2 percent, Madhya Pradesh- 1.3 percent, Andhra Pradesh 1.6 percent). There are some states where the rate of growth of crimes against women happens to be at very alarming stage, e.g. Assam (17.5 percent), Punjab (14.6 percent), Odisha (13.7 percent), Haryana (10 percent), where immediate intervention becomes necessary to reduce such crimes.

Table-3: Average Crimes per year against Women in India over the period 2016-18 and 2019-21 by selected crime heads

Crime Head	Three Years Average Numbers of Crimes Over the Period	
	From 2016 to 2018	From 2019 to 2021
Rape	35507.7	30763.7
Dowry Death	7581.0	7000.7
Cruelty by Husband or His Relatives	107352.3	125607.7
Kidnaping and Abduction	70294.0	88246.0
Human Trafficking	1304.3	1504.7
Acid Attack	163.0	124.0
Assaults on Women to Outrage her Modesty	87765.0	48090.0

Source: Reports of NCRB; Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India

Diagram-2



The crimes against women jeopardize their freedom of movements, access to resources and even deprive them of their basic human rights. Three years' average crimes against women over the period 2016-18 and 2019-21 by some of the selected crime heads (e.g. rape, dowry death, cruelty by husband or his relatives, kidnapping and abduction, human trafficking, acid attack and assaults on women to outrage her modesty) have been calculated and presented in table-5 and diagram-2. It is clearly revealed here that in the 2019-21 period the average number of cases per year of rape, dowry deaths, acid attacks and assault on women to outrage her modesty have declined from the 2016-18 yearly average. On the other hand, cases of cruelty by husband or his relatives, kidnaping and abduction and human trafficking have increased significantly in the period 2019-21 (see table-5, diagram-2). It is surprising that among the selected crime heads, 'cruelty by husband or his relatives' has the highest average incidents in 2019-21, followed by 'kidnaping and abduction' and 'human trafficking.'

The latest annual report of National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) has revealed a depressing surge of 4 per cent in crime against women in India throughout 2022 and a significant proportion of crimes fall under IPC. The report highlighted that the nature of crimes involved 'cruelty by husband or his relatives' (31.4 per cent), 'kidnapping and abduction of women' (19.2 per cent), 'assault of women with intend to outrage her modesty' (18.7 per cent) and 'rape' (7.1 per cent).

Women Empowerment -what the data says

Data on women empowerment at the household level over the period from 2015-16 to 2019-20 (i.e. NFHS-3, NFHS-4 and NFHS-5) has been analyzed. In addition, this study also incorporates the issue of continual crimes against women which come on the way to challenge the process of women empowerment in India and becomes detrimental to

enhancement of well-being of the deprived sections of India.

A. Percentage Distribution of Women (age 15-49 years) who usually seen as empowered : five different Issues

Issue	Area	NFHS-4 (2015-'16)	NFHS-5 (2019-'20)
Percentage of currently married women who usually participate in the three household decisions*	Urban	85.8	91.0
	Rural	83.0	87.7
	Total	84.0	88.7
Percentage of women who worked in the last 12 months and are paid in cash	Urban	23.2	25.0
	Rural	25.4	25.6
	Total	24.6	25.5
Percentage of women who own a house/or land (alone or jointly with others).	Urban	35.2	38.3
	Rural	40.1	45.7
	Total	38.4	43.3
Percentage of women having bank or saving account that they themselves use.	Urban	61.0	80.9
	Rural	48.5	77.4
	Total	53.0	78.6
Percentage of women having a mobile phone that they themselves use	Urban	61.8	69.4
	Rural	36.9	46.6
	Total	45.9	54.0

Note: * Household's three important decisions include (i) health care for herself (ii) making major household purchase and (iii) visit to her family or relatives

Here, women empowerment at the household level is assessed in terms of women's (age 15-49 years) freedom of (i) making decision regarding her own health care, (ii) participation in making major household purchase, (iii) visiting to their family or relatives, (iv) work for cash earning, (v) owning a house or land, (vi) having bank account that they themselves use, and (vii) having mobile phone that they themselves use. It is clearly evident that in India the percentage of empowered women, both in urban and rural areas, has increased significantly with respect to the above seven issues from 2015-16 to 2019-20 (see table-A).

It is interesting to observe that a significant percentage of married women who are currently facing violence against them, both in urban (85.8 per cent) and rural (83.0 per cent) areas, had already been participating in the household decisions making on their own health care, major household purchase and visit to their family or relatives in 2015-16. In 2019-20, the percentage of women participation in the above three issues has increased by 5.2 per cent and 4.7 per cent in the urban and rural areas respectively and an overall increased by 4.7 per cent in 2019-20. Women's financial empowerment, i.e. financial independence, has not been observed among significant percentage of women in 2015-16 and 2019-20. It is evident that in both the periods around 25 per cent of the women respondents worked in the last 12 months for cash earning. The overall percentage of women who own a house or land (alone or jointly with others), which implies women's access to asset, is also not commendable but in this regard percentage of rural women is little better off than that of their urban counterpart. However, overall, the percentage of women having a bank account which they themselves use, has been significantly increased by 25.6 per cent (19.9 per cent in the urban areas and 28.9 per cent in the rural areas) from 2015-16 to 2019-20. Again, the percentage of women having a mobile phone for their own use has increased significantly by 7.6 per cent and 9.7 per cent in the urban and rural areas

respectively and an overall increase by 8.1 per cent from 2015-16 to 2019-20. (see table-A).

Now, in order to judge the degree of women empowerment, the women's role in the decision making process of the household matters is ranked into four categories – (a) rank-1: sole decision maker; (b) rank-2: jointly respondent and husband are the decision makers; (c) rank-3: jointly respondent and others members of the family are the decision makers and (d) rank-4: decision makers are other than the respondent (i.e. zero empowerment). Percentage distribution of currently married female and male respondents by person who usually makes decision about 'own health care', 'major household purchase, and 'visit to wife's family or relatives' are presented in Table-B and Table-C respectively.

It is evident that the trend of decision making on 'own health care', 'major household purchase, and 'visit to wife's family or relatives' by an individual male or female has declined over the period from 2005-06 to 2019-20. Instead of that there has been a significant rising trend of making decisions jointly by husband and wife on the above three household issues are observed over the same period. It is to be noted here that the decisions on household issues, taken by someone else i.e. other than husband and wife have sharply declined over the study period (i.e. from 2005-06 to 2019-21) (see Table-B and Table-C).

B. Percentage Distribution of Currently Married Female Respondents by Person who usually makes Decisions about Three Different Issues

Decision Maker	NFHS Reports (Year)	Decision on								
		Own Health Care			Major Household Purchase			Visit to her Family or Relations		
		Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total
Mainly Respondent	2005-06	29.7	26.0	27.1	10.4	7.6	8.5	12.2	10.0	10.7
	2015-16	13.0	11.4	12.0	9.4	7.3	8.0	9.7	7.6	8.3
	2019-21	11.1	9.7	10.1	8.6	6.9	7.4	9.9	7.4	8.2

Respondent & Husband	2005-06	39.1	33.4	35.1	51.5	41.2	44.4	57.3	46.4	49.8
	2015-16	63.0	62.3	62.5	67.1	64.4	66.3	68.5	65.1	66.3
	2019-21	72.1	70.4	70.9	73.9	71.3	72.1	73.9	72.4	72.9
Mainly Husband	2005-06	26.5	31.7	30.1	26.8	34.6	32.2	22.0	28.9	26.8
	2015-16	21.7	23.1	22.6	19.1	22.6	21.4	18.6	22.6	21.2
	2019-21	15.0	17.9	17.0	14.0	17.7	16.6	13.8	17.2	16.1
Someone else/ others	2005-06	4.6	8.9	7.6	11.2	16.4	14.8	8.4	14.5	12.6
	2015-16	2.2	3.2	2.8	4.3	5.7	5.2	3.3	4.7	4.2
	2019-21	1.7	1.9	1.9	3.5	4.1	3.9	2.3	3.0	2.7

Source: NFHS-3 (2005-'06); NFHS-4 (2015-'16) and NFHS-5 (2019-'21) reports

It is worthy to mention here that empowering women is not mere a process of eradicating poverty or an effort towards gender equality, but it is a process of bringing forth nearly half of the women human resources in the mainstream development process. Although the trend of women empowerment is increasing in India but while considering the efforts by the central and state governments it is still lagging behind our expectation.

In this study it is clearly evident that when women empowerment has been expanding, the crime against women has also been rising at a faster rate. Therefore, the reality is that crimes against women not only interrupt the entire process of women empowerment but also weaken our economic development endeavors to a great extent.

C. Percentage Distribution of Currently Married Male Respondents by Person who usually makes Decisions about Three Different Issues

Decision Maker	NFHS Reports (Year)	Decision on																	
		Own Health Care			Major Household Purchase			Visit to wife's Family or Relations											
		Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total	Urban	Rural	Total									

Mainly Respondent	2005-06	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	22.5	28.2	26.3	20.4	29.3	26.3
	2015-16	32.0	35.2	34.0	20.9	25.6	23.9	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
	2019-21	34.1	33.0	33.0	22.2	25.3	24.2	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Respondent & Wife	2005-06	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	70.0	66.5	67.6	64.6	58.9	60.8
	2015-16	56.0	52.9	54.0	69.1	65.9	67.0	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
	2019-21	55.9	56.3	56.2	67.6	66.5	66.9	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Mainly Wife	2005-06	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	7.1	4.7	5.5	14.3	11.0	12.1
	2015-16	11.4	10.9	11.1	8.4	6.6	7.2	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
	2019-21	9.0	9.6	9.4	8.8	6.6	7.3	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Someone else/ depends	2005-06	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.7
	2015-16	0.7	1.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
	2019-21	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.

Source: NFHS-3 (2005-06); NFHS-4 (2015-16) and NFHS-5 (2019-21) reports

Concluding Remarks

This study is an endeavor to identify the roots of crimes against women in India and tries to unfold its present nature and extent. At the same time this study also tries to assess to what extent Indian women are being empowered. Government of India has adopted many legislative measures specific to stop violence against women but this particular social crime has been continued to perpetrate in our society. Much of the violence against women in India is in the form of domestic violence, dowry deaths, forced marriage, acid attacks, horror killings, rape, abduction and kidnapping, human trafficking and accusation of witchcraft. It is also observed that the chance of victim of violence increases if the women are attached with any sort of job. In reality the incidence of violence against women are much higher than that of the reported figures because of the social stigma attached to the nature of the crime. The victims and her families hesitate to report about those crimes. Another barrier to reporting is the unwillingness of police

officials to register complaints. Even if complaint is lodged, sub-standard investigations lead to low conviction rates.

The study also revealed that women's empowerment at the household matters has been increased at a commendable level. But, the negative effect of the crimes against women and the positive effect of the enhanced women empowerment ultimately resulted in an unconventional and unwarranted situation in India. On the one hand, we are always striving for women empowerment and on the other, crimes against women has been increasing at an alarming rate. In reality, co-existence of these two factors becomes counterproductive towards achieving faster economic and social goals.

This study advocates that the crimes against women should be stopped altogether, if not possible, it should be reduced significantly from the human rights as well as from the socio-economic point of view. This study suggests some plausible and effective measures to curve such violence: (a) social awareness should be raised and propagate the idea that women are assets and are also equally key human resources, complementary to their male counterpart, for the development of human well-being as well as for a vibrant nation and (b) the administrative and the judiciary departments should take prompt actions, i.e. quick investigation and charge sheeting of the police disposal cases, quick completion of trials of the court disposal cases and finally quick conviction of the accused, then only crime against women would be reduced significantly.

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