

Women in Difficult Circumstances

Summaries of Research



**NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC COOPERATION
AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT**

5, Siri Institutional Area, Hauz Khas, New Delhi-110016

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Number of Copies
English 800
Hindi 200

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Foreword

Societies in many parts of the world are plagued with the problem of discrimination against the fairer sex and gender inequality. Son preference is widely prevalent, so much so that parents abort the female foetus if the sex of an unborn child is disclosed. Declining child sex ratio has set alarm bells ringing as the child sex ratio (0 – 6 years) has fallen below 800 in several districts of the country. Girls are discriminated against in schooling, nutrition and personality development as their mobility is restricted during adolescence, and they are not allowed to move out of the house to learn skills which would enable them to earn a livelihood and become financially independent. Restrictions imposed on them in the name of safety impede their personality development and reduce their self confidence and self esteem. Marriage is set up as the only desirable goal of life, and if by chance problems arise in the marital home, alternatives are very limited. Women stay on in the marital home and the rising graph of crimes against women is an indicator of a deep set malaise in society. This document is an effort to assess the life situation of women in various adverse circumstances. 'Women in difficult circumstances' is a broad term covering various groups of women, namely destitute/ deserted/ divorced women; displaced women; women victims of domestic violence; women victims of armed conflict or terrorist violence; trafficked women or women in sex work; kidnapped women; women branded as witches; widows; and women prisoners. Research over the years has revealed that systematic exploitation of these women takes place, and they have no place and no one they can turn to. This study is an effort to collate and compile the needs of these vulnerable women so that policy decisions can be taken and implemented adopting a needs based approach. The widely scattered research has been collected and collated to facilitate its use by government agencies, planners, administrators, researchers, scholars, social workers, functionaries of voluntary organizations (NGOs) and other stakeholders working for the cause of women. If the recommendations of various experts and researchers who have undertaken these studies could be used to initiate appropriate action at various levels to give these women a safer, secure and violence free life, the objectives of this compilation would be achieved.

Valuable guidance and support for the Project was provided by Dr. Dinesh Paul, Additional Director and Dr. Sulochana Vasudevan, Joint Director of the Institute. I would like to put on record my appreciation for the painstaking effort put in by Ms. Meenakshi Sood, Ms. S. K. Solti, and her Project Team comprising Ms. Shikha Vij, Ms. Deepa Garg, Ms. Punita Mathur, Ms. Abhilasha Mishra, Dr. Anindita Shukla and Ms. Vipula Bahri for preparing the various summaries and scouting the reading rooms and libraries of various institutions in Delhi. I would like to thank various Government Ministries, autonomous organizations, research institutes, international organizations, voluntary organizations (NGOs), schools/ departments of social work, university departments and researchers who very kindly agreed to share their research studies with NIPCCD. Without their cooperation and collaboration it would not have been possible to bring out this compilation. I would also like to thank Shri Ashok Mahato, Project Data Entry Operator who provided unstinting computer support, and Shri A. J. Kaul, Publication Officer for layout, printing and design of the report.



(A. K. Gopal)
Director

Introduction

In India, women have been accorded high status in literature, and are worshipped as Goddesses, but in day to day life and in society their situation is far from satisfactory. Women are accorded lower status as compared to men, and if any misfortune befalls them, their situation becomes even more vulnerable. Since Independence in 1947, and adoption of the Constitution in 1950, the Government of India has made several efforts to improve the situation of women and bring women at par with men. But in spite of various initiatives, gender disparities are widely prevalent. But times are changing, however slowly, and women are stepping out of their homes in search of livelihood and to seek their own identity. In the process, they are exposed and exploited, and being physically weaker, they are vulnerable to many dangers such as kidnapping, trafficking, sexual assault, etc. They are not safe even in their own natal homes, as is indicated by the declining child sex ratio; nor are they safe in their marital homes, as the rising crime rate of dowry harassment, domestic violence, dowry deaths, cruelty by husband and relatives, etc. indicates. Special measures, hence, are required for women who are in special vulnerable situations at different stages in life. Women in difficult circumstances is a burning issue in contemporary times, and the women who fall in this category are destitute/ deserted/ divorced women; displaced women; women victims of domestic violence; women victims of armed conflict or terrorist violence; trafficked women or women in sex work; kidnapped women; women branded as witches; widows; and women prisoners.

Although exact figures about all these groups of women are not available, the information available about some categories of women in difficult circumstances is given below:

1. Widowed/ Divorced/ Separated Women	~ 20 million
7.8% of total population (SRS Statistical Report 2004)	
Married Women	47.6%
Never Married Women	44.6%
2. Female Headed Households in India	11.3%
(National Sample Survey Report 2004-05)	
3. Dowry Cases (2005)(Crime in India 2005)	3204
4. Dowry Deaths (2005)(Crime in India 2005)	6787
5. Cruelty by Husband and Relatives(Crime in India 2005)	58,319
6. Kidnapping and Abduction (Crime in India 2005)	15,750
7. Rape Victims (Total)	18,376
Upto 10 Years	557
10 – 14 Years	1174
14 – 18 Years	2344
18 – 30 Years	10,809
30 – 50 Years	3381
Above 50 Years	111
(Crime in India 2005)	
8. Estimated Number of Sex Workers	500,000 – 900,000
9. Women Arrested under Immoral Trafficking Prevention Act (ITPA)	5908
(Crime in India 2005)	

10. Women Prisoners (2005)		13,986
Central Jails	4323	
District Jails	4649	
Sub-Jails	1745	
Women Jails	2961	
Borstal Schools	136	
Open Jails	14	
Special Jails	128	
Other Jails	30	
(Prison Statistics in India 2005)		
11. Women Prisoners with Children (2005)		1251
12. Children in Prison with Mothers (2005)		1413

These categories of women are in specially vulnerable situations and are in need of special services. This document outlines the situation of these women and also includes the various recommendations offered by researchers who have studied the problems faced by these women in depth. It is hoped that ameliorative action would be taken by concerned agencies to ensure the basic human rights of these forgotten vulnerable segments of Indian society.

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I

**Deserted / Destitute and
Divorced Women**



Desertion of Married Women by Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) in Andhra Pradesh

Sri Padmavati Mahila Visvavidyalayam

Introduction

Desertion means abandonment or being given up or left alone. Deserted women are a group of women who have been abandoned or left out or discarded by their husbands after marriage without any time limitation. Marital life period of deserted women varied from a few days to many years. The most important reason for desertion of women irrespective of their economic, religious and cultural status was the extra marital relationship or bigamy of husbands. Andhra Pradesh is one of the states in India having a large number of non resident Indians (NRIs), and consequently a large number of wives deserted by NRIs. This is a newly emerging social problem.

Aims and Objectives

The study aimed to:

1. Identify the factors leading to the desertion of women by NRIs.
2. Analyze the legal aspects regarding relief and rehabilitation needs of deserted women.
3. To suggest suitable immigration policies to curb such fraudulent marriages and the dowry system.
4. To suggest legal measures for protection of married women, and the role parents can play towards safeguarding their daughter's future.

Methodology

Married women of Andhra Pradesh who were deserted by NRIs constituted the sample of the study. Data was collected from 50 deserted women though 83 had been contacted. Respondents were identified using purposive sampling procedure from the cases registered in Family Courts in Hyderabad, Vijaywada and Guntur Civil Court, which represented the coastal Andhra region. Interview schedule, mailed questionnaire and case study methods were employed to gather data.

Findings and Conclusions

1. Most of the deserted wives had been ill-treated by their husbands. Husbands did not show any interest in their wives, and often beat them brutally for the smallest pretext. They would despise and persecute their wife, and cause her great mental agony. Insufficient dowry was also mentioned as a cause for harassment. Most of these marriages were arranged marriages and the families did not know the boy's family or the boy well enough.
2. Most women got married above the legal age of marriage. More than 75% males married after 25 years, while 23% of them married when they were between 21-25 years.
3. More than 80% women had below one month gap between the betrothal and marriage. As the bridegrooms had come from abroad, hasty marriages were performed and the antecedents of the boy were not verified.
4. About 60% deserted married women were hindus, followed by 28% muslims and 12% christians.

5. Around 80% respondents reported that their parents were the ones who took the decision regarding marriage.
6. Nearly 60% of them said that they saw their spouses only once before the marriage.
7. About 87% of them reported that there was no mediation between them before desertion.
8. Nearly 33% of the respondents reported that they did not have any knowledge about the procedures to be followed for their visit and stay abroad.

Recommendations

1. Parents should be very cautious about finalizing the marriage of their daughters with NRIs. They should make a clear enquiry about the character and employment details of the future bridegroom, and check his antecedents.
2. Speedy judgment should be delivered in cases filed for maintenance and divorce by deserted NRI wives. Lok Adalats (Family Courts conducting hearings out of court premises) may be conducted frequently.
3. Dowry given at the time of marriage should be retrieved when the women are deserted. Legal assistance should be provided in this regard.
4. Legal Aid Cells need to be set up in all district headquarters.
5. Rehabilitation centres should be established abroad so that these women can get some help in a foreign land.
6. Better communication between legal systems in India and USA need to be established so that the offenders are not out of reach of the law.
7. Awareness among the community regarding H4/ dependent visas needs to be created.

Destitute Women in Kerala: Psychological Resources and Psycho-Social Needs

M. S. Razeena Padman

Introduction

In a patriarchal set up, the role of women is defined in relation to men. Any attempts to resist the atrocities committed by men leads to desertion of women. Kerala society has a significant presence of a large number of socially disowned women, such as widows, abandoned Muslim divorcees, and victims of deceit and cheating. A number of parents and families, or husbands and in-laws discard young girls if they become victims of rape. Cases of women who were single mothers and had been pushed out of their houses were numerous. Women who had fled home for fear of severe battering, sexual abuse and mental torture were also on the rise.

Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the present study were to:

1. Understand the psychological resources and psycho-social needs of destitute women living in *Mahila Mandirs* (women temples) in Kerala.
2. Understand the problems faced by inmates, as well as the home authorities that implement these programmes.
3. Examine the implementation of various rehabilitation programmes of Social Welfare Department of the State.
4. Understand personality profiles and levels of emotional maturity and adjustment capability of inmates of *Mahila Mandirs*.

Methodology

A field survey was conducted in the *Mahila Mandirs* in Kerala on personality variables, emotional maturity and adjustment capability of the inmates of *Mahila Mandirs* in comparison with destitute women living in slums. The personality variables studied were Extroversion - Introversion, and Neuroticism - Stability. The tools used were Personality Inventory, Adjustment Inventory and Emotional Maturity Scale. The present study covered 11 *Mahila Mandirs* and their inmates. Total number of inmates covered were 56, and in addition 50 slum women who were deserted were also covered.

Findings and Conclusions

1. The age of inmates in these homes ranged from 6 to 56 years of age, as some of the women were accompanied by their children. A large number of inmates suffered from various psychosomatic illnesses.
2. Nearly 90% of the inmates belonged to low socio-economic status families.
3. Average allowance for an inmate of the *mahila mandir* was only Rs.300/- per month. Destitute respondents who lived in slum dwellings had opted for self employment after several unsuccessful attempts to find employment.
4. Authorities of *mahila mandirs* reported that destitute women were extroverted, easily suggestible, irresponsible, unskilled and highly emotional. They were maladjusted and their coping skills were extremely poor. Destitute women had histories which suggested that they failed to adjust properly in their homes and at other places. These women failed

to conform to traditional attitudes of accepting roles in accordance with conventional values of the community.

5. The respondents failed to find happiness in submerging their identities by adopting the feminine roles ascribed to them by society.
6. Lack of social skills, competencies and other required potential made these women maladjusted and paranoid.
7. Many destitute women who were rehabilitated in the form of marriage or job placement, found their way back to institutions or streets again.
8. These women had a sense of futility, expectation of failure and general depression. They became frustrated easily and were anxious.
9. Authorities had punitive attitude and behaviour towards inmates which increased the distress of these women and led to mutual antagonism. This further led to failure of effective implementation of various rehabilitation programmes of Social Welfare Department.
10. The respondents felt uncertain about the purpose and meaning of their existence. They also felt insecure, frustrated and helpless.
11. Institutions and care homes had not given any importance to the rehabilitation of these women, specially in the areas of health, education and self employment to make them self dependent. Institutions do not make any attempt in the area of distress management and legal aid for abandoned and deserted women.
12. Inmates had frequent complaints about how they were treated in homes. Authorities were reported to behave in an authoritative and inhuman manner.
13. The homes had poor living conditions, lack of security, and inadequate staff.
14. No counselling services were available for inmates who had criminal tendencies.
15. Mentally ill patients were not given medical care, and there were no professionals to deal with psychosomatic, behavioural and emotional disturbances.
16. Insufficient funding made it difficult to provide for the basic needs of inmates.
17. There were regular quarrels among inmates, and disciplining them was difficult.
18. Nearly 18-28% inmates were dissatisfied with the freedom allowed for using their income, pursuing religious practices, and presenting grievances to officials.
19. Reasons for seeking shelter in these homes were alcoholic father, family problems, failure in love, problems with husband, sexual abuse, being discarded due to illness, and so on.
20. Pre-existing disadvantages include poor education, poor living conditions, family relations consisting of oppression, violence, sexual abuse, and subordination, inherently patriarchal oppression.

Recommendations

1. There is requirement for skill training and short term personality development courses for destitute women.
2. Job reservation for divorced women and unwed mothers would be a good measure to make them economically independent.
3. Medical care should be provided to mentally ill patients.

A Diagnostic Study of Wives Deserted by NRIs (Punjab)

M. K. Jabbi

Introduction

Many Indian women who enter into arranged marriages with non-resident Indians (NRIs) are led up the garden path by the husband's family who project rosy and misleading pictures about their income and status. Sometimes, the boys may be already married which may or may not be in the knowledge of the boy's family. The girl's family neither has the resources nor is in a position to verify their exaggerated claims. The motivation of the girl's family to find an NRI is partly the perceived high and glamorous status of the groom, and also the desire to visit and live in foreign lands may be another factor in such marriages. Mostly the woman is not taken abroad after marriage and she is asked to wait till the laws of the foreign land enable her to secure a visa for that land. If she is taken abroad, she is ill-treated, made a slave to the extended family of the husband, and sometimes even deserted. She is ill equipped to fight for her rights and unable to communicate her grievances to anybody because of her near zero familiarity with the local language.

Aims and Objectives

The main objectives of the study were to:

1. Identify the motivating factors and social causes driving NRI boys and Indian girls or their families into contracting such marriages.
2. Find out the coping mechanism of deserted women and possible ways of rehabilitating them.
3. Suggest strategies, social as well as legal, for securing justice for such deserted women.

Methodology

The study was conducted in 2 towns of Punjab namely Jalandhar and Hoshiarpur. A sample of 10 cases in each district and 6 additional cases was taken on the basis of FIRs registered in police stations. Data was collected through interviews with the deserted women, their parents, the groom's parents and the intermediary; and through discussions with NGOs such as Red Cross Society, Association for Social Health in India and Savera, social workers, college teachers, lawyers, district officials, media personnel, police personnel, and academicians.

Findings and Conclusions

1. Most girl were around 20 years when they got married and difference in the age of the girls and boys was about 3-5 years, but many times boys were up to 15 years older.
2. Out of the total sample, 37% girls and 35% boys had done graduation, whereas only 11% girls were post-graduates.
3. Only 7 of the 26 girls interviewed were working, and the rest depended on their parents for economic and other support.
4. Only one girl was staying in her in-laws house, another had remarried, two were staying alone, and the rest were staying with their parental families.
5. About 9 of them had one child and 3 of them had 2 children. Most of the children were living with their mothers, except 2 children who were with the father and living abroad.
6. Boys preferred Indian girls for marriage because they got a holiday wife for the period they stayed in India, along with the dowry.

7. Sometimes the Indian wife was taken abroad so that she worked as a maid for the groom and his foreigner wife and their children.
8. Girls wanted to marry NRIs because they felt life with a man settled in a foreign country would be very glamorous with lots of money, and they also had the insane craze to go abroad.
9. Demands for more and more money/ dowry, more so after the wedding, were found to be the foremost reason for break up of the marriage. Also, the girl was subjected to physical violence and mental torture if she failed to fulfill the increased and unreasonable demands.
10. Reasons reported by the boy's family for break up of the marriage was loose character of the girl, girl was not adjusting and did not mix up with the family.

Recommendations

1. Marriage certificate should be issued in duplicate, one for the boy and one for the girl, and it should also mention the social security number of the boy.
2. Passports should include the photographs and details of spouse, and those NRIs who abandon their wives, their passports should be cancelled.
3. It should be made compulsory for every NRI bridegroom and his parents/ relatives, and those living in India, to file a sworn affidavit in the local court on the groom's marital status before solemnizing the marriage.
4. Adequate alimony should be paid to the wife out of the share of the property of the husband, both in India and abroad, in case of divorce.
5. The traumatized girls should be provided counselling to enable them to come out of the trauma, and such girls could be trained for teaching, or provided training in skills such as computers, stitching and sewing, etc. for becoming economically independent.
6. Social awareness programmes to inform people about the different laws in foreign countries, laws regarding marriage, divorce, custody of children, maintenance, etc. should be organized.

Divorce and Muslim Women

S. A. H. Moinuddin

Introduction

Divorced Muslim women are those whose *talaq* or release from marriage has occurred in the presence of legal authorities or local elderly people. Here legal authorities mean *maulana*, *maulvi*, *imam* while local elderly people mean these who have the authority for witnessing such actions. Divorced women also include those cases in which release from marriage ties has occurred in court. Separated Muslim women are those who at present are living with their parents and do not have any connection with their husbands. These women may harbour fond hopes that their husbands would one day give due recognition to them and take them back with honour.

Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the present study were to:

1. Depict the present position of divorced and separated Muslim women belonging to gram panchayats in two districts of West Bengal and so trace out the system of divorce in operation and factors responsible for such practices.
2. Understand the nature and magnitude of problems faced by these women.
3. Investigate social and other causes due to which the practice of divorce and separation among Bengali Muslim women persists.

Methodology

The present study was descriptive in nature. Data was collected through interviews in Bardhaman and Murshidabad districts of West Bengal. In all, 67 divorced and 61 separated women from the two gram panchayats were interviewed. In Bardhaman 31 divorced and 39 separated women, along with 52 guardians were interviewed. In Murshidabad 36 divorced and 22 separated women, along with 47 guardians were interviewed.

Findings and Conclusions

1. In mate selection, majority of the parents prefer the working capacity or rather the good physique of the bridegroom. Educational qualification was not a consideration, and the amount of property he had was considered while hunting for grooms. Preference was also given to blood relations.
2. Age at marriage was extremely low. Nearly 41.83% in Murshidabad and 54.28% in Bardhaman got married when they were between 10-15 years, and 35.16% and 9.37% in both the districts got married when they were between 15-20 years, and 20 years and above respectively.
3. An important part of marriage negotiations is making the formal proposal. Women were not allowed to negotiate marriage. The woman/girl was to be given into marriage by her guardian (*wali*), who is usually her father. In the absence of her father, her paternal grandfather and brother and other male relations on the father's side, in order of inheritance act as the guardian. Mandatory consent sought from the bride at the time of marriage was considered equivalent to consultation regarding her marriage.
4. Among Bengali Muslims, the practice of dowry was widely prevalent whatever be their socio-economic status. 78.13% respondents paid dowry in the *gram panchayats* of both

the districts. 54 guardians paid cash. Land, along with cash, was an important mode of payment of dowry.

5. Muslim women had to face the practice of arbitrary divorce. The occurrence of divorce had a strong correlation with other social and economic variables. Divorce or separation was not the result of a sudden isolated case of friction between husband and wife, but was usually the result of a series of developments.
6. No husband waited for 3 menstrual cycles for the final pronouncement of *talaq* as specified in the *Quran*.
7. The reasons for divorce were extra marital affair of the husband, poor economic condition of both parties and family quarrels. Other reasons were dowry, no issue, second marriage, and re-establishment of husband's relations with estranged first wife.
8. In only 6.25% cases were the *Quranic* prescriptions regarding divorce followed. Local people were not aware of the *Quranic* principles of *talaq*.
9. In some cases, divorce was taken against the will of the respondents. Some husbands moved the court and then informed the respondents that they had been divorced.
10. Divorce was prevalent among low income group and low status group. Low income group includes all households having monthly income of Rs.600/- or less. Professions like those of day labourers, rickshaw pullers, gardeners and *bidi* makers were included in low status group; or those professions that required no formal training; those that involved physical labour; offered little remuneration; or a combination of the above could be treated as wreckers of social prestige.
11. Nearly 45% women in Murshidabad and 54% in Bardhaman belonged to low social status.
12. Wide divergence between theory and practice regarding marriage and divorce (*talaq*) existed in Muslim society. Islamic laws make a bride's consent compulsory for marriage. In only 27.6% cases in Murshidabad and 71% cases in Bardhaman was the consent of women taken.
13. Knowledge of rules and regulations about *talaq* as laid down in the *Quran* was limited to a small number in Bardhaman, and no respondents in Murshidabad.
14. No respondents had followed the tenets of *Quran* while obtaining divorce. 53% of the *talaqs* in Murshidabad originated in the extra marital affairs of husbands and due to dowry (51%). In Bardhaman 40% men had extra marital affairs.
15. *Mehr* is the gift to a bride, without which a marriage cannot be solemnized. The money/ property belongs to the wife alone, and is payable at the time of dissolution of marriage. Only 2 women in the study got *mehr*.
16. Only 38% guardians in Bardhaman and 7% in Murshidabad took the opinion of their daughters while making decisions in the family. Hence it can be concluded that girls were not accorded suitable status or consulted when important decisions regarding their life were being made.

Recommendations

1. Local people should be made aware of the tenets of *Quran* regarding *talaq*, *mehr*, etc.
2. Women need to be informed about their rights, so that they can be aware of the legal options available to them, in case of arbitrary divorces.

Problems in Women Headed Household Resulting from Desertion

Anna Mathew

Introduction

A deserted woman is described as a woman who has been discarded by her husband and has lost the status and identity as a wife. In a broader sense, the word deserted may also be used for a woman who has left her husband's house on her own free will due to harassment from her husband or in-laws. According to NSSO and Sarvekshana reports, the percentage of women headed households in India has increased from 8.68% to 9.92% in urban areas and 9.65% to 10.36% in rural areas, in the period 1984 to 1988, and in 2004, the percentage of widowed, divorced and separated women was around 10%.

Aims and Objectives

The study aimed to:

1. Examine the socio-economic characteristics of deserted women.
2. Explore the reasons for desertion.
3. Ascertain the problems faced by them due to desertion.
4. Examine the social support systems available to them.

Methodology

The study was exploratory in nature. The sample comprised of 56 deserted women from a local welfare organization which sponsored the education of needy children. Contact was made regularly in the first week of every month when sponsored children visited the organization with their deserted mothers to collect the sponsorship money. In order to have an in-depth and empathetic understanding of the problem, interviews were conducted based on a structured schedule, the respondents were encouraged to talk and ventilate their woes, and home visits were made to study the home environment.

Findings and Conclusions

1. The mean age of deserted women at the time of the study was 29 years and at the time of desertion was 22 years.
2. The average age at the time of marriage was 17.4 years and 37 respondents were married before they were this age.
3. Out of the 56 women, 41 were illiterate, 3 had completed primary level, 5 upper primary level schooling, 4 SSC and 3 had attempted Intermediate.
4. In the sample, 27 women were Hindus, 15 were Muslims and 14 were Christians.
5. Reasons for desertion varied and overlapped. Sixteen women (27%) expressed their husband's inability to financially support the family, 14 women (25%) stated alcoholism as the cause, 13 women (24%) were not able to satisfy dowry demands, 10 women suspected their husbands to have had illicit relations, and 3 women (6%) expressed that they were branded by their husbands as mentally disturbed.
6. Out of the 56 women, 25 women's husbands had walked out on them, 20 were thrown out of the house, and 11 left of their own will.

7. Some of the emotional problems noticed in deserted women were feelings of trauma (39%), feelings of emptiness and loneliness (24%), feelings of fear, uncertainty and insecurity (24%), and intense suicidal tendencies (7%). Almost all of them felt the deep scar would remain and would never heal, and they were solely responsible for their condition.
8. About 49 women (87%) were the sole earners, 4 women (7%) lived in families where another family member was also earning but not regularly, and 3 women (6%) were fully dependent on their relatives.
9. The monthly income of the 49 sole earners was below Rs.800/- per month, while the income of those with another family member also working ranged from Rs.800/- to Rs.1000/- per month.
10. Nearly 31 women (57%) worked as domestic helpers in two or three houses, 16 women (28%) worked as ayahs in schools and offices, 5 women (8%) as baby sitters and 4 women (7%) as housekeepers.
11. The sole earners experienced severe economic hardships, particularly those with children up to four years of age at the time of desertion. Paucity of financial resources resulting in deprivation of food, clothes, education, etc. was the most severe problem faced by almost all of them. The sponsorship programme for a single child in each family was the only redeeming factor for them.
12. More than 75% women were in small debts, and amounts ranged from Rs.200-Rs.1000/-. The main reason for taking loans for most of them (72%) was to meet medical expenses, and 27% took small loans during festivals to purchase new clothes and provisions.
13. Difficulties in bringing up children single handedly was expressed by almost all the respondents. They felt that they were overloaded in their multiple roles. 20 women (35%) stated that the absence of father figure had resulted in an atmosphere lacking in discipline and authority, 25 women (45%) felt that their status as a mother was undermined and 20% complained of defiance, stubbornness and emotional blackmail resorted to by their own grown up sons.
14. Of the school going children, 64% were boys and 36% were girls. Most of the children who were not being sponsored for education, did not attend school due to lack of financial resources (43%), 57% (particularly girls) helped the mother in the houses where they worked, and some were employed in petty jobs.
15. It was also found that 31% women were supported by their natal families and 19% by their in-laws. Partial support, indicating reluctance and hesitation to give help, was found in 6 (11%) natal and 8 (14%) in-law families. Additional support was provided by others such as employers (31%), neighbours (25%) and friends (19%). However, 25% received no help at all from their families or others.

Recommendations

1. Non-government organizations and welfare institutions working for women need to prioritize the need for establishing more short stay homes and centres for providing shelter to women in crisis situations.
2. More counselling centres should be established with trained social workers and counsellors so that family breakdowns can be averted by timely action.
3. Programmes should be initiated for enhancement of the living standards of deserted women.

II

Devdasis / Jogins



Devadasis Vulnerable among Vulnerable

S. Vijaya Kumar

Introduction

The origin of this system of *Devadasis* can be traced back to the Twelfth Century, when *Veerasaivism* was at its heights in the present day Karnataka state. Devadasis are girls dedicated and wedded to God or to a higher caste landlord. They are also known as sacred prostitutes. There is a difference between *devadasi* system and *jogin/ basavi* system. *Devadasi* system can be considered as a form of “exploitation of lower caste girls by upper caste feudalistic lords under religious faith”, whereas *jogins/ basavis* participate in dances before chariots of Gods and Goddesses during processions in village festivals which have local or regional importance. They are often called upon to dance at funeral processions, at annual festivals, and assorted village rituals during the harvesting seasons. With a strong motive of emancipating these “vulnerable among vulnerable” section of women, the National Commission for Women (NCW) initiated a move towards exploring a comprehensive rehabilitation package, and also to frame an action programme to bring these *devadasis* to the mainstream of society. In general, converting a girl as *devadasi/ jogin* has two stages. The first is *pattam*, where the *potharaju* (village priest) converts the girl into a *jogin* by tying the “*mangala sutra*” (wedding necklace) around the neck of the girl even if she is only a month old baby. The second *pattam* is done when she attains puberty and surrenders herself to the village landlord or headman.

Aims and Objectives

The aims of the study were to:

1. Streamline the process of rehabilitating *devadasis*.
2. For rehabilitating *devadasis*, three important points have to be considered, rehabilitating the *devadasi* herself; protecting her girl child from the system; and educating all her children.
3. Ensure the active involvement of NGOs in Devadasi Rehabilitation Programme.
4. Review the on-going welfare and rehabilitation programmes for *devadasis* periodically.

Methodology

NCW focused attention on analyzing the situation of *devadasis* in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra. In Andhra Pradesh this system was prevalent in fourteen districts, while in Karnataka and Maharashtra this system has been identified in six districts each. In Andhra Pradesh there were 16,624 *devadasis* and 14,339 *devadasis* were covered under the rehabilitation programme. In Karnataka there were 22,941 *devadasis* and 16,560 *devadasis* were covered, while in Maharashtra 1,432 *devadasis* were receiving this allowance but they were not covered in depth in the study.

Findings and Conclusions

1. Most of the *devadasis* were aware of the rehabilitation programme for *devadasis*.
2. With increasing awareness, *devadasis* were not forcing their daughters to follow the system, and were encouraging them to go for education.
3. *Devadasis* strongly argued that prostitution was not at all a part of the *devadasi* system.
4. Of the total school going age children of *devadasis*, only a few were able to utilize the facilities available under the education programme.

5. Cumbersome procedures, corruption and unusual delays were major hurdles faced while availing the services and facilities provided under the welfare and development programmes.
6. Health camps were organized twice a year for *devadasis*, and in these camps, a few HIV cases were identified.
7. Services available in PHCs and Government hospitals were of poor quality.
8. NGOs provided training and financial support to take up income generating activities like tailoring, milk production, handloom weaving and managing petty shops.
9. Karnataka State Women's Development Corporation (KSWDC) and MYRADA have mobilized the *devadasis* into SHGs to take up income generating activities.
10. In a few cases, *gram panchayats* (village groups) helped the elderly *devadasis* to get old age pensions. After crossing 40 years of age, most of the *devadasis* suffered from ill health, poverty and remained left out from society.

Recommendations

1. *Devadasis* expressed the need for receiving old age pension, ration card under Public Distribution System (PDS), special education assistance for their children, and lower rate of interest for loans for income generating activities.
2. Rehabilitation programmes were more or less similar in all the three states. Government initiatives should focus on preventing the *devadasi* system.
3. Since there was no proper co-ordination and cooperation between the stakeholder departments, the programme itself was suffering to a large extent.
4. Without assessing the capabilities of *devadasis*, programmes were implemented, but they failed to achieve the goals.
5. Social awareness may help in eradicating this system.

National Seminar on the Rehabilitation of Jogins, Bonded Labour and Persons Engaged in Unclean Occupations April 1 to April 3, 1990

Council for Social Development

Introduction

The system of dedicating girls in the name of religion is prevalent all over the world. It is believed that the Jogin system originated when Lord Parashuram was asked to behead his mother Renuka by his father Rishi Jamadagni. He could not kill her and left her in the forest. The children born of the union, therefore, could not marry and were offered to the temple. Since then this tradition is prevalent.

Aims and Objectives

The study had the following aims and objectives:

1. To raise the status of destitute women and rehabilitate them socially, economically and emotionally.
2. To analyse the nature, type and pattern of income and employment of scavenger households.
3. To study the nature and type of customs and traditions, faiths and beliefs prevailing among these low status households.

Methodology

A Seminar was held in April 1990 to discuss the various issues related to jogins, bonded labour and persons engaged in unclean occupations; present the findings of research studies; and share experiences of NGO functionaries working in the field. In the Seminar, a few papers dealt with the theoretical and historical aspects of the Jogin system; and some were concerned with the practical problems of working with Jogins. In this study, 143 jogins and their 242 children (123 boys and 119 girls) were covered.

Findings and Conclusions

1. A survey conducted by the State Government revealed that there were more than 46,288 jogins in Andhra Pradesh. Many of the jogins belonged to low castes and were from families with low socio-economic status. Of the 143 jogins covered in the survey, only 25 women had a regular income working as casual labour, while the remaining 116 were found begging.
2. Jogins are denied normal married life and are expected to serve the deity.
3. The obsession to make girls as jogins was so prevalent that even for petty causes a girl was made a jogin. The reasons for dedication were illness of family members, death of the children of family members, a religious vow, desertion by husband, or poverty.
4. When a girl becomes a jogin, she becomes the collective property of the village, and she cannot displease anybody. These women become prostitutes without any returns, and are at the mercy of village heads or elders. Their children are treated as illegitimate and are socially ostracised.
5. In 1988, 35,465 bonded labourers were released out of whom 23,956 were rehabilitated. There was a wide gap between the number of bonded labourers released and rehabilitated.

6. In Anantapur District, 98 bonded labourer households were freed immediately after the legislation was passed on bonded labour.
7. In Andhra Pradesh, the system of bonded labour is prevalent in the Scheduled areas. It has been estimated that there are as many as 25,000 jogins in this region.
8. The Bonded Labour Rehabilitation Scheme, started in 1978-79, is centrally sponsored, and the assistance available for each bonded labourer was Rs.4000/- and was raised to Rs.6,250/- in 1986.
9. Socio-economic conditions of rehabilitated scavengers in Municipal Corporation area of Hyderabad were studied. About 53% males and 40% females were interested in vocational training so that they could change their profession.
10. Various vocational trades like carpentry, fitter, welder and electrical work were the trades in which training was offered.
11. In many areas of Hyderabad, released bonded labourers or their family members or their relatives were not allowed to come for wage work due to pressure from society.
12. A Bill was passed in Andhra Pradesh Assembly and an allocation of Rs.50,00,000 was marked for various rehabilitation programmes for jogins or devdasis. In March 1989, Government approved a grant of Rs.1000/- per person for rehabilitation of jogins. They could also approach Women Welfare Department of the State and get Rs.5,000/- for self employment which would help in their rehabilitation.
13. Several organizations like SALT and SAMSKAR are involved in their economic rehabilitation, and providing care for their children.

Recommendations

1. The important role voluntary organizations can play in the planning, development and growth of the nation should be considered in view of physical and financial constraints.
2. The outlay provided by the Government in sectoral programmes formulated for the upliftment of scavengers was not sufficient and would have to be increased.
3. In endemic areas, where girls are routinely dedicated to become jogins, awareness programmes must be started to eliminate this social evil.
4. All old jogins above 50 years of age should be given old age pension for their sustenance.
5. The Government should appoint a committee to evaluate the rehabilitation programme from time to time and make suggestions for improvement.

Reform? Or a New Form of Patriarchy? Devadasis in Border Region of Maharashtra and Karnataka

Chhaya Datar

Introduction

Devadasi system is prevalent in South India where young girls are dedicated to goddess *Yellamma*. These girls cannot marry, and for their livelihood become mistresses or adopt prostitution.

Aims and Objectives

The objectives of the present study were to:

1. Study the socio-cultural aspects of *devadasi* custom.
2. Understand the rehabilitation measures for them.

Methodology

Data was collected from *devadasis* of Nipani village, which is located at the disputed border of Maharashtra and Karnataka. In Nipani and the villages around it, the influence of *Yellama* cult was strong. *Devadasis* in the age group of 17-70 years were selected, and data was gathered through interviews and questionnaires.

Findings and Conclusions

1. Most *devadasis* were above the age of 18 years suggesting a decline in the custom. Reasons for dedication were mental retardation, hunchback and a need to continue the tradition.
2. The presence of *jata* or matted hair was a significant factor in dedication of girls. Tradition was another reason for dedication. Mother and father often got possessed, went into a trance and were told to dedicate their daughters.
3. In their society, parents had the right to make choices for the daughter. It was the parents' choice to either get their daughter married or dedicate her, and the daughter had no say in this decision.
4. Illiteracy was a common factor among *devadasis*. About 85% of the *devadasis* were illiterate.
5. Deserted women, who had no other source of income, were found to be adopting prostitution under the garb of becoming a *devadasi*.
6. Lower rung women also took up prostitution after migration to cities, as these "untouchable *devadasis*" were not preferred by men in the villages.
7. Most of the *devadasis* were employed as workers in *bidi* (cigarette) and tobacco processing factories. Only very young or old *devadasis* were unemployed. In addition, they also earned a sizable amount from performing rituals such as *jagran* (whole night prayers), *ambil* (prayers to Lord Satya Narayan in which the presence of *devadasis* is essential), etc. Nearly all *devadasis* contributed to their household income. About 12% women in *devadasi* households contributed up to 75 - 100% of the total family income. Thus the assumption that poverty drove them to prostitution did not hold.
8. Although women dominated the employment scene, more education was provided to men. 65% of the females were uneducated as compared to 30% of the males.
9. *Devadasis* were given higher status in some villages and were not seen as prostitutes.

67% women even voted for the *devadasis* system to continue. 42.9% upper caste men also saw them as an incarnation of Goddesses. Even their family members reported that *devadasis* were highly respected. Only in towns were they considered as prostitutes.

10. However, the younger *devadasis* felt that they were looked at as prostitutes. They did not wish to be reborn as *devadasis*.
11. *Devadasis* also reported that they had a choice in making decisions about their life. About 15% had a choice in selecting their life partner, 10% had a choice in how to spend their income, and 20% had a choice about breaking up a relationship.
12. Less than 13% *devadasis* felt that the Government was against *devadasi* practice, and 70% did not understand why the Government was even interested in them.
13. *Devadasis* were aware that their traditional roles would not help them to survive, but they did not want to avail the self-employment schemes, due to the risk involved. About 75% did not even know about these schemes. However, they wanted pension benefits.
14. About 33% *devadasis* had a relationship with men, and on analysis it was discovered that these were cases of bigamy. These *devadasis* were considered as second wives.
15. *Devadasis* went to Primary Health Centres (PHCs) or municipal hospitals to have babies. Maximum number had babies when they were in the age group of 20-25 years. Not even 10% had babies below 18 years of age.

Recommendations

1. It is essential to remove superstitions and motivate *devadasis* to give up this practice.
2. Financial assistance and incentives should be given to the man who marries a *devadasi*. However, another group felt that men would marry them for monetary gains and later abandon them.
3. *Devadasis* should be informed about the benefits of self-employment.

III

Displaced Women



Development Induced Displacement in India: Impact on Women

Balaji Pandey and Binaya Kumar Rout

Introduction

Since Independence in 1947, India has been undertaking development projects to improve the quality of life of its people through 'planned development' under the successive Five Year Plans. Such projects include dams, power, mining, industrial and allied infrastructure projects, transport network, urban development, commercial forestry and other projects. Some of these projects have brought adverse effects in the form of displacement of people from their original place of habitation due to large scale land acquisition. Development induced displacement in the country has brought severe economic, social and environmental problems to displaced people. The long drawn out process of displacement has caused widespread traumatic psychological and socio-cultural consequences. These include the dismantling of traditional production systems, desecration of ancestral sacred zones, graves and places of worship, scattering of kinship groups, disruption of family system and informal social networks.

Aims and Objectives

Aims and objectives of the study were to:

1. Assess the magnitude of displacement.
2. Study the impact of displacement on tribals.
3. Find out how much land is given to land owners whose lands are being acquired.
4. Assess the different policies that have been ever formulated to address the needs of people in displacement.
5. Find out the impact of displacement on women.

Findings and Conclusions

1. According to a study by Vijaya Paranjpaye (1988), the number of people displaced due to dams alone was 21.6 million. According to another estimate, the country's development programmes have caused the displacement of approximately 20 million people over roughly four decades, but as many as 75% of these people have not been rehabilitated.
2. The Twenty-Ninth Report of the Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes says that even though tribal people constitute roughly 7.5% of the population, over 40% of those displaced till 1990 belonged to tribal communities. The most serious consequence of development induced displacement for tribal people has been the dispossession of land, both agricultural and homestead, along with the loss of their traditional occupation.
3. The meagre and inadequate compensation paid for the land and property acquired and rehabilitation assistance given hardly allowed tribals to rebuild the previous standards of living in the absence of viable means of alternative livelihood. The resettlement and rehabilitation of displaced people had been ad hoc plans, resolutions and orders, passed for specific states or even projects when the need arose. So far, States such as Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka have resettlement legislation. Most State Governments rely not only on law or universal policies, but instead on ad hoc administrative instructions, in conformity with the bureaucratic preference for what is described as 'case-by-case approach'. In Orissa, the resettlement and rehabilitation policy differed for mining, industrial, thermal power and water resources development projects.

4. The burden of displacement affected women differently because of the fact that there already exist gender disparities in the country. Relief and rehabilitation policies have failed to adequately address resettlement and gender concerns.
5. Loss of access to common property resources and loss of livelihoods due to loss of access to such resources and other avenues of income resulted in a decline in the status of women in the family and society. During the transition period between actual displacement and resettlement, women suffered more from being homeless. Mostly the women, aged and children who were left behind added to the responsibilities of women at both locations.
6. In Orissa, girls have been married off early among displaced families due to the availability of ready cash which was paid as dowry, though it was compensation against their land being acquired by the project. This led to further impoverishment.

Recommendations

1. In the eligibility for resettlement and rehabilitation benefits, women should be treated at par with their male counterparts.
2. When displaced people are rehabilitated in the form of land for land, it should be prescribed that the land allotted should be registered in the joint name of husband and wife.
3. Women should be equal partners in the rehabilitation, planning and implementation process.
4. In resettlement colonies, there is need for creation of community resources like fuel and fodder, facilities for health and nutrition services and clean drinking water.
5. Authorities responsible for relief and rehabilitation should provide educational facilities in resettlement colonies to benefit children in general, and girl children in particular.

Impact of Displacement on Women

Susheela Kaushik

Introduction

Whenever people face displacement, whether due to natural causes like earthquakes, famines or cyclones, or man made ones like barbaric acts of terrorism, military adventurism, or development projects, it is women who suffer the most and bear the consequences of such calamities. Women are uprooted from their physical terrain and human environment, and have to fend for themselves and their children.

Aims and Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Understand the social, economic and psychological impact of displacement on women and children and prioritize them.
2. Recommend appropriate measures that need to be taken by Government and other agencies to facilitate women to settle down to normalcy once again.
3. Elicit women's views on the rehabilitation and compensation policies and package, and solicit their suggestions regarding the problems faced in the new area.
4. Suggest policies and social action for Government, women's NGOs and action groups.

Methodology

A total of 500 people including 391 women and 109 girl children were contacted in their places of location (camps, tents, short stay homes, and orphanages) for data collection. Field survey and interviews were conducted on the basis of well drawn up schedules. Information was collected through well structured questionnaires, observation method, and individual meetings with local leaders, Government officials and NGOs working in those areas. The area of study included Tehri Dam, Orissa Cyclone, Gujarat earthquake, Kashmiri migrants and Burmese refugees. To enable an understanding of the different issues in their unique contexts, the identity of each issue/ region has been kept intact, even while drawing some general conclusions and recommendations.

Findings and Conclusions

Tehri Dam Project (1978) (85 women respondents)

1. Women felt that after being displaced they were more dependent on their male partners for livelihood and the new resettlement area did not provide them with any supplementary source of income. About 60% women respondents stressed on the need for new income generating activities in the resettlement area.
2. About 47% women were unhappy about leaving their friends and relatives behind. More than 70% experienced an emotional setback after displacement.
3. Women felt emotional stress due to being uprooted and had low confidence, felt lonely and depressed. 51 women faced health problems such as blood pressure, diarrhoea, etc. Change in climatic conditions compounded health problems. Only 33% women accepted that after displacement their personal and family life had improved.
4. Women reported that expenses had increased manifold because every necessity had to be bought, and authorities had not fulfilled their promises regarding providing civic amenities. However, authorities claimed that all colonies had the required facilities.

5. Women felt insecure about antisocial elements in resettlement area. 18.82% respondents did not interact with locals due to feelings of insecurity. 34 women were in favour of less interaction with locals. People felt secluded from their culture.
6. Most of the women were aware of rehabilitation and compensation packages. However, they were not aware of details, as compensation was given either to husband or father-in-law. Only in 13% cases, women received compensation in their own name.
7. Women were dissatisfied with implementation of compensation. Even after a decade most had not got the legal title deed to their land. Nearly 69.4% women faced problems in the process of receiving compensation due to official harassment and bureaucratic delay. 33% officials felt resettlement policy was discriminatory against single women and widows. About 94% women were dissatisfied with compensation packages.
8. Women made repeated demands for training in new income generation activities, but no action was taken. 50% women felt that work suffered due to different nature of agricultural practices.
9. Nearly 61.17% respondents said they would be happy to go back to their villages.
10. For children, recreational facilities like library, reading room, playground or parks have not been provided by the authorities in resettlement areas.

Super Cyclone – Orissa (1999) (88 women respondents)

1. Most women lost their land and equipment during the cyclone. The land had become unfit for cultivation. The houses built after the cyclone, were made of thatched leaves, thus provided no security.
2. Most houses had either collapsed or had been washed away by the cyclone. 55 women were living under plastic sheets. 86 women had no toilet facilities and defecated in the open, leading to unhygienic conditions.
3. Most of the villages lacked proper facilities like hospitals, doctors, health workers and PHCs.
4. Women faced health problems like malnutrition, weakness, body ache, amnesia, anaemia, skin problems, eating disorders and losing consciousness.
5. About 78 women were unemployed, and nearly all faced economic hardships in terms of loss of jobs, infertile lands, lack of income, loss of food, clothes, shelter, boats and fishing nets.
6. Most women lost their family's earning members and means of earning such as cattle, poultry, etc.
7. Most of them found themselves helpless vis-à-vis males for various things, like negotiating for compensation or availing other relief measures.
8. Several women complained of sexual harassment after the cyclone. Many narrated incidents of being sold or being forced to marry old men, etc.
9. 63 women were widowed after the cyclone. Many were ill-treated by in-laws; they were denied food, clothes, were taunted and abused. Lack of money and resources had badly hit the relationship between spouses.
10. Most women felt insecure and pessimistic about their future.
11. Women reported that no bureaucrats visited them after the cyclone and often they were treated like beggars. However, many women were satisfied with the help given by the Government.

Gujarat Earthquake (2001) (75 women respondents)

1. Most women had been employed in the unorganized sector as labourers and domestic help prior to the earthquake, and lost their livelihood after the calamity. Women who were organized into cooperatives or affiliated with organizations such as SEWA, were able to pick up the threads of their life again.
2. Many women reported that their husbands were without work after the earthquake, so they had no proper income, resulting in shortage of food and clothes.
3. People's houses had collapsed and the other arrangements were temporary and inadequate. There was lack of proper sanitation and essential items. Women reported that schools were being held in open grounds and so many children fell ill.
4. A few women felt depressed, uncertain and insecure about their future. They faced psychological problems like depression, amnesia and other behavioral problems.
5. The tents provided for living were small without any cooking gas or toilet facilities. In one camp, 22 people stayed in 1 tent. There was lack of privacy and women were uncomfortable during their menstrual cycle. They were also exposed to anti-social elements or drunkards.
6. A few women complained of marital problems like tension with husband and wife beating.
7. Women from lower castes suffered humiliation in relief camps. At some camps, these women were denied relief material due to their caste.
8. Women felt that Government should have given them prompt help after the earthquake. Due to delayed help, many lives were lost. Some women did not know about any relief policy or did not have adequate information about compensation.
9. About 52 women found that bureaucrats were rude, apathetic and arrogant. Women having special needs were ignored and gender insensitivity was rampant.

Kashmiri Migrants (1999) (88 women respondents)

1. Among the migrants, 53 women left Kashmir due to the fear of being killed or kidnapped. 21 left due to written threats from militants and killing of family members, and 4 left because their houses were looted or they or their family members were kidnapped.
2. Only 57 families got relief benefits after displacement. 61 women said they were not satisfied with the paltry sum they were getting. Almost all women faced economic hardships. Most women had left their homes at midnight, thus were unable to withdraw money from the bank. All 88 women had lost most of their belongings.
3. All women suffered from psychological tension, depression and insomnia. However, they did not feel lonely because people in the camps had similar problems.
4. Many women had lost their family members during the conflict, which was most traumatic.
5. Most of the women reported having skin diseases due to the heat in Delhi.
6. There was no privacy in camps. Problems vis-à-vis sanitation were experienced, as 30 to 40 families shared 3 or 4 toilets.
7. Most women found it difficult to adapt to the cultural change. They found Delhi people to be selfish and unhelpful. Also, the culture in Delhi was more westernized than that in Kashmir.
8. The migrants belonged to higher socio-cultural and economic life previously, but found themselves reduced to a "passive, subjugative, begging community".

9. Most women reported facing the problem of eve-teasing. A few girls felt that more restrictions were placed on their movements.
10. A total of 41 women wanted to go back to Kashmir since it was their motherland, but 41 women did not wish to go back as they did not want to face the trauma again.

Burmese Refugees (55 respondents)

1. Among the Burmese refugee women surveyed, the literacy rate was 96%. Some of them continued their education after coming to India.
2. Most of the women refugees received aid provided by United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and had no other source of income. There were very few self help programmes on the agenda for their rehabilitation.

General Findings

1. Women suffered double discrimination by virtue of being women, as they were lowest in the hierarchy with no control over resources and decision making process.
2. Women were forced to be housewives as they did not have employment opportunities and were dependent on men for earning the livelihood.
3. Most women were dissatisfied with the existing rehabilitation policies.
4. In case of women who contributed to family production and income by virtue of their work in the unorganized and agricultural sectors, the displacement caused much loss by eroding their distribution, production and marketing networks. Rehabilitation packages failed to take this into account.
5. In most cases, displacement caused upheaval and affected marital relationships.
6. Most women heads of households felt that policies were discriminatory against women.
7. Sanitation was a major problem. Not only was the environment physically unhealthy and uncomfortable, but it also made them more vulnerable to physical and sexual harassment.

Recommendations

1. While distributing agricultural land, plot for a house or cash, it should be allocated in the names of both husband and wife.
2. Traditional skills need to be preserved and encouraged, especially in the context of their search for better economic livelihood. Informal and alternative market system and opportunities should be made available.
3. Possibilities of imparting vocational skills to women should be explored.
4. The absence of recreational, entertainment and park facilities in resettlement areas need to be remedied.
5. Consultation with displaced persons and their involvement in the process of policy formulation for rehabilitation is needed.
6. Special needs of single women, widows and older women should be taken care of.

Uprooted Homes Uprooted Lives: A Study of the Impact of Involuntary Resettlement of a Slum Community in Mumbai

Qudsiya Contractor, Neha Madhiwalla and Meena Gopal

Introduction

Involuntary resettlement refers to the movement of populations when the choice to remain in a place is not granted. This is distinct from voluntary population movements, which include rural-urban migrations that reflect people's willing pursuit of new opportunities which stimulate economic growth. Involuntary or forced resettlement leads to landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalization, morbidity, food insecurity, loss of access to common property assets and social disarticulation. All these contribute to the process of impoverishment.

Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the present study were to:

1. Assess the impact of resettlement on health, education, social life and employment of different groups within the community using United Nations Covenant for Economic Social and Cultural Rights as a framework for analysis.
2. Support community efforts to gain access to health and education services through training, and drawing up recommendations to mitigate the social consequences of involuntary resettlement, which go beyond the mere provision of housing.

Methodology

The study involved both qualitative and quantitative methods. A household level survey was conducted followed by focus group discussions and key informant interviews. 2000 households which were relocated from Rafique Nagar in Jari Mari, Kurla to Shanti Niketan, the resettlement colony situated in Goregaon, were studied in June 2003. One-third of the households were selected as the sample, and a woman from each sampled household was interviewed during information survey. The interview schedule covered information on household profile, education, pregnancy, hospitalization, acute illness, chronic illness, work, social security, social life and mental health and well being. Key informants like community leaders or *sardars* and representatives of NGOs working with the community were also interviewed.

Findings and Conclusions

1. Respondents mentioned the difficulties they faced in shifting. There prevailed a general sense of uprootedness and alienation. People had not unpacked even 15 to 20 days after the shifting had taken place. There seemed to be a feeling that the current situation was a temporary phase before they moved again to a more permanent destination.
2. Women had taken to several forms of home-based production to add to the household income and meet expenses. Women struggled hard to make Rs.5 per day making garlands of about a hundred flowers, hardly earning Rs.150 per month. This added to the household chores and worries of women regarding household management.
3. Many women had to work outside the home, and had to leave their families, often young children, unattended. 16.1% women were employed as domestic workers. These women went to Jari Mari for work.
4. The health post in the vicinity was in a dilapidated condition and the municipal authorities had made no effort to extend its services to the resettlement colony or assign a new health post for the colony. Women who were pregnant still registered themselves there for

antenatal care. Women had expected all the necessary facilities to be in place, along with the newly constructed buildings.

5. Looking for new jobs in the resettlement area was difficult as the local community saw them as “planted”. Most resettled persons were Muslims in a predominantly Hindu neighbourhood, which added to the problem.
6. The living conditions in resettlement colony had significantly improved in terms of physical environment as there was no congestion or open drains in front of their houses.
7. The situation as far as child care was concerned in the case of working women had also changed with the new living conditions. Middle class style housing did not allow much interaction between households in the resettlement colony. In slum settlements, the narrow lanes or *gallies* of each *chawl* used to offer a space for socialization and interaction between neighbouring women. This maintained the culture of sharing household responsibility too. This situation changed after resettlement due to the changed living environment.
8. In the new settlement colony, girls were deterred from walking about freely as the open space could be accessed by boys. Thus women folk were restricted in their movement.
9. Lack of adequate livelihood opportunities or deprivation of earlier assured employment caused a lot of stress and worry for women in the community. Women worried about leaving their children at home in a new environment if they went out to work.
10. Women who worked from home sought the help of their girl children, and put them too at risk of health problems such as aches and pains, due to overwork.
11. Women were keen that their children continue with their education and resented the fact that because of the new expenses they had to cope with, their children had to miss out on education and work instead.
12. Women received less than adequate antenatal and post natal care owing to resettlement. Adverse pregnancy outcomes were abnormally high in the sample. Hence, lack of access to basic health care affected child birth.
13. Women commonly reported a mix of psychological and psychosomatic complaints. 48.5% women reported headaches, and more than half the women reported feelings of sadness. 31% of the women, at some point, had suicidal thoughts. This also points to the fact that women do not have adequate support systems.
14. Incidence of crime within the colony had instilled fear among women across all age groups. A sense of insecurity was also high among adolescent girls after a few incidents of kidnapping occurred.

Recommendations

1. New schools or *balwadis* need to be provided in the vicinity to cater to the needs of women and children.
2. There is a need to recognize and address the mental health needs of resettled communities, and to create informal/ formal networks for support.
3. Spaces such as work sheds should be provided in the community that could be used by women who were engaged in home-based work.
4. Transparency in dealings and information regarding entitlements and rights also need to be made available to communities so that they can negotiate effectively and safeguard their interests.

IV

Domestic Violence / Battered Women



Abuse and Activity Limitation Study on Domestic Violence against Disabled Women in Orissa, India

Sruti Mohapatra and Mihir Mohanty

Introduction

Women with disabilities tend to be more vulnerable to exploitation of various kinds, such as sexual harassment, domestic violence and exploitation at the workplace. Also, the potential for emotional abuse is high.

Aims and Objectives

The objectives of the present study were to:

1. Understand the magnitude of violence, physical and mental, against women with disabilities.
2. Devise mechanisms to address the issue of violence against disabled women.

Methodology

The sample consisted of 729 disabled women (including family members) in the age group of 18-40 years from 12 districts of Orissa. Both qualitative (survey data) and quantitative methods (questionnaire) were used for research.

Findings and Conclusions

1. Only 42% of the respondents took bath on a daily basis and 43% changed their clothes daily, reflecting the degree of apathy with which they were treated. Also, only 19% of the respondents used toilets for bathing and other activities.
2. About 27% of the physically disabled and 31% of the mentally challenged women got access to medical and health care services.
3. The sexuality of disabled women was not recognized. It was understood that marriage must precede sex and reproductive role was the only way to have sex. Thus, a denial of reproductive role meant a denial of their sexual life. Also, only 44.2% among the physically disabled and 21.6% among the mentally challenged women expressed the desire to have children, whereas a woman can give birth to a healthy child even with her lower half paralysed.
4. About 22.6% of the physically disabled women confessed to being beaten at home. However, the figure was 48.5% for mentally challenged women for whom shame was not a well understood concept, and thus they could openly admit to being beaten.
5. Nearly 12.6% of the physically disabled respondents reported being raped and 15% confessed to being pinched and touched uncomfortably. The incidence was higher for mentally challenged women among whom 19% were raped. The reason for higher incidence of rape against mentally challenged women was that they did not understand the concept of shame, thus reported freely. Also, their families did not hesitate in reporting rapes, as it could be used as an excuse for forced sterilization of these women.
6. Nearly 20% physically disabled and 22% mentally challenged women reported being forced into sex or being raped by their family members. However, a large number of women did not report it.
7. Around 6% physically disabled and 8% mentally challenged women were forcibly sterilised.

8. Domestic violence against disabled women led to depression, post-traumatic stress disorders, etc.

Recommendations

1. Community workers and service providers need to be trained adequately on the issue of violence against disabled women, for them to be able to empower disabled victims.
2. There is a need to start skill development programs to make disabled women independent.
3. Disabled women should be encouraged to form Self Help Groups (SHGs).
4. There is need to sensitize society as a whole towards the needs of disabled people and also disabled women.

Angst - Theirs and Ours: Domestic Violence: An Epidemic on the Upsurge

Hanif Lakdawalla and Sandhya Surendradas

Introduction

Domestic Violence (DV) is defined as all actions against the wife (victim) by her present husband (perpetrator) that threaten the life, body, psychological integrity and restrict her liberty. Violence against women has been acknowledged by United Nations as a human rights violation. Abuse related injuries include bruises, cuts, black eyes, concussion and broken bones. Abuse also led to miscarriages and to permanent injuries such as damage to joints, partial loss of hearing, abdominal pains, muscle aches, recurrent vaginal infections, and sleep and eating disorders.

Aims and Objectives

The objectives of the study were to :

1. Identify the health consequences of domestic violence (DV) on victims.
2. Get comparative morbidity pattern of victims and non-victims.
3. Get reliable statistics about the prevalence of DV.
4. Identify appropriate strategies to reduce occurrence of DV.

Methodology

All married women the reproductive age group of 15-45 years staying with their husbands in one of the slum areas of Ahmedabad formed the universe of the study. The slum was divided into 29 lanes. Every 5th household was then taken as the sample. Two researchers accompanied by community health workers collected information in the local language. Both, qualitative and quantitative information was gathered. Multi-variate analysis was done using SPSS package. The total number of respondents was 400 and the number of survivors were 268 or 67%.

Findings and Conclusions

1. About 34.70% survivors suffered from verbal and physical abuse. Nearly 15.30% survivors suffered from verbal, physical and sexual abuse.
2. Nearly 70.59% survivors were from joint families and 65.77% survivors were from nuclear families, suggesting that DV cuts across all family types. There was no major difference in the abuse pattern among Hindus or Muslims, showing that DV was prevalent in both religious groups. Hindus reported 68.78% victimization and Muslims 66.03%.
3. The percentage of survivors was found to be high in lower age groups (71.90% among 18 to 27 years) than that in the older age groups (58.33% in 38 to 45 years). There were only 4 respondents who were less than 18 years of age, all of whom were abused. There were more non-victims among the age group of 38 to 45 years (41.67%) than in 18 to 27 years age group (28.10%). Women in later years were comparatively spared, which could be attributed to reasons like when children grew up and got married, men found it embarrassing to abuse their wives in front of their grown up children and daughters-in-law. Also, with age men tend to mellow down to a large extent.
4. Husbands who inflicted violence on their wives were maximum (72.51%) in the age group of 30 to 39 years. Maximum number of non-victims husbands were found to be in the later age group of 50+.

Sanchetana, Community Health and Research Centre, O-45-46, 4th Floor, New York Trade Centre, Near Thaltej Cross Road, Ahmedabad – 380054, Gujarat. Ahmedabad: 2001. 36p.

5. Among the survivors, 70.94% were illiterate. Non-victims were found to be comparatively better educated than survivors. There were only 29.06% illiterate women among non-victims, while 52% of them were educated up to secondary level.
6. Illiteracy acts as a major hindrance to personality development which cripples survivors, as most of them were just mute spectators, and they believed that whatever happened to them was their fate. They suffered from inner guilt and self-blame, and most of them attributed this attitude to their not being educated. Most of them felt that if they were educated they would have got the courage to fight back and overcome their suffering.
7. About 71.26% husbands of survivors were illiterate. Husbands who did not abuse their wives were comparatively better educated than perpetrators of violence. Couples who were illiterate showed highest victimization rate (69.01%).
8. Daily wagers showed the highest victimization rate (78.05%). As these daily wagers worked shoulder to shoulder with men folk, their husbands suspected them of having extra marital relations. Also, daily wagers were highly insecure about their jobs.
9. Around 66.13% survivors were home makers. They said that their husbands believed that women who stayed at home usually enjoyed themselves by taking rest, gossiping with neighbours, etc. This thinking made these men jealous of their wives, and they never missed an opportunity to get angry at them.
10. Self-employed women had least victimization (53.57%) amongst various occupational patterns and most of them (46.43%) were non-victims. They were mostly engaged in home-based activities like kite-making, quilt-making, running a small grocery shop, etc. Sometimes even the husbands were engaged in the same business.
11. Unemployed men showed lesser abuse rate (58.82%) than other categories of occupations. The reason was that women earned and managed the family so husbands did not have much say.
12. On assessing the decision making powers, it was found that those living in nuclear families could decide on relatively more issues than those in joint families. Women were not allowed to move out without the husband's permission other than for taking children to the doctor. Women had to be accompanied by either neighbourhood women or other female members of the family if they wished to go out for any other purpose.
13. Few women could say no to physical relations with husband, and always succumbed to men's desires, otherwise they would do it forcibly. Only a few could decide on the adoption of family planning methods and all those were restricted to adoption of temporary methods and not family planning operation.
14. Respondents did not share their problems/feelings with their husbands as they felt they never bothered to listen, they got irritated if disturbed, they misunderstood them and sent the women to their mother's home, etc.
15. The study revealed traumatic physical and mental health consequences of DV which persisted over time. There were striking differences in the morbidity pattern between the victims and non-victims. Severely battered women had typical injury patterns which included cut on the scalp, on the palm and on the hands. A few of them even complained of partial loss of hearing and vision after being hit on the sensory organs. Minor lacerations and bruises, blood clotting, swelling, blue body, and dark circles around the eyes were spotted among those battered.
16. Those women who were sexually harassed suffered from vaginal infections and menstrual problems (62.31%). Forcible sexual intercourse led to unwanted pregnancies. Perpetrators

did not spare their wives either physically or sexually even during pregnancy. This led to miscarriages or birth of deformed babies.

17. Abuse led to a host of psychological problems. Women complained of restlessness and uneasiness which persisted even if their husbands were not around as they were constantly under some sort of fear that he might drop in any time. Sudden aftermath of violence resulted in shock, and 67.91% suffered from anxiety related problems like sudden sweating, palpitation, restlessness and uneasiness, etc. Many showed lack of concentration. Around 80.22% victims were found to be in a depressed state. Many remained tense, had fear of loneliness, were in a state of shock, exhibited aggression/anger, had frequent spells of crying, and they had mood disorders hence they disliked work. Some even complained of sleeping and eating disorders.
18. Respondents were asked to mark on a picture the areas affected during abuse. Most of the respondents marked private parts as the most affected during abuse. Face and head were also quite commonly marked portions.
19. Only 12.13% of the victims went to the doctor in the aftermath of violence, and these were women who were seriously injured and had to battle for their life. Majority of them said that they never felt like visiting doctors, as they were asked too many personal questions about their relationship with their husbands. They preferred homemade remedies.
20. Various methods of verbal, physical, psychological, and sexual abuse were used against women. As a result of the abuse, some typical behaviour patterns were observed among survivors and not among non-victims, such as shrunken body language, difficulty in speaking, shabby dress, avoidance of eye contact, etc.

Recommendations

1. Women must be provided with good education, so that they can fight for their rights.
2. Self-employment and income generation schemes for women need to be started.
3. Gender sensitization programmes should be started to change attitudes of men.
4. Counselling centres should be started to address the mental health needs of victims of DV.
5. Medical practitioners need to be more sensitive to victims of DV.

Atrocities against Women: A Study of Dowry Torture and Sexual Violence in Orissa: A Sankalp Study

Rural Economic Development Society

Introduction

Atrocities and crime against women is constantly rising at an alarming rate. A study was undertaken to study atrocities against women, with special reference to dowry torture and sexual violence in the State of Orissa.

Aims and Objectives

The study was undertaken to:

1. Study the genesis, nature and extent of dowry related torture and death as well as sexual violence in Orissa.
2. Find out the causes of dowry demands and sexual harassment.
3. Assess the physical, mental, psychological and emotional impact of such violence perpetuated on women.
4. Investigate linkages between crime against women, urban crime and crime against weaker sections of society in the areas of dowry cruelty and sexual violence.
5. Find out whether any relationship exists between incidence of violence, dowry torture, and sexual violence and the status of women.

Methodology

The study was mainly based on primary data. Two sets of schedules, one on dowry torture and the other on sexual violence were prepared and pre-tested before the collection of data. A three stage stratified sampling procedure was used. Cuttack and Khurda districts were selected; Bolangir and Rayagada represented backward districts, and Kondhamal and Kalahandi were tribal dominated districts. Over all 100 samples each of victims of dowry torture and sexual violence were selected from each district.

Findings and Conclusions

1. The growth rate of crimes against women in India shows 8.31% rise in the reported crimes in 1998 over 1997.
2. The total reported cases of crimes against women in Orissa registered a steep increase of 101.1% from 1994 to 1998. Rape, dowry death, molestation and eve teasing cases in Orissa have gone up by 86.5%, 92.0%, 66.1% and 91.8% respectively between 1994 and 1998.
3. Cruelty by husband and relatives, which involved dowry torture, increased by 159.0% during the years 1994 to 1998.
4. Over a longer period, the emerging findings were quite disturbing. Between 1986 and 1998, there has been 50% increase in dowry related cases, while rape cases registered 33.2% rise.
5. Dowry was not caste specific, it pervaded all castes groups/sub-groups.

6. Maximum number of domestic violence cases (48%) were of women, either without any education or with education upto primary level. Higher level of education of women ensured lower incidence of dowry torture. However, it was not the restraining factor in developed districts.
7. Economic independence of women lessened the incidence of dowry torture, as only 37% working women were tortured in contrast to 63% victims who were housewives.
8. Dowry torture was more rampant where in-laws families had poor economic status.
9. Maximum number of families demanded dowry in the form of cash (67%), gold (52%) and other items (23%).
10. The most important cause for ill-treatment was that almost 50% victims belonged to low socio-economic status; 31% had greedy husbands, 86% victims were tortured by husbands and 19% were under the influence of family members.
11. Dowry torture varied from scolding to burning. 80% women were scolded; 71% were beaten up; 39% were starved; 11% were injured by branding with hot iron rods or cigarette butts, and a few were given poison.
12. Frequency of dowry torture in 71% cases was regular, and for 29% women it was periodical.
13. Out of the sample of 600 women, only 261 (44%) reported the torture committed against them. Threat to life was found to be the restraining factor for 22% victims.
14. Violence was found to be more against married women (42%) compared to unmarried women (36%).
15. Sexual violence was less among educated women compared to tribal area and backward area victims.
16. Sexual violence was more prominent among families of daily wage workers (45%), followed by farmers (22%) and those from service sectors (21%).
17. In 80% cases, sexual violence victims had comfortable relationships with their parental families.
18. Majority of victims (42%) attributed sexual violence to the impact of television and cinema, while 6% victims thought that reports in newspapers made an impact.
19. The State Commission for Women and Legal Aid Cell were playing only a marginal role, and the least number of cases (2%) had been filed with the police. The Women's Commission was the most underrated body among sexual violence victims, and dowry related cases, especially in far flung areas.

Recommendations

1. Concerted efforts should be made to bring about attitudinal changes in the family and society to eradicate the evil practice of dowry.
2. The level of girls education should be further raised, especially in backward and tribal areas. Efforts should be made to make women economically independent.
3. More women police personnel should be recruited and deployed, especially in backward and tribal areas to win the confidence of victims.
4. State Commission for Women needs to totally overhaul its approach and methodology of functioning.
5. Legal Literacy Programmes for women should be organized at the grass roots level to make women aware of the legal provisions and protection available to them.
6. Girls should be trained in self-defence so that they can defend themselves.

Domestic Violence as a Public Issue: A Review of Responses

Nishi Mitra

Introduction

Domestic violence has become a major issue of concern and debate at the international level since the late nineteen sixties, and has gained greater momentum following the Battered Women's Movement of the nineteen eighties. Despite the growing interest in gender issues in the country there is a dearth of literature and research studies on domestic violence in India.

Aims and Objectives

The objectives of this study were:

1. The documentation and analysis of a variety of social responses to domestic violence against women with the intention of defining best practice.
2. To establish patterns and trends of domestic violence in India, and
3. To examine the Government and Non-Government response to domestic violence so as to identify appropriate remedial measures or "best practices".

Methodology

The study was located in two states namely Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. A non-random cross sectional survey of various actors involved in interventions was undertaken, namely police officers, district social welfare officer, staff and residents of short stay homes, personnel at counselling cells, lawyers, judges, activists and social workers. The pilot study was conducted in 11 districts out of a total of 45 districts of Madhya Pradesh (MP).

Findings and Conclusions

1. The nature of police intervention in cases of domestic violence is crucially important in determining the outcome of the case.
2. Battered women were often unaware of their legal rights.
3. Voluntary organizations were also facing problems like lack of infrastructure and shortage of trained personnel. Training programmes designed for them were found to be inadequate. In Women's Police Stations, there was inadequate infrastructure, and lack of adequate training and exposure of its staff.
4. Judicial bodies were not successful in their pious intentions. Family courts have ensured quick delivery of justice and high rates of recovery of maintenance for women.
5. There were no systematic efforts to rehabilitate the women economically or to impart therapeutic counselling.
6. Vocational training of the inmates has been restricted to traditional crafts like sewing, tailoring and knitting, thus limiting economic rehabilitation.
7. Bharatiya Adim Jati Sevak Sangh (BAJSS), Nagpur fostered all round development of backward classes living in rural and tribal areas and city slums.
8. Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh provided a contrasting picture with respect to the intervention of NGOs and activist groups on the issue of domestic violence.
9. Legal aid cells were hampered by the low priority given to them by senior members of the legal fraternity and insufficient outreach as a result of limited propaganda and publicity.

Recommendations

1. There is a need to look into the actual realization of economic and social rights granted to women by our Constitution.
2. Measures like secondary schooling, autonomy, in terms of access and control of resources, and delayed marriages can play an important role in decreasing women's sense of powerlessness, and in protecting them from marital violence.

Journey from Violence to Crime: A Study of Domestic Violence in the City of Mumbai

Anjali Dave and Gopika Solanki

Introduction

The last twenty years have seen a number of changes in the attitude of society towards women. The Special Cell for Women and Children is one such effort aimed at eliminating violence against women. The Special Cell for Women and Children was set up in July 1984 as a joint project between TISS and the police. The second Cell was opened at Dadar Police Station (1988) and the third Cell at Khandivali Police Station (1994). If violence against women can be viewed as a crime, the police could become a pro-active agency in protecting women.

Aims and Objectives

This study assessed whether the Cell achieved the objectives for which it was set up.

The objectives of the Cell are to:

1. Rebuild violated women's self-esteem, self-worth and dignity.
2. Offer immediate services in cases of family violence and atrocities against women in the form of police assistance in registering criminal complaints, etc., placement in institutions, counselling, referral to family service agencies and other agencies offering medical, psychiatric, education and vocational services, and legal aid.
3. Create awareness among women themselves, among professional groups and general public of the atrocities committed against women and children.

Methodology

Information was collected from data sources such as applications submitted to the Special Cell, intake registers and other documents like medical reports, women's letters and records of non-cognizable complaints attached with the applications, case studies, etc. Tool of data collection was one pre-coded structured questionnaire. Information was collected about demographic profiles of victims, data about violence within the marriage and family, and the nature of problems faced by women.

Findings and Conclusions

1. About 33.9% battered women had approached the police for help in the past. Nearly 88.6% women had put in applications at the Cell themselves, and in only 9.3% cases had fathers or brothers approached the Cell.
2. Around 37.2% cases were in the age group of 25-34 years. The mean age of girls at marriage was 19 years in Maharashtra according to Maharashtra State Report on Women (1997).
3. About 28.2% women in the age group 18-24 years had reported abuse, and 14% women above 35 years also complained of violence.
4. About 35.7% women had primary education, 27.4% women had secondary education, and only 6.5% women were graduates.

5. About 47% women who approached the Special Cell were from low income group, 17.6% cases were from lower middle class, 21.3% from middle class, while upper middle and higher class women had other support systems to deal with their problems.
6. About 62.6% of the victims were married women, and 33.4% single women (unmarried, widowed, divorced, separated women and second wives) also complained of violence.
7. Even in the metropolitan city of Mumbai, 92 girls among the cases before the Special Cell were married off before they reached the age of 14 years; and 16.6% were under 17 years.
8. Newly married women also approached the Special Cell for help; 21.5% women had been married for up to two years, while 18.5% had been married for 2-5 years.
9. Marital problems continued even after 17 years of marriage. About 18.5% women struggled to overcome brutal violence during the early period of the marriage, and 6% women faced continued violence for over 21 years.
10. Around 85.80% women faced violence within the natal family, 89.1% within the marital family, and 3.9% outside the family. Complaints against the husband were present in 74.1% cases.
11. Around 6.8% women had grave injuries, 57.3% reported psychological abuse, 0.3% sexual abuse, and 24.7% women had suffered emotional distress with grave physical injury.
12. About 6.2% women attempted suicide before approaching the Special Cell, 3.3% children were sexually abused within their families, and 9.5% women felt cheated and betrayed by their spouses.
13. Of the women who approached the organizational intervention namely Special Cell, 24.0% wanted intervention in the form of counselling for reconciliation, and 24.7% wanted legal help to get a divorce.
14. About 47.7% women were helped by the Special Cell workers, in 12.1% cases preventive action was taken by use of legal assistance, and in 29.4% cases women were given economic assistance.

Recommendations

1. An in-built system for research and documentation would enhance the Special Cell's capacity to deal with violence against women.
2. The women's movement and the Special Cell should create pressure to ensure easy registration of crime and civil remedies.
3. Capacity building for skillful investigation of crimes against women would help in sensitive handling of cases. Mental violence should be treated at par with physical violence.
4. There is need for context specific initiatives to deal with violence against women in general, and family violence in particular.

Patterns and Trends of Domestic Violence: An Examination of Court Records in Karnataka, India

V. S. Elizabeth

Introduction

In recent years, it has become evident that a growing number of women in India are unable to enjoy their basic rights because of violence committed against them. Sexual harassment, beatings, rape, murder, and other forms of abuse are widespread throughout the country, and are frequently carried out by spouses and relatives.

Aims and Objectives

The study aimed to:

1. Bring to light the effectiveness and implementation of existing laws, as well as trends in domestic violence in cases brought to court.
2. Examine records of domestic violence cases and analyze the major obstacles that abused women and their families face during the pursuit of legal redress.
3. Identify landmark cases in order to facilitate in-depth study on this subject in the future.

Methodology

Cases of domestic violence that came up for hearing in Bangalore High Court, Bangalore Family Court, Rural Sessions Court and Urban Sessions Court were identified. Court records were perused, and some plaintiffs were interviewed to find out lacunae in the judicial system and problems faced by women who pursued the course of legal justice. The study examined cases and rulings carried out from 1986 to 1997.

Findings and Conclusions

1. About 22 cases were from the High Court in Bangalore; 71 from the Family Court in Bangalore; 13 from a Rural Sessions Court; and 11 from an Urban Sessions Court. The categories included assault, divorce, dowry harassment, financial support (maintenance), murder, psychological abuse, restitution, suicide resulting from abuse, and wrongful confinement.
2. In several cases, it was apparently difficult for plaintiffs and their lawyers to provide the type of proof of domestic violence mandated by the Court.
3. The judicial system does not clearly defined terms such as “mental cruelty” and “trauma”, leaving room for inconsistent rulings and punishments, which are left to the discretion of the presiding judge.
4. Many complaints were not investigated or filed within the required time period and were therefore dropped. This was a lacunae of the investigating agencies, due to which the women suffered.
5. Perpetrators of violence were often not held accountable for their crimes, and the risk increases that they will repeat their actions. Perpetrators went scot free and the victims were further victimized.
6. Several of the women in the examined cases had committed suicide following acts of violence, an issue that is rarely addressed by the judicial system.

7. Several areas of ideological and legal disagreement exist within the courts, and there is lack of efficiency, accessibility, and timeliness among both, law enforcement officers and health care practitioners, which negated the effect of police and medical reports. All these delays and inefficient handling of cases resulted in women being denied justice.

Recommendations

1. In order to improve the way that domestic violence cases were handled and prosecuted, programmes should be developed to provide judges with information on the issues and trends surrounding domestic violence.
2. To ensure that more women are able to get justice, judiciary and law enforcement officials need to be sensitized to the issue of domestic violence. Lawyers or non governmental organizations working on women's welfare and domestic violence issues could carry out the training, while researchers could help design the programmes.
3. Almost all cases should be publicized rather than only the "sensational" cases.
4. Without adequate record systems, it is difficult to pursue legal reform with regard to domestic violence.

Responses to Domestic Violence in India: A Study in Karnataka and Gujarat

Veena Poonacha and Divya Pandey

Introduction

Women in all cultures, religions, classes, and ethnic groups suffer from violence perpetrated against them. India, a diverse nation, is no different; the few studies available showed that from 22% to 60% of the women surveyed experienced violent acts, commonly perpetrated by spouses or relatives. Grassroots organizations in India increasingly work to bridge the public-private divide in responses to domestic violence.

Aims and Objectives

Researchers of the study wanted to:

1. Evaluate both State and voluntary organizations with regard to their ideological principles, organizational structure, decision-making process, intervention strategies, and other aspects.
2. Prepare case studies to facilitate in-depth analysis of organizational responses to domestic violence.

Methodology

The study sites were selected because of their histories as centres of social organization. Non governmental organizations (NGOs) in Karnataka and Gujarat were chosen. Questionnaires were mailed to 500 groups working on women's issues. Sixty NGOs in Karnataka and 100 in Gujarat responded. Small group discussions were held with personnel of NGOs.

Findings and Conclusions

1. Case studies of All Women's Police Stations (AWPS) revealed poor quality services and low rates of utilization.
2. Female officers perceived domestic violence as a private matter and ignored investigative procedures.
3. Female officers faced gender based discrimination and sexual harassment, together with low wages, long working hours, and insufficient training that plague the police force in general.
4. Counsellors at Family Counselling Cells (FCCs) established by the Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) viewed domestic violence as the result of loss of control, differences with spouse, lack of education, extra marital affairs, and alcohol abuse.
5. NGOs provided temporary housing for women and their children with the help of Government grants.
6. Differences existed among shelters, but residents reported lack of child care facilities and uncomfortable living conditions.
7. Residents were found to live under strict regulations with regard to their hours, visitors, and activities.
8. Facilities that provided child care, primary school facilities, vocational training, libraries,

and comprehensive counselling were found to be conducive to women's rehabilitation and growth.

9. Many of the State-initiated responses to domestic violence in Karnataka and Gujarat were short term and reactive.
10. Although innovative interventions are increasing, domestic violence is still often viewed as a breakdown.

Recommendations

1. Systematic records of domestic violence cases should be kept
2. Access to basic services needs to be improved.
3. Offenders should also be reached out to, and the problem dealt with keeping in view all view points.
4. A hotline should be created for women in distress to give them information, advice and counselling.
5. Sensitivity to social norms can also spur the involvement of community members in efforts to combat domestic violence.

Responses to Domestic Violence in India: A Study in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh

Nishi Mitra

Introduction

For many decades, the magnitude of the problem of domestic violence has been hidden behind a cultural emphasis on the privacy and sanctity of the family and on self-sacrificing womanhood, as well as conservative and insensitive judiciary.

Aims and Objectives

The study was undertaken to:

1. Analyze the range of government and non governmental responses to domestic violence in the states of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.
2. Identify “best practice” among such responses and related programmes.

Methodology

The central state of Madhya Pradesh and the western state of Maharashtra were selected to identify the best responses in dealing with the issue of domestic violence. A combination of mailed questionnaires and field research was done. Secondary data sources were also analyzed.

Findings and Conclusions

1. Many women who face domestic violence may not necessarily opt for a break in their marriage. The reasons are custody of children, no home to go to, insecurity and uncertainty about the future, they are not financially independent, and various other factors.
2. Section 498A has been largely ineffective due to police reluctance to register cases, high rates of acquittal, and emphasis on reconciliation.
3. Male bias in the police system against physical and professional capabilities of women constrains the effectiveness of female staff.
4. In certain districts, initiatives taken by government officials resulted in programmes for income generation, skill building, education and literacy.
5. Most counselling services focused on practical rather than emotional aspects, an approach that was observed to ignore factors such as fears of further abuse, dilemmas about staying with an abuser, concern for children, and negative self-identity.
6. Neither the State nor the NGO sector has adequately addressed the need for immediate, effective medical care for survivors of domestic violence.
7. Research showed that the most successful models for domestic violence intervention combine both State and NGO strategies and provide a diversity of services.

Recommendations

1. The State should utilize its legal mandate to publicize domestic violence as a public concern.
2. Collaboration among Government agencies and NGOs should be encouraged in order to prevent duplication of services, ensure better utilization of scarce resources, and increase the dissemination of information.
3. Gender sensitivity should be included in the training of police, the judiciary, public officials, policy makers, social workers, counsellors and other service providers.
4. Many women’s efforts to escape domestic violence are hampered by lack of information on available services.

Rights – Based Strategies in the Prevention of Domestic Violence

Pradeep Kumar Panda

Introduction

The societal responses to domestic violence have focused primarily on crisis intervention after the harm has occurred. This study was an attempt to provide a framework for the prevention of domestic violence informed by a rights-based strategy. A recent study found that countries promoting women's rights and increasing women's access to resources and education have lower poverty rates, lower child and infant mortality, improved nutrition, lower fertility rates, lower AIDS prevalence, less corruption, higher economic productivity and faster growth than countries who do not do so (World Bank, 2001). Population based surveys (1999) from a range of countries indicated that 10% to over 50% women underwent physical assault in intimate relationships. Of these women, 33% to 50% reported sexual abuse or coercion.

Aims and Objectives

Aims and objectives of this study were to:

1. Understand the prevalence of domestic violence, and more pertinently, the reasons why such violence is being perpetrated, which are extremely important.
2. Examine the prevalence and correlates of domestic violence in intimate relationships in the context of Kerala.

Methodology

A household survey was done in three rural and three urban settings in Trivandrum district of Kerala state. 500 households, 300 rural and 200 urban were selected at random. Participants were ever-married women aged 15-49 years. The interviews were conducted in 2001 by a team of six local female investigators.

Findings and Conclusions

1. The average age of women respondents was 33 years and the average duration of marriage was 12 years. More than 95% of the men and women were literate in both rural and urban areas.
2. Women in rural areas (58%) were engaged in seasonal and irregular employment, whereas urban women (86%) were employed in regular jobs.
3. Marriage was predominantly arranged (78%).
4. Nearly 48% women reported that dowry was demanded by their in-laws at the time of marriage. Dowry was demanded more in rural areas (57%) than in urban areas (33%).
5. Over all, 35.7% women experienced physically violent behaviour, and 64.9% experienced violent psychological behaviour at least once in their married life.
6. Of the 179 women who reported being hit, kicked, slapped or beaten in their marital life, 109 females (60%) experienced all the four behaviours (hit, kicked, slapped or beaten), 161 females (90%) suffered at least three behaviours, and 74 out of 326 females (25%) experienced all the seven psychological behaviours, namely insults; belittlement or demeaning behaviour; threats to the women respondents; threats to someone the respondent cared about; made her feel afraid; threats of abandonment; and husband's unfaithfulness.

7. Out of 179 of the 326 women reporting physical violence, 68% reported a frequency of 3 or more times, and of the women reporting psychological violence, 76% reported a frequency of 3 or more times.
8. More than 33% women experienced violence during pregnancy also. The rate was more in rural areas (40%) compared to urban areas, where the rate was less than 20%.
9. Of the 443 women in the focus group discussion, 29% experienced slapping, kicking, hitting, beatings or forced sex during the last 12 months. Nearly 15% women reported forced sex during the previous 12 months.
10. Of the 127 women being hit, kicked, slapped, beaten or subjected to forced sex in the last one year, 36% experienced four such behaviours, and 58% at least two such behaviours.
11. Causes of violence reported by women were not looking after children properly (78%), not attending to the household (72%), not cooking properly (54%), etc.
12. Among 104 women in another group, 85% reported their husband's infidelity as the reason for quarrels. Nearly 75% women were hit or beaten for suspecting their husband's sexual involvement with other women.
13. Among a women's group of 106, 96% reported that husbands quarreled and accused them of being unfaithful, and 66% hit or beat their wives for being unfaithful, or when their husbands suspected them of being unfaithful.
14. Harassment due to dowry was reported by 46% women who were beaten, 46% were threatened, 13% were sent back to their natal homes, and 21% were treated like a servant.
15. In the sample, 54.4% women had one source of support, but the remaining 45.6% had no social support. Nearly 23.5% women had support from both the sources, and 30.9% had support from the natal family.
16. Among those who did not own property, 49% experienced physical violence and 84% experienced psychological violence.
17. Nearly 35% women witnessed their fathers beating their mothers during their childhood.
18. A majority of women (56.4%) reported harsh physical disciplining during childhood. Harsh childhood was higher in rural areas (64.6%) compared to urban areas (44%).

Recommendations

1. In the context of Kerala, research clearly revealed that "right to housing" and "right to property and inheritance" are critical and most fundamental to the strategy for prevention of domestic violence.
2. Social support networks, especially the natal family and neighbours, are also crucial in reducing domestic violence. Support structures could be from both contexts within the family and from NGOs, women's self help groups, etc.
3. Male attitudes and society's attitudes also need to be changed in this context.
4. Given the pervasiveness and harmful nature of domestic violence, a national policy of zero tolerance for domestic violence is necessary.

A Sociological Study of Violence Against Women

Suchitra Vedant

Introduction

Violence against women is a part of contemporary social life. Women have begun to move shoulder to shoulder with men in every walk of life, including the traditionally male dominated ones such as politics, police force and aviation. On the other hand, women are facing more and more violence, both in society and on the domestic front.

Aims and Objectives

The study was conducted with the objectives to:

1. Identify different forms of violence against women.
2. To identify the perpetrators of violence.
3. Study the impact of and reaction to violence on the victim and her family.
4. Explore the action taken by law enforcing authorities to deal with violence against women.
5. Suggest remedial measures to deal with the problem of violence against women.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Mysore district of Karnataka state. A sample of 250 cases was selected for a detailed study. The sample included cases of dowry deaths, marital cruelty, rape and molestation. Data for the study was collected by interviewing the victims of violence at her place of normal residence and members of her family in strict confidence.

Findings and Conclusions

1. Women of all ages were vulnerable to violence. However, the majority of them (82%) were found to be below 30 years of age. The age at which women were most vulnerable to violence was around 25 years.
2. Nearly 76.4% of the victims were married, and it was found that violence cut across all religions and caste backgrounds.
3. The extent of violence in rural areas was higher than in urban areas, and 67.2% of violence was reported from rural areas.
4. Women with low educational attainments are more susceptible to violence than those with higher education.
5. Women who were unemployed or those who were employed in unskilled occupations faced more violence than women in skilled employment.
6. About 47.2% of the victims of violence had no income, 50.4% had a monthly income of Rs.300 or less, and 2.4% earned between Rs.500 and Rs.2000 per month.
7. All the victims included in this study faced physical violence in some form or the other. About 59% of the cases of marital cruelty were because of dowry, the next major cause accounting for 41% cases was due to addiction of the husband to alcohol. Nearly 87% of intra-family violence occurred in arranged marriages.
8. Nearly 87% of rape victims were victimized by persons with whom they had been familiar or acquainted.

9. The most common reaction of victims to violence was found to be crying (100%) and all the victims indulged in it.
10. Most rape victims were not sure as to how they should react because, often, the assailants were persons known to the victim.
11. About 56% molestation victims expressed mixed reactions. About 56% protected themselves by hitting or slapping the accused, and 44% had not shown any immediate reaction due to shock.
12. The police, who in present circumstances, were the main source of succour to victims of violence, had by and large, failed to live up to people's expectations.

Recommendations

1. More studies carrying out detailed analysis of different aspects of violence against women need to be undertaken.
2. Surveys that help to assess the actual extent of the problem need to be undertaken.
3. Education of women must be given priority.
4. An increase in employment opportunities for women is essential to remove economic pressure on women.
5. There is need to bring about fundamental changes in the social fabric of society.
6. Programmes to spread awareness about violence and imparting knowledge about methods of self-defence and fighting violence need to be undertaken.
7. Police and community should act as effective agents of social control.

Stress and Health Implications of Domestic Violence

Naina Rao Athalye

Introduction

The Domestic Violence Bill will soon be introduced within the Indian legislature. Violence in India takes on many dimensions. Women are victims of violence for various reasons; common among them are dowry and the inability to produce a male child.

Aims and Objectives

The study was undertaken to:

1. Obtain the opinions of women regarding domestic violence.
2. Try and understand women's responses and methods of coping with domestic violence.
3. Check whether women victims of violence reported more health-related hassles and physical health related symptoms than non abused women.

Methodology

Data was collected by students of Sophia College, Mumbai. About 280 women were given inventories to check off. The mean age of the sample was 38.5 years. The Domestic Violence Scale I and II, Daily Hassles Scale and Health Scale were used to gather the responses of women. For the purpose of the study, only 40 respondents were retained keeping in mind their age.

Findings and Conclusions

1. There was a positive correlation between stress as measured through hassles and health related symptoms for both groups.
2. Nearly 50% women reported being unaware of the laws protecting women against violence.
3. About 65% women reported they could control violence by behaving in ways that pleased the husband.
4. About 35% respondents thought leaving home might control the violence, while 65% reported that support from family would help control violence.
5. Nearly 52.5% women felt that financial independence of women would reduce the violence.
6. About 60% reported that being assertive and independent would reduce the violence, but 60% also felt that being submissive at times would help control the violence.
7. Nearly 45.5% reported that going to the police would help control the violence and 62% said support from in-laws would be effective. There was reluctance to make domestic violence a public issue by going to the police, as women would have to face many more problems later if they stayed on in the house.
8. About 42% women stayed on in the marriage for their children, 62.5% because they loved their husband, 5.0% wanted the husband's money, and 32.5% stayed as they had no where else to go.
9. About 47.5% resorted to violence when victimized, 65% withdrew from husband, 40% called their parents, 25% called their friends, 65% only cried and 67.5% prayed.
10. Women experiencing domestic violence also exhibited attributional styles similar to the depressed.

11. Women with traditional gender-role beliefs or with a feminine sex-role orientation tended to put in a lot more work, both at home and at work.
12. A victim of domestic violence will experience even routine tasks such as daily chores and child care as insurmountable.

Recommendations

1. This study pointed out the need for policy makers to take note of the requirements of domestic violence victims.
2. There is need to focus on women's strengths, such as her capacity to relate and nurture.
3. There is need to enhance women's self-esteem by making them aware of options available to them.
4. Counselling should be available and approachable by demystifying therapy.
5. A cross-section of women needs to be included in a study like this in order to get a wider perspective.
6. A few in-depth cases studies would yield a clearer picture about the stress and coping styles of victims of domestic violence.

A Study on Domestic Violence in Rural Gujarat

Usha Nair and Hemlata Sadhwani

Introduction

Violence against women in the past decade has become a priority issue with women's organizations all over the world. The World Bank estimates that rape and domestic violence account for 5% of the healthy years of life lost to women of reproductive age in developing countries.

Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the study were to:

1. Study the perceptions of community members on domestic violence or maltreatment of women.
2. Understand the assessment of community members regarding the extent of prevalence of domestic violence.
3. Understand if there are any events/ acts which are socially acceptable or unacceptable, and if any form of maltreatment is justified by community members.
4. Know their suggestions on the kind of interventions to be sought by victims of domestic violence, both informal and formal interventions, and when, that is at which stage of the abuse would women prefer the intervention.

Methodology

The study was conducted among a rural community in Savli taluka of Vadodara district. SORT conducted a study which covered 1126 households in 12 villages of Savli taluka. Randomly 300 households were selected, and an equal number of husbands and wives, 150 each were interviewed. A semi-structured questionnaire with several open ended questions was used. Due to attrition, a sample of 291 was studied.

Findings and Conclusions

1. About 57% respondents and their spouses had married when they were in the age group of 15-19 years.
2. Around 49% wives were illiterate as compared to only 15% husbands.
3. A majority of the households (67%) had five or more members in the family, and 45% had 3 or more children.
4. Around 41% of the houses were *kutchha* (non-permanent structures), and 34% were *semi-pucca* (semi-permanent structures).
5. About 64% husbands were in the habit of smoking; 20% husbands and 21% women ate tobacco or snuff; and 9% husbands regularly consumed alcohol.
6. About 59% females and 8% males perceived domestic violence to be occurring frequently in their community; and 66% females perceived the prevalence of verbal harassment occurring in the community to be as high as 90%. Instances of physical harassment and mental torture were perceived to be more by females (16% and 22%) than males (1% and 3%) respectively.
7. Both male (88%) and female (99%) respondents mentioned the wife as the main victim of

domestic violence; 77% males and 40% females were of the view that husbands were also the victims of domestic violence; 96% males reported the wife to be the perpetrator, while 73% females mentioned their husbands to be the perpetrators. More males (83%) than females (53%) admitted themselves to be the perpetrators of domestic violence; and in-laws were also reported as perpetrators by 31% females.

8. Majority (87% males, 80% females) reported slapping and beating with hand, kicking, punching and attacking with objects (78% male, 74% female) as common forms of physical harassment; 27% females also mentioned forced sex as one type of physical harassment.
9. More females (68%) than males (12%) mentioned suspicious nature and labelling the wife 'characterless' as a type of mental torture.
10. Respondents reported that trivial issues like not preparing food in time and tasks not done by the wife in time (84% male, 74% female) triggered off domestic violence; and females (70%) and males (53%) perceived that habits of smoking, drinking or gambling also contributed to domestic violence among married couples.
11. Males (72%) and females (79%) were of the opinion that women should always follow the husband's instructions, whether she liked it or not; 75% males and 89% females said that women victims of violence kept quiet and did not say anything in case of verbal harassment.
12. It is evident from the present study that domestic violence was prevalent in rural Gujarat across different castes and socio-economic groups.

Recommendations

1. Community members felt the need for some organizations that would help women victims of domestic violence.
2. Any strategy to prevent such violence in their lives must focus on long term interventions, which could bring change in the attitudes and beliefs of community members who legitimize violence.
3. Abuse of women should be prevented at all costs, and efforts in this direction should start from the early years of a child's life. The pattern of socialization of children should include respect for women from early stages.

A Study on the Psychosocial Circumstances in the Family Life and Environment of Married Women Victims in the Reported Cases of Family Violence in Delhi and Kolkata Metropolis

Maushmi Gangopadhyay

Introduction

The term 'domestic violence' refers to a self contradictory incident in civilized, modern social life. Instances of domestic violence very often remain unreported to save the family image from criticism or scandal. In February 2000, a study conducted under the auspices of International Centre for Research on Women reported that 40% to 75% women worldwide were physically abused by their partners at some point of time, and that one out of every four women was physically or sexually abused during pregnancy.

Aim and Objectives

The aims of the present study were to:

1. Understand why family violence takes place and affects mainly married women, and whether the causes are universal.
2. Study the characteristic features of family status, sub-culture and behavioural ethics experienced by the victims of family violence in their pre- and post marital family life.
3. Understand the context and happenings generating family violence against married women in the environment of in-law families of the victims.
4. Investigate the characteristic modes of common punitive practices used to discipline married women so as to bring them in line with the desired terms and conditions of in-law families.

Methodology

The study sample was selected by multi-stage purposive sampling method. Case reports of the last two years of Delhi metropolitan area and Kolkata were scrutinized and addresses of victims collected for conducting face to face interviews. About 180 victimized daughters-in-laws from Delhi and Kolkata were taken, 90 from each city.

Findings and Conclusions

1. Around 130 victims perceived and described their in-law families as middle economic class, greedy, boastful and highly prejudiced; 50 victims perceived and described the status of their in-law families as hazy and unstable income class, greedy, pressurizing, ill-tempered and having women oppressors (pre-marital = 80 and post marital = 108).
2. The age range at marriage was 22.6 to 24.5 years. Their qualifications were between high school level to graduate or college level.
3. There were 39 cases of self-arranged marriages where the living parent or their brother cut off all social links with the informants and their children. These 39 informants had lost all their ornaments and personal savings to meet the whimsical demands of their husbands, mothers-in-law and brothers-in-law to save themselves and their children from physical and mental torture.
4. About 40 women in Delhi and 50 in Kolkata, who were victims of family violence, were born and brought up in the family environments of these cities.

5. All the victims were not allowed to spend money for their personal requirements from the family fund.
6. Negotiation marriage and conventional dowry payment had taken place in 105 families and 40 of them failed to meet their commitments, while the remaining 65 families fulfilled the requirements.
7. Significant differences were observed between the situation of married women in Delhi and Kolkata. In Delhi, more than 60% of the respondents were never consulted for purchase of household articles, whereas the percentage in Kolkata was 45%.
8. The number of estranged husbands was found to be very high in both the places. Only 11 husbands in Delhi and 12 in Kolkata were perceived by the informants to be usually cooperative and having congenial relationship. More husbands in Delhi were always non-cooperative with their wives, but they cooperated with their son's wife. Nearly 70% mothers-in-law in Delhi and 50% in Kolkata never cooperated with their daughters-in-law.
9. About 46% respondents of Delhi had no autonomy to visit their parental home, whereas in Kolkata only 17% faced this problem. This may be because more families in Kolkata were nuclear families.
10. Frequency of abuse by husbands was 67% for dowry and 51% for other financial matters in Delhi, which was found to be higher than that in Kolkata. About 71% respondents in Delhi were abused by their husbands for being lazy, even though they worked for an average of 11 hours a day for the households.
11. Physical torture such as beating and slapping was found to be high in Delhi (60%) and Kolkata (55%). Around 30% to 40% women had been hospitalized after torture in both cities. However, violence on women was not only higher but also more severe in Delhi than in Kolkata.
12. Nearly 50% respondents were sexually harassed by their husbands in both cities.
13. A separated woman or divorcee remains more open to new oppressive situations for further victimization, and her version is less trusted, conventionally, when she defends herself.
14. Lack of economic self-sufficiency, social devaluation of self-esteem, no guarantee to get oppression free social life, fear of sexual exploitation, and social insecurity were the problems faced by more women in Delhi.

Recommendations

1. Education of women, with competence based vocational training for them, must be made compulsory.
2. Each and every adolescent girl student should be made aware of the essential ethics of conjugal life and cohabitation. Family life education must be taught in schools to both boys and girls.
3. For the criminal part of domestic violence, legal support for the victim and help for punishing the abuser are essentially required.

A Study on Special Arrangements to Combat Violence and Crime against Women in the States of Punjab and Haryana

Centre for Social Research

Introduction

NIPCCD and Centre for Social Research (CSR) took up a joint project to study domestic violence in the two states of Haryana and Punjab, and assess the functioning of two institutions which have been set up in these states to combat domestic violence, that is, the Crime against Women Cells (CAW) of these states. Domestic violence is one of the most poignant forms of betrayal. The home, which should be a shelter and sanctuary, becomes a trap, a place of torture and fear. And the men with whom women share their lives become the perpetrators of the most horrendous violence - physical, mental and sexual - against them. Violence against women cuts across boundaries of nationality, education, class, caste and religion. The phenomenon extends across the country. Though shocking, the fact is that violence against women has become an acceptable norm of life in India.

Aims and Objectives

The study was undertaken to:

1. Assess the magnitude of the problem of domestic violence in Punjab and Haryana.
2. Study the functioning and effectiveness of Crime against Women Cells.
3. Suggest measures to protect women.

Methodology

The study was based on primary and secondary sources of information. Secondary sources included existing literature on the subject, and primary data was collected through extensive field surveys. Four CAW and CPRC (Community Policing Resource Centre) Cells each were selected for the study from each range/ administrative zone. In Punjab, CPRCs of Amritsar, Patiala, Moga and Mohali, and in Haryana CAW Cell of Ambala, Karnal, Gurgaon and Jind were analysed for the present study. Quantitative data was collected through a structured questionnaire, which included both open ended and close ended questions, and qualitative data was collected through case study method.

Findings and Conclusions

1. Field results reiterate the fact that in spite of economic prosperity in these two states, one out of every five women experiences violence within their homes.
2. It was found that people approaching CPRC (Community Policing Resource Centre) and CAW Cells are not immediately categorized as criminal / antisocial and the same applies not only to women victims but also to the accused.
3. Another aspect which the study revealed was that while the number of women approaching these institutions has increased reflecting general acceptability of the problem, women still need male consent to register a case. Fathers, brothers, uncles and brothers-in-law of victims took the lead in registering the case.
4. Most of the cases were registered under the Dowry Act while in reality it may be some other problem that the women may have encountered at her husband's place, like undergoing beatings under intoxication, extra marital relationship, etc.

5. Most regular forms of violence which women in this study have faced were hitting with stick, beating, slapping, kicking, pouring kerosene, throwing them out of the house, confinement, keeping victims hungry, verbal abuses, humiliation in front of outsiders, and preventing victims from going to their natal houses.
6. In regions with strong presence of patriarchy reflecting a domineering male psyche, slapping and hitting are considered to be very normal, and unfortunately there is an absence of language to describe such incidences in official recordings.
7. The study further revealed that there are some aspects, which are different in the functioning of institutions named CAW and CPRC. One distinguishing feature of CPRC is that they have panels for handling cases in which not only police officials but also civilians like social workers and psychiatrists are present.
8. The study identified that there are specific services offered by Crime against Women Cells like hearing, counselling, provision of safety to deserted women, sending them to shelter homes, legal suggestions, mediation between parties, and referring cases to court if needed.

Recommendations

1. Development strategies and interventions need to address not only individual women's needs, but also develop a more holistic and integrated vision in combating domestic violence at the local and national level.
2. It is suggested that positive features of each individual institution may be considered separately and replicated on the other if needed, taking into consideration the local specificity.
3. There has to be constant monitoring so that institutional reforms can take place.
4. There should be permanent staff in CAW Cells and CPRCs, and the number of police officers should be less. The person Incharge of a Cell should be posted at a particular Cell for at least three years.
5. There is need to make civil society, particularly rural women, aware of the different laws for women. Dissemination of information and awareness generation about legal provisions and rights is required.
6. Dissemination of information on the role and function of Cells needs to be made more public. The Cell needs more visibility.
7. Gender sensitization workshops need to be held at frequent intervals at both higher and lower levels within the ranks, particularly at the constable and head constable level.
8. More female staff is required and they should handle most cases, specially sensitive cases.
9. Psychiatrist needs to be a part of the panel.
10. There should be enough space in the Cell so that two or more families can wait.
11. Linkages with NGOs and other civil society groups need to be established.
12. Regular investigations and monitoring of the Cells is required to avoid lapses and prevent corruption.
13. Proper follow-up of solved cases is required to ensure that there has been no recurrence of violence.

Why Some Men Beat Their Wives? A Report about Perpetrators of Domestic Violence

Hanif Lakdawala, Rini Sen Balasaria and Payal Rajput

Introduction

Violence against women is a problem that exists due to gender inequities within social structures and cultural norms that condone males' use of power and control over women. Violence against women occurs in several forms including intimate partner violence or wife abuse, homicide in family, sexual harassment, sexual assault, forced prostitution and rape. The most pervasive form of violence against women is abuse by husband or intimate male partner.

Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the present study were to:

1. Understand men's perspective of domestic violence.
2. Find out if the perpetrators were aware of the adverse effects of domestic violence on the health and well-being of victims, namely women and children.
3. Formulate appropriate strategies to reduce the occurrence of domestic violence.

Methodology

The sample consisted of 130 households, in one of the slums of Ahmedabad drawn through random number tables. These households consisted of one ever married man in the age group of 16 to 60 years. The youngest married man interviewed was 19 years of age. In the final analysis, 120 households were surveyed. A detailed questionnaire was prepared to help explore men's perception and behaviour related to domestic violence. Data was analysed using SPSS software.

Findings and Conclusions

1. The survey revealed 27 perpetrators and 93 non perpetrators of DV.
2. Early marriage seemed to be the norm for both, men and women. Most husbands had got married between the ages of 14 to 17 years (31.7%), followed by 49% respondents who married between 21 to 30 years.
3. Most men respondents hardly ever thought, let alone acknowledge, what their wives did for the family, like washing, cooking, bearing and rearing children, and looking after the elders of the family.
4. Men identified women's social responsibilities to include displaying respect to family members, attending community and family functions, resolving family matters, etc.
5. When wives worked outside the house, it was considered "work" by husbands. Nearly, 45% women worked. However, 44.20% of the husbands saw no change in the role that the wife played on the home front, even after becoming an earning member.
6. Husbands of home-makers were unwilling to let their wives work. The array of reasons given were the wife would not be able to give enough time to the home, children and the husband would be neglected, and "she would become proud" of earning money. Men felt threatened with the idea of their wives working.
7. Nearly 35% men, whose wives worked, said that wives took decisions about household matters, followed by matters of child rearing and the children's education. Only 8% men

Sanchetana, Community Health and Research Centre, O-45, 46, 4th Floor, New York Trade Centre, Near Thaltej Cross Road, Ahmedabad - 380054, Gujarat. Ahmedabad: 2003. 40p.

said their wives took financial decisions too. About 92% wives had no say in money matters, even though 45% wives earned.

8. Nearly 44.20% male respondents admitted that they did not believe in gender equality, while 5% did not respond. The reason given was that men were the main breadwinners of the family, and thus shouldered more responsibilities. Also, as women's domain of decision making hovered around household and children, they were not equal to men. Most perpetrators did not consider men and women equal, and this is where gender biases arise from.
9. About 71.7% respondents stated that it was not acceptable if a man beats his wife. Among these, 75 respondents belonged to non-perpetrator category. About 7.5% respondents approved of wife beating. Wife beating was justified by saying, "we have to keep her on track" and "what does one do if she does not listen to her own husband? She deserves it." 25% respondents gave a mixed response, enlisting conditions that led to clashes and violence.
10. Among the perpetrators, 29.60% approved of DV, and 37% perpetrators gave mixed answers. Nearly 33% perpetrators disapproved of wife beating, and at the same time indulged in it.
11. Those who did not approve of spousal violence mentioned that the wife performs multiple roles that need to be appreciated. Also, beating her would indirectly affect other family members. Beating a wife could also result in heavy medical expenses, if she got injured in the process. Humiliation of battered woman was never provided as a reason or consequence for disapproving of this form of violence.
12. Nearly 74.20% respondents were aware of the physical impact of battering like injury, body pain and weakness. Very few spoke about the psychological impact. 10.80% mentioned that continuous torture inflicted on the wife may lead to restlessness, tension, loss of appetite, desire to commit suicide or deserting the family. 87.5% respondents including 89% of the perpetrators, were also aware that wife beating is illegal and severely punishable.
13. Nearly 66.70% respondents seemed aware that the prevalence of DV adversely affected children in the family as they "cry, are afraid, fall ill frequently, don't study properly." However, as many as 38 out of 144 responses stated that violence at home would have no effect on the children.
14. About 48.2% of the respondents blamed husbands for violent fights.
15. 91 men in the study held alcohol addiction as the main culprit for DV. Burdened with many worries, beating their wives was an easy outlet. 74 out of 264 respondents mentioned economic pressures of living life amidst poverty and unemployment as contributory factors. A feeling of dissatisfaction and frustration looms large at the end of the day. A few respondents also mentioned suspicion about one's spouse, as a reason for battering.
16. Of the 27 perpetrators in the survey, 37.10% have blamed the husband's alcohol addiction followed by economic stress (24.20%), and suspicion about their own wives, as a reason for abuse.
17. Nearly 66.70% of the respondents disapproved of wives turning to the justice system for help. 21 out of 27 perpetrators fell in this category. They all believed that it was also the woman's responsibility to keep the marriage together, come what may.
18. Only 17.50% respondents bravely approved of wives beating their husbands in retaliation.

19. Most respondents said that they had to raise their hand on the wife as they did not fulfil their duties of being a good housewife. Some also felt that wives' attitudes towards husbands were annoying like her rudeness, denial of sex and her suspicious nature. Secrecy about her savings, borrowing and lending money without his consent, and being a spendthrift were some reasons cited for their annoyance over money matters.
20. About 66% of the respondents admitted to having thoughts of punishing their wives.
21. Nearly 22.50% men admitted to having punished their wives by beating her over the last one month, and 7.50% refused to answer the query.
22. About 71.70% men in the survey, including 66% perpetrators, had not seen their fathers beating their mothers. Only 23% respondents stated that their fathers used to beat up their mothers.
23. Nearly 80.80% respondents considered DV a private matter. Majority of them felt it was a matter of family prestige. Only 11.70% respondents considered it a public issue because of its high prevalence across caste, class, religion and locality.
24. Majority of the respondents claimed that help was always available for DV, primarily from relatives and neighbours. In contrast, 10% respondents insisted that there was no help available in the area to stop such aggression. According to 14% respondents, if the matter turned serious it was taken to the *Panch* (local leaders) for a solution. 3.30% men said that the police was approached in some cases, but they played no preventive role.
25. As many as 81.50% perpetrators felt the need to stop DV.
26. About 32.50% respondents said that while men and women were equal, women should not complain to the police about the battering they faced from their husbands. This reflected the double standards that men held.
27. Nearly 18% of the respondents were aware that DV is a legal offence, yet approved of it, conditionally.
28. Many men who had witnessed violence at home as children did not approve of DV. Yet, 20% respondents who had never seen their mothers being victimized through violence, approved of DV.

Recommendations

1. Area-wise couple counselling centres for crisis intervention need to be started.
2. A multi-pronged approach involving family members, community, police, health care centres and education system, needs to work together to start making a difference.
3. Gender sensitization training through broad based campaigns seems to be an urgent pre-requisite to deal with the problem of DV.
4. Women's groups need to be organized as they are an important platform for women affected by DV.
5. There is a need for standardized interviewing procedures in health and hospital settings to better identify abuse cases, rather than reliance on self reported cases of violence.

Wife Abuse: A Study of the Influencing Factors and Its Consequences

Sumitra Sundar

Introduction

The problem of wife abuse, though not a new phenomenon, has gained the attention of researchers in the recent past, due to its transformation into a serious social problem, which was hidden from the public domain earlier under the garb of domestic privacy. Feminist concern has generated public interest in the plight of wives who are subject to abuse in the family. This resulted in the introduction of a legislative bill on domestic violence and proliferation of services to battered women. Violence between intimate partners is known as 'marital violence', 'spouse abuse', 'wife battering', 'family violence', etc.

Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the study were to:

1. Identify the various forms of wife abuse.
2. Identify various factors associated with wife abuse.
3. Understand the consequences of wife abuse on the family.

Methodology

The present research was conducted in a large metropolitan city in India namely Madras (presently Chennai). For the present research study, 280 wives who had experienced abuse from their husbands, were taken as respondents. Interview method was adopted for collecting data. The age of respondents ranged between 20 years to 58 years, with the average age being 29.78 years.

Findings and Conclusions

1. Various forms of violence such as scolding, slapping, pushing out of the house, strangling/ choking, grabbing the hair, kicking and forced sex were widely prevalent (above 90%).
2. As the age of the husband increased, wife abuse decreased.
3. Education of the wife was not related to wife abuse.
4. As the number of years the wife lived with her husband increased, abuse decreased.
5. With increase in the number of children in the family, wife abuse tends to decrease.
6. Wife's assertiveness decreased the occurrence of abuse.
7. The more suspicious the husband was, higher were the chances of abuse of the wife.
8. Smoking, drinking alcohol and gambling by husband were found to be associated with wife abuse.
9. As the involvement of others increased, abuse was also found to increase.
10. The major needs of abused wives reporting at the centres was counselling for themselves (92.5%).
11. Majority of the respondents hid their injuries, and among those who took treatment from doctors, majority of them never gave the actual reasons.

12. Majority of the counselling needs of victims were catered to by the counselling centres, except for the counselling that their husbands needed.
13. Wife abuse brought about behaviour changes in children, and their development was affected. Children from battered homes had traumatic experiences which impacted their studies.

Recommendations

1. Appropriate prevention and awareness efforts should be initiated and continued as domestic violence is a widespread but under-recognized problem.
2. Widespread campaigns should be undertaken in which mass media can play a vital role.
3. It is suggested that preventive education programmes should be organized for young men and women of marriageable age. The content of these education programmes for girls should include training in family life education, family management skills, assertive behaviour and social skills.
4. Boys and girls can also be given moral education and sex education. It should involve group discussions and role play including moral dilemma at various stages of growth.
5. It is proposed that separate organizations such as victim service centres may be started.
6. Victim service centres should train the victims reporting to them in assertive behaviour, family management and social skills. Victim assistance centres may also assist in imparting skills for income generation programmes.
7. It is suggested that integrated projects should be developed to identify such affected children at schools and help them to come out of their traumatic experience.
8. At the community level, family crisis intervention units must be started, at least in a phased manner.
9. Integrated projects should be developed at schools to help children from battered homes to come out of their trauma.
10. Programme should be evolved to increase the abusers' self esteem, status, education and job skills, to make them learn alternative ways to get what they want.

Wife Battering : A Study of Domestic Violence in the Slums of Varanasi

Shweta Prasad

Introduction

There are several forms of family violence, and wife abuse is one such type of family violence which is defined as “the use of physical force by a man against his intimate cohabiting partner”. The National Family Health Survey (NFHS) II (1998-99) of India reported that 50% of the women in India accepted at least one reason for wife beating, 40% women justified beatings for neglecting the house or children, 7% for not paying the expected dowry, and 25 – 37% for some other reason.

Aims and Objectives

The study was undertaken to:

1. Investigate the existence and prevalence of wife battering.
2. Establish the nature and extent of physical violence experienced by wives.
3. Ascertain the causes of wife battering, and
4. Suggest measures for curbing wife battering.

Methodology

This research studied the battering experienced by women in the slums of Varanasi city. Out of 209 slums, only one slum cluster mostly inhabited by Schedule Castes was selected. The total population of the *basti* (slum) was 1,188 and 20 cases were taken up randomly for in-depth study. Interview schedules were used to gather data.

Findings and Conclusions

1. About 80% women experienced the first incidence of violence within 2 years of their marriage, 10% experienced violence between 4 – 5 years of marriage and 10% did not experience any kind of physical violence.
2. Wives were beaten, burnt by pouring kerosene and ignited, slapped, pushed, scratched, and objects were thrown at them. This violence was perpetrated mainly by husbands.
3. Around 69% women sustained severe injuries due to beating.
4. Reasons given by husbands for inflicting domestic violence were food was not cooked properly, inadequate care of children, gave birth to a girl child, did not sacrifice personal desires for the sake of the family, was not able to give sexual gratification, inadequate dowry, and so on.
5. Around 70% reported that alcoholism was the major reason for wife battering, 90% believed that poverty was the reason behind their husband's aggressive behaviour, and 10% of them were uncertain about the reason for being battered. Only 20% women reported sexual jealousy to be the cause for violence.
6. In 40% cases, insufficient dowry was the main cause for violence, but 30% respondents faced violent behaviour on other issues also.
7. Almost all women said that their husbands took good care of them during pregnancy.

Recommendations

1. The Act on Domestic Violence must be passed to approach the problem of domestic violence legally.
2. The process of sensitizing men on the issue of domestic violence should start from early childhood. Socialization of children and upbringing should reinforce respect for women and girls.
3. There should be at least one shelter home in every city and town.
4. Awareness generation regarding existing legal provisions will also, to some extent, help curb the problem.
5. Indigenous arbitration bodies like *mahila mandals* and self help groups should be formed in each locality to combat the problem of domestic violence locally.

Women – Initiated Community Level Responses to Domestic Violence

Usha Nagar, Saroj Patel, Manisha Brahmhatt and Ila Solanki

Introduction

Domestic violence perpetrated against women by partners and close family members has long been a matter of silent suffering within the four walls of the home. In India, families and community leaders are beginning to organize together at the local level to re-shape community norms and attitudes regarding violence against women within marriage. The following research is intended to provide better documentation of how women led innovative responses have emerged, how they operate, and how successful they are in addressing the needs of women facing violence.

Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the study were to:

1. Document the process of unique community responses to domestic violence.
2. Assess the impact of these responses, and through this process, derive indicators for evaluating such responses.
3. Build the institutional capacities of these organizations in the areas of research, process documentation and evaluation.

Methodology

The study was conducted in 3 states namely Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. Local level responses to domestic violence namely *Nari Adalat/ Mahila Panchayat* (women's court/ women village leaders group) in Gujarat, *Nari Adalat* (women's court) in Uttar Pradesh and *The Shalishi* in West Bengal were studied. Data was collected through observing innovative women-initiated, community based responses to domestic violence and also from these women's courts.

Findings and Conclusions

The Shalishi in West Bengal

1. The Shalishi process was a traditional system widely used in Bengal which has the potential for adaptation by women and men for resolving their own disputes, and for increasing their ability to take decisions about their own lives.
2. Several *samities* also worked under the shalishi system, and these were Sharamajibee Mahila Samity (SMS), Jana Sanghati Kendra (JSK), Pashchim Banga Khet Major Samity (PBKMS), etc.
3. Two districts were covered in this study, South 24 Parganas and North 24 Parganas, which had the second and third highest number of cases of cruelty by husbands and relatives in India, and a quantitative survey was conducted of 151 women, who had utilized the shalishi system, to document the impact.
4. Most of the people who took help through the shalishi process were agricultural labourers, marginal farmers and small peasants.
5. The status of women within the family was low, dowry was a big problem, and there were a large number of cases of bigamy.
6. About 82% of the women surveyed said they came to the *Samity* expecting their family life to be restored. This means that the *Samity* has to ensure that its action does not lead to break up of the family.
7. The respondent had to write an application and give it to the *Samity*, and then the *Samity* started the enquiry.

8. A problem in every enquiry visit to meet the perpetrators was to convince them to attend the shalishi. The activists used many strategies to persuade the perpetrators. They listened patiently to them and even expressed sympathy towards them, then they gave assurance that the *Samity* would play a non-partisan role.
9. The shalishi was attended by the woman, the perpetrator(s), the natal and matrimonial family, along with their witnesses. *Samity* also invited locally important people like panchayat members, secretary of the local youth club, etc.
10. The *Samity* organized the shalishi like a public hearing, where everyone, starting with the complainant, was asked to narrate the events which boosted the women's confidence in front of the public, and speaking out was also cathartic for everyone present and helped to clear the air between the disputants to some extent.
11. The study showed that shalishi had a great impact on women due to which the status of women in the family and in society improved.
12. It was found that the number of applicants had increased, and around 66% women reported that they were definitely better off, 86% women mentioned that they had gained more self confidence, and around 40% - 50% of the women mentioned specific changes, such as the ability to protest and express themselves, increased mobility, courage and mental strength.
13. Women came to the *Samity* with problems, which showed better help-seeking behaviour among women. A large number of women (42.5%) had begun thinking about the causes of violence against women, subsequent to their case being discussed at the shalishi.
14. From the survey it seemed that the *Samity* has caused most change in the husband's behaviour and least in the natal family's behaviour. Also, wherever there has been change, it has resulted in the women being treated better. This could also be taken as a positive indication of the impact of the *Samity's* intervention, which had resulted in making the natal family more supportive, and which made the perpetrators less violent.

Nari Adalat and Sahara Sangh in Uttar Pradesh

1. This report discussed the evolution and impact of two responses, namely the Nari Adalat (women's court) and the Sahara Sangh (support groups), in two districts of Uttar Pradesh (Tehri-Garhwal and Saharanpur).
2. The Sahara Sangh (SS) in Tehri-Garhwal district and the Nari Adalat (NA) in Saharanpur district have emerged as significant interventions in the empowerment process initiated by the Mahila Samakhya (MS) programme. Both could be characterized as alternate systems of justice, as they functioned outside the formal legal system and derived their legitimacy from community approval.
3. A series of high profile cases of violence against women taken up by MS in the area propelled the issue as an important focus of the work by Sanghas, and the Nari Adalat (NA) consisted of a core team of 15-20 women comprised by selected Sangha women and Sahyogins (helpers) from MS programme, who held hearings along with representatives of village level collectives. They met at a designated time, place and date to deal with cases of violence against women.
4. The most fundamental impact was the end to violence in the lives of almost all women who were interviewed during the course of the study.
5. Most of the women mentioned that they became aware about their rights, their self-confidence increased, some had started working while others had started retaining control

over their money and had more decision making power in the household. The behaviour of family members and husbands also became better after MS programme.

Nari Adalat and Mahila Panchayat in Gujarat

1. In Gujarat, Baroda and Rajkot were among the first districts where the MS program was launched. *Nari Adalat* in Baroda and *Mahila Panchayat* in Rajkot were the structured community forums initiated by women to enable a public face-to-face arbitration in cases of violence between the two sides involved in the dispute.
2. Mahila Panchayat/ Nari Adalat handled the cases of violence against women which were brought to its notice by the Sangha of a particular village, or the affected woman herself may have done so. Local leaders (formal and informal), as well as other local officials, also referred cases.
3. Of the 25 case studies taken for in-depth survey, all women were found to be happy after the decision, except in two cases in which a person associated with the case (one man and one woman) reported total unhappiness with the decision.
4. Most of the women mentioned that their self-confidence had increased, they could tackle new problems, their ability to protest increased, there were changes in their understanding of rights and violence, their relations with husbands improved, husbands listened to them and consulted them before they took any decisions, and also looked after them.
5. Significant impact was also found on the women activists who implemented the intervention. The significant impact for the activists was their increased ability to negotiate within their families, and increase in their knowledge level and skills level, including their knowledge of law.

Recommendations

1. Linkages with local government authorities should be improved in order to strengthen and garner support for the women initiated forum, and strong alliances should be built specifically with panchayats, in order to ensure the institutionalized monitoring of local agencies such as the police, health clinics and others responding to domestic violence.
2. Programmes for victims of domestic violence need to integrate counselling and education for members of the natal family in order to provide adequate support to women experiencing violence.
3. A series of regional exchanges should be facilitated between institutionalized service providers and representatives of these organizations to improve the coordination of referrals, awareness of services available, and perspectives on domestic violence and human rights.
4. Research should be conducted into possible links between these programmes and legal institutions and processes, and indicators designed to assess the subtle impact and the longer term impact of the programmes upon the next generation, and the ways in which the dispute processes and case resolutions attract new participants and complaints.

V

Evicted Women



Gendered Assault: Women's Experience of Forced Eviction in Mumbai

Lysa John

Introduction

Forced eviction is the involuntary, permanent or temporary removal of a person from their home or lands, directly or indirectly attributable to the State, without the provision of and access to legal and other forms of protection. In effect, forced eviction prohibits an individual or group from living in a particular house, residence or place, and requires the movement of the individual or group to other areas. The United Nations Commission on Human Rights has deemed the practice of forced eviction to be a "gross violation of human rights, in particular, the right to housing".

Aims and Objectives

The specific objectives of the present study were to:

1. Study the types of violence which women have experienced in slums and pavements of Mumbai during forced eviction.
2. Observe whether planned resettlement, as the intended humane alternative to forced evictions, protects women from violence and safeguards their housing rights.
3. Share the experiences of women who were evicted in Mumbai.
4. Assess the gender assault.
5. Understand what 'terror on the pavement' meant.
6. Suggest ways to mitigate the pain caused by eviction.

Methodology

Three communities of Mumbai located at Bhabrekar Nagar, Shivaji Nagar and Prakash Nagar were selected for the present study. The first narrative of the study was the experiences of a pavement community living in Prakash Nagar. The second account was that of a typical 'slum community', that of Bhabrekar Nagar, and the third community was a poor migrant community located at Shivaji Nagar. The study traces its movements from a slum to a transit camp and finally to the building in which it was resettled under the Social Housing Scheme of the Government of Maharashtra. A feminist action research model was used to document the narratives. Women's experiences were sought and respected as a valuable research resource.

Findings and Conclusions

1. Large scale evictions of pavement communities have been carried out in Mumbai since 1981. During eviction, verbal abuse and beatings, rape and even killing were common. The destruction of home and property were traumatic experiences. Sometimes rape was used by evictors to break resistance.
2. The families in Prakash Nagar faced demolition on 12th February 1999 carried out by Mumbai Municipal Corporation. The bulldozers came unannounced in the afternoon and demolished the houses. The families in Prakash Nagar mentioned that they were subjected to verbal, physical and sexual violation by young policemen during eviction.
3. Eviction damaged the life of several families and the worst part was obtaining the basic necessities of water and sanitation.
4. Bhabrekar Nagar residents felt secure as their tenure had been long, and they had complete possession of legal proofs, until suddenly they were uprooted and evicted unannounced,

without warning and brutally in June 1998. A total of 12,842 families who had been living there for more than 20 years were displaced and almost 65,000 people rendered homeless.

5. Demolitions were made without any prior intimation and disrupted the entire social, cultural and economic fabric of the community.
6. Men and women lost their livelihoods and children were forced to drop out of schools. Women and children would spend hours walking to collect water, and people were forced to defecate in the open due to lack of sanitation facilities which created health problems.
7. The history of Shivaji Nagar showed that between 1960-1975 the community experienced repeated demolitions by the local authority.
8. The community's involvement in the State scheme for resettlement from row houses into apartments was initiated in 1988 and led by a man called Barnabas. Barnabas informed the residents that they would be able to own apartments if they made an initial payment of Rs.5000 and second installment of Rs.10,000. However, the people were not provided with any details of the SRA scheme.
9. The new elected committee shifted families into the Transit Camp, where they provided shelters made of asbestos sheets. The families reported that severe water-logging and absence of adequate drainage and sewerage systems gave rise to widespread health problems.
10. The average daily income of families vulnerable to eviction ranged between Rs.20 to Rs.50 per day.
11. On 6 August 1998, 120 families moved into their new houses in 7 storey buildings but besides the keys to houses, the families were provided no other form of ownership of their flats.
12. Women realized the need to unite for change and one of their first actions was to get a copy of the guidelines of the housing scheme and publicize these from house to house and make others aware of the existent legal deviations.
13. The condition of evicted women who were single, was the worst.

Recommendations

1. According to the Committee, procedural protections which should be applied by States prior to the eviction include an exploration of all feasible alternatives with affected persons.
2. An adequate and reasonable notice for all affected persons prior to the scheduled date of eviction should be given.
3. The eviction should be carried out in strict compliance with relevant provisions of international human rights law and in accordance with general principles of reasonableness and proportionality.
4. All the individuals concerned should have a right to adequate compensation for any property, both personal and material, which is affected.
5. Evictions should not result in rendering individuals homeless or vulnerable to the violation of other human rights. Where those affected are unable to provide for themselves, the State party must ensure that adequate alternative housing, resettlement or access to productive land is provided.
6. NGOs around the world should document and monitor specific forced evictions. The related reports should be presented to United Nations Human Rights Commission.

VI

Kidnapped Women



Procurement by Kidnapping of Women and Children for Prostitution at Metropolitan City: A Study of Kolkata, Hyderabad and Bangalore

Bureau of Police Research and Development

Introduction

There have been a number of cases where girls/ women have been taken away from their homes by force or deceit and gradually intimidated into joining the flesh trade and lead the life of prostitutes. Criminals involved in this type of trafficking normally target such persons and adopt such *modus operandi* that the developments leading to the crime do not appear to or amount to any offence at any particular place at the time of its commission.

Aims and Objectives

Objectives of the study were to:

1. Elicit information from prostitutes who have come to the metropolitan sex market in the last 10 years.
2. Identify the modes of kidnapping and routes of procurement of women and children for prostitution.

Methodology

NGOs who were already active and undertaking various activities in red light areas were selected and approached through local city police. The prostitutes gave information under the assurance of anonymity and non-involvement in any future litigation and therefore the data could not be used to initiate any legal action against anybody. A total of 349 interviews were taken of prostitutes from three metropolises, namely Bangalore (146), Kolkata (153), and Hyderabad (50).

Findings and Conclusions

1. Most of the prostitutes were from India, and only 12 belonged to Bangladesh and 2 were from Nepal.
2. Out of the 348 respondents who disclosed their religion, 254 (72.98%) were Hindus, 76 (21.83%) were Muslims and 18 (5.17%) were Christians.
3. The number of married prostitutes was higher (187) than those who were unmarried (162).
4. Maximum number of interviewees were illiterate or had primary education.
5. A large number of prostitutes in Bangalore came from Bangalore district and those in Kolkata came from Nadia, North 24 Parganas and South 24 Parganas.
6. Induction is different in different states as money appeared to play an important role in Bangalore, while cheating dominates in Kolkata. In Hyderabad, forcible induction was much higher compared to the total number of respondents.
7. Persons instrumental in inducting the prostitute into the flesh trade were husbands in the case of Bangalore, while the kidnapper played a major role in Kolkata.
8. The number of respondents indicating presence of one to three members in a gang is much higher than those claiming a larger number of members.
9. Mostly, women were working in these gangs, and there were fewer men.

10. According to the information revealed about places of operation of these gangs, they appeared to have large areas of operation. Gangs use long routes with transit places for procurement of women and children for prostitution, and some indulged in kidnapping and forcible induction.
11. Prostitutes were sold for the first time in Bangalore city in Jamuna Mansion, Kethwadi, Veerabhadra Theatre Roadside, Srirampura slum, and K.R. Market; in Mumbai City in Basha complex, Bombay Central Hotel, Krishna Building, and Kamathipura red light area; in Bangladesh in Dhaka and Tangi; in Bihar in brothels in Patna and Debriazilla Rail Station; in Delhi in Shalimar Garden, Chandni Chowk and G.B. Road; in West Bengal at Dhama Railway Station, Howrah Railway Station, Sonagachhi and Kolkabagan; in Goa at Baina beach; in Pune at Swarna Hotel. Second time selling took place in Delhi at G.B. Road and Kamla market; in Bangalore at Kamakshipalaya; in Goa at Baina beach; in Mumbai at Kamathipura, Simplus Building; and in West Bengal in Sonagachhi.

Recommendations

1. Further strategy needs to be drawn up to tackle this issue of preventing as well as rescuing helpless girls and women from being forced into prostitution.

VII

Rape Victims



Psychological Correlates of Rape Victimization

S. Usharani

Introduction

The recent upsurge of the feminist movement, following an increase in the victimization of women, has seen the emergence of multiple studies in crimes against women. Crime statistics from Government sources reveal that rape victimization is highest compared to all other crimes against women. A proper functioning legal system in any country is essential to have a thorough investigation of unlawful or illegal events. In this sense, rape victimization is highly significant because it is not only a sex crime but a crime of violence and aggression against women.

Aims and Objectives

The major objective of the present study was to:

1. Investigate the psychological aftermath of rape.

Methodology

The study was conducted with an *ex-post facto* design. The sample of the study consisted of 95 rape victims. All cases registered as 'rape' of victims in the age group 12-19 years in the First Information Report (FIR) of different police stations in Madras and neighbouring districts were taken as the sample for the present study. Due to non-availability of a large sample, purposive sampling method was adopted.

Findings and Conclusions

1. Incidents of rape are increasing because of increasing social maladjustment.
2. As social maladjustment increases, the tendency to share attitudes and opinions characteristic of persons in lower socio-economic classes also increases and vice-versa; the presence of distrust and estrangement in the victim's attitudes towards others also increases; and feelings of hopelessness and depression also increase.
3. Negative relationship was found between rape trauma and intelligence. There was no relationship between demographic variables and the Rape Trauma Syndrome variables except in the variable of social anxiety.
4. It was found that victims of rape had lack of cognitive capacity for comprehending situations, due to which feelings of hopelessness and depression were felt by victims and they could not overcome their victimization and lead life in an effective manner.
5. Rape incidents were more where the individual was raped by a stranger, by a single person within four walls, and raped during evening and night hours.
6. The maximum number of rape victims were in the age group of 16-18 years, were unmarried (90%), and belonged to the semi-urban and unskilled labour group. Most rapes occurred in rural areas rather than in urban and semi-urban areas.
7. There was no significant difference between the two groups *viz*, the recently raped group and the earlier raped group, on the variables of social maladjustment, alienation, feelings of hopelessness and depression.

Recommendations

1. There is a need and urgency for developing rehabilitation programmes for training rape victims to cope effectively and change their attitude and lifestyle towards living.
2. Training should be given to women to protect themselves from physical violence and any other violence by teaching them self defence.
3. Victims should have knowledge about protection acts and other legal information meant for their welfare.

Rape Victims in Kerala

Usha Venkitakrishnan and Sunil George Kurien 32

Introduction

Kerala witnesses large scale violence against women, including rape, despite significant social development. Statistics available with statutory bodies like Crime Records Bureau, State Commission for Women and Police Women's Cell revealed that the enormity of crimes committed against women in Kerala is alarming.

Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the present study were to:

1. Study post rape condition of victims' physical, mental, social, and moral condition, and suggest remedial action.
2. Study the role of police and crime investigating agencies, medical agencies, judiciary, NGOs in assisting rape victims, and judicial system's efficacy to inflict just punishment on offenders.
3. Study familial situation of rape victims, prior to and after the incident.
4. Propose necessary amendments to existing rape laws.

Methodology

40 reported cases of rape from different police stations, NGOs and State Commission for Women were identified. Out of these 40 women, personal interviews of 30 victims and families were conducted, though only 25 cases were taken for detailed analysis. A structured schedule was used for interviewing the victims. Information was collected on type and particulars of rape, such as place, relationship of victim to the rapist, reputation of victim, educational level, age, marital status, etc. at the time of rape. To understand the mental condition of the victim, questions on mental state of the victim were also included. In 19 cases, judgment was given and in 11 cases judgment was awaited. Discussions were also conducted with neighbours of victims and local people, and interviews were conducted of various categories of people involved in the process of dealing with reported rape cases, such as police officials, psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker, etc. Free flowing and semi-structured interview schedule was used during in-depth interviews. Investigators also observed non-verbal behaviour and other circumstantial evidence during interviews, to do a fairly vivid situational analysis.

Findings and Conclusions

1. Crimes committed against women increased by more than 30% in Kerala during the 1990s. The number of reported rape cases increased sharply. Scheduled tribe women were victims in around 4% of the total number of rape cases during 1997-2000.
2. Nearly 60% victims were in the age group of 16-30 years, which was the same proportion as at the all India level. The next highest group that was prone to rape was between 11-15 years (25%). Cases against children below 10 years of age were 5%.
3. In some cases, rape was by physical force – a sudden attack on the victim, whereas in other cases the victims were lured under some pretext; unemployed girls were lured by fake recruitment agencies, and poor girls were lured by promises of marriage.

4. There were instances of attracting innocent children, by offering them chocolates or toys and then raping them.
5. Incidents of rape of young housemaids by their employer, and rape of pregnant women during consultation by physicians were also reported.
6. There was increased involvement of youth in the crimes, particularly those from affluent families. People were insensitive to rape cases, and popular responses ranged from apathy to downright condemnation of victims. Victims were branded as immoral by rapists, police and judiciary.
7. Instead of apprehending the culprits, efforts were made to play down the incidents of rape.
8. The police failed to collect primary evidence and conduct serious investigations.
9. In Kerala, out of the total crimes against women, 90.6% cases were disposed off in 1998 and 81.6% in 1999, with conviction rate being 23.7% and 38.2% in 1998 and 1999 respectively. Less than 10% accused on an average were convicted, and more than 3 times the number were acquitted.
10. The victims become a laughing stock before the public and suffered indignities when the culprit was acquitted. The woman was branded as a woman of easy virtue.
11. In a small number of cases, force was not used while raping and the offence was committed by 1 person. In such cases, the victims were mentally challenged.
12. Majority of the rapes occurred in the age group of 16-24 years. Most of the victims belonged to low class (76%). The parents of these victims were workers, such as unskilled labourers, fish vendors, etc. A few victims belonged to lower middle class. None of the victims were from affluent families. Chances were that such incidents did not get reported or were settled on a compromise basis between the concerned families.
13. A total of 23 victims were from nuclear families. None of the victims were from broken homes. The popular belief that such incidents took place in families without strong psychological bonds among members was unfounded.
14. Most victims were students when raped.
15. In a majority of cases the rapist was a person known to the victim. The known person included acquaintances, neighbours, close relatives and lovers. Close relatives involved father, step father, brother-in-law and maternal uncle.
16. In some cases, the offenders were under the influence of alcohol. In gang rapes and incest rapes, the rapists were heavily drunk.
17. In 58% cases, rapists were from families with good social standing. It seemed that they committed the crime impulsively, taking advantage of a favourable situation. In 42% cases, the rapist had a criminal background and had either been a vendor of illicit liquor, or a habitual rape criminal.
18. The rapist used different techniques to trap the victims – enticing, seducing, threatening, trapping and overpowering victims. Since the events happened unexpectedly, most victims submitted to the violation meekly out of fear or shock, without knowing the seriousness of the act. In a few cases, victims struggled to keep the rapists away.
19. In most cases, victims had reported to the police immediately after the rape. In a few cases, the victims reported after some delay, and the reasons for delay were fear of the

- offender, fear of social stigma and parental rejection. In a few cases, victims did not persist with charges as culprits were either step-fathers or strangers who could not be identified.
20. In cases in which rapists were close relatives of victims, fear of bringing a bad reputation to the family, the crime affecting other family members badly, and fear of others holding the victim herself responsible were causes for not pursuing the case.
 21. In certain cases, families were forced to report cases, as culprits made repeated attempts to rape the victim or the victim became pregnant.
 22. All families of victims cursed the rapists for bringing them a bad name.
 23. Most family members, neighbours and victims said that police personnel were on the whole very cooperative and helpful; they themselves gave the victims and their families all the necessary support, and did not misbehave in any manner. However, in 3 cases police who had been helpful initially turned harsh.
 24. All the victims who attended courts expressed that questioning by defence lawyers was an excruciating experience. In a few cases, victims were also expelled from their homes after the rape. Women who had children born out of rapes, did not even consider marriage as an option.
 25. Most victims reported suffering from hallucinations and melancholia. Owing to feelings of inferiority and worthlessness, they stayed away from relatives, friends and neighbours. They saw a potential rapist in every man and felt lonely during ceremonies and festivals. Victims felt that people ridiculed them, and none of them could stand a rape scene even on TV.

Recommendations

1. Special courts should be set up for speedy trial of rape cases. Such courts should be constituted of judges, lawyers, doctors, psychologists and representatives of NGOs. Also, majority of the members should be women.
2. In the event of a child being born out of rape, rapists should be ordered to pay adequate maintenance, till the child becomes a major.
3. Systematic efforts should be made to organize large scale awareness programmes and campaigns in order to disseminate gender just values that should counter patriarchy.
4. State Commission for Women should organize awareness classes in schools and colleges with the help of NGOs.
5. Specialized counselling centres should be started to deal with rape victims.

Rape Victims Seeking Justice: An Unending Ordeal

Ritu Chaudhary, Rajan Khosla, Sampurna, Sabhayata

Introduction

Rape is a heinous crime against women. There is a need for higher conviction rate for rapists committing this heinous crime. Rape victims faced many problems due to legal proceedings. Most families needed emotional support and legal guidance. However, they were unable to access these services due to unavoidable reasons.

Aims and Objectives

The objectives of the present study were to:

1. Identify the concrete problems faced by victims of sexual abuse at police level, hospital level, community level and within the family once the case is reported.
2. Devise strategies to create a victim friendly environment through effective need based intervention.
3. Find out the demographic profile of the accused involved in sex crimes and see if some pattern emerges.
4. Identify reasons for poor motivation to fight cases among victims and low conviction rate of accused in sexual abuse cases.

Methodology

In the study, east, north-east, north-west and central districts of Delhi were covered. The sample consisted of 150 cases of sexual abuse referred to Pratidhi or Action for Development (AFD) - Umeed in the year 2002. Questionnaire technique was used for data collection. The questions gave multiple choices and the responses could fall in more than one category.

Findings and Conclusions

1. There were a variety of problems faced by the families at police level. About 89% families reported that policemen visited their homes in uniform. Also, 16% families reported paying for transport while going for MLC. This was a problem for daily wage earners who already had a meagre income.
2. Nearly 31% families complained that policemen passed undue remarks on the character of the victim and her family members when they went to register a complaint. Police was blamed for forcing the victim's family to compromise with the accused family in 15% cases, and 17% accused police of favouring the accused and neglecting the victim's problems.
3. About 27% families had problems in accessing the status of their case, followed by 22% families having problems for being called to the police station frequently, due to which their job suffered, especially in the case of daily wage earners. Other problems shared were unnecessary delay in filing FIR (8%), giving money to get FIR copy at police stations (6%), and demand for bribe (2%).
4. Nearly 16% families were very upset at the way they were treated at the hospital. They complained of being kept waiting for more than 4-5 hours for getting MLC done. 45% cases received very prompt response from the doctor and were taken care of within an hour. 5% families also faced the problem of undesirable remarks or queries made by doctors.
5. In 33% cases, neighbours and people from the victim's village/relatives were a source of

stress to the victim's family. In case the victim was above 13 years of age, community exerted pressure for a compromise with the accused person's family, boycotted victim's family, and use of abusive language for the victim's family was common. However, community was supportive towards the victim's family in cases where girls were below 12 years of age.

6. The victim's acceptance within her family also goes down. About 36% victims were constantly blamed by parents and 37% were withdrawn from school or vocation.
7. Other problems that arose were isolation of the victim (27%), early marriage of the victim (25%), and loss of parent's job (24%).
8. In 25% cases, the complete family withdrew from the neighbourhood due to shame or fear from the accused person's family.
9. The major problem faced by almost all families was the long delay in starting of the case. The long interval encourages more people to talk against the victim causing them to lose interest in the case. This explains the reason why a large number of families change residence without informing the police or the NGO about their new address.
10. On an average, every family had to suffer postponement of hearing dates at least 4-5 times without further progress in proceedings. 32% families reported that most of the times information about the postponement is given after a whole day of waiting.
11. In 88% cases, the accused was known to the victim and belonged lower socio-economic group. In more than 95% cases, the accused were school dropouts and 5% had done schooling beyond Class 10. Nearly 50% of the accused were employed in the unorganized sector. They had no regular jobs, and their jobs were seasonal like labourer, white washer and rickshaw puller, etc. This left them with lots of extra time, which brought them at par with their unemployed counterparts (50%). This availability of excess time without any constructive activity to involve themselves, along with so much exposure to sexual issues through mass media, and easy availability of vulnerable group could be seen as some of the precipitating factors for occurrence of sexual offences.
12. About 66% victims and 82% parents were provided with counselling services. In most cases, victims could not be contacted as parents had sent them to some relative's place for change of environment.
13. In 22% cases victims were provided with medical treatment.
14. Nearly 15% cases were provided with educational assistance in one form or the other.
15. Most of the families were legally ignorant, and apprehensive in approaching the police to know about the status of their case. Out of 127 cases, case hearings had started in only 32% cases.

Recommendations

1. During investigation, the interaction with the victim about the case should be done by a female police officer.
2. Some provision should be made to check the policemen who are found guilty of probing into the character of the victim or her family when the victim registers a complaint of being sexually abused.
3. Even though it is written in SO 303 that no policemen should visit the victim's home in uniform, it is not put into practice. It should be made mandatory for all policemen going to the victim's home to be in plain clothes, and show their identity proof to the victim before questioning her.
4. In cases where the accused person's family is influential and tries to threaten the victim's family, the victim should be provided police protection.
5. Fast track courts for rape victims should be started to ensure quick justice and respite to the victim.

A Report on Violence Against Women

Namita Sethi

Introduction

Violence against Women (VAW), in terms of forced prostitution, trafficking, domestic violence, etc. are manifestations of women's oppression in society. This study investigated the various forms of violence against women.

Aims and Objectives

The objectives of the present study were to:

1. Locate VAW in various spheres of society and devise effective strategies to ensure a peaceful existence for women.
2. Understand Indian laws and policies on VAW and their effective implementation.

Methodology

Statistics on VAW have been collected from various sources. Recent statistics (May-December 2004) were collected from 8 newspapers (4 English, 4 Hindi) of Delhi by a research team at *Jagori*. These statistics were broad indicators of the cases reported, and were not the actual cases. Most data on violence against women was difficult to collect as many victims chose not to talk about it.

Findings and Conclusions

1. A rape occurred every 36 minutes. The conviction rate of offenders was dismally low in proportion to the number of cases that were reported.
2. Mostly, the victims were too scared to report the cases due to loss of honour/reputation, fear of reprisal, depression, etc.
3. If the victim went to a Government hospital for Forensic Medical Examination (FME), she was treated with great insensitivity. She was subjected to a long wait, and not given any information about the prolonged and intensive examinations that she would be subjected to. Most women withdrew their complaints at this stage only.
4. The victims had to undergo repeated tests at the hospital as pregnancy, HIV, etc. could be the repercussions of the rape. HIV brought additional stigma and trauma for some women.
5. The victims had to tell their story many times and were made to recall every gruesome detail.
6. In 84% of the cases the offenders were known to the victims. These known offenders were either neighbours (32.0%) or relatives (6.3%).
7. The rapists who were arrested could be released on bail and it took up to 7 years for the sentence to be passed. Meanwhile, the perpetrators intimidated the victims and pressurized them to withdraw their cases.
8. Gang rapes were used to humiliate Dalits, tribal women and minority communities. About 1000 cases of rapes were annually reported by the women of disadvantaged communities. Apart from caste and communal violence, the security forces (Jammu and Kashmir) and police were also implicated in some of these cases.

9. In prostitution, the major dichotomy lay in the abolition of prostitution as advocated by some groups on one hand, and the sex workers who were fighting for their rights on the other hand.
10. Most prostitutes distrusted regulations and licensing because it gave excessive powers to the police. Also, all prostitution was not forced and all commercial sex workers (CSWs) did not wish to quit.
11. Most CSWs did not use condoms or advice given by NGO activists, as the clients demanded unprotected sex.
12. Domestic violence (DV) constituted about 32.3% of the total crime against women. One of the greatest myths was that DV is more prevalent in a particular type of class, relationship or family. However, there were no distinctions vis-à-vis DV between joint-nuclear, working class-business class, love-arranged marriages, etc.
13. Police and NGO records revealed that women asked for help only when violence had been going on for many years (usually the 8th year), or when they were faced with situations that threatened their or their children's immediate survival, or when confronted with loss of children's custody.
14. Convictions in cases of DV were low. Lengthy court proceedings, delays in investigation and lack of sufficient evidence to prove grave injury were the reasons for fewer prosecutions.
15. The cause of DV were arguments over money, jealousy, refusal to gratify sexual needs, women's desire to work outside, etc. Moreover, there was always pressure on the women to reconcile.

Recommendations

1. Active networking between prosecution, police and NGOs is needed to combat VAW.
2. Greater protection for victims of violence and their demographic details are needed.
3. Counselling centres should be run to help victims recover from their trauma.
4. Alternative legal structures like '*Nari Adalats*' (women courts) and '*Mahila Panch*' (women community leaders who arbitrate in disputes) should be set up.

VIII

Street Women



Alone in the Metropolis: Street Girls of Mumbai, India

Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action (YUVA)

Introduction

There are many girls living alone on the streets of Mumbai, but for their own protection, they remain elusive and little is known about them. For this and other reasons, the specific needs of street girls have remained unidentified and few programmes have been developed to assist them. Street girls live as invisible ghosts in the huge metropolis, uncared for and unwanted.

Aims and Objectives

The specific objectives of the study were:

1. To contribute to the information on and to develop appropriate intervention strategies for street girls in Mumbai.
2. To understand more about the background, lives and livelihood of lone street girls.
3. To improve the lives of street girls, and in the long term, reduce the number of girls living on streets.

Methodology

Many of the street girls were contacted through the open shelter, Childline (a telephone support and emergency service for street children), and YUVA's Health Van. YUVA's staff had physically gone to the streets to find the street girls, who usually would congregate on station platforms at night to sleep. Therefore, night rounds were held throughout the year to make and renew contacts with these girls. A number of residential workshops were held over a period of two or three days. YUVA also organized an occasional day outing to enable girls to relax and play in a safe environment. Information was also collected by the method of case studies.

Findings and Conclusions

1. Under-employment and unemployment, illiteracy, death, illness, evictions and large families are primary indicators common to the majority of street girls.
2. Secondary factors such as alcoholism, broken marriages, and abuse are frequently related to the primary factors that force girls to move onto the streets.
3. Extreme poverty has to be taken as a major factor when addressing the causes why girls, as young as six years old, come onto streets.
4. Lone street girls are found to be self-reliant and independent. From their experiences, they have learnt not to readily trust people, to move from station to station, and to use their feminine charms.
5. Lone street girls need special intervention strategies in order to improve their living conditions.
6. Street girls need support in trying to deal with their relationships, which form an important and often emotionally draining part of their daily lives.
7. Another major element for an effective intervention strategy is to ensure psycho-social support.
8. Street girls need emotional tools and methods for dealing with the conflicts that occur on an everyday basis, especially between each other.

Recommendations

1. Educating street girls about hygiene, nutritious food, contraception and sexual diseases should be given high priority.
2. Skills like sewing and applying *mehendi* (henna) can help in their economic rehabilitation, and self defence should be taught to street girls so that they can defend themselves.
3. All street girls need to have individual attention and support, depending on their particular situation in life.
4. Flexibility is a priority as the girls are at such varying stages. Many will take as long to get off the streets, as it did for them to come onto the streets; others may never live off the streets.
5. These girls desperately need shelter, food, education, medical care, security, emotional support, recreation and love. Very few programmes are available for street girls, and they are in dire need of social services.

IX

Terrorist Violence / Riot Affected Women



Bangles of Fire: A Study

Qudsiya Banatwala

Introduction

Women are associated with the “private” or domestic life rather than the public domain of social, political and economic life which men generally shape and transform. The general belief is that women are more caring of the human race, as they lack the blood thirsty instincts of their male counterparts. This study found that in changing times women can be as aggressive and violent as men in certain situations.

Aims and Objectives

Objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine aggression levels in adult women.
2. Examine the role of women as perpetrators of communal violence.
3. Examine the role of psychological factors that pre-disposed women to commit acts of violence.

Methodology

The study investigated the Gujarat riots of 2002. Research commenced on 25th April 2002 in Mumbai and Ahmedabad with a sample of 10 each Hindu and Muslim women in the age group of 20-50 years. Information was collected only from Hindu and Muslim women using a structured questionnaire translated into Hindi, Marathi and Gujarati. Reports and affidavits on the Gujarat carnage of 2002 were obtained from lawyers during interview sessions.

Findings and Conclusions

1. On the sub trait of physical aggression, the differences found between Hindu and Muslim women were significant.
2. The Fact Finding Team found that women from communities were affected by the fear and terror promoted by the State and the police.
3. Area reports from Barampura, Bajwa and Navayard among others reveal that women had been active members of the attacking mobs.
4. PUCL Fact Finding Team reported that the level of hate among the Hindu women against Muslim women was alarming.
5. Hindu women felt threatened by Muslims economically and socially.
6. Dalit women had more or less allied with the upper castes during the violence, which was seen in areas like Baranpura, Navidharti, Navayard and Fatehpura and resulted in the Hinduization of Dalit women on a scale never before witnessed in Vadodara.
7. A primary estimate of economic losses suffered by the Muslim minority had been put at Rs. 38,000 millions.
8. Most of the women participating in communal violence came from middle class family backgrounds.
9. The two extremist groups within the two communities also differed in childhood experiences.

Recommendations

1. The need of the hour is for women to unite, to fight this move to divide Indian people along the lines of religion and caste.
2. It is time that women discard their communal attitude, evaluate their historical legacy and favour values of courage, sanity and personal freedom.
3. Hindutva women need to be provided a platform to come together and interact with other Hindu and non-Hindu women and realize that they are not being empowered or liberated in anyway with their militant identity.

How Has the Gujarat Massacre Affected Minority Women? The Survivors Speak Citizen's Initiative

Introduction

The scale and brutality of violence in Gujarat has robbed many women of their basic human right to live in dignity. The impact on women has been physical, economical and psychological. In many ways women have been the central characters in the Gujarat violence.

Aims and Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine the nature and extent of crimes against women.
2. Understand the role played by the police and other State institutions in protecting women.

Methodology

Women survivors at 7 relief camps in both rural and urban areas of Ahmedabad, Kheda, Vadodra, Sabarkantha and Panchmahals districts were interviewed by a team of women investigators from Delhi, Bangalore, Tamil Nadu and Ahmedabad.

Findings and Conclusions

1. The pattern of violence did not indicate "spontaneous" action. The violence against minorities was pre-planned, organized and targeted. In every instance of mob violence against minorities there was a regular pattern of violence against women.
2. The crimes against women had been grossly under-reported and the exact extent of these crimes demanded further investigation. Many women in relief camps had suffered from rapes, gang rapes, mass rapes and then had been burnt alive.
3. There was evidence that the State and the police had assisted in perpetuating crimes against women. No effort was made to protect the women and no *mahila* (female) police was deployed. FIRs were not being lodged and compensation was not given.
4. There was a total collapse of the state machinery. No alternative institutional mechanism was provided through which women could seek justice. Gujarat did not have a State Commission for Women.
5. Relief camps did not provide for any outlets where women could talk about their nightmarish experiences. Women had not shared their experiences with anyone.
6. There was pressure to conform culturally in order to survive. Muslim women had to give up *salwar kameez* and wear *saris* and *bindis* for their own safety.
7. Most women were unwilling to return to their homes in villages. The scattered positioning of Muslim homes in villages led them to feel insecure.
8. Violence led to creation of female-headed households. In many cases entire families had been killed and many women had witnessed the killing of all their family members. In addition to dealing with the trauma of their loss, they had to face a future with their life savings and livelihood sources destroyed.
9. Many women kept on repeating the long lists of possessions that they had lost. The psychological impact of sudden destitution had been brutal.

10. For those who were widows before the violence, it was difficult to go back to being a destitute again and regain economic solvency.
11. Relief camps had appalling physical conditions. There were inadequate toilet facilities and little protection from bad weather conditions.
12. Rural women had been affected by communal violence on such a large scale for the first time, and this led to an alarming trend towards ghettoization of the Muslim community in rural areas.
13. Certain sections of Gujarati vernacular press had played a role in promoting and provoking sexual violence against women.

Recommendations

1. Counselling should be provided immediately to all victims, even before registering cases so that women are able to give essential information, which they have difficulty speaking about. People with expertise in trauma counselling need to be identified.
2. Women's rights activists should be enabled to work freely among survivors and police protection should be provided to them.
3. The appalling sanitary conditions at relief camps need to be improved. Adequate health care facilities need to be provided at the camps.
4. A comprehensive rehabilitation programme for rape victims and their families (where the women are dead) needs to be announced urgently.
5. Immediate assessment of the number of female-headed households needs to be done. A rehabilitation package needs to be made available for them.
6. Special provisions need to be made for orphans and children.
7. There is need for Peace Committees to be set up by the Government.

Victims of Militancy: Punjab

Pramod Kumar, Rainuka Dagar and Neerja

Introduction

The ruthless violence of the 1980s fractured the social fabric of Punjabi society. The present study aimed to understand the impact of violence on victims in terms of somatic effects like psychological disturbances, physical disabilities, withdrawal symptoms, revenge addiction, reliving experience and also effects like break in education, dropouts, loss of jobs and incomes, and disintegration of the family. Also, the study attempted to identify the response of the community towards the victims especially vis-à-vis gender, whereby male victims were glorified and female victims were stigmatized.

Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the study were to:

1. Understand needs (social, psychological, economic) and aspirations of women and children of violence affected families.
2. Understand the overall impact of violence on children and other victim-survivors.
3. Formulate a plan of action to productively integrate the children and victim-survivors into existing socio-economic and political milieu.
4. Suggest policy initiatives to Government support systems and NGOs for the integration of child victims of violence and victim-survivors into society.

Methodology

The sample was divided into 2 classification systems, based on victimization and affiliation. The first classification included 4 categories: victim-survivors (women or children who suffered different levels of torture, injury and psychological trauma such as rape, etc.), victim-dependents (members of victims family who were dependents like orphans, widows, etc.), handicapped survivors (family members of a person who became disabled but remained alive), and witnesses (those who observed an act of killing, humiliation, torture, rape or any other violent act). The second classification of affiliation included 3 categories of militant affiliates (not only identified militant family but also families suspected to belong to militant families, since they were treated as militants by the state and community), state affiliate and other affected survivors. Case studies of victims were studied, along with women and children residing in 3 institutions namely *Guru Asra*, *Mata Gujari Sikh Niwas*, and *Manukhta Da Ghar*. A representative sample of 200 women and 200 children was taken from 3 cultural zones of Punjab, namely Malwa, Majha and Doaba. Data was collected through interview schedules, group discussions and case study method. Psychological tools like PGI Health Questionnaire N2 (Verma and Wig, 1976), Multi-phase Personality Questionnaire (MPQ, Murthy, 1965), Coping Scale (Schier and Crowice, 1994), and Efficacy Alienation Scale (Tamber, 1977) which was standardized on the Indian population, were used to analyse physical health, mental health, attitude and coping behaviour of victims. Projective techniques such as free painting and free association were used on child samples, along with sociometry techniques to ascertain social functioning of children in various groups.

Findings and Conclusions

1. About 71% victims were from rural areas, whereas only 29% were from urban areas. Nearly 45.5% of the victims belonged to lower middle strata and 25.5% were from upper middle strata.

Institute for Development and Communication (IDC), SCO 1126-27, 1st Floor, Sector 22 B, Chandigarh-160002, Chandigarh : 2001. 121p. Collaborators : UNICEF, New Delhi; Punjab, Department of Relief and Resettlement, Chandigarh.

2. Within the lower middle strata, most victims were from militant affiliate category (30%). Most respondents in this category were financially affected as they were given no compensation from the state and had no personal assets to fall back on.
3. Nearly 73% women victims belonged to categories other than SCs and OBCs. However, in the militant category 45.3% were from OBC category, with only 53.1% from the *Jat Sikh* category. In the state affiliate group, 80% were non-OBCs and non-SCs and in the survivor category 85% were non-OBCs and non-SCs. Hence, victimization under militancy was caste based with the SCs escaping much of the violence since only 2% of the victims were SCs.
4. Nearly 73% of the victims were Sikhs and 27% were Hindus. Not even a single Christian or Muslim was found to be a victim even in the category of witnesses. Within the militant affiliates all women belonged to Sikh religion, whereas among the state affiliates 65.5% were Sikh. Among the other affected survivors, 55% were Sikh.
5. Most women were affected through the loss of spouse, with 59% becoming widows. 37% women suffered as mothers of victims. In the militant affiliate category, 75% had been harassed, beaten, and taken to police *thanas* (stations) in their capacity as mothers and wives of militants. 71.8% women whose spouses were militants were widowed, divorced, or deserted. Some woman were half-widows as they were not sure whether their husbands were dead or alive.
6. Nearly 42.5% victims were in the 35-45 years age group, reflecting that young women were most affected, and this age group had need and capacity for socio-economic integration. Within this category, 39.06% were militant affiliates, 46.43% were state affiliates, and there were other affected survivors also.
7. About 25% victims were illiterate, 29% had completed Class X and 37.5% had studied below primary level. The education level also determined their economic integration. The militant affiliate group was not eligible for Government pension or compensation. They could be involved in micro-enterprises but that required functional literacy. Only 17% state affiliates were illiterate, making their absorption into employment easier. Most graduates belonged to witness group and were young girls belonging to upper strata.
8. Militant affiliate category comprised 95.4% of the victim survivors, and they either belonged to or were suspected to be from militant families. Even families suspected of having militant members were meted out the same treatment as militant affiliate group, both by the Government and community.
9. Militant affiliate category was constantly harassed by the police and remained socially isolated in the community. Till the time of the study, these families continued to be harassed by the police. The victims from police background also faced "one-spell" harassment by militants until the death of their male members. Thus, continued harassment and fear of recurring torture or humiliation did not exist.
10. About 97.5% victims lost their family members (59% became widows), underwent torture, humiliation, lived in conditions of fear, insecurity, and endured financial diminution. Episodes of violence were traumatic in nature leaving them psychologically disturbed and socially isolated from their support structures. Victim categories overlapped, and victim-survivors were also victim dependents, having undergone physical abuse while simultaneously trying to cope with the loss of a loved one on whom they were economically and socially dependent.
11. Nearly 75% of the militant affiliates were taken to police stations and beaten. Many of them complained of being badly treated and still remained psychologically disturbed by sexual abuse unleashed upon them. About 80.5% victims suffered psychological abuse, excessive fear, threats, foul remarks and distress due to killing of a family member. Police would take away and abuse young girls from militant affiliate category. Foul remarks with sexual connotation were psychologically damaging to 54.6% of victims in militant affiliate and

other affected survivor categories. Material loss was suffered by 7.5% through extortion and looting.

12. During the post-militancy phase, women victims were neglected socially, were vulnerable to sexual abuse and were without material sustenance. They were re-victimized by their meagre finances, denial of share in property by families and pushed into levirate marriages. Thus, their support system was the very source of their victimization. Also, they had to find employment avenues for survival. These roles were alien to the socio-cultural psyche of women who were integrated in typed role functions, where visiting the market or working was an affront to their dignity.
13. Most women victims suffered from health problems, such as indigestion, stomach pain, heart burn, poor appetite and general weakness. Only 3% women were free from any ailment. Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh measured higher loss of interest in life among militant affiliate group, particularly reflecting higher suicidal impulses. Many had psychosomatic problems. All categories were infused with fear but most affected were militant affiliate group (28%), among whom fear psychosis was very strong. Even the sound of "Bullet" motorcycles used by militants was a fear rousing stimulus. In one village, 10% respondents from militant affiliate group experienced nightmares. They were also high on paranoia and persecutory delusions as reflected in poor interpersonal relations. Insomnia, hallucination and disorientation were some of the other after effects. MPQ revealed that women were significantly more depressed and paranoid than the control group. Aggressive feelings were strong in all the affiliate groups, all wanted to take revenge in their present conditions.
14. The loss of their husband propelled widows into becoming head of the family, and they were responsible for generating not only financial resources, but also working in their homes to make their children successful and well placed.
15. About 49% reported conflict and disintegration of their families after the violence. Nearly 81.2% militant affiliates did not have cordial social relations due to negative experiences which distorted their frame of social perception. Most respondents mentioned that relatives were scared that they would have to provide them with some financial or other support and thus were shying away from them. Militant affiliates in Majha reported receiving better social support (30%) as compared to Doaba (6%) and Malwa (5%) which contributed to better mental health.
16. Prior to the violence, 84.5% victims enjoyed unrestricted and frequent mobility and especially interaction with neighbours (90%). This interaction decreased by 45.5% during and after the violence. However, the militant affiliate category had to move about after dark to complete work and reported an increase in movement by 17.19%.
17. About 61% women suffered marital loss and 2% were deserted by their husbands. Nearly 28% victims suffered psychological damage after disintegration of families, and 72% felt a sense of insecurity due to an unhealthy family environment. 7.5% respondents were distressed over material conflicts in the family, resulting in low self esteem.
18. Women were issued a code of dress by militants, such as *chunni* (scarf) to cover the head, no make up, and a ban on dancing by women. Even inter-group marriages were banned by militants. About 9.5% accepted the change in dress due to fear. 21.5% reported non-use of contraception due to the ban on contraceptives imposed by militants.
19. Violence against women was manifested in sexual abuse and rape by militants and police. 18% of the FIRs in one police station were against security personnel. Nearly 23% victims reported prevalence of sexual abuse of women as a weapon to insult the community.
20. A number of women were cheated of their compensation money by their relatives.
21. Women who were affiliated with militants faced total isolation (76.6%). "Dishonoured women", whether picked up by militants or abused by police, were ostracized by society.

- Nearly 15% among them were estranged from their maternal families and 49% were not aided by their marital families.
22. Women had to garner religious protection under the ritual of “*amrit chakhna*” (tasting holy water) to protect themselves physically. Some women were bartered by their men folk to either gain protection or for elevation of status.
 23. Nearly 57% women needed economic sustenance and relief, and 23% mentioned that disruption of family occupation resulted in financial hardship.
 24. Nearly 55% of the sample faced ostracism and were victims even at present. About 63.1% militant affiliates in Malwa and Majha were most severely ostracized. 67% militant affiliates mentioned that they continued to suffer from State harassment. Regular inquiries and vigilance maintained by security forces over families specially on National festivals like Republic Day, was seen as curtailment of freedom and a source of embarrassment. 67.2% respondents mentioned this as the most detrimental factor to their leading a normal life. This was even more worrisome than economic sustenance.
 25. Militant affiliates received no compensation so resentment was rampant. Families were forced to migrate to urban areas, causing rootlessness. Living in shelters also cut them off from the mainstream, making them feel victimized continuously. Maximum benefits were given to police families. Special rehabilitation was given to them by Punjab Police.
 26. Both education and employment suffered. About 14% girls had to drop out of school due to financial and security concerns. Girls were required to dress conservatively and cover their heads with *chunni* (scarves) as a regular practice. Often, militant affiliate girls were forced to marry young to escape sexual abuse.
 27. It was estimated that in Punjab around 88,000 children became victims of violence.
 28. A majority of the children suffered from clusters of psychological problems such as depression (inadequacy, sadness, discouragement, pessimism and a sense of hopelessness), low self esteem, anxiety attacks, obsessive recollection of incidents, vindictiveness, speech problems, guilt feelings, hallucination, insomnia, excessive fear and a sense of helplessness.
 29. Children also suffered from several physical problems like constant fever without any reason, stomach ache, excessive sweating, headaches, disturbed bowel movement, nausea/vomiting sensation, watery eyes, heart burn, easy fatigability, breathing problem, bed wetting and mouth ulcers.
 30. About 35% of the children were not able to concentrate on their studies, they had low achievement motivation and were forced to drop out from school.
 31. Due to mental stress and psychological problems 27.5% child victims were inclined towards substance abuse.
 32. About 74.5% of the children reported that they took active part in sports and games prior to the period of violence and were part of the school teams, but during the violence and subsequently their participation in sports and games reduced considerably. This was due to restrictions imposed by parents and guardians, as there was deep-rooted fear prevailing in the social milieu.

Recommendation

1. *Panchayats* and *mahila mandals* (women groups) should be given training and sensitized about victimization.
2. A Reintegration Cell should be created in each district to help with health, education, and recreation needs of victims.
3. Victims should be provided with medical allowance and employment.
4. Efforts should be made to mobilize the community to reintegrate the victims of violence.

Violence against Women in North East India : An Enquiry

National Commission for Women

Introduction

In the North East of India, women enjoy greater mobility and visibility than women of other communities in the country. Practices such as dowry and bride burning are not very prevalent in the region. Data collected by the NGO North East Network (NEN) however suggests that violence against women, particularly domestic violence, is on the rise in the north east. The ongoing armed conflict situation prevalent in North East India has intensified the violence faced by women, which takes the form of sexual, mental or physical abuse, killings and clashes. The region under the shadow of conflict has witnessed a resurgence of patriarchal values and norms, which have brought with them new restrictions on the movement of women, the dress they wear, and more overtly, physical violence, and all this is compounded by the long social, economic and psychological trauma of armed conflict.

Aims and Objectives

The study was undertaken to :

1. Highlight the depth and different dimensions of violations/ discrimination suffered by women in North East India, specifically Assam and Manipur.
2. Analyse the causes and consequences of physical, mental and sexual violence faced by women, and also the existing support services available for women survivors of violence.
3. Highlight lacuna in the existing system in ensuring justice to women who have been violated and to reiterate the need to ensure gender sensitive justice.
4. Recommend strategies to build a gender equitable just society which is free of gender based violence.

Methodology

The study was conducted in the states of Assam and Manipur. Three districts were selected in Assam namely Cachar, Sibsagar and Sonitpur, and four in Manipur namely Churachandpur, Imphal East, Imphal West and Tamengbg. Data was collected through interviews.

Findings and Conclusions

1. Though women's status in North East India is relatively better than their counterparts in many other regions of the country, but there were very strict gender rules and norms that define the roles, responsibilities and attributes of an 'ideal girl' or 'ideal women'. In Manipur an ideal women is called '*Imoinu*' which means a "women who is faithful to her husband, who regards her husband as divine and worships him, who obeys orders and is submissive to the husband, who eats only when her husband has eaten, and so on". The shaping of such an ideal woman begins from childhood.
2. In the North East region there has been a low intensity conflict going on for almost three to five decades.
3. Conflict in the North East region has resulted in an increase in female-headed households because the husbands/ fathers/ brothers have either fled, been killed or had joined the ranks of the underground.
4. These women who became heads of households were forced to depend on their neighbours for work, or on their relatives for help and access to the formal economic sector.

5. The study found that women had to resort to selling liquor, drugs or even take to prostitution to make enough money to run their households.
6. Findings showed that many women and women's groups had not been able to fight this violence and articulate their rights because most of them did not know what these rights were.
7. Sexual violence had increasingly been used as a tool of warfare in the North-East region. Many cases of sexual violence resulted from the armed conflict involving state armed forces.
8. Armed conflict in the North-East had led to the wide scale displacement of people. Figures released by the US Committee for Refugees showed that there were between 170,000 and 230,000 displaced people in the North-East in 1998. There were 78 relief camps opened by Human Rights Network (Asia-Pacific) in Kokrajhar and Bongaigaon districts of Assam, but the conditions in these camps were very poor. Shelters consisted of rows of temporary sheds, people slept on the ground or on makeshift beds of bamboo, and there was lack of drinking water. Pregnant women, children, and the elderly suffered the highest health risks in camps.
9. According to the Norwegian Refugee Council reports for Manipur 2000-2001, violence between Kukis and Paites and friction between Nagas and Meiteis had reportedly left 50,000 people homeless. Most of the Kuki community were settled now. Violence in Manipur since June 2001 has displaced about 50,000 Nagas.
10. Ethnic clashes in Manipur had resulted in the loss of property and livelihood, displacement and trauma, and patriarchal control on women seemed to have increased.
11. Doctors from the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences, Imphal revealed that during the ethnic conflict in Manipur from November 1997 to April 1998, 70% of the people were affected with anxiety disorder, 48% with post-traumatic stress disorder, 44% with depression and 20% with psychosomatic disorders.
12. Unmarried single women and women who had been thrown out of their marital homes had a tough time and were often subjected to violence and abuse as they were seen as an additional burden. Widows were another group of women who were extremely vulnerable to exploitation because they were looked upon as inauspicious and debarred from attending several Hindu religious ceremonies. The option of remarriage was also not available to them and in many non-tribal communities there were severe restrictions placed on their mobility, the food they eat, the clothes they wear and the people they came in contact with.
13. In Manipur, in most cases when the husband was killed during armed conflict, the wife was denied not just property rights but the right to live in her marital home as well. Consequently, a number of women were forced to get into commercial sex work or became during drug peddlers to keep themselves and their children alive.
14. In some parts of Assam witch-hunting had been increasingly highlighted from the last few years. Women were branded as witches and were accused of causing harm to communities. These women were physically and mentally tortured, and some were buried or burnt alive, which was another form of violence against women.
15. Many cases of HIV/AIDS were found in Manipur, and the impact of AIDS on women was an area of concern. According to North East Network workers at the field level, the level of discrimination and violence faced by women was much higher. If the wife was infected by the husband, she was expected to take care of him, but after his death, she was not allowed to stay in the same house by her in-laws. If the women was detected with HIV/AIDS, she was thrown out of the house.

16. A study carried out by NEN in Manipur to document support services to counter violence against women found that there were 9 counselling centres in the State, most of which were located in big towns. In the interior areas there were minimal support systems to cater to the mental health needs of women who had been violated. Although support services existed in the form of shelter homes for women in distress, counselling centres and so on, but very few actually provided the required support in Manipur and Assam.
17. According to official records, there were 1995 rape cases in Assam from 1998 to November 2000. From 1999-2001 molestation cases in Assam were 166. In Manipur there were 33 rape cases recorded from 1998-2000 and there were 66 cases of molestation from 1999-2001.
18. The study revealed that even where women managed to gather the courage and resources to approach the police and judiciary, they were faced with a lot of gender insensitivity from these institutions.

Recommendation

1. There is a need to upgrade the skills of people working in different organisations across the region. A majority of organisations expressed a need for inputs on counselling, management and documentation.
2. There is a need to involve the bureaucracy in the sensitization process, and to facilitate political will to deal with the problem of violence.
3. Women's rights based agenda needs to be incorporated in the political process. Strategies have to be developed to raise awareness about the extent and impact of violence perpetrated against women.
4. Information should be disseminated on legal safeguards, rights, support services, health and accommodation. Women's groups should also inform other women about the support services available in rural areas and towns.

Women Silent Victims in Armed Conflict: An Area Study of Jammu and Kashmir, India

Charu Wali Khanna

Introduction

The silent victims of war are women, who are most vulnerable in armed conflict situations. Women in armed conflict are specially vulnerable to sexual assault and rape, which cuts across all cultural boundaries. Jammu and Kashmir is no exception to the situation. 'Armed conflict' is the preferred legal term rather than 'war' because humanitarian law applies irrespective of formal declaration of war or not. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is an impartial, neutral and independent organization whose mission is to protect the lives and dignity of victims of war and internal violence, and provide them with assistance. The ICRC has given increasing recognition to the fact that the situation of women in armed conflict poses distinctive challenges for humanitarian law. Feminists said that the designation of rape as a crime against honour embodies the masculine notion of women as property rather than as victims of violence, humiliation and degradation.

Aims and Objectives

This study aims to:

1. Assess the situation of women in zones of armed conflict and the consequence of violence on the lives of women.
2. Assess measures that can protect women and ameliorate their condition.

Methodology

The study covered documented cases of women affected by violence in zones of armed conflict in Jammu and Kashmir. Information was gathered through interviews and recorded documentary sources. The sample consisted of vulnerable women from regions of Jammu and Kashmir where violence was widespread.

Findings and Conclusions

1. Violence has been widespread in Jammu and Kashmir since more than one decade. Terrorists and other groups who perceive violence as a means of achieving their goals carry out bomb blasts, missile attacks, acts of sabotage, kidnappings, murders, etc. in order to fulfill their objectives. In this environment, helpless civilians and the law enforcement agencies are drawn into conflict situations where the opponent is invisible. This cycle of violence shows no signs of abating and more and more citizens become victims of violence.
2. When the breadwinner of the family becomes a victim of violence, the women members of the family have to assume the responsibility of the head of the household. Though women take no part in the decision-making that precedes armed conflict, they are the ones who have to live with the results and face the consequences. Gender-based violence was observed during armed conflict.
3. The victim of violence or her family members never made a complaint due to fear of humiliation.
4. Women could be targets of sexual assault anywhere, anytime. The women of the State have been forced to come out on their own seeking their own means of negotiating and finding a place in life due to the prevailing circumstances.

5. Besides committing other atrocities, the militants also took away young girls, married them and raped them, and when they got tired of the girls they abandoned them.
6. Girls were not aware that the man they had married was a militant. Only when militants were arrested by security forces did they discovered that their husbands were militants. Widows of militants were equally traumatized and were constantly held in suspicion.
7. A new phenomenon emerging in Kashmir was the problem of 'half widows'. These women's husbands had been picked up either by militants or security forces and the wives had no idea of their whereabouts.
8. Torture, hostage – taking and rape have all been prominent abuses in the Kashmir conflict.
9. After being victims of numerous atrocities, women are also involving themselves in terrorist activities and the number of women terrorists in Kashmir is on the rise.
10. The subordinate role that women play in all cultures and the lesser value frequently placed on women's lives are additional factors that contributed to their different experiences.
11. It was observed that security forces have also perpetrated some crimes of gender violence, and the courts in India have time and again taken cognizance of the same.
12. In Kashmir, medical specialists in hospitals in Srinagar claimed that the number of neurological disorders among women is on the rise. The number of abortions has also increased.

Recommendations

1. There is need for a new Protocol which should cover not only rape but also many other aspects of women's experiences of sexual violence.
2. The Protocol should provide compensation to victims which should be awarded by the Special Tribunal on conviction of the offenders and by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board.
3. Another simple and most effective approach is ensuring the effective participation of women in the preparation and drafting of future laws.
4. Every State should implement the UNHCR guidelines for the protection of refugee women, and include in their national policies guidelines for prevention of sexual violence on refugee women.
5. Rape as a gender specific form of abuse in Kashmir must be understood in the context of the subordinate status of women generally in South Asia.

X

Trafficking / Prostitution



Action Research on Trafficking in Women and Children in India

P. M. Nair

Introduction

The main concern of the National Human Rights Commission in commissioning this study was to check the disturbing trend in the reported alarming rise in trafficking. Press, police and NGO reports on trafficking had given a clear and unequivocal indication that buying and selling of women and children for sexual and non-sexual purposes was an expanding activity and involved gross violation of human rights. What was even more worrisome was the indication that India was fast becoming a source, transit point as well as a destination area for traffickers. Trafficking denotes a trade in something that should not be traded in. Thus, we have terms like drug trafficking, arms trafficking and human trafficking. The concept of trafficking in people refers to the criminal practice of exploitation of human beings whereby they are treated as commodities for profit and after being trafficked, are subjected to long term exploitation.

Aims and Objectives

Aims and objectives of the study were to:

1. Study the crime of trafficking and the responses engaged in preventing and countering it.
2. Study the existing anti-trafficking law, that is, the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 (ITPA).
3. Study events in the trafficking chain from the source areas to their destinations, including the factors that caused re-trafficking.
4. Assess the sources and scale of profitability from this 'sector' to find out the motivations behind the demand.
5. Find ways to prevent trafficking, protect victims and prosecute traffickers.

Methodology

Research was carried out in the States/ UTs of Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Meghalaya and Assam. Special attention was given to metropolitan cities. Interview schedules were administered to 4006 respondents. Information was also collected from published and unpublished sources, through focus group discussions, and interaction with NGOs and law enforcement agencies. About 155 case studies were also prepared.

Findings and Conclusions

1. It is estimated that between 70,000 to 1 million women and children are engaged in sex work in India. Nearly 30% of them are below 20 years of age, about 15% began this work when they were below 15 years, and 25% entered between 15 and 18 years. A CEDPA report estimates that there are between 300,000 to 500,000 children in prostitution in India.
2. On an average 44,476 children under 18 years are reported missing from various States/ Union Territories. The number of missing children in Maharashtra was 13,881, Delhi 6227, Madhya Pradesh 4915, Tamil Nadu 4618, in Karnataka 3660, in Andhra Pradesh 2007, and in Gujarat 1624.
3. Respondents from all 12 States said that trafficking takes place mainly for brothel based commercial sexual exploitation and non-brothel based commercial exploitation carried out

under the façade of 'call girl' racket, massage parlours, friendship clubs, etc. Similarly, trafficking in male children takes place for variety of purposes such as paedophilia, adoption, camel jockeying, begging, labour and servitude, and organ trade. Transit and destination points of trafficking to and from Andhra Pradesh were Hyderabad, East Godavari, Visakhapatnam, Krishna, Guntur, Kurnool, Nalgonda, Prakasham, Mahbubnagar and Nizamabad.

4. The exploitation of women and children takes place not only before trafficking, but also during and after trafficking.
5. The rights of trafficked persons are violated with impunity.
6. Law enforcement machinery, in most places, violated the rights of victims. It was a common practice to arrest, chargesheet, prosecute, convict and fine the trafficked victims.
7. More than 50% rescued victims were from socially deprived sections of society. About 38% survivors had been rescued by NGOs, despite the fact that in most states, NGOs have not been officially notified by the Advisory Body (Section 13 (3) (b) ITPA).
8. The survivors had to face an average of seven clients per day. They had no choice with regard to use of condoms or any other safe sex practices. About 32.3% respondents were suffering from one ailment or the other, and among them 8.3% were suffering from HIV infection, 30% from STDs and 17% from other gynaecological problems.
9. About 2.9% of the trafficked women were from Nepal, 1.1% from Bangladesh, and 0.2% from Pakistan.
10. Delhi and Goa have a high level of trafficking as compared to other states.
11. The study has brought to light the fact that trafficking, though not reported from many places, is happening almost everywhere. The situation is worse in underdeveloped areas. Around 68% of the victims in brothels were lured with the promise of jobs and 16.8% by the promise of marriage, which makes it clear that deception is by far the most frequent means used by traffickers to entrap their victims.
12. Most of the clients look for girls who are young virgins and would withstand all types of perversions in silence.
13. About 26.6% of the clientele interviewed were in the 16-25 years age group and an equal number was in the 26-30 years age group. The youngest client interviewed was 16 years of age. Married clientele constituted 45.5% of respondents, and 44.7% lived with their spouses. Another trend that came to light was that 54.3% of the married clientele had wives who were below 35 years. Among the clientele, 82.6% had never come across any police interference in brothels.
14. Research has brought out the linkage between migration and trafficking; trafficking is never consensual, migration has an element of consent. Consent could have been obtained, before or during trafficking, by deception, lure, cheating, coercion, force, threats, etc.
15. With the advent and importance of tourism in several parts of the country, sex tourism and related trafficking has also gone up.
16. Initiatives undertaken by the Government have been ad-hocist and disjointed, and rarely comprehensive or integrated on a national level.
17. Research shows that the situation with respect to implementation of this law leaves much to be desired.
18. Research indicates that at present, the linkage between trafficking and HIV/AIDS has not been widely recognized or appreciated by the agencies concerned, despite the fact that they have a direct functional linkage.

19. Due to intervention of the High Courts of Mumbai and Delhi, there has been a paradigm shift in the system of law enforcement and justice delivery.
20. The number of NGOs working in this field has increased.

Recommendations

1. More importance should be given to human rights.
2. There is a need to develop guidebooks, brochures and fliers which would help demystify the concept and bring clarity about trafficking to all stakeholders.
3. It would be better if NGOs are notified on district basis or at least regional basis to intercede on behalf of victims.
4. State Governments should revise rules issued long back under SITA (Suppression of Immoral Traffic Act, 1956).
5. Governments should bring out state policies, including guidelines on the minimum standards of care, attention and service to be extended to the victims and survivors of trafficking.
6. A multi-disciplinary approach could be helpful in combating trafficking.
7. There is a need for coordination among NGOs.
8. Regional victim-witness protection protocols could be developed and circulated to all concerned for guidance.
9. Mapping has to be done keeping all the parameters and dimensions in view and not only from the law and order perspective.
10. Public awareness of human rights should be widespread and media should be used to increase outreach. The requirement is to uphold community values and create a culture against exploitation. The media has an important role to play in mobilizing public support and seeking their involvement for preventing and combating trafficking.
11. Law enforcement agencies need to make special efforts to deal with this multi-faceted problem.
12. Minimum standards should be maintained by Government and NGOs during rescue and post-rescue activities.
13. Rehabilitative measures should be oriented to the best interests of trafficked victims/survivors.
14. There is a need to enhance the punishment for traffickers and other exploiters.
15. The preamble to ITPA should incorporate in itself the philosophy, purpose and orientation to safeguard the rights of women.

Child Prostitution and Women in Trafficking in the States of Orissa and West Bengal

P. Sahoo

Introduction

The sexual exploitation of children and women does not occur in a vacuum but involves a more widespread network of exploitation, sexual or otherwise. Poverty and ignorance are the underlying causes of this worldwide phenomenon, as families rely on their youngest members to contribute to household incomes. There exists evidence that discrimination and violence against girls begins at the earliest stages of life and continues unabated throughout their lives.

Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the present study were to:

1. Find out the common characteristics of sex workers, mother's background and lifestyle.
2. Assess the income level and standard of living, food, health, sanitation, etc. of children in prostitution and their families.
3. Find out the role of women in trafficking, their age, sex, literacy, income, etc.
4. Examine the existing legal provisions to save these victims.
5. Suggest measures to check trafficking in women, within the framework of their right to survival, protection, development and participation.

Methodology

For the purpose of the study, it was desired to cover two primary sources namely temple sex workers, young daughters of sex workers and child prostitutes. The study covered 1300 sex workers distributed proportionately between Orissa (350) and West Bengal (950). In depth personal interviews were conducted with female sex workers. For the present study, 10 areas from Orissa and West Bengal were identified. Nearly 100 sporadic migrants, like truck drivers (50) and their helpers (50) plying trucks on the national highways of Kolkata-Mumbai and Kolkata-Chennai were interviewed. Focus group interviews were conducted with child and female prostitutes.

Findings and Conclusion

1. Most of the girls entered sex trade either by kidnapping or false promises of marriage. Also, there were many refugees from Bangladesh and girls in search of employment from Nepal who were coerced into prostitution in India.
2. Both National highways, Kolkata-Chennai and Kolkata-Mumbai, pass through Orissa. The *dhabha* (small restaurant) culture on both sides of the National highways in different parts of the state has developed sporadic prostitution points to meet the sexual requirement of truck drivers and their helpers.
3. The daily life in brothels starts with completing morning work of washing clothes, bathing, cooking, eating, dressing and make-up. Business was less during daytime, and getting customers was a competitive affair because the customers chose prostitutes they wanted to have sex with.
4. There were various categories of customers in Orissa and West Bengal. Non-skilled and low skilled workers in manufacturing industries located in different slums of West Bengal and Orissa, living away from their families, were the major customers of prostitutes. The second category of clients included construction workers and manual labourers, and the third category included transport workers namely truck drivers, helpers, taxi and auto rickshaw drivers.

5. Truck drivers played a prominent role in spreading HIV infection through multiple sexual partners at different points of the National highway, as well as visiting brothels in urban red light areas.
6. 75 drivers reported that they visited 2-3 prostitutes per week and 60-95 CSWs in a year. 66 drivers had never used condoms, and only 5 used condoms somewhat regularly.
7. Prostitutes maintained anonymity about their profession except with a few individuals who had earned their trust. Even families of prostitutes did not know about their trade in some cases. Therefore, prostitutes assumed different names and family backgrounds to protect themselves.
8. Nearly 95% CSWs earned between Rs.2000 – 3000 per month in West Bengal. A certain percentage was given to the brothel owner, per client per day. In the beginning stages when they joined prostitution, the entire amount was given to brothel owners and pimps.
9. Most prostitutes lived in unhygienic conditions, and were exposed to different customers and thus to various diseases. Various types of uterine infections indicated STDs. Many did not use condoms, and used abortion as a method of birth control, which was detrimental to their health.
10. Most of the prostitutes had migrated from their houses, lured by promises of a happy marriage or job. In Orissa, prostitutes had migrated from Andhra Pradesh, while in West Bengal they came from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Bangladesh.
11. Most of the pimps were males and spent their money on clothes, jewellery and their own addictions.
12. Most respondents were illiterate.
13. Systematic and organized trafficking of girls for profit by experienced persons accounted for a large number of girls being bought, transported and sold within and outside the state. In some cases, women already engaged in the profession known as *didis* (sisters) allured young girls from poor areas. Poor parents allowed their daughters to go with *didis* for a petty amount of earning per month. Many parents believed their daughters would do manual jobs. However, the promises given were rarely kept. The girl/ woman was completely broken by beatings, torture and rape, and this initial period was the most horrifying stage. This period continued for 15-20 days.

Recommendations

1. Census of all prostitutes living in urban red light areas should be undertaken.
2. Government and NGOs should monitor and ensure that women in brothels are not exploited.
3. All prostitutes should be registered and provided health services.
4. Policing of brothels should be left to women police. No male policemen should be allowed to exercise control in red light areas.
5. Children of prostitutes should be provided with free education and health care.
6. Preventive care for STD/HIV and health education needs to be taken up.
7. Rehabilitation programmes for prostitutes should be designed.
8. Women should be provided with housing facilities and income generating activities so that they can move out of this profession.
9. Community awareness programmes should be taken up by Government functionaries in the supply areas from where prostitutes come. NGOs should spread awareness about sexual exploitation of women in urban areas which may help in reducing the problem.

Combating Trafficking of Women and Children in South Asia

Asian Development Bank

Introduction

An alarming number of women and children being trafficked for forced labour or slavery-like practices including commercial sexual exploitation is a development concern for Governments, United Nations and Asian Development Bank (ADB). Although available statistics are limited and contested, the existing data has highlighted the issue as is evident by increased national attention to trafficking. ADB's involvement in combating trafficking of women and children is directly linked to the strategic goals of ADB namely poverty reduction and improving the status of women. In July 2000, ADB fielded a Mission to Nepal, Bangladesh and India to assess the human trafficking issues confronting the region.

Aims and Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

1. See how ADB's existing assistance programmes and policy dialogues at the regional level can be used to support anti-trafficking efforts in South Asia.
2. Explore avenues for capacity building of stakeholders to combat trafficking.
3. Create widespread awareness about trafficking using the forum of the Second World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children.
4. Identify best practices in the field adopted by Government and NGO stakeholders.

Methodology

The Mission met with representatives of the Government, donors and NGOs active in the field who were implementing anti-trafficking initiatives. The ADB Mission met officials from National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) to assess the data gathered, and review emerging data on cross border flows from NGOs. Information was also obtained through interviews with State Government officials.

Findings and Conclusions

1. Traffickers throughout South Asia lure their victims by means of attractive propositions and promises such as high paying jobs, glamorous employment options, prosperity and fraudulent marriages. It is estimated that 35% of the total number of girls and women trafficked to India have been abducted under the pretext of false marriage or a good job.
2. Though traffickers themselves play a key role in the entire process, many other people also directly or indirectly contribute namely agents, promoters, brokers, border police, hoteliers, transport agents, etc.
3. Although most traffickers are men, women also lure girls by displaying lavish lifestyles during visits to villages, befriending local girls, promising them jobs and eventually, helping them run away.
4. India is both a destination and transit area for trafficking of women and children. It is estimated that cross-border trafficking represents about 10% of the coerced migrants, with approximately 2.17% being from Bangladesh and 2.6% from Nepal. Inter-state trafficking, therefore, could make up as much as 89% of trafficked victims.
5. West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal and Bihar are the main transit States in India through which trafficked women and children pass.

6. Border Security Force (BSF) check points are few and widely dispersed, and are thus ineffective in maintaining strict vigilance on who crosses the border.
7. Traffickers usually cross the border on fixed days of the week at fixed hours.
8. Under the IPC, crime at the national level has increased by 15.3% over the last decade.
9. Incidence of trafficking under the ITPA has shown a steady increase since 1997, with an increase of 7.7% over 1998 rate. Reported crimes against women were highest in Tamil Nadu (10.5%).
10. The incidence of kidnapping and abduction cases of women and girls recorded an increase of 6.4% over the quinquennial average between 1994 and 1998.
11. About 70% of the trafficking of women in Eastern India occurs at Kolkata (according to Sanlaap, 2002). Persons trafficked are used for purposes other than prostitution also.
12. NGO surveillance of official border crossings with Nepal has increased the number of rescues of trafficked victims, but traffickers go to extra lengths, such as pay-offs and shifting routes, to continue their operations.
13. Initially young married women were trafficked from Bangladesh to Mumbai but in the past eight years demand for young unmarried and minor girls has increased.
14. As there is no law in India covering repatriation of trafficked persons to Bangladesh or Nepal, the system currently depends on a good understanding and rapport between the various stakeholders involved and requires dealing with cases on an individual basis.

Recommendations

1. The challenge of combating trafficking is far beyond the capacity and resources of individual organizations, hence it requires a coordinated and concerted effort of Government and NGOs.
2. Different approaches are required to unveil the total picture of cross-border trafficking in the SAARC region. The current ADB national studies are a first attempt to substantively analyze common trends and patterns, utilize comparative denominators, and formulate definitions and frameworks of analysis.
3. A framework is required to develop a format and methodology to standardize data on the extent and scope of trafficking of women and children.
4. More diversified research is required.
5. Other initiatives that could improve the monitoring of cross border flows of trafficked victims, while contributing to combating trafficking itself, include increasing birth registration and training for enforcement officers.
6. Categories in national crime data collection system need to be reviewed if they are to provide expansive and accurate data in relation to cross border flows.
7. A high level of common understanding and cooperation is needed among SAARC member countries.
8. The SAARC Regional Task Force on this issue has to initiate common legal assistance, extradition, prosecution and rehabilitation measures.
9. There is need to collate data from pro-active mechanisms for rescue/ repatriation taken by enforcement agencies in India to highlight best practices in this area.
10. Strengthening of the SAARC Convention is essential, particularly regarding the need to distinguish between women and children.

Fallen Women or a Fallen Society: Coining Experiences from Red Light Areas in India

Indrani Sinha

Introduction

Prostitution is prevalent all over the world and children of prostitutes are in an appalling situation all over the world. The situation is worst for girl children. Many prostitutes understand the importance of education, and feel sorry that their children are discriminated against when the profession of their mothers becomes known. Children of prostitutes are sometimes even thrown out of schools.

Aims and Objectives

The study was undertaken with the objectives to:

1. Assess the status and condition of prostitutes and their children.
2. Share the experiences of women from red light areas in Kolkata.

Methodology

Several commercial sex workers (CSWs) working in red light areas of Kolkata were interviewed to assess their situation and investigate the problems faced by them.

Findings and Conclusions

1. These women were regarded as fallen women by society and they went to great lengths to protect their children or younger sisters by sending them to boarding schools or to other areas to live. They were very skeptical of the hypocrisy of society which condones the acts of high class people (*bhadralok*) but condemns the women who are in this profession due to force of circumstances.
2. In many states of India such as Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal, children of prostitutes were denied admission to schools, but in Kolkata they are given admission.
3. Though sex workers try their level best to ensure that their children do not suffer from the stigma associated with their profession, very few children were able to overcome the disadvantage and become well placed in life. In Kolkata, children of CSWs grow up and become drivers, garage mechanics, private tutors, office club actresses, *jatra* (folk theatre) actresses, cooks, housemaids and some even become antisocial elements.
4. Prostitutes in Kolkata were forming organizations to demand "reservation" for their children in education, jobs, shelter, etc.
5. In West Bengal, girls from one month to ten years old and even older girls were bought by agents by giving a certain amount of money, and finally made to join this profession and work as prostitutes.
6. In Andhra Pradesh, the birth of a girl in the Domari caste was a celebrated event as the girl child would join prostitution when she grew up and would become a breadwinner.
7. In the Bedia community in Uttar Pradesh, women became the breadwinners and were the jackpot for those men (the agents) who set them up, brought clients and used them till they provided the agents with money.
8. In Kolkata, brothel girls were kept under strict vigilance, and the children born to them were kept with the mother in early childhood. Subsequently, they stayed with relatives in some other area, or in some other shelter.

9. Trafficking in the Indian situation was rampant, and women and girls were brought/ bought from neighbouring countries like Nepal and Bangladesh.
10. Every year girls are sold by parents or hoodwinked in the name of marriage, kidnapped by agents, lured by false promises of employment, and tricked and forced into joining this profession.
11. During early times in Kolkata, rich men used to come from villages and stay with women who took care of them.
12. Due to the prevailing economic conditions in neighbouring countries, boys, girls and women were brought in large numbers to India. They were used for various purposes such as bonded labour in various industries, domestic labour and prostitution.
13. When they were inducted into this profession, women and girls were physically and psychologically tortured. They suffered cuts, thrashing, starvation and even attempted murder.
14. There are no planned programmes for reporting the problems of these women in police stations. The police system is insensitive to their condition and problems, and instead of dealing with them sympathetically, treat them with contempt as fallen women.

Recommendations

1. A rehabilitation programme is needed to provide for the children of CSWs. Children need to be protected from the environment of red light areas.
2. Though human rights groups and NGOs are working to identify these unfortunate women, information networking is needed among them.
3. Pressure points on respective country Governments need to be applied so that cross border trafficking issues can be addressed.
4. Regional and country networks are required.

Guilty without Trial: Women in the Sex Trade in Calcutta

Carolyn Sleightholme and Indrani Sinha

Introduction

Prostitution is often referred to as 'the oldest profession' and the women working in this profession were known as 'fallen women', 'public women', or in insulting and derogatory terms such as *randi* or *veshya*. The gender perspective of commercial sex was the one which was most frequently overlooked.

Aims and Objectives

The study assessed the situation of sex workers. Within the existing tolerant laws, the study aimed to:

1. Support the demand to repeal those clauses which criminalize the sex workers and deny their basic rights.
2. See whether the law could allow for punishment of the client for non-payment of dues, or for refusing to wear a condom.

Methodology

The study was based on case studies and field experiences of Sanlaap, a small non-government organization run by women. It was a collection and compilation of information, stories and experiences shared by sex workers with the researchers. About 257 sex workers were studied for knowing the reasons why they became sex workers. In Sonagachhi, 450 women were surveyed.

Findings and Conclusions

1. In Calcutta, a majority of women entered the profession for their own or their family's survival. Most women cited poverty as the single most important factor compelling them to join the profession, as they needed to support themselves, their families and their children.
2. In Sonagachhi, 49.1% CSWs mentioned acute poverty, 21.56% a family dispute, 15.56% were misled and 0.44% were kidnapped and forced into this profession.
3. About 70% of the sex workers associated with Sanlaap were from West Bengal, 30% were from Murshidabad district, 30% from outside West Bengal and 15% were from Bangladesh.
4. Increasing male unemployment and rural poverty have resulted in more women migrants coming to Calcutta in search of work.
5. The Sanlaap survey found that only 6 out of 257 practicing sex workers were daughters of sex workers.
6. Of the women interviewed, 4.4% were sold into the profession, 4.4% were cheated or misled, 6.4% came with a husband or lover, and 5.4% were brought in through agents.
7. About 19.4% of the agents were sex workers themselves, and 80% of the agents bringing women into the sex trade were known people such as neighbours, relatives or other acquaintances.
8. International trafficking seemed to be on the rise as women and children are traded from one country to another.
9. Roughly 100,000 to 160,000 Nepalese girls and women were working as sex workers in India.

10. Cases of poor Muslim minors being taken abroad through marriage deals were heard of quite regularly.
11. Uttar Pradesh (UP) was allegedly the centre of organized selling of women and girls, especially Allahabad, Varanasi, Lucknow and Kanpur.
12. About 69% of the clients consumed alcohol in the company of sex workers.
13. Infertility and miscarriages were a problem faced by many sex workers.
14. Nearly 45% of the women were found to be taking precautions against pregnancy.
15. In Kalighat (1994), 80% of the women were regularly using condoms with their one-off clients.
16. In Sonagachhi, the standard rate of payment for pimps was 25% of the sex worker's earnings.
17. Most sex workers do not want their daughters to join the trade, but wanted them to experience a stable married life.
18. Only Sonagachhi red light area catered to high income clients. Students formed 8% of the clients, and 87% clients were literate, while 25% had higher education.
19. Many projects undertaken for their welfare only focused on STD/HIV/AIDS. Women were seen only in one role, as commercial sex workers and their all round development or rehabilitation was left untouched.
20. Since sex workers are not a powerful group who can lobby for themselves, there is no way by which they can amend the law which brands them as offenders, and allows clients to go scot free. Traffickers also are seldom penalized.

Recommendations

1. Existing local initiatives should be supported, and networking and coordination between different sex worker groups should be promoted locally and nationally.
2. Coordination between NGOs should improve, and dialogue and networking between NGOs and the Government should be enhanced.
3. Short stay shelter homes and refuge homes for girls and women victims of violence and sexual abuse should be opened.
4. More women police officers, particularly in police stations near red light areas should be posted.
5. More dialogue and cooperation between women's rights activists and sex workers is needed.

Needs Assessment of Bar Girls in Navi Mumbai for Planning Appropriate Interventions to Ameliorate Their Conditions: A Study Conducted by Save the Children India and Vedh Seema Khot

Introduction

International studies indicate that millions of women and girls are trafficked across borders for sexual exploitation. The global trafficking industry generates an estimated Rs 33,600,000,000/- (US \$ 5 to 7 billions) annually which is more than the annual budgets of some of the affected countries. A large number of girls are found working in bars which serve alcohol and entertain clients by live dance performances by girls. Bar girls are generally victims of child trafficking. In Navi Mumbai, a fast growing suburb of Mumbai, the problem of increasing bars and bar girls is particularly alarming due to its scale, acceleration and nexus of perpetuating factors. The study was conducted by Vedh in August-September 2001 and it deals with the situation of bar girls in Navi Mumbai who were trafficked into this profession from all over the country.

Aims and Objectives

The major aims and objectives of the study were to:

1. Estimate the magnitude of child trafficking problem.
2. Understand the factors leading to trafficking of girls.
3. Study the impact of their profession on the lives of bar girls.
4. Understand the needs of bar girls.
5. Suggest interventions to improve their lives.

Methodology

The study was carried out in 28 villages around Navi Mumbai. A series of data collection methods were used namely focus group discussions, observations, and interviews of bar girls and their families, bar owners and agents. There were also a few constraints in data collection like non-compliance of the contact person, lack of privacy, disturbance from different people, police raids, socially unsafe environment and unhygienic conditions.

Findings and Conclusions

1. Magnitude of the 'bar girl' phenomenon in Navi Mumbai could only be estimated. There were a total of 164 bars in Navi Mumbai, of which 150 were 'Dance bars'. These bars had to pay Rs 5000/- per month as entertainment duty and needed a permit to sell liquor. Only 164 bars had both the licenses. The estimated number of bar girls was above 5000. From 1990, the bars doubled, and from 1995 to 2000 they tripled. The population of bar girls had increased in particular pockets. 75% of the girls interviewed were less than 25 years of age, and of the 50 girls interviewed 64% were married. The children of bar girls were affected the most, as their health, food and schooling were at stake.
2. 'Push factors' which made the young girls leave their families were poverty, rural/farming family background, lack of education, male members' decision, and luring by agents. Majority of the girls interviewed (60%) mentioned poor economic condition of the family as the major push factor. About 30% of the girls interviewed were illiterate. The agent's network with politicians and mafia was also one of the major coercive causes for girls getting into

dance bars or the sex trade. Even women relatives were used by agents to assist in getting girls into bars or sex trade.

3. The chain of trafficking of bar girls was investigated. Many of the bar girls in Navi Mumbai were from Bangladesh, and some were from Nepal. The route of each girl trafficked was mapped.
4. Bar girls usually stayed in rented houses of 1-2 rooms, without basic amenities or proper ventilation.
5. Bar girls were subjected to physical, social, sexual and economic exploitation by family members, agents, bars owners and clients. All these factors had an adverse impact on their health.
6. Bar owners as well as agents mentioned that younger girls are preferred over older girls. To ensure good business, bars have to ensure the entry of new girls every month. New girls aged 13-16 years are recruited on a regular basis by dance bars. Dancing continues from 7 p.m. to 2 a.m. Older girls (women) serve alcohol and give company to clients.
7. Agents revealed that most relatives knew what they were sending the girls to Mumbai for. The relatives had to be kept happy and their payments were never pending. That was the way to get more girls year after year. There was clear dominance of a patriarchal value system taking a toll of and exploiting female family members.

Recommendations

1. An in-depth study of the problem of bar girls was recommended, as this was a rapid study and the investigators had to rely on information provided by bar owners.
2. The process of prevention should start from families. To control trafficking, awareness generation among village women, formal education of girls, sex education of girls and boys, and vocational training to potential bar girls is needed.
3. To minimize the negative effects on those who were already in this occupation, vigilance in bars, preparing and displaying a code of conduct for clients and customers in bars, better 'employee benefits' to bar girls, basic amenities in residential colonies, and crèches for children were needed.
4. Rescue operations would require political will, deputation of Government machinery, legislative back up, as well as community based rehabilitation.
5. Sensitization of bar owners, agents and bar girls was necessary for successful rehabilitative intervention. The intervention activities should include counselors, vocational training, micro credit group formation, medical facilities, promotion of the use of condoms, sex education, crèches for the children of bar girls, and their marriage.

Rehabilitation of Children of Prostitutes and Devadasis

Anuradha Patil

Introduction

A prostitute, by definition, is a woman who sells herself for sexual purpose to a great number of men in succession and with little or no choice among them. Prostitution is as old as human society, and is accepted as a necessary social evil. Female dancers and singers attached to temples are generally referred to by the term “*devadas*” which literally means female slaves of the deity. As centuries passed, their services to God shifted from God to earthly Gods and Lords. The woman so dedicated to a deity as “*devadas*” usually leads the life of a prostitute with religious sanction.

Aims and Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Suggest realistic alternatives that enable rehabilitation of prostitutes and their children.
2. Understand the conditions in which prostitutes and their children live, ways of handling child care, and the services required for them.
3. Identify specific needs and make specific recommendations to Governmental and Non-Government agencies.

Methodology

The project was undertaken in 5 cities in the state of Maharashtra, namely, Pune, Aurangabad, Sangli, Kolhapur and Mumbai, where migration is more due to industrial development. To conduct the study, a contact point with NGOs working in red light areas was established. NGOs were sent interview schedules having questions regarding the services they offered, frequency of visits to red light areas, etc. It was an exploratory study, and non-probability purposive sampling technique was used. Women prostitutes who had children in the age group of 0 to 12 years staying with them, or in institutions or with their parents were the respondents. The tool used was a schedule with about 100 questions covering minute details about the prostitute’s life, her expenses, savings, health, child’s health, education, etc. From each city 100 respondents were studied. From Aurangabad only 50 respondents could be interviewed and the expected number was then readjusted in Mumbai. In all, 458 prostitutes were interviewed and study covered 600 children.

Findings and Conclusions

1. Prostitution is based on demand and supply. There is poverty, illiteracy, and unemployment among women, and there are young males who are ready to pay for the services of commercial sex workers, hence women are inducted or coerced to adopt this profession.
2. Deserted women face socio-economic instability, and when they have no means of livelihood, they adopt prostitution for survival in the absence of any other avenues of financial and social support.
3. Prostitutes have an average income between Rs. 500 – 1500 per month. However, a very negligible amount remains in their hand after paying the brothel owners and sending money to their relatives. Therefore, due to their meager earnings hardly any saving habits were found among prostitutes.
4. At the time of crisis, if loans are required by prostitutes, they take it from another prostitute or from the *gharwali* (brothel owner) and repay it on monthly basis. Loans are taken for education of their children or to send the money to their relatives.

5. Prostitutes were also found to be using addictive substances, such as alcohol, cigarettes, tobacco, etc.
6. There are welfare schemes for *devadasis* funded by the Government and implemented by NGOs, but very few *devadasis* have knowledge about these schemes.
7. Prostitutes have an innate desire to have children to add meaning to their lives and enrich their experiences. They showed great care and concern for their children.
8. In the absence of the mother, children of prostitutes are looked after by other women or ex-prostitutes in red light areas. They are hardly put in day care or night centres. Institutions for children hesitate to admit children of prostitutes.

Recommendations

1. Information about welfare schemes for *devadasis* needs to be widely disseminated and made known to NGOs and professional social workers, so that they can reach out to beneficiaries, and inform them about the schemes.
2. The machinery to implement schemes has to be competent and efficient, and reach out to the beneficiaries, so that they can be rehabilitated.
3. NGOs should emphasize on the value and habit of saving, and encourage prostitutes to put whatever little amount they have in the bank. Their savings would help them in future.
4. NGOs can create awareness about the ill-effects of drinking, smoking and chewing tobacco, etc.
5. NGOs should have counselors on their team, to assist commercial sex workers in red light areas.
6. All women and girls should be taught skills to achieve economic independence.
7. Prostitutes should unite and form unions to make their voice heard, and to influence policy makers to provide them with basic rights and facilities.

Report of the Committee on Prostitution, Child Prostitutes and Children of Prostitutes and Plan of Action

**India, Ministry of Human Resource Development,
Department of Women and Child Development**

Introduction

The issues of trafficking and the commercial sexual exploitation of women and children or “prostitution” as it is commonly called are gaining prominence in international circles, among NGOs, Governments and concerned citizens. Prostitution has been called “the oldest oppression” by the National Commission for Women. At different times in history it has been tolerated, encouraged, prohibited and regulated. In recent times the issue has come centre stage because of increasing reports of commercial sexual exploitation of children, greater awareness and emphasis on the rights of women and children, etc.

Aims and Objectives

The study was undertaken to:

1. Examine the issue of trafficking among women and children in India.
2. Focus on the issue of commercial sexual exploitation of women and children in India.
3. Suggest strategies and remedies for the welfare of these women and children.

Methodology

The issues of trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of women gained prominence since the 1990s. On these specific problems the Supreme Court of India passed an order which stated that the Central and State Governments should set up Advisory Committees to take measures against the problems of women and child victims of commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking. So, as directed by the Supreme Court, the Committee on Prostitution set up by Government of India made an in-depth study on the issue. Secretary, Department of Women and Child Development, the Chairperson and Member – Secretary of the Committee held several meetings and discussions in different states all over India with officers of State Governments, persons involved in law enforcement, social defence, legislative matters, SC/ST welfare and with NGOs working for the rescue and reintegration of women and child victims of commercial sexual exploitation and children of women victims, experts and social workers. Projects in red light areas and high supply areas were also visited.

Findings and Conclusions

1. The Committee found that there were several ways by which women and children were inducted into sexual exploitation. These were:
 - a) Firstly, children and women were inducted forcibly through abduction, trafficking and deceit.
 - b) Secondly, there were children of women victims who were inducted into the racket by pimps/ brothel keepers and sometimes even by the mother herself.
 - c) Thirdly, some castes and tribal communities had customs and practices which allowed the exploitation of their women folk. Some castes and tribes earned their livelihood by entertaining village folks by rope-walking, snake-charming, dancing, etc. The spread of modern forms of entertainment forced many in these communities to allow the exploitation of their girls/ women.
 - d) Fourthly, the religious practice of dedication of girls in the name of God as in the Devadasi, Jogin, Basavi, Venkatasani system continues, though on a lower scale, in some of the states where these practices flourished.

- e) Fifthly, women who were in economic distress due to lack of means of livelihood, widowhood, separation from husbands, abandonment by family, etc. were, much against their choice, forced to become victims of commercial sexual exploitation.
 - f) Sixthly, migrant women from within the country or from neighbouring countries were more likely to be forced to become victims.
 - g) Seventhly, girls on the fringes of the entertainment industry, such as bar girls, cabaret dancers, etc. were also vulnerable.
2. A survey sponsored by Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) in 1991 in 6 metropolitan cities of India indicated that the population of women and child victims of commercial sexual exploitation would be between 70,000 to 1,00,000 and 30% of them were below 18 years of age. The major contributory factors for the commercial sexual exploitation of women and children were poverty and unemployment.
 3. Commercial sexual exploitation was found in a concentrated manner in brothels and red light areas along major highways, in massage parlours, guest houses, call girl rackets, cabaret shows, female escort services, etc.
 4. The condition of women and child victims of commercial sexual exploitation were found to be worst, and the consequences were serious, life-long and even life threatening. About 60-80% of the victims suffered from more than one disease, and the threat of unwanted pregnancy, maternity mortality, torture, physical injury, physical disabilities, mental trauma and disorders, and sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS was ever present.
 5. Women and child victims lived under constant fear - of the police, pimps, brothel keepers, dangerous clients, etc. The children of women victims were born and brought up with the stigma of illegitimacy and they were in danger of being caught in the grip of various vices and criminal activities. They also developed a fatalistic attitude towards life.
 6. Several Acts related to trafficking and prostitution have been amended by the Government of India, and some of these are the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 (ITPA), supplemented by the Indian Penal Code (IPC), which prohibited trafficking in human beings including children, and awarded severe penalties for the same. The ITPA and IPC prescribes punishment for crimes related to prostitution. The ITPA contains enhanced punishments for offences in respect of a child or a minor.
 7. National Commission for Women (NCW) has drafted two Bills to end prostitution. The first draft Bill is the "Prevention of Immoral Traffic and the Rehabilitation of Prostituted Persons Bill, 1993" and the second draft Bill is "The Prohibition of Immoral Traffic and Empowerment of Sexual Workers Bill, 1993". According to these Bills immoral trafficking should be prohibited, and rights conferred on sex workers with a view to prevent sexual exploitation and protect their health and hygiene.
 8. The Supreme Court of India has also passed an order on 2.5.1990 to take action against commercial sexual exploitation of women and initiated measures for the rescue and rehabilitation of children of women victims which stated that the Central and State Governments should set up an Advisory Committee to suggest measures for eradicating trafficking and prostitution.
 9. The Government and NGOs have also taken up interventions for the rehabilitation of women and child victims. Protective Homes were established by Government exclusively for girls/ women who sought protection from being forced into prostitution and the number of such protective homes was estimated to be about 80. They provide custodial care and protection in addition to providing education and vocational training and taking measures for rehabilitation of inmates. But there were many inadequacies in the running of these homes.
 10. The Government of India has opened Short Stay Homes, Juvenile Homes and also started ICDS centres in some red light areas. But the services of qualified doctors and psychiatrists was on part time basis in Short Stay Homes and Juvenile Homes. The response from ICDS centres started by NGOs was not found to be encouraging.

11. The Central Social Welfare Board and several NGOs had opened development and care centres for the victims of prostitution in red light areas to provide facilities of crèche and day-care centres, educational support programme, supplementary nutrition, health care, counselling, excursions, etc. These were manned by trained social workers and trained teachers.
12. Projects for rehabilitation of Devadasis, Jogins, women victims, etc. were also taken up under various schemes for training and employment of women like Support for Training and Employment Programme (STEP), Setting up of Training cum Employment cum Production Units (NORAD) and Shramik Vidyapeeths (education centres for labourers) assisted by the Central Government.
13. State Governments of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, etc. had implemented a number of projects for the rescue and rehabilitation of women and child victims through their own agencies and in collaboration with NGOs. The Devadasi Rehabilitation Scheme of the Karnataka Government consisted of 4 components and was being implemented in 6 districts of the state.
14. In spite of many interventions for prevention, law enforcement, rescue and rehabilitation, there does not appear to have been much impact on the prevalence of commercial sexual exploitation of women and children except in the case of the Devadasi system, which has nearly been eliminated in the states where it existed.
15. Several reasons were found for the low impact of rehabilitation programmes that included ambivalent attitude of society to the problem, insufficient awareness, social stigma and family problems faced by victims, insufficient structure in the form of institutions, lack of co-ordination among border police forces of neighbouring countries to stop inter-country trafficking, lack of support measures, etc.

Recommendations

1. All out efforts should be made to prevent trafficking right from the supply areas districts by organizing sustained campaigns about this social problem.
2. Girls should be retained in the education system for as long as possible, and taught skills to enable them to earn a living.
3. Self defence training should be given as part of physical education to girl students, to enable them to develop self confidence and defend themselves from being harassed, trafficked or exploited. Also, a safe and secure environment for women and children should be created through formation of Committees for the Protection of Rights of Women and Children at district level, block level and village level.
4. Strict instructions need to be issued to immigration officers, Border Police authorities and local police in transit areas for the purpose of keeping a vigil on the entry of young girls under suspicious or unexplained circumstances into the country from neighbouring countries.
5. Awareness generations camps and media campaigns that initiate a process of questioning gender roles and gender discrimination, and project positive images of partnerships between women and men, and achievements of girl children and women should be taken up.
6. Health centres should be set up in and near red light areas, and health cards should be issued to women and child victims to ensure free medical treatment, provision of adequate drugs and medication, etc.
7. Education support programmes in terms of tuition, supplementary nutrition, sex education and health checkups should be provided to school going children of women victims in red light areas and high supply/ risk areas under existing schemes, or as a part of integrated projects for trafficked women and children.
8. The public and private sector should be encouraged to take part in the rehabilitation of rescued women and child victims by providing training for income generating activities and opportunities for employment/ self employment.
9. Serious steps should be taken to enforce existing provisions of law against the production, publication, sale and exhibition of any kind of pornography.

A Situational Analysis on Trafficking and Prostitution in Dinbazaar (Jalpaiguri) and Changrabandha (Cooch Behar)

Indrani Sinha

Introduction

Trafficking in persons is a process of transportation of persons from one place to another, facilitated by agents seeking commercial benefit, for purposes of exploitation. The exploitation may be for labour or for sexual exploitation, as in the case of prostitution. Trafficking in women and children, for commercial sexual exploitation, is a phenomenon that has sustained institutionalized prostitution in red light areas of South Asia down the ages.

Aims and Objectives

The study was undertaken to:

1. Understand the situation of women in red light areas of Dinbazaar (Jalpaiguri) and Changrabandha (Cooch Behar) in West Bengal.
2. Obtain information which would help in designing interventions for commercial sex workers (CSWs) in red light areas.
3. Develop possible action strategies for preventive, curative and promotive approach to deal with trafficking in women, primarily for commercial sexual exploitation.

Methodology

The design was both, exploratory and descriptive in nature. The study was conducted in two red light areas, namely, Dinbazaar (Jalpaiguri) and Changrabandha (Cooch Behar). Women prostitutes who resided in red light areas were the respondents and they were selected through the process of random sampling. In Dinbazaar the sample size was 60, whereas 18 respondents were contacted from Changrabandha. Information was gathered through interviews and group discussions. Secondary data was obtained from the Officer-in-charge of police stations, Block Development Officers, and Superintendents of Observation Homes and Juvenile Homes for neglected boys.

Findings and Conclusions

1. Most women were forced into prostitution due to economic hardships and vulnerability. In some cases fathers were the sole breadwinners of a large family, hence these women were compelled to augment the family income, and they adopted prostitution as a profession.
2. About 15.3% of the respondents were children of prostitutes who were raised in red light areas. They had no education and no secure environment. These children saw their mothers and madams (brothel-owners) as role models, so they never thought of being part of any other sphere of life, other than prostitution.
3. Old women, who could no longer make money through prostitution, had to face severe economic hardships. They did not have proper shelter and almost no food so they were forced to put their daughters into the flesh trade, giving rise to second generation prostitution.
4. The women who have been trafficked were caught in traps, they were either lured into marriage (62.5%) or promised jobs (37.5%), and later sold. The traffickers took advantage of the vulnerability of their situation.
5. Majority of the respondents earned between Rs. 4000 – 5000 per month. They spent their earnings on house rent, food, clothes, medicines, and toiletries. Only 33% women of

Project Director, Sanlaap, 38-B Mahanirban Road, Kolkata – 700029, West Bengal. Kolkata: 2002. 53p. Supported by: Gana Unnayan Parshad and Human Development Centre, Kolkata.

Dinbazaar understood the importance of savings and tried to save their hard earned money. None of the respondents in Changrabandha showed any concern for savings.

6. The respondents reported continuous harassment from police or hoodlums, who extorted protection money from them and also enjoyed free sex. In return, they allowed the prostitutes to run their business.
7. CSWs are prone to many diseases due to sexual contact with different customers, who have different sexual behaviours. Gynaecological diseases, multiple pregnancies, abortions and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are the occupational hazards of this profession.
8. About 21.6% prostitutes in Dinbazaar did not know which diseases constituted STDs. Due to their ignorance, they were unable to express any prevalent symptoms.
9. Women prostitutes had no vocational skills to fall back on in their old age. 33% of them were not interested in learning any skills, as they felt it would not empower them, and they would never be viewed as complete human beings by society.

Recommendations

1. Women and girls should be provided education to facilitate economic independence. Special efforts should be made to educate daughters of prostitutes to prevent second generation prostitution.
2. Initiation of income generation programmes and setting up of Old Age Homes for ex-prostitutes by the Government and NGOs would help aged CSWs.
3. CSWs should be encouraged to form cooperative bodies for promoting economic activities. These organized bodies can help them to protest against local hoodlums also.
4. Legal and administrative steps should be taken to prevent trafficking and to sensitize administrative officials about the issue.
5. The 3 tier panchayat system should disseminate information about the provisions and schemes specifically designed for women, so that these women do not fall into the traps laid by traffickers, and are able to sustain themselves economically.
6. Orientation programmes on STDs should be conducted regularly for the benefit of CSWs by Government agencies and NGOs, so that they can seek help when required.

Situational Analysis of the Commercial Sex Workers towards Safe Motherhood

Soumita Das

Introduction

The condition of commercial sex workers (CSWs) in relation to safe motherhood is precarious, because they are considered to be the most high risk group in the spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and HIV/AIDS. Studies done among CSWs recently in a few large Indian cities indicate a rapidly rising prevalence of HIV infection among them due to infection from clients, and they again pass on the infection to non-infected clients, who again pass it on to their wives and other sexual partners. These CSWs, in order to earn their livelihood, continue to carry on their trade even during the last trimester of pregnancy.

Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the study were to:

1. Assess the knowledge level of commercial sex workers regarding antenatal check ups.
2. Know the practices they follow regarding immunization and breastfeeding of their children.
3. Know their awareness level regarding the effect of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) on their unborn child during pregnancy.

Methodology

The study was conducted in the Budge and Bagihat areas of South 24 Paraganas district of West Bengal. Data was collected through interviews with 50 CSW mothers having children between 0-5 years of age. The sample was randomly selected.

Findings and Conclusions

1. About 57% CSW mothers were in the age group of 26-30 years.
2. Out of the total sample, 38.7% had children up to 2 years, 34.69% had children aged 3-4 years, and 26.54%, had children up to 5 years and above.
3. Of the total sample of 50 CSWs, 25 (50%) mothers earned between Rs. 3501 to Rs. 4500 per month.
4. Most of the CSWs were either addicted to smoking, chewing *gutka* (mouth freshener containing tobacco), or consuming alcohol.
5. About 82% CSWs were aware of the fact that breast milk was very important for a new born baby to survive.
6. It was found that 77.41% CSWs had gone in for induced abortion and the remaining 22.5% had spontaneous abortion.
7. Majority of CSWs mothers (75.5%) went to hospitals for antenatal check ups, and only 10.2% went to private nursing homes.
8. About 83.67% respondents mentioned that they had gone for blood test, immunization and took iron folic acid tablets during pregnancy.
9. Findings showed that 55.1% CSWs entertained clients throughout pregnancy, and nearly 63.27% of them asked their clients to use condoms.

10. Very few CSWs (6.12%) suffered from STDs in the antenatal stage, and only 2.04% had STDs in the post natal stage.
11. Nearly 95.9% CSW mothers immunized their children, but 4.09% gave only oral dose of polio vaccine.
12. Out of 59 children, 19 had good weight at birth, 24 had medium weight, 10 had low weight and 6 had very low weight at birth.

Recommendations

1. The Government should organize educational programmes and awareness camps on reproductive and child health (RCH) for CSW mothers and community members. Information on proper care of children should also be imparted.
2. Mental health counselling services may be promoted in the community, as they are needed, but woefully lacking.
3. It is increasingly evident that trained medical attendance at delivery is the key to safe motherhood, which should be aggressively promoted.

Situational Analysis of the Floating Sex Workers

Mohua Banerjee and Joydev Majumdar

Introduction

Sex work is a profession where a woman or man or a transgendered person offers her or his body for commercial purposes to give sexual satisfaction to others. Commercial sex workers (CSWs) are an outcaste group, rejected by mainstream society, and stigmatized as “fallen women”. In most cases economic difficulties force women into sex trade as a survival strategy. Floating sex workers are poverty stricken women who are forced to take up sex trade in addition to another profession. They do not abandon their families while continuing sex trade outside.

Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the study were to:

1. Evaluate the health seeking behaviour of floating sex workers.
2. Assess the extent of exploitation and harassment they face in their workplace.
3. Assess their moral support towards the profession.
4. Understand the socio-economic factors responsible for women taking up the profession of a floating sex worker.

Methodology

Floating sex workers (FSWs), who flock together at Kolkata to work in different unorganized sectors as their parallel profession, were the target group of the study. 45 women labourers who waited for their clients, near Bidhannagar Station, Kolkata were selected through non-probability sampling technique. Interview technique was used for data collection.

Findings and Conclusions

1. Women of poverty-stricken families are forced to take up the profession of sex trade to make both ends. They do not abandon their families while continuing sex trade outside. They are called “floating sex workers” or FSWs.
2. Floating sex workers felt threatened by various social, psychological, physical and economic factors. They are unable to tell their families about their profession, and due to constant use of untruth they suffer from an identity crisis.
3. FSWs face tremendous hatred and family violence if their profession is leaked. Therefore, they try to keep themselves invisible. As they do not like to revealed their identity, they cannot be organized under the umbrella of an organization, which leads to poor awareness among them.
4. Unprotected sex exposed them to different sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and AIDS.
5. Nearly 60% FSWs were in the age group of 28-38 years, and 28.88% were in the age group of 18 to 28 years.
6. About 11.11% FSWs were widows with children, and 33.33% lived with their husbands and children. 8.88% and 24.44% were divorced (with children) and deserted women respectively.

7. About 48.88% were engaged in this profession due to poverty, and 17.7% adopted prostitution due to lack of sexual satisfaction.
8. Nearly 17.77% of the sex workers used condoms in their interaction with their clients. However, 31.11% of the total respondents never used condoms. The first group of respondents, who used condoms regularly showed less hazardous sexual health.
9. About 84.44% FSWs hid the fact that they were involved in the sex trade from their families. Those women whose families became aware of their profession faced tremendous family violence, and were sometimes deserted by their husbands.
10. 86.66% of the respondents did not respect their profession, but had to adopt it to earn money to feed their families.
11. Nearly 24.44% of the respondents generally avoided participation in social and family occasions. About 46.66% disliked going to family functions. Some of them believed that even God would not accept their worship unless they repented for their work.
12. About 44.44% women suffered from tremendous guilt feelings. Nearly 51.11% wanted to shift to a different profession, even if the profession demanded more time. However, most of them hesitated to shift to a job with lesser salary, as poverty was a crucial problem.
13. Nearly 8.88% of the respondents had taken membership of welfare organizations which were exclusively working for sex workers. However, 62.22% avoided these organizations as they feared that their families would come to know that they worked as CSWs.
14. Nearly 60% respondents consumed alcohol at their workplace. Most of them did it just to please clients and due to the fear of losing clients if they did not cooperate.
15. Nearly 42.22% respondents had faced physical violence from their co-workers and associated persons. Many had been injured either by a blade or had acid thrown at them.
16. Nearly 20% respondents faced harassment by the police mainly because they had to stand on the roadside during pick up hours of the day which were mainly twilight or night.
17. If the respondents got a job at their parallel profession, they did not indulge in sex trade.
18. Nearly 24.44% respondents had accounts in banks, 11.11% of the respondents saved money at post offices, and 17.77% had a savings account at a co-operative society. 31.11% saved money at their homes because it was easily accessible. 13.33% of the respondents had no savings due to extreme poverty or due to lack of economic awareness.
19. Nearly 75.55% respondents were unaware of the concept or debate regarding legalization of the sex trade. Only 4.44% respondents knew that legalization promoted easy access to the justice system, and 2.22% highlighted access to benefits like old age pension. However, none of the respondents knew about health insurance.

Recommendations

1. Self employment opportunities should be provided to women from economically weak groups, so that they are not forced to adopt sex trade to earn a living in order to survive.
2. Counselling centres for FSWs, to address their feelings of guilt and identity crisis, are the need of the hour.
3. Police need to be sensitized towards the problems of sex workers.
4. Day care centres for children of FSWs need to be started.

A Study on Sexual Health Status of Commercial Sex Workers of Lebubagan Brothel at Baranagar, Kolkata

Kabita Pandey

Introduction

Commercial sex workers (CSWs) are one of the most vulnerable sections of society, and due to their occupation, they are vulnerable to infectious diseases like sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and AIDS in large numbers. They come from poverty stricken families suffering social deprivation, and they are so heavily burdened with the pressure to eke out day to day living that they hardly care for their health. They compromise their health for the sake of money, which is essential for them to survive, and fall deep into the trap of contracting dangerous diseases like AIDS and STDs, compounding their existing health problems.

Aims and Objectives

Aims and objectives of the study were to:

1. Explore the sexual practices and health seeking behaviour of commercial sex workers.
2. Know how many of them use safety measures and assess the awareness level of CSWs regarding STDs and HIV/ AIDS.

Methodology

The study was conducted in the Lebubagan Brothel which was located within Baranagar Municipality area, Kolkata. The 60 sex workers covered in the study had been randomly selected. Data was collected from primary and secondary sources, through interviews, case studies, observation and study of daily routine.

Findings and Conclusions

1. About 23.3% CSWs were in the age group of 27-33 years, 21.66% respondents were between 33-39 years of age, and only 3.3% were between the age of 18-22 years.
2. Majority of CSWs were illiterate (43.33%), some were barely literate, and only 21.6% respondents were literate.
3. Among 60 respondents, 48.33% were married and they joined this profession due to loss of income of husband, poverty, and other related factors.
4. About 60% respondents lived in rented houses, while 36.6% CSWs shared accommodation. About 35 respondents out of 60 paid monthly rent, and 22 paid on daily basis.
5. Respondents aged 38 years to above 40 years entertained 5 to 6 clients per day and earned on an average Rs 30 to Rs.60 from each client. Respondents aged 19 to 37 years entertained 6-7 clients per day and were paid Rs.60 to Rs.80 by each of them.
6. About 73.3% respondents had the habit of saving, whereas 26.6% could not save because of family burden and huge medical costs.
7. About 40% CSWs did not practice protected sex, but 60% were able to do it sometimes. Nearly 75% of the sample did not use condoms regularly as they were not conscious about the necessity for using condoms. Most of them had to act according to the desire of customers, and they could not force customers because of economic reasons.

8. Majority of the respondents (61.6%) suffered from abdominal pain, 46.67% had skin diseases, 38.3% had cold and cough, and 33.3% suffered from stomach problems.
9. All the respondents were addicted to *pan masalas* (flavoured tobacco), 35% were addicted to alcohol, 18.3% had tobacco addiction, and 26.6% had addiction to *gutka* (flavoured mouth freshener with tobacco).
10. All 100% of the CSWs practiced vaginal sex, 58.3% practiced oral sex, whereas 18.3% practiced anal sex. This was based on the demands of clients.
11. About 51.6% respondents continued their profession during menstrual days, and 28.3% even during pregnancy.
12. Majority of CSWs (81.6%) suffered from STDs, whereas no respondent among the 60 suffered from HIV/AIDS.
13. Only 10% CSWs had not even heard about STDs, 13.34% were aware of STDs though in name only, 38.3% had minimum knowledge about it, and 38.3% had moderate knowledge. About 70% CSWs had a little knowledge about HIV/AIDS.

Recommendations

1. Awareness campaigns must be undertaken to make CSWs aware about HIV/AIDS, STDs, skill to use condoms properly, and influence them to practice safe sex.
2. Networking of sex workers - locally, nationally and regionally - is required to advocate for protective laws, working conditions, and better and safer services.
3. Economic development programmes, including skill training, that offer alternative means of employment to sex workers need to be started.
4. Advocacy for a socially and legally supportive environment is required. Working communities need to change social norms, and lobby with policy makers and law enforcers to address legal issues that affect sex workers.

A Study Report on Prevailing Conditions of Female Commercial Sex Workers/ Women in Prostitution

Akshayanagar Pallisri Sangha

Introduction

The Suppression of Immoral Trafficking (SIT) Act, later modified as Immoral Trafficking in Persons (ITP) Act, describes a prostitute as a male or female who offers his/her body for sexual intercourse for payment, either in cash or kind, with a man or woman who is not her/his husband or wife. The various ways by which sex trade is operational in India are brothel prostitution, Devdasi/ Vasavi System, massage parlours, cabarets, clubs, bars, guest houses, private meeting places, prostitution on highways, soliciting customers on pavements, railway stations, cinema halls, market centres, etc. A rough estimate suggests that there are about 3 million sex workers in India.

Aims and Objectives

The study aims to focus on the:

1. Demographic and socio-economic background of sex workers.
2. The factors influencing a woman or girl's entry into sex trade.
3. Health status of prostitutes and their awareness about HIV/STD/AIDS.
4. The current and future needs of sex workers.
5. Opinion of sex workers on the question of legalization and rehabilitation of prostitutes, their social and economic security, etc.

Methodology

The study was conducted in the red light areas of South 24 Parganas, North 24 Parganas, Howrah and Hooghly Districts of West Bengal. About 200 women/ girls were selected randomly as the sample from each red light area.

Findings and Conclusions

1. In sex workers' profession, women are never distinguished by their castes as they are all an outcaste lot.
2. About 93.1% prostitutes were of Indian origin and the remaining 6.9% were of foreign origin.
3. Majority of the prostitutes were illiterates, 3.4% were semi-literate and 2% were non-matric.
4. For concealing their true age or for obtaining sympathy from local people or police personnel, almost all the prostitutes claimed to be married but deserted or separated from their husbands.
5. Highest proportion of women in the sex trade (90.8%) had a normal family background.
6. Normally a sex worker took a room on rent. The room had no ventilation and it was dirty, damp and unhygienic. Almost all sex workers in the study area resided in unhealthy housing conditions.
7. Economic status of a prostitute depended on her income. Her income was again dependant on the demand for her in the sex market. The monthly income could range from Rs.2000/- to Rs.6000/-.

8. Just like commodities in the market, women in sex trade also have their durability in the market. A majority of the prostitutes (51.4%) had experience of 5 years in the flesh trade, while 7% had experience of more than 10 years.
9. About 96.7% prostitutes came into this profession unwillingly. They narrated stories of being trapped, victimized and forced to take up this profession. Nearly 92.6% women in prostitution were motivated by agents/ brokers with whom they came in contact, either at the workplace or through relatives/ friends.
10. About 35% prostitutes entertained clients for 6 to 10 hours per day; younger prostitutes were busy for more than 10 hours a day. Number of clients varied between 2 and 7.
11. The regular clients of prostitutes were rickshaw pullers, truck drivers, conductors, helpers, labourers, local youths and people. Professionals, executives, policemen and politicians also formed a minor proportion of their customers. Elite customers normally approach pimps instead of going to brothels.
12. About 93.6% prostitutes intended to be good housewives and lead a peaceful conjugal life; 1.8% intended to be in service and 0.6% desired to establish a business.
13. Nearly 98% prostitutes were aware of STD/HIV/AIDS, and were also aware about preventive measures. About 92% reported that despite their sincere attempts to make their customers use condoms as a preventive measure, they failed to do so because customers were shabby drunken men from the lower strata of society.
14. About 98% prostitutes admit that they do not receive proper health care services, particularly with regard to STDs. Many of them do not have knowledge about Government clinics that provide counselling, medical check ups and other services to STD patients.
15. About 97% prostitutes do not visualize any better future for themselves and their dependants. Insecurity looms large in their future life. Almost 47% prostitutes were in debt for having taken loans from private sources.
16. Almost all the prostitutes expressed a strong desire to come out of their profession. Prostitutes were of the opinion that multiple kinds of assistance should be provided to them for their rehabilitation.
17. About 61% prostitutes acknowledged that their profession affected the upbringing of their children very adversely, and 20% kept their children away from them.

Recommendations

1. There is a need to develop communications channels with the women in prostitution to understand their real problems and assess the level of assistance they require for their rehabilitation.
2. The Local Self Government should come forward with specific programmes to clean the social and physical environment of red light areas, and ensure basic minimum facilities for them.
3. The police needs to be sensitized towards the needs of sex workers.
4. There is a need to identify the network of flesh traders and they should be punished severely.
5. It is very much important to protect the children of prostitutes from entering into sex trade through some strategic intervention aiming to rehabilitate them.
6. Awareness generation camps need to be organized on regular basis to generate awareness among women in prostitution about their general health care, use of condoms, contraceptives and other measures to protect themselves from STD/HIV/AIDS.
7. Government should ensure that all children in the vulnerable age group are under its supervision and control.

Survey Mapping and Needs Assessment of Sex Worker Settlements in Mumbai City, Its Suburbs and in Navi Mumbai

Committed Communities Development Trust

Introduction

A continuing debate persists, both at national and international levels, on the terminology for women and girls who receive payment in exchange for sexual favours. Mumbai, being a large commercial metropolitan city and a port, has a large number of women engaged in sex work. The nature of sex work in most of these areas in Mumbai is significantly brothel – based, with a small percentage of women operating independently. Kamatipura was one of the largest of these settlements in Mumbai city. Information about the newer areas was obtained mostly from interactions with the women at Kamatipura. The areas covered in the study were Worli, Gaiwadi, Sewri, Ghatkopar and Bhandup.

Aims and Objectives

The main objectives of the study were to:

1. Understand the situation with regard to newer sex worker settlements in Mumbai city and its suburbs.
2. Identify areas where women in prostitution lived, and to systematically map these areas.
3. Assess the needs of sex workers.

Methodology

The study identified and mapped sex workers settlements in Mumbai city, South Mumbai, and its suburbs in Western and Central Mumbai. Navi Mumbai was also included in the study. Snowballing technique was used to identify CSWs for data collection. The processes involved in conducting the study were identification of settlements and mapping; training of community workers for information collection; reliability checks through field visits; and needs assessment of sex workers.

Findings and Conclusions

Findings of the study were reported area-wise, as given below:

Worli

1. The children from sex worker families attended school and smaller children attended balwadis in a neighbouring area.
2. In case of illness, both women and children visited private practitioners.
3. Women had sufficient information about HIV/AIDS.
4. Sex workers conveyed that they only entertained a client if he used a condom, and these were distributed by an NGO once a week.
5. Immediate need expressed by women was balwadis for younger children and boarding school admissions for older children.

Gaiwadi

1. Most of the sex workers in this settlement were girls from poor families who came from various parts of Mumbai, rural Maharashtra and Karnataka.
2. In most cases, the family and spouse were unaware about the profession of women.
3. Most women came into the profession of their own choice for reasons such as financial need, desertion by the spouse, alcoholism and unemployment of the husband.

4. Very few children stayed with their mothers.
5. When they were unwell, women went to private practitioners in the locality for treatment.
6. There were very few girls of young age, and the women here looked healthier than the women in Kamatipura.
7. Each building had rooms measuring approximately 8'x 8', with a *gharwali* (brothel owner) and 3 to 4 women in each room.

Sewri

1. There were about 20 houses in this area, 15 on one side and 5 on the other side of the road.
2. Most women continued to maintain contact with their families in their villages.
3. They did not entertain clients without the use of condoms.
4. Clients were mainly truck drivers and were charged Rs. 30 – Rs. 50 per visit.

Ghatkopar

1. Most of the sex workers in Ghatkopar were from Maharashtra and Karnataka.
2. Women entered this profession due to compulsions such as financial need, desertion by spouse, alcoholism and unemployment of the spouse, widowhood, etc.
3. Older children from the locality attended a Municipal school in the neighbourhood.
4. In case of illness, women and children went to Rajawadi hospital.
5. Women seemed to be aware of HIV/AIDS.
6. Women mentioned that money flow was poor as *dhandra* (business) was not flourishing due to the scare of HIV/AIDS.
7. Some women had to drag clients into their rooms by the collar, and sometimes they solicited clients out in the lane.

Bhandup

1. There was a large eunuch population in Bhandup and *goondagardi* (hooliganism) was widespread. Voluntary organizations were warned not to enter this area, even to survey.
2. The eunuchs came from the southern states of India, especially Karnataka.
3. There were 40 houses where women engaged in sex work stayed and 60 where eunuchs resided.
4. The area lacked basic amenities like health centres, schools, sanitation and other facilities.
5. Women mentioned that *dhandra* (business) was low because of the scare of HIV/AIDS.
6. Clients were largely industrial workers from the vicinity.
7. They did not seem to have any fear of the police, as whenever they were required to accompany the policeman to the police station, they paid a sum of Rs. 110/- and were let off.

Recommendations

1. There was a rapid increase in the population of sex workers in Mumbai city.
2. Due to lack of alternatives and options for employment of women and girls who do not have the requisite education or skills in a rapidly developing economy, the flesh trade flourished.
3. Welfare and development programmes aimed at sex workers and their children often viewed them only as carriers of HIV/AIDS. Their problems need to be addressed in a holistic manner.
4. Though awareness programmes, condom distribution, counselling and testing facilities would help in controlling the spread of AIDS, the community lacks basic amenities, which should be provided.
5. Children of sex workers need to be empowered and exposed to opportunities in mainstream society.

Violence against Women: Report of the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, Its Causes and Consequences

Radhika Coomaraswamy

Introduction

At the invitation of the Governments of Bangladesh, Nepal and India, the Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women visited Dhaka, Kathmandu, Bhairahwa in Rupandehi district in Nepal, Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata from 28 October to 15 November 2000, to study the issue of trafficking in women and girls in the region. The present report is intended as a case study to complement the Special Rapporteur's previous report on trafficking in women, women's migration and violence against women, submitted to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights at its Fifty Fifth Session. Trafficking in persons means the recruitment, transportation, purchase, sale, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons by threat or use of violence, abduction, force, fraud, deception or coercion, or debt bondage.

Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the study were to:

1. Find out the causes of violence against women, specially trafficking in South Asia.
2. Learn about the consequences of trafficking.
3. Know the initiatives undertaken by Governments to combat trafficking.
4. Assess whether there is any growth in trafficking.

Methodology

Information about trafficking was collected from three South Asian countries namely Bangladesh, India and Nepal. Data was collected through the case study method, by conducting unstructured interviews and having discussions with sex workers. Information was also gathered from Government officials and NGOs working in the field.

Findings and Conclusions

1. Governments appear to be seriously committed to the eradication of trafficking of women and children across national borders.
2. Despite a formal commitment, effective institutions, laws and policies aimed at eradicating trafficking were still not in place.
3. Effective implementation of existing provisions and policies that are directed at combating trafficking was also lacking.
4. Many of the campaigns and programmes were donor driven or under NGO leadership. Governments of the region had not been aggressive or proactive in their commitment to eradicate trafficking in the past.
5. The most urgent need in terms of the trafficking of women and girls from Nepal and Bangladesh to India is the collection of data so as to ascertain the true scope and magnitude of the problem.
6. Estimates of the number of women trafficked vary from 10,000 a year to 25,000. The estimated number of sex workers varies from 1 million to 8 million.

7. Conceptual clarity with regard to trafficking is the only way to promote the enactment of laws and programmes to prevent trafficking, which is a gross violation of human rights of women.
8. Many of the victims interviewed by the Special Rapporteur were very clear that they had left home because of poverty and discrimination. Some of the women also told the Rapporteur that they left their communities because their husbands took other wives.
9. In India, when women victims of trafficking are rescued they are often sent to a Government home for protective custody until their cases are heard or until they are sent back home.
10. A regional convention of itself cannot solve the problem of trafficking in South Asia. It must be supplemented with a regional monitoring mechanism, as well as regional cooperation among law enforcement officials.
11. The struggle to eradicate trafficking in South Asian region has two components. The first concern is the efforts of the criminal justice system to prevent, prosecute and punish traffickers; the second involves social welfare for the women who want to be rescued and provided with alternative avenues for making a living. The social welfare component also includes health policies and activities around the problem of HIV/AIDS among women who have been trafficked for prostitution.
12. Empowering the police to deal with trafficking may not be very successful unless there are appropriate guidelines and training procedures in place.
13. Police corruption in trafficking processes was an issue that was constantly raised by women victims of trafficking.
14. In her discussions with women victims and NGOs as well as officials, the Special Rapporteurs received a mixed picture about judiciary's role in fighting trafficking, especially in India as a receiving country.
15. India is a source and a transit point for persons trafficked to Pakistan and Gulf states, and is also destination for trafficked persons. Women and girls are trafficked into India for sex work, for forced labour and for forced marriage.
16. Internal trafficking also occurs from rural, economically depressed areas to the cities, where there is a market for sex work.
17. The Supreme Court has used Articles in the Constitution that deal with equality, human dignity, the right to life and liberty when dealing with the crime of trafficking, as it seriously infringes on the basic rights of women.
18. Prostitution is not illegal in India but soliciting and exploiting prostitution are offences.
19. There are many efforts underway to replace PITA (Prevention of Immoral Traffic Act of 1986) with comprehensive trafficking prevention legislation. The National Commission for Women (NCW) is looking into this aspect.

Recommendations

1. The international community must continue to play a proactive role in preventing trafficking in the South Asian region. More resources should be given to Governments of the region to deal with this problem of human servitude and forced labour.
2. The countries of SAARC region should get together to collect comprehensive data on trafficking. There should be a central database and a regional survey to assess the nature of problems, numbers involved, and the responses of national Governments.

3. The adoption of the SAARC Convention on Trafficking should be encouraged.
4. There should be an Inter-Governmental Regional Task Force on Trafficking that would plan and implement a concerted strategy for the region.
5. Governments of the region should have a National Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking. There should be a monitoring mechanism involving Governments, NGOs and international agencies.
6. There should be a nodal agency entrusted with implementing the Plan of Action.
7. Legislation to combat trafficking should be considered, but only if it complies with international human rights standards and does not violate the rights of women.
8. Governments should refrain from enacting regulations and orders that restrict the free movement of women under the guise of fighting trafficking. Instead, measures aimed at educating women about their rights and raising awareness about conditions in receiving countries should be adopted.
9. 'Protective custody' as a means of dealing with victims of trafficking should be reconsidered. Any stay in a Government Home should be voluntary.
10. In cases involving trafficking victims who are foreign nationals, Governments of the region must work towards facilitating their voluntary return, if that is appropriate, rather than detain them for long periods in Government Homes.
11. All countries of the region should have training for their police forces on how to combat violence against women in general, as well as trafficking.
12. There should be seminars and workshops with judges in the region to increase their awareness about issues relating to violence against women.
13. The Human Rights Commission in all countries of the region should increase awareness on issues related to trafficking.
14. Witness protection schemes should be set up for women victims so that they could safely testify against their traffickers.
15. Extensive support should be given to NGOs working in this field.

XI

Widows



Life after Death: A Journey into the Lives of War Widows

Vinita Narula and Sarita Anand

Introduction

Widows are in a vulnerable situation and are a group who are in need of special services. In India, there are an estimated 35 million widows constituting about 8% the country's female population. To many, the transition from being a married woman to a state of widowhood is often tumultuous, traumatic and painful. Problems start cropping up soon after the husband's death. The widow faces economic deprivation, familial and social deprivation, role burden or role adjustment, emotional deprivation, and cultural deprivation.

Aims and Objectives

Objectives of the study were to:

1. Know about the socio-economic status of war widows of 1971 war and 'Operation Vijay' at Kargil in 1999.
2. Identify the needs for education, training and employment among war widows.
3. Arrive at some suggestions for the central and state administration to alter the compensation package for a war widow so that she can be rehabilitated more fruitfully.

Methodology

Five northern states of India, namely Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan and Western Uttar Pradesh, which is a martial belt, were selected for the study. In all 40 war widows were selected as respondents on the basis of the list of Quality of Living Index of all districts in the five selected states obtained from the administrative officer, Government of Haryana. Thus, rank order of each district was the criteria for the selection of districts. Data was collected through in-depth interviews.

Findings and Conclusions

1. The number of very young widows in the age group of 15-20 years was highest in Delhi followed by Rajasthan. The practice of early marriage is widely prevalent in these states. In Punjab and Western Uttar Pradesh, none of the widows were very young. The number of widows in the age group of 20-25 years was highest in the states of Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan.
2. Majority of the widows in all the states were illiterate.
3. About 50% of the widows lived with their in-laws after the demise of their husbands.
4. Nearly 29% of the widows from all the states got remarried.
5. Three widows received Rs. 20,000 approximately, one received Rs. 50,000 and 8 of the 1971 war widows received no financial assistance except their late husband's pension.
6. In all, 14 petrol pumps/ gas agencies had been allotted to widows/ martyrs' families in five states.
7. About 50% martyrs' families were offered employment opportunities.
8. Only 2 families residing in Western Uttar Pradesh had received housing facility, while 25% of the other respondents had taken an additional amount of Rs. 5 lakhs, the worth of the housing facility from the Government.

9. In Western Uttar Pradesh, none of the widows of martyrs' families received an offer of employment. In Haryana, maximum number of widows declined the offer.
10. Only 50% of the widows worked outside their homes, even when forced by circumstances to earn a living. One of the widows performed three jobs - of an agricultural labourer, rearing a buffalo and as a peon in a school.
11. The highest number of widows/ martyrs' families in Western Uttar Pradesh showed their willingness to join the army. Some of the widows and martyrs' families, particularly of the 1971 war, were discontented with the indifferent attitude of Government to the extent that they did not want their kin to join the army. On the contrary, the children of martyrs of 1971 war were enthusiastic to send their children to the army. Some of the children of the martyrs of 1971 war were already in the army fighting at the border.

Recommendations

1. As soon as a soldier marries, it should be mandatory for him to bring over his spouse to the regiment with the dual purpose of orientation and education of the newly wed bride towards army life.
2. Social and cultural systems need transformation in order to alter the mindset of society. Issues like education of the girl child, child marriage, gender bias, remarriage of widows, widowhood need redefining and relooking at.
3. More stringent steps are required to utilize the compassionate benefits being given to families. Benefits should be given to the widow or her own immediate family, that is her children, in the case of married persons.
4. Central government, state government, voluntary organizations, organizations like Army Women's Welfare Association (AWWA) and other women's organizations can play a proactive role and make the armed forces as a chosen profession for many more young men in our country.

Socio-economic Problems of Old People among Bhils of Udaipur Region

T. M. Dak

Introduction

In India, the population of old people is increasing at a much faster rate compared to the general population. The number of old people which stood only at 12 million in 1901 constituting 5% of the total population rose to 56.7% million in 1991 and it is expected to rise further to 7.7% by 2001, 8.7% by 2010 and 12.3% by 2025. Over 25% of the elderly population is now estimated to be dependent on caregivers. Of greater concern is the increasing incidence of widowhood, separation and divorces corresponding to the growing number of aged. The elderly widowed population comprised about half of the total widowed population, and the population of females widowed was 3 times higher than that of males widowed. Apart from the dependence of increasing number of old people on caregivers, age care and support services traditionally available to elderly people were adversely affected owing to recent social changes such as urbanization, industrialization and migration of young people.

Aims and Objectives

The study was conducted with the following objectives in view:

1. To study the socio-economic problems of the elderly persons among Bhils and identify the traditional support system available for care of the aged, particularly women.
2. To examine emerging stresses and strains caused due to modernizing forces and their relative impact on aged males and females.
3. To study the contribution of the aged in the socio-economic life of the community and society.
4. To find out empirically the support system needs of elderly persons in order to reduce their disabilities and to make them useful citizens of society.

Methodology

The study was carried out in Udaipur district where Bhils were concentrated in seven of its ten tehsils, namely Jhadol, Kherwara, Kotra, Sarada, Salumber, Dhariawad and Girwa. Based on the concentration of tribal population, the tehsils were divided into 2 categories namely those that had 75% or above tribal population, and those that had below 75% tribal population. One tehsil from each category was randomly selected. These tehsils were Dhariawad (high tribal concentration) and Jhadol (low tribal concentration). From each tehsil, one town and four villages, and a specified number of Bhil households from each town and village were selected. The sample consisted of 300 persons in the working age group, 210 aged males and 233 aged females from 300 sample households. Data was collected through interview schedules.

Findings and Conclusions

1. About 60% of the respondents belonged to nuclear families and membership in most families ranged up to 5 persons. Most respondents were small landholders, had low income levels and very few household assets.
2. Nearly 58.9% elderly persons were looked after by their sons, 33.86% elderly members were looked after by their daughters-in-law and 6.7% were looked after by their daughters.

3. Among the areas of care and services received by old people, health care emerged as the most frequent attended area with highest mean weighted score (2.06/ 3.00).
4. The most neglected areas of care as perceived by old people were sympathy, empathy and respect towards the aged.
5. A majority of the elderly persons (52.6%) considered themselves partially able to perform physical work and most of them were involved in household activities.
6. Barring a few cases (3.34%), all elderly persons received financial as well as material help from their families.
7. Majority of the elderly persons mentioned that the financial help they received from their family according to their needs was not adequate, whereas 45% respondents reported that the financial help received was adequate for their needs.
8. About three-fourths of the caregivers recognized that elders need help and were providing them help in cash or kind.
9. Regarding the social contribution of old people, 40% caregivers felt that match-making was the most important social activity, whereas 60% caregivers reported helping of neighbours in difficulty was an important social activity of the elderly.
10. While assessing the impact of widowhood, increasing dependency was ranked first, followed by social disability and feelings of helplessness.
11. According to family members, some ageing widows had 3 behavioural problems namely fault-finding (79.8%), domineering attitude (79.78%) and obsession (52.8%) which adversely affected their relations with family members.
12. It was found that care of the elderly was not affected by the habitat.
13. One of the most significant trends noticed was the inverse association between proximity to urban areas and regularity in receipt of support services relating to food care, sanitary living, sympathy and respect.
14. It was noted that respect towards elders was positively associated with education; that regularity in age care tended to increase with increase in the family size; and that income level was positively associated with most dimensions of age care. However, occupation and land holdings did not affect age care.

Recommendations

1. There is a need to develop viable and suitable programmes of economic security and income generation that can reduce old persons' dependence, enhance their productivity, remove their loneliness and isolation, and reduce their feeling of uselessness.
2. There is need to focus more on rural and tribal areas, and opportunities need to be provided to preserve traditional skills, transfer them to the younger generation and utilize them to meet increasing demand of artistic products.
3. The Health Policy for the Aged should include provision of mobile medical vans, periodical visits to remote tribal and hilly areas to ensure accessibility of the old to PHCs and sub-centres, and orientation of medical staff of the health delivery system in the specific diseases associated with old age.
4. NGOs and panchayati raj institutions should plan for some economic security measures to benefit the old who are poor.
5. Well being of the elderly lies to a great extent in their remaining in the joint household and in the motivation of caregivers to offer the old needed care and support.

Status of Widows in Contemporary Tamil Society

L. Thara Bhai

Introduction

Widowhood brings change in the status of a woman after the death of the spouse and necessitates the establishment of new relationships within the family, within the kin group and within the community. Widowhood is a very stressful situation. It brings about several kinds of social, economic, cultural, emotional and psychological deprivation. In Tamil Nadu, even today, both in urban and rural areas, widows have to undergo all the customs of yester years, which are very unpleasant.

Aims and Objectives

The objectives of the present study were to:

1. Find out the socio-economic background of widows before and after widowhood.
2. Study the problems of widows that hinder their personality development.
3. Study power equations of widows in their respective families.
4. Study problems of widows who are working outside their homes.
5. Study problems of widows and their relationships within the family of procreation and family of orientation.
6. Make a comparative analysis of working and non-working widows.

Methodology

Snowball sampling technique was used to select 600 widows in different age groups from both, rural and urban areas of 9 districts of Tamil Nadu. The 9 districts were Madurai, Dindigul, Tirunelveli, Chennai, Virudhunagar, Coimbatore, Nagercoil, Chidambaram and Tanjore. Working widows were selected from public offices and private organizations, after a thorough pilot study. Non-working widows were also included. Case studies of 10 widows were also made using projective technique. Unstructured interview schedules were used to collect data.

Findings and Conclusions

1. Nearly 85% widows were Hindu, 12% were Christian, and 3% were Muslim. No significant relationship was found between caste and widowhood. The number of widows were in proportion to the size of the population. Thus backward castes had maximum number of widows followed by most backward castes. A significant finding was that the number of widows among scheduled castes was considerably lower than forward castes. Rigid beliefs were not present among scheduled castes as was seen among the *brahmins* and other upper caste communities. The tendency to remain a widow was more among upper class rather than lower class.
2. Nearly 1.5% became widows before the age of 25 years. Nearly 14.8% of the widows were in the age group of 26 – 35 years, which was considered marriageable age. About 26.5% widows were between 36 to 45 years, and 24% were between 46 to 55 years of age. Last group was above marriageable age according to Indian tradition and thus remarriage was not possible.
3. About 16% of these women were married by the age of 15 years, and majority of the respondents were married between the age of 16 – 20 years. Girls who got married before 15 years were largely from rural areas, where attaining puberty was considered marriageable age. 75% of the girls who married at a very early age were from villages of Tamil Nadu. Villagers were not aware of civil rules regarding marriage or the age of marriage as prescribed by the Government under various legislations. When informed that it was

punishable if the girls were married before the age of 18 years, the parents of the girls strongly opposed the law and replied that the 'Government was not looking after the people, then why were they bothered about the age at marriage?' Also, information about most Government programmes had not reached the people.

4. Nearly 94.5% of the marriages were arranged.
5. Widows did not want to marry again and no widow agreed with the suggestion that they remained widows because of compulsions from their immediate society. However, they were not happy with their present stage of life, and they did not want to openly say that they would like to marry again.
6. Illiterate widows who had received primary education did not take any steps to enhance their qualification. However, those who had higher secondary education (HSC) before the death of their husbands, increased their educational qualification to graduation or post graduation after becoming widows, because they knew that education would give them knowledge, confidence and economic support.
7. Before the death of their husbands, 61.3% widows had HSC qualification and this group raised their educational qualification. The number of graduates increased from 7.5% to 9% and post graduates from 4.0% to 5.5%. When the husbands of these women were alive, they did not have the freedom to voice their ambitions or aspirations.
8. Irrespective of the economic background, most widows have taken up one job or the other after becoming widows. Among illiterates there were no widows who remained unemployed. The occupation chosen was in the public sector, private sector or unorganized sector. Most of the women who got a job, got it on compassionate grounds. Working widows were happy that they were able to make both ends meet in an efficient manner, unlike their husbands who would give very little money for household expenses. Lower class women complained that their husbands would spend a major portion of what they earned for their own expenses, unlike women whose primary interest was their family. Many respondents said their husbands would even collect their earnings from their place of work.
9. After the death of their spouse, the number of women in rural areas in the income group of Rs. 100-5000 per month increased from 5% to 10%, and from 1% to 4.5% in Rs. 5001-10000 income group.
10. Most widows felt a sudden change in their status due to sympathy, avoidance, exploitation, etc. Both working widows and non-working widows felt this change after their husband's death. Only 13% working and 14% non-working widows did not feel the change, and they had a strained relationship with the husband or one of his family members. Widows were isolated and looked after by their respective joint families, but felt that none wanted to keep them because of overdependence. Many reported feelings of helplessness and fear immediately after the husband's death.
11. Most of them who were afraid to face life alone did not have an independent dwelling place or were not confident of their kin. 54.5% widows were shocked that their husbands were no more. Most respondents who were shocked were young widows married only for 3-5 years. Women who had responsibilities recovered quickly. 16.1% working women and 24.6% non-working women had strong mental support from their families who gave them courage to overcome the shock.
12. Counselling was an alien concept and only 3.5% widows went for counselling. In Tamil Nadu, counselling centres were only available in cities and were not functioning properly. Coimbatore and Madurai had centres which were not well equipped. Qualified and trained people were present only in Chennai.
13. Widowhood was considered as "fate" by at least 58.4% of the working widows and 28.70% of the non-working widows. Many of them believed it was the curse of a previous birth and some felt it was a consequence of not satisfying the deity, etc.

14. After the husband's death, working women were negatively differentiated against due to the fact that they were earning and were more independent. Sympathy was considered positive differentiation and negligence and indifference were considered as negative differentiation. 39% were victims of sympathy. 27% widows were ill treated in their own houses, either through negligence or indifference of the family.
15. Nearly 75.8% did not know the concept of status in their own homes, and the rest of them felt that they were given a low status in the family in which they were born. They were isolated from auspicious functions and ceremonies. Nearly 54.5% got support from their family, 19% got support from their husband's family, 33.5% from children, 20% from friends and 13.1% from neighbours. 26% were discouraged from various sources and it was their own will power which made them continue. About 46.5% said that neighbours and friends showed a negative attitude towards them as though they were untouchables. About 21% reported that widows generally did not face the problems they faced. About 6.5% said that they were looked at with suspicion for want of money, companionship or sex.
16. Nearly 25.5% widows of the sample did not have any mobility, whereas the rest of them had restricted mobility. Widows could not go out alone and had to be accompanied by children, servants, etc. Even a few working widows did not have any mobility at all. They went out only for specific reasons such as children's education, medical needs, religious visits, etc.
17. Most popular custom after husband's death was removal of *thali* (a symbol of marriage that a lady wears), in a ceremonious way immediately after husband's death. Nearly 93% removed their *thali* and 79.5% did not wear *kumkum* (vermillion) after husband's death. Other customs like not wearing dress of their choice, avoiding ceremonies, etc. followed. Nearly 7.5% reported that they followed all customs due to their own free will, and consoled themselves by saying it was their fate. 22% said that these customs were unnecessary and no one gained from them, and 19.8% said they underwent all these customs to show respect towards their demised husbands.
18. Nearly 18.5% widows were aware of concessions available to them, and these included even rural and illiterate widows. However, very few knew that they were entitled to their husband's savings, and official processes were also a hurdle to overcome.
19. Most respondents, even those who were working, did not believe in counselling. Only 15% had gone for counselling.
20. Nearly 12% widows thought about remarriage though they did not express it. Those who thought about remarriage had problems where they lived and thought no one looked after their needs. Widows who had children did not want to remarry as their priority was their children. Almost 33% enjoyed bringing up their children.
21. Nearly 50.5% widows changed their residence from marital home to their parents' home or acquired a house near their parents' home. Relatives failed to understand the agony over their husband's death and 21% said family members were non-cooperative.
22. Nearly 57% did not face any problem in receiving the assets of husbands, whereas 27% found it difficult to collect assets. Difficulties experienced for collection of assets included getting death certificates, etc. Working women faced more problems than non-working women, and rural non-working women had more problems than urban non-working women. However, 81.5% respondents became more empowered after their husband's demise.

Recommendations

1. There should be strict implementation of laws regarding appropriate age of marriage.
2. Efforts should be made to generate self-employment among widows.
3. Counseling centres for women should be opened.
4. Special needs of children of widows need to be taken care of by school authorities.
5. Media should spread awareness and help in removing prejudices against widows.

Status of Widows of Vrindavan and Varanasi: A Comparative Study

V. Mohini Giri and Meera Khanna

Introduction

The state of widowhood is a great calamity in a patriarchal and traditional society like India, and patriarchy has played the biggest role in the total marginalization of widows. As widows, women suffer some of the most severe subjugation of their lives and face many kinds of deprivation – economic, social, cultural and emotional. Of all deprivations, economic deprivation is most harmful. The situation of widows in North India is worsened by the system of patrilocal residence, whereby widows cannot return to their parents' home even though they are often rejected by their in-laws.

Aims and Objectives

The aims of the present study were to:

1. Study the reasons for migration of widows from West Bengal to Varanasi and Vrindavan.
2. Assess the extent of economic, social, psychological and cultural deprivation faced by these widows.
3. Identify the measures taken for their rehabilitation by Government and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

Methodology

The study was started in May 2000. Incidental sampling was used to obtain a total sample of 324 widows, 240 widows in Vrindavan and 84 widows in Varanasi. The sample comprised three groups of widows – widows who lived in rehabilitation homes, widows who lived in boarding houses, and widows from the streets. An interview schedule was designed to obtain information from the respondents.

Findings and Conclusions

1. It was found that in rehabilitation homes the widows were leading a life as akin to a home life as possible. There, their daily needs were taken care of, medical care was provided, and there existed a personal bond between members of the home and those responsible for the efficient functioning of the home.
2. The boarding houses for widows were, on the whole, impersonal and members lived as paying guests. Food was provided in some houses, but on the whole, widows had to fend for themselves, and medical care and clothing was not provided for.
3. Widows on the streets were absolutely at the mercy of vicissitudes of poverty and old age.
4. Almost all widows in rehabilitation homes, boarding houses and on the streets were above the age of 60 years.
5. It was found that around 53.3% widows from Vrindavan were married to men who worked as labourers on the land and earned between Rs.2000 – 5000. In Varanasi, about 51% widows were married to men earning below Rs.1000. It was found that in Varanasi and Vrindavan, all the three categories of widows had no savings left for them by their spouses. Majority of the widows had no house on their name and suffered from economic deprivation.
6. Majority of the widows in Vrindavan (65.7%) had more than one child. They were forced to move away from their homes to fend for themselves in pilgrim towns. On the other hand, 41.7% widows in Varanasi had suffered negative behaviour from their children. It was found that the level of deprivation among the widows of Varanasi was relatively higher.
7. About 30% widows claimed to have been treated well by their children before widowhood, this figure fell to 22.5% on widowhood. Majority of the widows felt depressed because they

felt abandoned by their children, isolated from relatives, were at the receiving end of disrespectful attitudes, and they felt lonely.

8. Emotional insecurity was higher among widows in Varanasi (25%) because they were not living in a family over which they had moral social rights. They felt they were at the receiving end of a dole. The sense of insecurity was there because women were condition to associate their sense of security with their relationship with a man.
9. On becoming widows, the diet of the women changed to simple food, they started wearing simple clothes due to lack of interest, and they were also economically not sound.
10. Widows were made to shaved their hair or cut them very small because of societal norms, and the percentage of widows getting their head shorn was higher in Varanasi than Vrindavan, which showed that Varanasi was more conservative.
11. Widows from Varanasi and Vrindavan attended religious and social functions. In marriage ceremonies, not one went near the bridal couple, nor were they allowed to enter the marriage *mandap* (flower decorated place where the ceremony takes place). Society regarded them to be inauspicious and felt that ill luck would come to the newly married couple.
12. Majority of the widows stated that they should not remarry because society did not accept idea of remarriage, they hated the idea of remarriage, and also some widows were unable to forget their first husband.
13. In comparison to Vrindavan, Varanasi had more widows living on the streets than in rehabilitation or boarding homes. Most of these widows had been abandoned by their relatives and children.
14. In Varanasi, even widows with children were left to fend for themselves, contradicting the belief that families took care of widows.
15. Most of the widows were married at the age of 15 years to men who were much older than them, knowing fully well that in the eventuality of the husband's death they would live the rest of their life as a widow.
16. About 81% of the widows in rehabilitation homes of Vrindavan were widowed before the age of 19 years, but were not given the option of remarriage by society. Their young age was a disadvantage to them. They were uneducated and could not support themselves financially.
17. About 42% of the widows, despite being literate, were found begging on the streets. A large number of women were also engaged in exploitative professions to support themselves.
18. Widows were considered inauspicious, and thus were discouraged from attending social functions. They were encouraged to attend religious functions, and most of them gave religion as the reason for their migration to Vrindavan and Varanasi.
19. Most widows wore simple clothes because of economic deprivation and not because they had no worldly desires left after they became widows. They also cut their hair so that they could obtain support from *ashrams*, which advocated age old patriarchal norms.

Recommendations

1. Government and NGOs should initiate programmes to rehabilitate widows economically. This would prevent widows from entering exploitative professions or adopting begging as a means of sustenance.
2. Widows should be provided with adequate pension benefits, access to fair price shops and vocational training.
3. Efforts should be made to provide sound education to women to empower them. Also, child marriages need to be prevented.
4. NGOs should advocate the practice of widow remarriage. NGOs should also start special awareness camps for creating a right attitude towards widows in society.

A Study on Situational Analysis of Bengali Hindu Widows Living in Karidhya Village in Suri Block I of Birbhum District, West Bengal

Gargi Biswas

Introduction

Widows are viewed as objects of pity, and are regarded as sad, unfortunate women, destined to suffer for the rest of their lives. The marginal state of a widow, who is actually regarded as socially dead, is marked out through a variety of rituals, all of which are damaging to a widow's sense of self identity. Widows are under tremendous psychological and social pressures and even today they are accused of being responsible for their husband's death. They are pressurized to observe restrictive code of dress and behaviour. They are excluded from religious functions and social life. They are verbally, physically and sometimes sexually abused, and often deprived of their legitimate share in property.

Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the present study were to:

1. Assess the nutritional status, domestic rights, accessibility to property rights, and health care facilities available to widows.
2. Understand the respondents' perception of their status as a widow.
3. Identify the cultural and social sanctions imposed on widows.

Methodology

The study was conducted Karidhya village in Suri Block – I of Birbhum district, West Bengal. A sample of 22 widows was selected using snowball sampling technique, and interview schedule was used for data collection.

Findings and Conclusions

1. Among the 22 respondents, 59.09% became widows before the age of 40 years and the remaining 40.91% became widows before the age of 60 years. The average age when these women became widows was 38.64 years.
2. The educational level among respondents was poor. Around 54.5% were illiterate, 40.9% were educated up to primary level, and only 4.54% had passed higher secondary.
3. Majority of the respondents had no occupation (72.7%), 22.7 were self employed and 4.5% were in service. This implies that most of the respondents were economically dependent on others, and most of them came from very low economic group.
4. About 22.72% of the respondents took only one meal a day, consisting mainly of rice, after they became widows. They kept many more fasts after becoming widows.
5. None of the respondents took part in any rituals of marriage. Their participation in marriage was considered to be inauspicious or *ashubho*. The taboo was so deep rooted that even the respondents felt that their active participation in the rituals of marriage would prove disastrous for newly wed couples. Most of them seemed to have lost interest in attending marriages.
6. Most widows observed the rigid restrictive dress code prescribed by society. About 59.09% of the respondents were found in white sarees, 27.27% in light coloured sarees and 13.64% in coloured sarees. Respondents felt if they failed to observe the restrictive dress code, people would raise eyebrows.

7. Nearly 77.27% of the respondents took two meals a day and 22.73% of the respondents took only one meal per day.
8. The nutritional status of most of the respondents was poor.
9. Majority of the respondents went to Government hospitals for treatment as they faced shortage of funds. In 59.1% cases, the medicines respondents took during illness were financed by their children. 77.27% of the respondents suffered from chronic illnesses.
10. Around 36.3% of the respondents had to make arrangements for payment of their medicines, 31.8% depended on their children for medicines, and only 13.6% made payment for medicines out of their husband's pension.
11. Maximum number of respondents went out in the locality (45.4%) whenever they got leisure time, they gossiped with their neighbours and sometimes they went to houses where there was a television. For some widows TV was a source of recreation, some (22.7%) preferred sleeping or relaxing, and only 4.54% respondents attended religious ceremonies during their leisure time.
12. Almost 54.5% of the respondents (27.28% pension holders and 27.28% occupied with work) mentioned that they themselves collected their pension, they had full authority over their money, and they could spend it any way they wanted.
13. About 27.27% respondents did not share their problems with anyone.
14. Only 13.64% of the respondents reported that the property or money left by their husband was adequate for their sustenance. 86.36% reported that the property left by their husbands was inadequate even for basic sustenance.
15. Sanctions on food were imposed on widows of upper castes only. They observed these restrictions on food because they believed that it was a societal norm and ought to be followed. Some of them even believed that non-adherence would bring ill luck to their families.

Recommendations

1. Self employment schemes need to be started for financial empowerment of widows.
2. Widows who have primary level education should be absorbed in non-formal education centres, crèches or as health assistants.
3. Self help groups need to be formed for upliftment of widows.
4. Government should undertake supplementary nutrition programmes for widows to help maintain their health and nutritional status.
5. Widows need to be informed about their legal rights.

Widows in Countryside Problems and Prospects : Studies on Human Development in India Project of the UNDP

S Vijaya Kumar

Introduction

India has been predominately an agrarian society. An overwhelming majority of women are engaged in the unorganized sector of rural areas, which not only provide low returns, but barely cover the minimum basic needs. Among women, the incidence of widowhood is much higher compared to that of widowerhood among men.

Aims and Objectives

Aims and objectives of the study were to:f

1. Delineate the living conditions, inter-personal and inter-generational relationships of widows.
2. Highlight their economic and social status within the family, as well as in the community/ society.
3. Know their socio-psychological and health problems and their survival strategies.
4. Evaluate the existing social security programmes, both formal and non formal.

Methodology

The universe of the present study were 225 widows of all ages living in selected rural areas of Andhra Pradesh. The present micro level investigation was carried out with the help of a systematically constructed questionnaire. Secondary data was collected from available books, journals and other published material. About 9.4% respondents were between 20-39 years and 41.8% respondent widows were between 40-59 years of age respectively.

Findings and Conclusions

1. A large majority of the widows belonged to higher caste (HC) groups (43.1%), followed by backward castes (BCs) (32.9%), SCs (21.3%) and STs (2.7%).
2. About 56.4% respondents were illiterate and 16% could read and write. The reasons for not attending school were restrictions over female literacy, economic problems, marriage, and non availability of schools in their villages.
3. About 43% widows lived with their in-laws and 48.4% with husband's joint or nuclear families, followed by 2.2% with parents and 1.3% with their kin.
4. At the time of the study, 20.4% were living with either in-laws or husband's family, about 8.4% with their parents/ brother's family, and 49.8% were living with their children. 7.2% were living independently.
5. Around 52.9% of the widows said that widows should not remarry, and in this category majority (53.7%) were from the upper castes.
6. More than 90% widows said that loneliness and isolation were one of their major problems.
7. About 89% stated that they were facing social problems and 88.4% said that insecurity was also a major problem.
8. About 32% widows were sending their children to school when their husband was alive, but afterwards only 22% could send their children to school.

9. Nearly 32.9% were engaged as wage labourers in agricultural works and 20.4% in wage non-agricultural works. About 10.2% were self employed and 4% were working as domestic help.
10. In a majority of cases, help was given in the form of kind namely clothes, food, periodic gifts and so on (61.3%), rather than cash (20.9%).
11. About 62.2% of the widows did not receive any type of help from the community; 32% got social support and 2.7% got economic support from the community.
12. Widows were aware about the State Government's programmes for widows but a limited number had applied for it.

Recommendations

1. The traditional outlook of society about widows must be changed.
2. A separate legal cell should be established with certain constitutional privileges to look into the specific issues related to widows.
3. Each and every widow of the village must be educated, first through non-formal education system, and then based their interest, vocational training should be given.
4. Existing social security programmes like IRDP, DWCRA and TRYSEM are there, but these programmes do not deal with the needs of widows in particular.
5. While implementing welfare measures and providing social security packages to widows, it is better to adopt a decentralized system by identifying the local conditions.

Widows in India

L. Thara Bhai

Introduction

Widowhood is the change in the status of a woman brought about by the death of the spouse in a marital relationship and which necessitates the establishment of new relationship. Widowhood is a very stressful situation which brings about socio-economic, cultural, emotional and psychological deprivation. Tamil Nadu is one of the states where there are many atrocities and discrimination against women due to strong traditions of the past which continue even today. This study highlights the living conditions of widows of all ages and income groups.

Aims and Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Find out the socio-economic background of widows before and after widowhood.
2. Study the problems of widows that hinder their personality development.
3. Understand the problems of widows who work outside their homes, and assess the status of widows in their respective families.

Methodology

A total of 600 widows were selected from the state of Tamil Nadu through snowball sampling technique. Nine districts of Tamil Nadu were covered, namely Chennai, Chidambaram, Coimbatore, Dindigul, Madurai, Nagercoil, Tanjore, Tirunelveli and Virudhunagar. An interview schedule was drafted to obtain information from respondents. Working and non working widows, educated and less educated widows, and urban and rural widows were given proportional representation.

Findings and Conclusions

1. Around 34.8% women became widows before they were 30 years of age. Around 25% women were widowed between 31 and 40 years, 10% became widows between 51 to 60 years, and 8% when they were above 61 years.
2. About 32% widows had no income of their own and were economically dependent on others.
3. About 36.2% of the working widows and 35.1% of the non-working widows faced life courageously after their husband's death, whereas 33.1% working widows and 40.4% of the widows who were housewives were fearful to face life after their husband's death. About 70.5% of them were not ready to take up life without their husbands and reported feelings of fear and helplessness immediately after their husband's death. Working women and older women were more courageous than their younger counterparts when faced with widowhood. Most of the widows who reported feelings of fear did not have an independent dwelling place.
4. Around 45.2% working widows and 54.8% non-working widows had positive differentiation in their families.
5. Widows reported that none of their families wanted to keep them due to over dependence.
6. Widows in both rural and urban areas reported that they were treated as unwanted elements by members of their family.
7. Widows were isolated from auspicious functions and ceremonies. As they were considered

'inauspicious' they were not allowed to go to religious functions, including marriages, and a widow was not supposed to bless the youngsters.

8. Nearly 83.5% of the widows reported that they had removed their marriage symbols such as *kumkum* (vermilion) after the death of their husbands. Majority of them followed these customs because society insisted on it and not out of their own free will.
9. The worst negative attitude widows faced from their immediate society was double standards. Another problem they faced were 'being looked at with suspicion' from the sexual perspective, for want of money, for want of companionship, etc.
10. Many widows were not aware of the schemes run for their benefit by the Government and NGOs and hence did not avail of them. Around 64.9% working widows and 35.1% non-working widows were aware about concessions, whereas 54.6% working widows and 45.4% non-working widows were not aware about concessions, or they did not know that they were entitled to the savings of their husband.
11. Only 15% widows went to counselling centres and they others were in the dark as far as counselling was concerned.
12. Around 41% widows mentioned that their personality remained the same after the death of their husband, about 21.1% mentioned that their personality deteriorated, but 37.5% mentioned that their personality improved after the demise of their husband.
13. Those widows who mentioned that their personality improved belonged to the working class, and their husbands did not show any interest in family affairs. These women hardly got any money from their husbands when they were alive, and they led a difficult life due to bad habits of the husband. After their husband passed away, widows gained confidence after taking up a new job, and this was one of factors that helped to improve their personality.
14. Widows whose personality remained the same or deteriorated was mainly due to the fact that they were mentally tortured by family members. These widows lost interest in life as they were not able to come up as they expected.
15. Majority of the widows never thought about re-marriage. There was joy and suffering in bringing up their children and they took it as a part of life. Welfare of their children was their major achievement. Around 33% widows enjoyed bringing up their children, 21.5% suffered during the process of child rearing, and 31.5% took it as part of life.

Recommendations

1. Government and NGOs should organize a few courses for widows to generate self-employment.
2. Counselling centres for widows should be set up to help them work through their feelings of fear and helplessness, and to empower them.
3. NGOs should work at grass roots level in society to root out prejudices against widows and change the mindsets of people towards them.
4. Media should stop projecting the traditional image of a white clad Indian widow who is helpless and an easy prey.
5. Small entrepreneurial units (like telephone booths) should be made available for widows.

Widows in Pilgrimage Centres: An Anthropological Perspective

Centre for Development Research and Services for Human Welfare

Introduction

In India, a predominantly patriarchal society, loss of a husband brings a number of drastic changes in the economic and social status and often in personal self identity of widows. Widows, separated and divorced women in the female population range between 8% to 10%, and it is estimated that there are 25 million widows in India. In the age group fifty years and above, around 60% women were widows. Despite this large number and the knowledge that widows are a particularly disadvantaged social group, only a few attempts have been made to study the way these widows actually live.

Aims and Objectives

The study was undertaken to:

1. Study the profile of widows and the way they actually live.
2. Assess the measures taken to improve the condition of these women.

Methodology

A study was conducted in four pilgrimage centres namely Vrindavan, Mathura, Varanasi and Haridwar in Uttar Pradesh. Both qualitative and quantitative research techniques were employed to carry out the study. Of the 1040 widows identified in 4 pilgrimage centres, only 1030 widows could be studied. In-depth discussions were held with 40 widows (ten in each of the pilgrimage cities) using a check list and guidelines. The study area covered Bhajan Ashrams, Rama Krishna Ashram, Vridh Ashram, Balajee Trust, etc.

Findings and Conclusions

Vrindavan

I. Bhajan Ashram

1. Vrindavan has two Bhajan Ashrams started by Shri Janki Das Pataudia where widows stay and sing bhajans morning and evening.
2. He also started a scheme of distributing 2.5 annas to these down trodden ladies. Widows got around 250 gms of rice, 50 gms of *dal* (lentils) and Rs.2.00 daily from the Ashram for attending the sessions regularly.
3. There were no specific rules for gaining membership in these ashrams.

II. Balajee Trust Ashrams

1. This Trust is managed by Shri Chail Behari Upadhyay. Balaji Trust Ashram functions exactly like the Bhajan Ashram.

III. Old Age Home and Amarvadi

1. There are two rehabilitation centres specifically meant for aged women and cater to the needs of resident widows.
2. Widows from Bhajan Ashrams were provided free accommodation, food as well as medical aid.

3. For the entertainment of widows, a television was installed in the old age home.
4. In Amarvadi, certain crafts were taught to the women inmates. The products made by them were sold for profit.

Mathura

1. In Mathura, there was a branch of Bhagwan Bhajan Ashram, managed in a similar way as in Vrindavan.
2. On special occasions, lunch was prepared in the Ashram and the widows could eat as much as they wanted.
3. For singing bhajans daily, these women were provided 250 gms of rice, 50 gms of dal and Rs.2.00 in cash.
4. Most of the widows did not get any pension.
5. Widows were not paying any rent for their accommodation.

Haridwar

1. Haridwar is a very beautiful city, and unlike Vrindavan and Varanasi, where scores of widows were found on the roadside, Haridwar was not popular with widows, especially Bengalis.
2. Most of the widows here were from Bihar or from adjoining areas. They sustained themselves by begging and survived on alms given by outsiders.
3. In Indira Basti, a young Pradhan administered every minor detail of their life, ranging from health care to cremation of the dead.
4. At Malgodam, widows from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh sold all kinds of items like bangles, bindis, etc. These women either stayed on the roadside or lived in tenements in the town.
5. There was no organization to cater to their needs.

Varanasi

1. Varanasi was heavily populated with Bengali widows from the upper castes, who had their own ancestral houses where they lived with their respective families.
2. Widows in Varanasi were from Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Rajasthan. Here widows / old couples / old women could rent a room and stay till they wanted.
3. Rama Krishna Hospital provided board and lodging to Bengali widows who gained entry through Belur Math, Kolkata.
4. The overall scenario in Varanasi, compared to other pilgrimage cities, seemed to be much better.

1. Marwadi Ashram

- ii. This is the most popular Ashram among widows. It has around 300 rooms meant to house *yatris* (travellers), out of which 15 rooms were owned by Marwadis belonging to Rajasthan.
- iii. Widows here seemed to be a lot better as they could manage everything on their own. Medical care was provided only when they were unwell.
- iv. Family members of widows provided them all the required financial support.
- v. Widows used ration cards, but they did not avail widows' pensions.

2. Moksha Bhawan

- ii. This is managed by Birlas. Here widows and non-widows were staying, but criterion for admission was that one should be over 65 years of age.
- iii. Widows sustained themselves from their own family resources. They paid approximately Rs.150 for room rent.
- iv. There were two dispensaries attached to this Ashram, one was for homeopathic medicines and the other was for allopathic medicines.

3. Rajkiya Vridh Mahila Avaseeya Greha

- ii. In this Ashram, widows were provided Rs.450/- per month by the Government for their daily expenses like food, milk, etc., and Rs.100/- was kept to defray expenses for their other needs like clothing (two sarees, two blouses and petticoats) and medicines.

4. Rama Krishna Seva Ashram

- i. It houses 15 women and admission to this Ashram was given on the recommendation of Belur Math, Kolkata.
- ii. Women who deposited caution money got food provided by the Ashram, and some women who worked as honorary members received extra facilities and privileges.

5. Mother Teresa Hospital

- i. This Hospital houses both males and females, most of whom were mentally unsound. Here, the widows were provided food, milk, medical attention and a permanent place to stay till they lived.

6. Leper Home

- i. The Leper Home provided shelter to 10-11 widows who were driven out of their respective villages after they became afflicted with leprosy. Most of them sold *raddi* (waste paper) to sustain themselves. The Home provided food and clothes to them.

Recommendations

1. Some basic education should be imparted to make widows less vulnerable to exploitation by unscrupulous people.
2. To check corruption, a Complaints Cell should be created near the ashram/ trust/ dispensaries, etc. where the complaints lodged by widows could be looked into.
3. This Cell should monitor the functioning of trusts/ ashrams for any maltreatment of widows, and the widows should be made aware of their rights.
4. Widows should be paid a minimum sum of Rs.500 per month to make them economically independent.
5. Widows should be taught certain crafts and these items should be marketed by NGOs or any Government agency.

The Widows of Vrindavan, District Mathura, Uttar Pradesh

Deepali Bhanot

Introduction

Widowhood is a curse in India. When there is no ray of hope or any respite from the family and society, widows turn towards the mercy of God and throng holy places like Varanasi, Prayag (Allahabad), Puri, Haridwar, Mathura and Vrindavan in the hope of spending the rest of their lives in peace by serving the Lord and to atone for the sin of having become a widow. Then begins a long, arduous journey for widows.

Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the present study were to:

1. Assess the living conditions of widows in Vrindavan.
2. Identify rehabilitation plans and specific recommendations for widows in Vrindavan.

Methodology

There are more than 5000 widows in and around Vrindavan in pitiable and pathetic conditions. The present study covered a sample of over 1000 widows. Data was collected through informal interviews.

Findings and Conclusions

1. Many widows came to Vrindavan of their free will to serve the Lord by singing his praises. However, many young widows and women had been lured out of their home towns by unscrupulous people under the pretext of marriage or lucrative jobs, and then sold to people who indulge in the flesh trade.
2. These widows have been abandoned by their families, and they had no financial, social or emotional support.
3. Most widows have just one piece of clothing to cover themselves. If any blanket or sari comes their way from charity, it is promptly sold off by them to meet the rent of their rooms. According to them, they can manage with just one piece of clothing but cannot do without a shelter as they are women. About 80% of these women wore only one sari to cover their bodies. As many of the women had no place to live they just curled up in their saris at night.
4. Most widows were found begging outside temples or on *river-ghats* (steps leading to the river), fighting with each other for small coins or morsels of food.
5. These widows lived in tiny rooms that were stinking due to lack of sanitation in surrounding areas.
6. Old and sick widows just lay around with no one to care for or look after them. Some of the women were so old and bent that they crawled on their hands and feet to move around as they could not even stand up properly.
7. Most widows worked as helping hands in households and *ashrams* (monasteries) as they were illiterate and did not have any particular skills. The main occupation of most of these women were singing *bhajans* (hymns) in *Bhajan Ashrams* run by rich patrons. However, owing to the tight schedule, old and sick widows were turned away.

8. *Bhajan Ashrams* were found to provide food and clothing to widows. However, these *Bhajan Ashrams* had been commercialized. The staff reflected false figures to hoodwink local authorities and patrons, whereas in reality they deprived these women of their rightful share of rice and clothing.
9. Some widows received money orders or financial assistance from their relatives. These women scrounged and saved for hard times ahead, and also to make their funeral arrangements. However, many of them died without withdrawing the money that lay in their accounts.
10. Women belonging to younger age group undergo harrowing experiences of sexual harassment, molestation and physical assault.
11. Flesh trade flourished in Vrindavan and Mathura with full knowledge of police, administrative authorities, holy men and politicians. In many *ashrams*, flesh trade flourished under the garb of religious activities.
12. Many women were brought to Vrindavan from neighbouring rural areas under the pretext of marriage and then forced into prostitution. Some of these girls lived like widows to try and escape sexual abuse. However, these women had no respite from sexual abuse.
13. Most of these widows suffered from T.B., asthma and various skin diseases due to their unhygienic living conditions. Lack of sanitation also resulted in stomach ailments like diarrhoea and dysentery.
14. When these widows got pregnant, they had to go to quacks as Government hospitals were uncooperative and good medical doctors inaccessible. Thus, these women ended up with many kinds of gynaecological disorders as well.
15. People were totally indifferent to the sad plight of these women. Most younger widows got no respectable jobs. Even though some of them knew a few skills like making mats, *kanthimalas* (prayer beads), embroidery and crochet, etc., no decent jobs were available to them as they were looked down upon.
16. Many widows were not aware of the schemes run for their benefit by the Social Welfare Board. Also, many voluntary organizations received grants and donations to help these widows, but relief did not reach them.

Recommendations

1. Government should make arrangements for Night Shelters (*Rain Baseras*) for women who have no place to live. This would also protect them from unwanted sexual harassment and abuse.
2. Training-cum-production centres for imparting training in skills like tailoring, embroidery, midwifery, nursing, handicrafts and so on to the younger women should be opened by the Government, Social Welfare Board and NGOs.
3. There is a need to employ women police officers to attend to the women who wish to lodge complaints.
4. There is a need to provide mobile health care units for widows.
5. NGOs should monitor the welfare schemes available for women and widows and help them in getting their rightful benefits.

Widows Role Adjustment and Violence

Mukesh Ahuja

Introduction

The lives of widows have been made miserable by the norms of patriarchal society. They face emotional trauma, familial exploitation and social stigma. Widows have to find new support systems, new sources of attachment and new social networks, which are often difficult.

Aims and Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Study the family life and patterns of role adjustment of widows as a result of entering a new phase in life after widowhood.
2. Examine the economic, emotional and social support systems of widows.

Methodology

Snowball sampling technique was used to select 190 widows in the city of Jaipur, Rajasthan. An interview schedule was used for collecting data. Separate interview guides were prepared for family members. Only Hindu widows including Scheduled Castes, Jain, and Sikh widows were studied. Muslim, Christian or Parsi widows were not selected. Widows who had remarried and were well settled were not included. Non-parametric tests such as chi-square were employed for drawing inferences from the sample data.

Findings and Conclusions

1. Widowhood brought in its wake single-handed, total responsibility towards the children (if any), fear of the fact that one might never bear any children if one had not had any at the time of husband's death, fear of being ill-treated by in-laws and being shunned by parents.
2. Widows were humiliated, abused and blamed for any unhappy occurrence in the marital home. They were considered inauspicious; to see their face either in the morning or while going out for a journey was considered to be a bad omen.
3. Even some children did not show any respect to their widowed mothers, and often treated them as baby-sitters for their children or as housekeepers.
4. Widows had some normative restrictions placed on them by society. They were made to shave their heads and never grow their hair, renounce all worldly things, eat simple food and sleep on the floor. They devoted all their free time to singing '*bhajans*' (religious songs) and did not laugh or talk loudly.
5. A large number of widows below 25 years of age were not interested in remarriage. Only 27.9% reported that they would like to get married given the opportunity. Reasons reported for remarriage were companionship (14.2%), motherhood (6.3%) and security (4.7%). Socialization prevented anyone from referring to physical needs as a reason for remarriage.
6. Young widows with children were unable to find young boys for marriage and were compelled to marry middle-aged or old men who were nearly their fathers' age. Some refused offers of remarriage as they felt they would be doing injustice to their husband's memories or they would be unfair to their child by giving him/her a step-father.
7. Many parents of widows believed in cultural traditions of the community. Even lower castes which permitted widow remarriages endeavoured to restrict it, in an attempt to reach the

cultural level of higher castes.

8. It was common for widows to face violence in the family. The nature of violence depended upon the perpetrator of the violence. Mothers-in-law would pass sarcastic comments, beat or ill-treat the children of widows, whereas fathers-in-law and brothers-in-law denied the widow her share in the husband's property and economic assets.
9. Widows knew very little about the husband's business, accounts, insurance policies, etc. and thus became victims of fraudulent schemes by unscrupulous family members.
10. Around 26 respondents also confessed to being victims of sexual attacks in one way or another by fathers-in-law or brothers-in-law.
11. Economic independence did not necessarily accord normal social status to widows.
12. Widows sought employment not only for money (15.6%) but for other reasons such as recognition, esteem, social affiliation and passing time as well.
13. Widows worked in Government jobs (45.1%) or private jobs (18.8%), as school teachers (7.5%) or as maid servants (10.7%). 63.9% earned between Rs. 1000 - 2000/- per month.

Recommendations

1. Widow remarriage should be advocated.
2. Economic support and vocational training should be provided to widows. Co-operative societies need to be established to help in selling the products made by widows.
3. Television, radio, magazines and other media should be used for spreading awareness and changing the attitudes of people towards widows.
4. Rehabilitation homes need to be set up to help widows who have been shunned and shunted out by their in-laws and ignored by their parents.

XII

Witches



Casting the Evil Eye: Witch Trials in Tribal India

Archana Mishra

Introduction

Since times immemorial, women have been branded as witches and have been trapped, humiliated, tortured and killed by their own society with the ulterior motive of grabbing their money, land, assets and property. Women are declared as witches, they are prosecuted, tortured and killed for flimsy reasons, with the active or passive support of their community under the garb of witch – hunting.

Aims and Objectives

The objectives of the present study were to:

1. Study the socio-cultural aspects of witch-hunting.
2. Assess the rehabilitation measures for witches, if any.

Methodology

Beliefs about the existence of witches are widely and deeply rooted in the minds of some tribal communities. The study was carried out in tribal areas of West and East Singhbhum districts of Jharkhand. Information was collected through verbal interviews with women designated as witches (*dains*) and witch-doctors (*ojhas*).

Findings and Conclusions

1. Tribals believed that no village was free of witches who were considered to be the embodiments of evil. The *ojhas* were perceived to be the only ones who could save the villagers from the evil spell of witches. Witches were held responsible for the occurrence of diseases like simple boils, stomach aches, fever, diarrhoea, AIDS, cancer, etc.
2. A widow, any woman who acquired a property, or a woman whose son/husband worked in the city and sent her money was marked by the *ojha* and the influential group in the village as a potential witch. If, by chance, a mishap occurred in the vicinity of that woman's house (cattle died, a tree stopped bearing flowers, etc.), then she was blamed and rumours spread throughout the village that she was a witch.
3. Other villagers helped the *ojha* so that they could benefit from plundering the assets of the witch, a practice that usually followed a witch hunt.
4. The targeted woman was framed in such a way that she was compelled to give everything up to save herself.
5. The *ojhas* performed a test to determine whether the framed woman was a witch, and his confirmation was believed by all. The woman had to pay a penalty, in addition to arranging a banquet for the villagers. She not only lost her identity but also her property, house, cattle, family, friends and access to the entire tribal community.
6. The identified witch was made to ask for the *ojha's* forgiveness and admit to her crimes. She was blamed for any misfortunes in the village, such as illness, death of cattle, sterility of women, etc.
7. The witch's family was also compelled to kill her to save their wealth, and such killings were considered pious. At times, the family of the witch fled with her to save themselves.
8. Witches were paraded naked in the village, gang-raped, forced to eat human excreta/ flesh of humans and drink the blood of slaughtered animals. The family of the so-called

witches were also murdered. Most of the witches were killed and their dead bodies hidden or thrown into the jungles with the consent of villagers.

9. If a woman tried to seek help from the police or tried to flee she was tortured even more. The police in charge might be a tribal and hence his loyalties would not allow him to register a case in her favor. A non-tribal policeman might join hands with the *ojhas* and extort money.
10. When a woman was killed in the name of witchcraft, no enquiries were made. The root of the problem lay in the social fabric of tribal society, which prescribed differential treatment for the two genders.

Recommendations

1. Women should be made self-reliant by providing them vocational training and education.
2. Self help groups (SHGs) need to be formed to combat witchcraft.
3. NGOs should be in touch with women identified as *dains* and hold meetings with them.
4. *Ojhas* should be trained in the use and preparation of herbal medicines and treatment to provide them a steady source of income.
5. Awareness on witchcraft through *nukkad nataks* (street plays) would help to uproot the social evil of witch-hunting.
6. Teachers of local schools should organize meetings to spread awareness among innocent tribals.
7. Medical teams should be deployed regularly in tribal areas to combat diseases, so that witches cannot be blamed for causing them.
8. Outreach teams of the Agriculture and Rural Development Departments should cover tribal villages and bring improved technology and scientific methods of farming, irrigation, cultivation of crops and medicinal herbs, etc. to the doorsteps of remote tribal communities, so that they are able to deal with problems in a scientific way.

Local Customs and Practices in Rajasthan and Their Impact on Women: An In-depth Study of *Dakan/ Dayan* (Witches)

Kanchan Mathur et al

Introduction

In Rajasthan violence against women constitutes a legitimized and routinised aspect of prevailing cultural definitions of gender. It is also used as a tool to ensure that women remain within socially defined boundaries of behaviour and space. Women's low status is further reinforced through local beliefs and practices. These not only harm women's psyche but also impact their physical health. Belief in witches and witchcraft, labeling women as *dakan/ dayan* (witches) is one such belief which impacts women's status.

Aims and Objectives

The main objectives of the study were to:

1. Provide an in-depth understanding of the local custom of branding women as *dakans/ dayans*.
2. Analyse the adverse impact/ effects of this practice on women's well being and psyche.
3. Analyse the role of the family/ community, local communities, caste *panchayat* and enforcement machinery in preventing or abetting this practice.

Methodology

The study was conducted in six districts of Rajasthan namely Tonk, Bhilwara, Ajmer, Kota (plains region), Jodhpur (desert region), and Udaipur (tribal district). Data was collected through field visits and interviews with sufferers, community people, anganwadi workers, police, lawyers/ judiciary and with NGOs. The study covered 63 women aged 25 to 70 years, and of them 8 women were no longer alive, 7 had been victims of violence (murder) and only one had a natural death.

Findings and Conclusions

1. A large majority of women (55.6%) were dependent on agriculture and animal husbandry. This dependence declined to 41.3% after they were labeled as *dayans* by the community people, because either people grabbed their land or they were not being allowed to cultivate their fields on account of being labelled as *dayans*.
2. The second largest category (28.6%) were women engaged in traditional occupations such as sweeping and petty trade; making pots and lamps for festivals; performing certain rituals on death, birth and marriage functions; selling flowers, fruits and vegetables; selling bangles; conducting prayers and other religious ceremonies at village temples, etc. The percentage of these women engaged in traditional occupations had declined from 28.6% to 4.8% as a result of labelling.
3. A large majority of the women (44.4%) were found to be married, the percentage of separated and widowed women was 5% and 38.1% respectively. It was significant that no unmarried woman was labelled as a *dayan*.
4. More 50% of the women stated that they had been suffering physical and mental violence for 20 years or more.
5. The process of labelling women as *dayans* in 49% cases was done by persons belonged to other castes, in 23.8% cases the process was initiated by the husband's family, and in 22.2% cases the initiation of the accusation had come from members of the woman's own caste.

6. The study found that superstition was a prime reason for accusing women as *dayan/ dakan*, and such beliefs rise due to low educational status and lack of quality health care in a majority of districts.
7. Another main cause for branding women as *dayans* was property dispute because this was the easiest way to grab the fixed assets of a woman who was a widow or a single woman and lacked male protection. Out of a total of 63 cases, 12 women were named as *dayans* due to property disputes, land grabbing or encroachment.
8. Women were also labelled on account of infertility and childlessness because infertility in a woman was viewed as a 'disability', and a woman who was unable to produce a child was viewed with suspicion.
9. Apart from women's inability to produce children, physical deformities as well as perceived low intelligence levels also became a cause for labelling/ naming them as a *dayan*.
10. Other reasons for branding women were fear of ignominy or disgrace, personal and caste rivalry, and often the assertive nature of women.
11. Women once labelled were subjected to various forms of mental and physical violence including immolation, hair being cut off, heads shaved, branded with iron rods, raped, made to eat animal excreta, hurting genitals, murdered or even forced to commit suicide.
12. As a consequence of this, labelled women lost their reputation in their families and community. Apart from creating feelings of helplessness, fear and powerlessness, labelling and consequent violence impacts their lives in several ways. These women often experienced severe depression and low self-esteem.
13. The state machinery and other agencies such as police, judiciary, PRIs, NGOs, media and caste *panchayats* had been largely ineffective in preventing this practice, the prime reason being the absence of an Anti-Witchcraft Act in the state.
14. Women did not have easy access to law enforcement institutions as these were patriarchal in nature, and approaching them required a lot of courage on the part of women. Most women were illiterate also.

Recommendations

1. The Government and NGOs should undertake responsibility for conducting sensitisation training among the village community, anganwadi workers, ANMs, *sathins* (female village level worker), police, judiciary and media about the social problem of labelling women as witches.
2. The issue of labelling women as *dayans/ dakans* should be included as a major issue while discussing the subject of violence against women in the training of police personnel. Administrators also need to be aware of this problem.
3. Interventions have to be planned both in terms of countering the violence meted out to women survivors and also towards preventing it from happening in future.
4. One main step that needs to be taken is changing the mind sets of people to remove myths, beliefs and superstitions.

Persecution of Women: Widows and Witches

Mita Barman

Introduction

During the last 15 years research had revealed the vulnerable position of women across all sections of Indian society. Marginalization and neglect are part of the daily existence of most women. In most societies, households and family comprise the core of social relationships for women. The present study covers women who are widows and are without protection, and women who are persecuted as witches in regions of West Bengal.

Aims and Objectives

Aims and objectives of the study were to:

1. Assess the conditions of Bengali Hindu widows.
2. Examine the beliefs associated with witches and witchcraft among the Santal tribal community in West Bengal.
3. Study the use of gender as a regulatory mechanism in society.

Methodology

The study was conducted on Bengali widows and witches among the Santal tribe of West Bengal. Data was collected through surveys and by interviewing widows and the community.

Findings and Conclusions

Bengali Hindu Widows

1. In Bengali Hindu society, widows were the targets and victims of social exclusion and ostracism.
2. Bengali widows were sent to Vrindavan to contain the crisis that the presence of a young widow created in the family, and the upwardly mobile Bengali males wanted to exercise total control over the cultural and economic life of widows.
3. At present the number of Bengali widows in Vrindavan was estimated to be 3000 due to the natural calamity of floods in Bengal in 2000, and in the subsequent migration of disaster struck widows into Vrindavan.
4. Bengal had the highest proportion of widows according to the Census of India. In West Bengal, 59% females in the age group 70-79 years and 72% females in the 80+ age group were widows according to Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India (1998). This may be because for most Hindu widows remarriages were socially barred.
5. The *Dayabhaga* laws of inheritance prevalent in Bengal gave a limited right to the widow in her husband's property. Widows of the rich and elite stayed at home. In the early 20th Century in Bengal, there were abundant instances of women from *zamindar* (land owning) families controlling the assets from *andarmahal* (inner palace). This was done in the absence of a male heir or if the heir was minor.
6. Female labour work force participation in West Bengal was found to be one of the lowest in the country.

Santal Society

1. Santals were the third largest, most integrated and possibly the most resilient tribal group in India after the Bhils and Gonds.

The Indian Anthropological Society, 27 Jawaharlal Nehru Road, Kolkata – 700016, West Bengal. Kolkata: 2002. 171p.

2. In Santal society, the practice of witch-hunting was considered essential to identify the root cause of ill health or misfortune.
3. In Santal society witches were almost always women, and especially widows, because they were alone without the support of a husband, family and sometimes even children. Widows also had land rights in Santal society. Some of these women were denounced as witches by the community and then driven away or killed, which would result in the lands immediately passing into the hands of the husband's male agnates. Exclusion of single women, mainly widows, resulted in direct material gain and inheritance of property.
4. Witchcraft related violence in the years 1991-2000 was found to be highest in Jalpaiguri district, where it was spread across different communities and victims were from both sexes. Among 70 cases reported from Jalpaiguri, 33% victims were males. Many acts of violence caused by factors like rivalry or drunkenness were passed off as witch killing.
5. After Jalpaiguri, the other districts where witch killing was reported were Malda (29 cases), Purulia (21 cases), Dinajpur South (10 cases), Dinajpur North (9 cases), Hooghly (7 cases), Darjeeling (7 cases), and the lowest were Burdwan and Midnapur where only 3 cases each were reported. This may be because Santal population in Malda district was highest.
6. In districts where witch killing is prevalent, lack of employment opportunities and other related problems were the complementary features responsible for the continuance of this practice.

Recommendations

1. Education programmes should be undertaken in tribal and underdeveloped areas so that the community can understand natural phenomena like diseases, infertility, droughts, etc. on scientific basis and not attribute it to superstitions like witchcraft.
2. The outreach of Government programmes related to health services should be extended to cover remote tribal and rural areas. Mobile health vans may be deputed to provide services in far flung areas.
3. The connectivity of remote hamlets needs to be improved by construction of all weather roads. Planned development would reduce the level of ignorance and eradicate unscientific superstitions and myths by opening up access of these communities to modern scientific ideas.
4. Avenues for income generation should be started in backward and tribal areas so that people have alternative means of earning a livelihood.

Witch Hunting: A Blatant Violation of Women's Rights

Somesh Kumar

Introduction

A witch is a person, generally a woman, branded and believed by others to have powers which can harm any other person through magic, *mantras* (verses or phrases chanted with spiritual powers), bad (evil) eye or any other method. A witch is supposed to know and practice the rituals of witchcraft by which she harms others. Witchcraft is reported from all parts of world, including Europe. Over the centuries, in developed parts of the world, such beliefs have come down, but the sad aspect is that in most 'underdeveloped' areas of India, atrocities related to witches and witchcraft go on unabated. It was reported that during 5 years (1991-1995) as many as 71 cases of witchcraft related killings were registered in Singhbhum district of Jharkhand.

Aims and Objectives

The study was undertaken to:

1. Assess the problem of witchcraft in Jharkhand.
2. Suggest measures to deal with this problem.

Methodology

Information about cases of witchcraft related killings were gathered from tribal areas of West Singhbhum district of Jharkhand. Visits were made to villages where such cases were reported. Information was also collected from documentary sources.

Findings and Conclusions

1. It was found that during five years (1991-1995), number of deaths reported due to witchcraft related crimes were 107 and the number of women killed was 84.
2. In the garb of witchcraft, innocent women from most vulnerable sections of society were eliminated by influential sections.
3. Women who escaped attempts of murder were subjected to torture of the highest order, both mental and physical. Most of them ran away from their original place of residence in order to save their lives.
4. High prevalence of witchcraft related atrocities was reported from inaccessible areas which had low literacy rates and poor health care facilities.
5. Due to lack of awareness, superstitions about health and disease persisted, and non-availability of health care facilities made such areas susceptible for witchcraft related beliefs to flourish.
6. Sometimes just rumours could created a doubt in the minds of community members and lead to the branding of women as witches. These women were mostly illiterate, from weakest of the weaker sections, and did not have the powerful on their side. It was found that well educated women never got branded as witches, whereas young widows, who did not oblige others, had high chances of being victimized.
7. The administration generally looked at this issue as any other crime, and registered cases in a routine manner, due to which victims had to suffer a lot.
8. The whole system of branding women as witches was well organized. In villages there are

ojhas (witch doctors) who claim to be the only ones who can counter the evil influence of witches. Rumours are started against a particular woman, and often large sections of the community participate in commission of the crime. The crime is planned and methodically executed. If the woman is eliminated or driven away, her assets are appropriated by persons remaining behind in the village.

Recommendations

1. The community or poor people should be made aware of such types of superstitions by launching anti-superstition campaign in remote tribal villages.
2. Proper health care facilities should be provided in villages so that people stop believing in 'black magic', witches or *ojhas* (witch doctors).
3. Educational programmes should be started to create awareness among people about various types of superstitions, so that people become aware of the scientific reasons for the occurrence of natural phenomena and do not attribute it to witches and witchcraft.

XIII

Women in Distress



Evaluation Study on Short Stay Homes for Women and Girls

India, Planning Commission

Introduction

In India women are guaranteed equality, freedom and protection by the Constitution as well as by several legislations, nonetheless they continue to be victims of domestic violence and gender inequalities. The scheme of Short Stay Homes (SSH) was introduced by the Department of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Human Resource Development in 1969. Short Stay Homes provide temporary sanctuary to those women and girls, who face moral danger due to family problems, mental strains, violence at home, social ostracism, exploitation and other social problems. The scheme provides a package of facilities namely medical care, psychiatric treatment, case work services, occupational therapy, educational – cum – vocational training, etc. The effort of SSH is to help these women to rehabilitate themselves within a short period of time extending from 6 months to 3 years. By the end of the Eighth Five Year Plan, 361 SSHs had been sanctioned by the Government.

Aims and Objectives

The main objectives of the study were to:

1. Examine whether the admission procedure set in the guidelines are being followed by the Homes.
2. Examine the role of Short Stay Homes in the rehabilitation of inmates.
3. Assess whether location of the Short Stay Homes is suitable.
4. Assess whether SSHs are taking advantage of other Government programmes being run for the development of women.

Methodology

A stratified random sampling design was adopted to select 36 SSH, 177 beneficiaries and 105 ex-beneficiaries from 13 states. The selected states were Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Assam, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi. From the target population, 5 inmates and 3 ex-beneficiaries were selected from each Short Stay Home. Field work for the study started in December 1997.

Findings and Conclusions

1. Most of the Homes were managed by the following NGOs namely Bhartiya Adimjati Sevak Sangh (BASS), New Delhi; Association for Social Health in India, New Delhi and All India Women's Conference, New Delhi
2. Most SSHs were located in urban/ semi-urban areas.
3. New SSHs were not sanctioned in a district with two or more than 2 SSHs.
4. In most Homes the staff position was comfortable, but salary/ honorarium structure for the staff of Short Stay Homes appeared to be quite inadequate.
5. About 82.94% of the inmates staying in Homes belonged to eligible categories, while 17.06% inmates were children.
6. In Rajasthan and Haryana, the percentage of children was as high as 53.19% and 44.44%. The other extreme was Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, where the percentage of children residing in the Homes was negligible (1.22% and 3.84%). Though the guidelines clearly specify that children accompanying the mother may be accommodated in the SSH, in the case of some Homes (Rajasthan) it was found that other destitute children were also staying in the Homes.
7. In the states of Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh the number of cases admitted was quite low. The minimum number of inmates were found in SSHs in Rajasthan where only 8 inmates were present, and the maximum number of inmates was in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, where there were 33 inmates in each SSH.

8. Almost all Short Stay Homes had their own doctor to attend to routine illnesses. Only 68.97% beneficiaries indicated that treatment was given to them in case illness was detected. In 54.88% cases admitted in Homes, the mandatory medical examination was carried out.
9. Hospitals were being utilized by 83.33% SSHs, whereas recreation centres, theatres, employment bureaus, and training centres were utilized by less than 50% SSHs.
10. Vocational training was provided in all the Homes, although it was given only in traditional trades like tailoring, embroidery, typing, weaving, pickle making, etc. which have very little employment potential. After joining the Home, out of 138 inmates only 17.39% could get employment, mostly in traditional trades.
11. In some Homes in Delhi and other big cities like Chittoor, Chennai and Mumbai, candidates were allowed to prepare and appear for Matriculation Board Exams. Eligible inmates were allowed to undergo training in typing, shorthand and computer courses outside the Homes also.
12. Only in 50.34% cases did the staff at SSHs undertake follow-up measures, but out of 36 SSHs, 8 homes could not take up follow-up measures due to shortage of staff and delay in the release of funds.
13. The states where more than 40% inmates stayed for more than one year were Assam, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. In these states, in some Homes, the scheme was not being run strictly as per the prescribed guidelines.
14. States where a large percentage of women inmates were refused admission were Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Madhya Pradesh. This was because these women did not belong to the target group, shortage of funds, no vacancy, services not available in Homes, and due to litigation or anti-social links of inmates.
15. Majority of the inmates required the services of SSHs up to the period of one year. Efforts made by Homes need to be more focused and concentrate on the rehabilitation and settlement aspect. It was also a fact that the limitation of finance, low educational level of girls, their varied attitudes and interest were some factors which genuinely put limitations on the efforts of Homes to upgrade their skills and create employment opportunities.
16. Homes were quite congested and of poor quality in many areas, except in Rajasthan where there was no overcrowding.
17. Food was provided roughly three times a day. Inmates were cooking their meals in all the Homes except one SSH where the food was arranged from outside.
18. The quality of food was reported to be average or good. Only in Himachal Pradesh inmates were not getting proper food and at times only one meal a day.
19. The cost norms were outdated and need substantial revision.
20. Very few inmates in SSHs in Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Karnataka took advantage of the government programmes called Employment-cum-Income Generation-cum-Production units (NORAD).
21. Professional counselling facilities contributed towards quick and successful rehabilitation of inmates.
22. Due to distance, the follow up study was not possible.

Recommendations

1. The Vocational Training Programmes in Homes should have linkages with training facilities available in other organizational set ups outside the Homes.
2. Institutional Counselling facilities should be arranged for the inmates of Short Stay Homes.
3. To make optimum use of available resources, the activities of Short Stay Homes need to be coordinated with those of various other government departments/ agencies.
4. The efforts of Homes need to be more focused and concentrate on the aspect of rehabilitation and settlement.

XIV

Women Prisoners / Undertrials / Criminals



Custodial Justice for Women

National Commission for Women

Introduction

Custodial justice for women is an issue of great relevance to women's cause. The numerous difficulties and problems that arise due to women being detained – due to their roles as daughter, wife or mother – have various family and social implications. The Constitution of India guarantees the life and personal liberty of its citizens in the most glorious terms, and this guarantee extends even to prisoners who have certain rights even while under detention.

Aims and Objectives

The study was undertaken with the following objectives:

1. To access the situation of prisons exclusively for women.
2. To investigate whether the guidelines of Indian Jail Manual are followed or not as per recommendations.

Methodology

A Commission was formed to assess the situation of women prisoners in jails, remand homes or other places where women are kept in custody, and take up with concerned authorities the need for remedial action, if necessary. The findings of the Commission were presented in a workshop which had representatives from the various organizations involved in custodial justice. Discussions were held with various concerned officials who discussed the actual problems faced in implementation due to various constraints. Information was received from custodial institutions in Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Delhi, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Orissa, Pondicherry, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Andman & Nicobar Islands, Chandigarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu, and Lakshadweep.

Findings and Conclusions

1. The Supreme Court outlined seven guidelines to come to the aid of women in custody which included exclusive police lock-ups for female suspects, interrogation of women prisoners in the presence of a female police officer, communication to the nearest relatives or friends immediately after the arrest of women, inquiry by the Magistrate about any torture meted out to the woman arrestee, and her right to medical examination. The Prisoners Act, 1955 is also a Central Act which specifically makes provisions for the attendance in courts of persons confined in prisons for obtaining their evidence or answering a criminal charge.
2. There has been a strong urge to extend the jurisdiction of Family Courts so as to include all cases concerning women offenders and speeding up justice to women in custody.
3. The commonest reasons given by custodial officers were that they did not have enough funds and resources to improve the conditions of women prisoners.
4. In Orissa, sanitary conditions in all jails were stated to be satisfactory except in Deogarh Jail. Vocational training was generally non-existent and where available was not very relevant to assure prisoners employment after release. The daily diet was given as per prescribed scales. Recreation facilities were available in the form of books, newspapers and indoor games, and even TV and radio were available.

5. In Gujarat, a large number of women prisoners, most of them poor, were kept in jails without trial. They were ignorant of law.
6. In Gujarat, many young women prisoners, undergoing punishment for murder, kept to themselves, were reserved and suffered from depression. They needed counselling and psychiatric services.
7. In Karnataka, a small section of men's jails was generally provided for confinement of women prisoners. Sanitary conditions were good and adequate in all jails. Only tailoring, embroidery and knitting were taught to them.
8. At present, in Maharashtra there was only one separate prison for women prisoners at Yervada, Pune, in the State. In other districts, women's enclosures were within the four walls of the main prison. In Maharashtra, presently, undergarments such as petticoats, and toiletry such as sanitary napkins, etc. were not included among the authorized clothing articles. The existing medical facilities were also not adequate.
9. In Manipur, medical facilities in prisons were negligible. The standard of hygiene and sanitation was very high. Free legal aid through state Legal Aid Committee of the Manipur Bar Association was provided to needy cases.
10. In Nagaland, most women prisoners were first offenders and they were lodged in a separate enclosure. Indoor games were provided for recreation.
11. In Madhya Pradesh, the stress was on the need for training of wardens and other jail staff, as there was immediate urgency for this.
12. In Andaman and Nicobar Islands, there is one jail where women prisoners are lodged along with male prisoners. Infants are allowed in jail with their mothers, and milk is given to them. Vocational training is given in cane work and weaving.
13. Lakshadweep has 3 sub-jails only with one of them having a capacity of 2 male and 2 female prisoners. These jails are meant for undertrials prisoners; the long term prisoners are sent to Kerala.

Recommendations

1. While arresting women, the police officer should not actually touch the person of the woman.
2. The medical examination of a female should be done immediately after arrest. No woman should be arrested after sunset and before sunrise (at night). Relatives should be informed immediately after a woman's arrest.
3. There should be separate prisons for undertrial women prisoners.
4. There should be one Central Jail for women in each State and Union Territory.
5. A comprehensive plan for better welfare amenities in jails for women prisoners should be placed before the Tenth Finance Commission.
6. Psychiatric services should be provided to women prisoners who need them.

Impact of Correctional Programmes on Female Prisoners

P. T. Uma Maheshwari

Introduction

Society reacts to criminal behaviour in a number of ways, one of which is the practice of incarcerating the offender, to serve the purpose of 'correction'. 'Correction' is the part of society's agencies of social control that attempt to rehabilitate or neutralize the deviant behaviour by imparting treatment through various programmes, besides confining the offender. In recent times, reformation has been the focus of correction. The trend now is towards humanizing punishment and rehabilitating the prisoner.

Aims and Objectives

Aims and objectives of the study were to:

1. Understand the various correctional programmes in a women's prison such as work, vocational, educational and recreational programmes oriented towards their rehabilitation.
2. Assess the effectiveness of correctional programmes on female prisoners adjustment in prison.
3. Assess the effectiveness of correctional programmes on released female prisoners adjustment in the community.
4. Find out the problems faced by released female prisoners in getting employment.
5. Assess the effectiveness of the correctional programmes in relation to recidivism or relapse into crime.

Methodology

Data for the investigation was gathered from a sample of 120 female prisoners at the Central Prisons for Women at Vellore and Madurai in the state of Tamil Nadu. The sample consisted of adult female prisoners convicted for various offences (excluding short term prisoners and offenders under PITA). The sample of female ex-offenders comprised 60 women who were convicted and subsequently released, besides the immediate family members, friends and neighbours of female ex-offenders. Non-probability sampling techniques were used to select the sample. Four semi-structured interview schedules, one each for female prisoners, female ex-offenders, family members, friends and prison officials were designed, and used along with the modified version of Adjustment Inventory Scale.

Findings and Conclusions

1. About 74.2% of the women prisoners participated in work programmes which included administrative duties such as office work, store work and hospital work; cooking and prison security. Of the 3 work programmes, cooking was not offered in Madurai Central Prison.
2. Under vocational training programmes, female prisoners learnt tape making, tailoring, *ambar charkha* (weaving), twisted thread (making ropes), and prepared wire bags.
3. In the educational programmes, 44.2% prisoners participated in adult education programmes, and 55.8% were in moral education programmes, where religious lectures and meditation were taught to them. But these programmes were not held in Vellore Prison due to lack of staff.
4. Under recreational programmes, dances, dramas, folk programmes, film shows, etc. were

organized twice a month, besides the provision of television and radio in jail. But these facilities were absent in Madurai Central Prison due to over crowding and lack of space.

5. Findings showed that economic rehabilitation was minimal because of poor quality of the programmes for economic rehabilitation carried out in jails.
6. It was found that there was some improvement in behavioural adjustment due to the correctional programme carried out in jails.
7. Acceptance by family is all the more important, even if the offender is adjusted, so as to prevent her from committing further crime.
8. The prisons lacked organization and efficient management.
9. The major problems faced by female ex-offenders soon after their release were reuniting with the family, followed by the need for getting employment. Female prisoners and ex-offenders expressed the need to take up a job after release, as they wanted to be employed and desired economic security.
10. The effectiveness of the correctional programmes, measured in terms of overall participation and attitudinal change of female ex-offenders as perceived by friends and neighbours after release, was significantly related to their adjustment after release.

Recommendations

1. A prison community should be organized to maximize the constructive, rehabilitative and therapeutic impact of the penal institution on inmates by developing autonomy, responsibility and appropriate images of inmates.
2. A shift system must be provided in work programmes so that equal opportunity is provided to all women prisoners to gain knowledge of all the programmes and make maximum use of the learning opportunities offered during their time under detention.
3. Accreditation of vocational training programmes should be done, so that women prisoners have certificates to show their field of specialization.
4. Education programme should be three pronged, covering adult, social and moral education.
5. A variety of recreational programmes should also be provided.
6. Incentives should be increased sufficiently because female prisoners have to normally depend on their family members and friends for financial help. They desired to be economically independent.

Life Behind Bars : A Research Study Situational Analysis of Women Prisoners in the Jails of Orissa

Pattanaik Dibyajoti and Renuka Kumar

Introduction

To reform and rehabilitate prisoners, prison is the first correctional institution. Over a decade, efforts have been made to better the status of women in society but results are yet to be achieved to the desirable effect. Women prisoners constitute 4 – 5% of the total prisoners. Due to their small number, they are not getting proper facilities during imprisonment. Women's involvement in crime is due to discrimination, gender inequality, atrocities by family members as well as by society, extreme poverty, conflicting situations, marital violence, desertion and prostitution.

Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the study were to:

1. Find out the socio-economic status of women prisoners.
2. Ascertain their level of awareness about prison life prior to conviction.
3. Measure their feelings about the present position in jail.
4. Find out their lifestyle in jail and changes envisaged with reforms being brought about.
5. Unveil the difficulties faced by women prisoners in the jail premises as well as social problem outside the premises.

Methodology

A total of 17 jails in Orissa were surveyed. Jails were segregated into 4 different groups. Questionnaires were given to 150 women prisoners and 17 Jailors.

Findings and Conclusions

1. Maximum prisoners (27%) were in the age group 20 years to 30 years, and another large group was between 50 years to 60 years. Drinking water and appropriate sanitation facilities were available in all the jails surveyed.
2. Maximum women offenders were from the general caste (66%), 15.3% were from STs and 18.7% were from SCs respectively.
3. About 81.3% women prisoners were married and 10% were unmarried.
4. Illiteracy was very high among women prisoners in Orissa. Because of poverty they were unable to get education in their childhood.
5. Around 52.2% prisoners had more than 2 children. This showed the awareness level of the target group about family planning.
6. About 23.4% women prisoners were simply housewives, 18.7% were daily labourers and 35% were engaged in farming or other small businesses to earn their living.
7. Around 60% women prisoners were under trials and 40% were convicted.
8. Types of crime committed by women were murder (51.3%), dowry torture (28.0%), commercial sex work (6.0%), drugs related cases (3.3%), theft/ robbery/ cheating (2.0%), etc.
9. Maximum prisoners (52.7%) were imprisoned since 1 year and 24% had come recently to the jail.
10. About 55.6% inmates realized that they were in jail because they had committed a crime, and the remaining 44.4% were repentant because they did not like the jail environment and it was difficult for them to survive inside the four walls of a jail.

11. Nearly 59.3% were staying in the jail like a family with other inmates residing in it. The remaining 40.7% were facing difficulties with the jail inmates.
12. About 84.7% inmates either felt bad or guilty about their imprisonment, while 15.3% inmates had no problem or felt good in the jail environment.
13. About 84.6% prisoners had enough confidence that their family members would easily accept them, while 12.7% knew that their family members would not accept them.
14. After release majority wanted to spend time with their family, 38.7% said they would go back to their previous work, and 19.3% were planning to start some new work.
15. Jail environment was quite comfortable for 58% women prisoners as they were provided with every type of facility in terms of materials, but 19.3% did not feel comfortable with jail inmates.
16. Facilities like sanitation and drinking water were very good in almost all the jails.
17. About 96.7% women prisoners had problems inside the jail and 3.3% thought that jail security was not strong enough.
18. Family members of 38% respondents visited them regularly in the jail, relatives of 11.3% prisoners rarely visited them, and 30.7% relatives never came to meet them.
19. It was seen that 6.6% respondents were not having any physical problem; 18% had minor health problems like cold, cough, fever; 7.3% had blood pressure and 3.3% were mentally depressed inside the jail.
20. About 14% prisoners were in need of some financial support, and 5.3% required some work or job for their resettlement.
21. About 64.7% prisoners were afraid and felt that they were threatened from society, and 35.3% feared that the opposite party of the cases they were involved in may kill them.
22. Nearly 52.9% inmates felt that jail authorities never differentiated in dealings with male and women prisoners in their jail.
23. About 52.9% jails officials provided educational facility as well as spiritual outlook for women prisoners. About 29.4% women prisoners were getting training in stitching, gardening, kitchen work, and only 17.6% had the opportunity to get the help of different development organizations for their socio-economic development.
24. Nearly 23.5% jail officials mentioned that ex-prisoners should get financial support for their future rehabilitation. Also, very often family members of women offenders accepted them after they were released from jails, so there was no problem for them to settle down. About 52.9% jailers felt that society has become more broad minded, and the impact of social stigma due to imprisonment has become less.

Recommendations

1. Awareness meetings should be organized for women offenders in jails to remove their ignorance.
2. Counselling is needed for women prisoners to psychologically prepare them to face society.
3. Lady doctors should visit women patients during their sickness during incarceration. The appointment of a gynecologist is necessary for pregnant women.
4. Women should be imprisoned only if found absolutely necessary.
5. There is no internal mechanism to check the functioning of jails today, which remain oppressive and cruel. Employing jail staff of high character or strict implementation of the jail manual does not work in practice.
6. If the rights of prisoners as proposed are to be implemented, provisions must be made so that the jail staff do not violate them.

Maharashtra State Commission for Women: Jail Inspection Report

Ujwala Kadrekar and Chitra Sawant

Introduction

Women prisoners face many hardships in Jails. It is necessary to take appropriate actions to improve the living conditions of women prisoners and understand the problems faced by them. The present study is a report of jail inspections all over the state of Maharashtra, with a view to help women prisoners attain better living conditions, and see whether the instructions given in the Jail manuals are being implemented.

Aims and Objectives

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Understand the living conditions of jail inmates and the facilities provided to them.
2. Understand the problems faced by inmates.

Methodology

Jail inspections were carried out all over the State of Maharashtra. A comprehensive questionnaire dealing extensively with all aspects of the well-being of jail inmates was drafted. The questionnaire covered areas such as capacity of the jail, health aspects of prisoners, environmental sanitation, food and nutrition, lodging arrangements, employment, complaints regarding sexual harassment, and retention for long periods. Superintendents and jail inmates were interviewed for the study. 18 jails were inspected as per the questionnaire, whereas the remaining 9 jails were inspected generally.

Findings and Conclusions

1. About 33% of the jails had the problem of over crowding. One of the jails had a capacity for 4 women prisoners but 15 prisoners were housed in it.
2. Nearly 22.22% of the jails were unable to provide the facility of bail to women prisoners, as they were unable to provide escorts to accompany them to court, and due to non-availability of financially sound sureties. It was also observed that no legal aid was made available to these women prisoners, although it was their mandatory right.
3. About 18.51% jails faced the problem of inadequate food supply to the inmates. Pregnant women and the children of inmates were not given supplementary diet in a number of jails. Most prisoners also complained of the food being tasteless.
4. Nearly 14.81% jails had inadequate toilet facilities. The toilets were in a very bad condition. They were unclean and needed repairs.
5. About 11% of the jails reported that they had inadequate provisions for medical help. Most of the prisoners were found to be anaemic and expressed the need for a lady doctor to visit the Women's Cell.
6. Lack of facilities for children with regard to food, education, clothing, proper bedding and medical facilities was found in 33% of jails that were inspected. The children were not provided with any pre-school education and even supplementary nutrition was not given to them.
7. Inadequate water supply was a problem faced in about 11% jails. This resulted in unhygienic conditions in the jail, which further led to skin diseases like scabies among the inmates.

8. Non-availability of employment facilities to the inmates was a common concern among jails (22%). Under trials were not provided with any vocational training, and the convicts were trained in vocational courses which did not provide them with any job opportunities in the future. The inmates were idle for most of the time and thus created chaos.

Recommendations

1. Construction of new jails should be taken up to prevent the problem of overcrowding. Open jails should be provided for prisoners who are first time offenders.
2. Prisoners who could not obtain bail due to lack of escorts should be given the facility of hearings within the jail premises. Also, hearings should be expedited for those prisoners who cannot get bail due to lack of sureties.
3. Jail inmates who could not afford advocates should be given Free Legal Aid.
4. Food should be palatable and hygienically prepared. Pregnant women, lactating mothers and children of inmates should be given additional nutritional food. Also, gynaecologists, skin specialists and pediatricians should visit the jails regularly and provide services and medicines to inmates. The children of inmates should be provided with necessary facilities.
5. Adequate number of toilets should be available, keeping in mind the number of inmates. The toilets should be clean and in good working condition. The availability of adequate water supply to prisons should be ensured.
6. Inmates should be trained in courses which have good future job prospects. New vocational opportunities should be made available to educated prisoners. New activities such as computer education, making toys, and yoga should be introduced for them. Adult education classes should be arranged for illiterate prisoners.

The Problem of the Under Trial Women Prisoners: A Study on Presidency Jail Soma Ghosh

Introduction

Under trials are those prisoners behind bars who, in the eyes of law, are yet to be convicted by the absolute final judgement, and they pass their days with suspense and expectations like light and shadow in their minds. The difficulties these under trials face are because of procrastination by the judicial system. Possibly some are innocent under trials who are compelled to stay in jail, some turn lunatics, some get mentally disturbed, all lose their jobs and become economically bankrupt, and some bear tremendous mental pressure due to uncertainty about their future. Statistical records prove that the number of under trials are more in West Bengal (93.8%) than in other states.

Aims and Objectives

The study had been taken up with the following main objectives:

1. To know how many years the under trial prisoners were held in custody and whether separate custodial facilities were there for them and convicted prisoners or not.
2. To find out the nature of inmate code and types of work in which they were engaged.
3. To know how the children of under trials were dealt with by prison authorities as well as by their mothers.
4. To study the hindrances, social and legal, in arranging for their release from prison.

Methodology

The study covered 16 women under trial prisoners who had spent more than 2 years term of imprisonment as under trials. The universe of the study was the Female Ward of Presidency Jail, West Bengal. Data was collected using an interview schedule.

Findings and Conclusions

1. It was observed that 68.75% respondents were Hindu and 31.25% were Muslim.
2. About 43.7% respondents were in the age group 25-30 years, 50% were between 31-40 years of age, and only 6.25% respondents were between the age of 51-60 years.
3. A major group of under trials (43.75%) were in the low income group of Rs.900 -Rs.2000 per month.
4. It was found that 37.5% of the respondents were domiciles of West Bengal, and 62.50% of the under trials were mainly from Bangladesh, Bihar, Gaya and Orissa. So poverty and migration both played an important role which contributed to delinquent behaviour.
5. Only 18.75% respondents had saving habits whereas the rest had no such attitude.
6. Majority of the respondents (75%) were illiterate, and due to their lack of education they were not very aware about their problematic situation.
7. Among the under trials, 50% were involved in cases associated with drug peddling. Others were involved in cases related to illegal trafficking, infiltration, murder and robbery.
8. A majority of the under trials (75%) were eager to place their statements before the court of

law, but they were never allowed to give their statement by their respective lawyers. Around 75% of the respondents had received legal help from their family members.

9. Around 87.5% respondents did not have proper faith or impression/ judgment about the court system.
10. Nearly 93.75% under trials were depressed and disenchanted with procrastinations in the process of law.
11. About 50% under trials had direct communication and 43.75% had indirect communication with their lawyers.
12. Nearly 43.75% respondents had a negative response towards health care facilities received during their illness, and the quality of food supplied was also found to be poor.
13. About 68.7% respondents mentioned that they had no scope to contact their relatives.
14. Nearly 75% respondents felt that the relationship between the under trial and her family was good, but the remaining 25% were indifferent.
15. The wards of under trials were allowed to stay with their mothers up to the age of 6 years, and after 6 years the wards were generally handed over to relatives.
16. Nearly 56.25% respondents were ready to accept any kind of work in prison, such as cleaning utensils, washing clothes, serving food, etc.
17. About 62.5% under trials had suffered from the anguish of being 'labelled' while on release.

Recommendations

1. Serious efforts should be made to identify delinquency prone under trials in prison for special guidance and counselling by the police teacher movement.
2. Vocational training programmes and rehabilitation programmes should be formulated and implemented for under trials.
3. Free and compulsory education by the Government should be arranged for the children of under trials.
4. In the field of penal reform and law, some method can also be worked out for reducing the number of arrests and miscarriage of justice due to wrong detention and subsequent acquittal of the under trial by the court of law.

Study on Children of Women Prisoners in Indian Jails

B. N. Chattoraj et al

Introduction

In the wake of industrialization, westernization and urbanization, Indian society has been passing through changes in socio-economic, political and cultural spheres. The process of urbanization has not only produced a changed physical environment and a new form of economic order, but also has profoundly affected the social order and man's conduct and thought. Women have started participating in the labour force and in all walks of life, and there has also been increase in the incidence of female criminality. This study was done to assess the situation of women prisoners in Indian jails.

Aims and Objectives

The study was undertaken to:

1. Ascertain the number of children living with their prisoner mothers in Indian jails.
2. Study socio-economic background of families of these children and the status of their mothers in their family set up.
3. Provide an in-depth analysis of the situation of women prisoners in prisons.
4. Suggest ways and means to improve the situation in jails.

Methodology

The study was conducted in all the jails of the country including central jails, specific jails, districts jails, open jails, women's jails, Borstal jails and sub-jails where children were living with their prisoner mothers. All female inmates living with their children in jail and all prison staff entrusted to look after them constituted the universe of the study. The study was conducted in two phases, in the first phase all children living with their mothers were covered, and in the second phase, one Central Jail, one District Jail, one Sub-Jail and one Women's Jail (where available) from all the states were selected. Questionnaires and interview schedules were used to gather data.

Findings and Conclusions

First Phase

1. The total number of women prisoners in different jails in India as on 30.06.1997 was 7268, of whom 1610 were convicts and the remaining 5658 were undertrials.
2. The highest number of women prisoners were lodged in Bihar (965), followed by Uttar Pradesh (902), Madhya Pradesh (742), Maharashtra (685) and Andhra Pradesh (625), West Bengal (405), Delhi (401), Punjab (390), Tamil Nadu (311) and Rajasthan (268).
3. There was no women prisoner in the jails of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Nagaland, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu and Lakshadweep.
4. It was observed that 885 children were living in different prisons of the country with their prisoner mothers as on 30.06.1997.
5. About 866 children's mothers were married, 17 children's mothers were separated and 2 children's mothers were unmarried.
6. The highest number of children (155) were living with their prisoner mothers in the jails of Uttar Pradesh, followed by Madhya Pradesh (110), Andhra Pradesh (81), Maharashtra (70) and Bihar (60).

7. About 125 children were below six months, 136 were between 6-12 months, 301 were 1-3 years and 237 were between 3-6 years.
8. Among the women prisoners, 50% were hindus, 21% were muslims, 20% were christians and about 10% were sikhs.
9. Most women prisoners were illiterate. General economic status of the families was found to be poor.

Second Phase

10. The second phase of the study, which was carried out in 25 jails of different types spread all over the country, covered various facets of the living condition of 250 children of women inmates in 12 states.
11. Children in jail really faced many diverse types of deprivations related to food, health care, accommodation, education, recreation, etc. No suitable programmes were evolved or operative in any jail for their proper bio-psycho-social development.
12. Out of total 250 children, majority of the children (112) were below the age of 2 years, 4 children were more than 6 years, and the remaining 124 children were between 2-6 years. Nearly 29 children more than 3 years of age had been living in the jail for more than 3 years, which was harmful for the child, and it became difficult to save the child from the harmful effect of incarceration on their personality development.
13. It was observed that in most jails women inmates with children were not given any extra meals. Mother inmates generally had to share their meals with their children.
14. No separate medical facilities were provided for the children and they shared the same medical facilities as was available to adult prisoners.
15. Some kind of general education was reportedly provided to the grown up children of women inmates. For the small children, no arrangements were found in any jail.
16. Economic background of the women prisoners and their families was quite poor. More than 66% families either did not have any visible monthly income or had very meagre income of less than Rs. 500 per month, and all the mothers were housewives.
17. A large number of mothers (85%) were found to be associated with all types of traditional crimes, and a large number of them were involved in murder cases.
18. 48 women inmates delivered their children in jail, 38 of them got pre-natal care in jails, and 33 of them got post natal care.
19. No supplementary food or any other facility was given to child bearing women inmates. Even in prison women inmates were most concerned about their children.
20. About 73% prisoner mothers complained to Jail authorities when they faced problems relating to their children's care.
21. Majority of mother prisoners considered their problems were because of over-crowding in the living barracks, and they were not getting appropriate type of food for their children.
22. Almost all mother prisoners considered that their stay in jail would have a negative impact on the physical and mental development of their children.
23. As there were no crèches or any other arrangement for taking care of children, working women prisoners took help from other co-inmates to care for their children. Sometimes their children were left unattended while they were at work.

Recommendations

1. It is suggested that before sending a woman who is in advanced stage of pregnancy or is being accompanied with her child to a jail, concerned authorities must ensure that the particular jail has got basic minimum facilities for delivery as well as for providing pre-natal and post natal care both to mother and the child.
2. Extra space for newly born babies and their mothers should be provided.
3. While determining the number of child bearing women prisoners to be accommodated in a barrack, the primary consideration should be that the barrack is not over crowded and children get sufficient space for movement.
4. One or two jails should be identified in the whole state where children living with women inmates can be accommodated. The number of jails would depend on the requirements of the state in this regard. These identified jails should be properly equipped with facilities and provisions for meeting children's basic needs in respect of food, accommodation, medical care, nourishment, education, recreation, etc.
5. A permanent arrangement should be evolved to provide separate food to each child and special food to nursing mothers on regular basis. Mother prisoners should be provided with extra diet like milk, fruit or any other type of nutritious food to supplement their daily food. Medical care should be provided for both, mothers and children.
6. Separate utensils of suitable size and material should be provided to each mother for the child.
7. Under no circumstances should prisoner mothers be asked to buy medicines if they require them for their children.
8. In the event of serious illness of the mother, alternative arrangements for looking after their children should be immediately made by the jail staff without leaving the child to the care of the ailing mother.
9. Adequate arrangements for imparting formal and informal education, including stationery items, should be provided for women prisoners.
10. Prison administration should be more sensitive and responsive to the problems of women prisoners.

A Study of Legal Situation of Women Under Trial Prisoners at Mumbai Central Prison and Kalyan District Prison

Prayas

Introduction

Prayas is a project of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai working in the criminal justice system with the objective of rehabilitating persons affected by crime or prostitution and their families. This study investigated the situation of women under trial prisoners, reasons for overcrowding in jails, and suggest measures to improve their situation.

Aims and Objectives

Aims and objectives of the study were to:

1. Find out the socio-economic and legal status of women under trial prisoners in Mumbai and Kalyan Jails.
2. Assess the reasons for overcrowding in the Women's Sections of Mumbai and Kalyan Prisons.
3. Study the impact of languishing on their rehabilitation.

Methodology

A survey was undertaken in the Women's Sections of Mumbai Central and Kalyan District Prisons in the month of September 2000. The questions asked in the survey ranged from issues like educational level, health, number of days spent in prison, to legal aid and support available outside. 141 inmates were interviewed from both the prisons, and for other information prison documents and records were referred.

Findings and Conclusions

1. The principal reasons for overcrowding in prisons were inability of women prisoners to avail of the bail facility granted to them, lack of sufficient police staff to escort prisoners on their court dates, and delays in trials.
2. Around 48% women prisoners interviewed lacked social support systems, and awareness about law was negligible.
3. Some women reported that persons supportive to them (friends, neighbours or relatives) were scared to come forward to help.
4. Only 34% women prisoners were literate and most of them were from a rural background.
5. About 40% inmates did not have legal documents to prove their place of residence.
6. Around 60% women were married and 73% had children, either with them in prison or outside. Children who were outside were in a state of neglect.
7. Around 58.55% women did not have any fixed or stable source of income prior to their arrest.
8. Nearly 46% of the women interviewed complained of not being taken to court on their dates due to lack of police escorts. The situation was reported to be worse in Kalyan Prison than in Mumbai.
9. Around 20% women were in prison for more than one year; 78% were arrested in non-bailable cases, and 5% women were not even aware about their bail condition.

10. Around 87.9% of the women had been arrested for the first time, and could be criminalized if timely and positive help was not available. In the absence of positive support systems, these women could be easily lured and exploited.
11. About 49% inmates had asked for legal aid, and in 17.7% cases women prisoners were not aware about legal representation. Around 78% inmates were booked under sessions triable matters, and 31% of them were not aware about the status of their cases.
12. About 59.6% inmates did not have any co-accused in their cases. This fact had positive implications for conduct of speedy trials, if women's cases were taken up on priority basis.
13. The major reasons for overcrowding were that most women who were languishing for long periods had been arrested in serious cases. The offences under which they had been charged were non-bailable and sessions triable. If they had been granted bail, they were unable to go out due to their inability to arrange for suitable sureties.
14. The families were not able to support them because of economic constraints, lack of education and awareness about the law. The reason could also be that they did not want to help because they were afraid of the police or did not want to involve themselves in legal proceedings.
15. Due to lack of or inappropriate legal representation, inmates continued to languish in prison for periods longer than they should as under trial prisoners.
16. The consequence of languishing in prison without proper trial was the neglect of children of women prisoners left outside. Another consequence was the increased chance of contamination of unsupported women prisoners, specially first timers by habitual groups to take up crime as a way of life.

Recommendations

1. Taking up women's cases on a priority basis in metropolitan and sessions courts is required.
2. Increasing the number of visits of women lawyers from the Legal Aid Board to write applications and guide women prisoners on legal matters is required.
3. Based on a home inquiry report, the use of personal bond given by women prisoners should be started on a trial basis.
4. The Probation of Offenders Act should be used more liberally and its implementation strengthened, specially in sessions triable matters.

A Study on Problems of Women Prisoners and Their Children in Maharashtra

B. S. Mhaske

Introduction

The advent of modern forces and change in the role of females has led to increase in the number of crimes by women and pattern of female criminality in India. More crimes and the serious nature of crimes committed by women is a recent phenomenon that has emerged as a result of change in women's thinking, changes in society, and women becoming breadwinners and having to provide for their families due to various reasons such as desertion, armed conflict, violence against women, etc.

Aims and Objectives

The aims of the study were to:

1. Study the factors determining women's behaviour leading to the crime committed.
2. Understand the social, psychological and familial implications of imprisonment of women for themselves and the family.
3. Study the social acceptance of women prisoners upon their release.
4. Study rehabilitation measures for released women prisoners.

Methodology

The present study was undertaken in the State of Maharashtra. Female prisoners whose cases obtained conviction by the court were included as respondents. The required information was collected by means of interview schedules in a face-to-face situation with the respondents. In all, 70 prisoners were covered, out of whom 64 were Indians. Secondary data about prison administration in Maharashtra and about women prisoners was collected from reports available with the Jails Authority of Maharashtra State.

Findings and Conclusions

1. About 25% of the crimes committed by women were murder or murderous assault, theft/house breaking (15%), cheating (11.8%), illicit distillation and sale of liquor (9.7%), miscellaneous offences (9.2%), kidnapping and abduction (8.1%), travelling without ticket in a train (8.1%), begging (6.9%), vagrancy (5.2%), miscellaneous under local and special laws (2.7%), immoral trafficking (2.5%), unlawful assembly (2.3%), breach of trust or peace (1.8%), unauthorized possession of arms (1.7%) and trespassing (0.8%).
2. Among the crimes committed by women prisoners, murder tops the lists in which 57% prisoners were involved and had been convicted. Drug trafficking ranked second (24.3%).
3. Majority of the inmates (87%) had been imprisoned for only one single offence, whereas 8.6% reported that they had a criminal record in the past too. Majority of the prisoners 58.6% were awarded life imprisonment and 26 (37.1%) had been given rigorous imprisonment.
4. Majority of the criminal (48.6%) were between 17-34 years of age at the time of commission of the crime. This could be because at a particular age the individual has mental and physical strength to do physical harm.

5. The socio-economic vulnerability of women is a dominant factor which accounts for the rising trend of crime among women. Poverty was a common phenomenon experienced by these women prisoners. About 61% reported that their spouse's monthly income was below Rs.2000/-.
6. Women prisoners were found to be a neglected group in society. They were not treated at par with male prisoners as far as facilities were concerned. The opportunities provided to them were limited in comparison to the male prisoners, in the areas of education, occupational, social and cultural programmes, employment, and even medical and health services.
7. About 52% of the prisoners were illiterate. Even among literate prisoners none had qualifications above secondary level.
8. The respondents belonged to families with no past criminal record. Thus, committing a crime was the beginning of their involvement with criminal offences.
9. Imprisonment of any duration, short or long term, led to social degradation of the individual and the family in the eyes of society.
10. Children of 42.9% women prisoners were going to school before their mother's imprisonment, but subsequent to the arrest, children of 24% prisoners had to discontinue their education, which showed that imprisonment of the mother affected the schooling of children.
11. Imprisonment of women adversely affected the lives of their children, resulting in discontinuation of education, children had to work as labourers, or on the farm, and the child was deprived of love and care of the mother. This had the most adverse impact on the child/ children as was reported by 31 of the 35 prisoners who responded.
12. The study found no strong opposition or resentment from any member of the family to accept her after release, and it was encouraging to note that a majority of women prisoners (85.7%) expressed confidence that they would be able to adjust to post-release life.
13. Majority of the inmates had no past criminal record, and had good relationships with their family members. Inmates had no psychological problems and almost all had good childhood experiences, which showed negative correlation with delinquent behaviour.
14. Rehabilitation of women prisoners was not taken up extensively by the Government. This is true especially for those women who become destitutes after their release.
15. About 86% of the women prisoners had no knowledge about rehabilitation services provided in areas of financial assistance, provision of shelters, etc.

Recommendations

1. It is essential that women prisoners achieve economic independence, as their immediate family might discard them after their release. Therefore, they should be kept engaged in work during their stay in prisons. However, they should be assigned work keeping in mind their physical and mental ability.
2. Vocational training should be made an essential feature of correctional programmes. It should include areas like domestic science and home science, sewing, needle work, embroidery, knitting, toy-making, home decorating, painting, gardening, etc.
3. The Government should take up programmes for rehabilitation of women prisoners, at least for those prisoners who are rejected by their family upon release.
4. Prisoners should be given information about the services designed for them by voluntary organizations, so that they can avail of these services.

Women Criminals in Tamil Nadu

A. Thomas William

Introduction

It is an unpalatable truth that crime is not only a fact of life but a way of life as well, since the bulk of human behaviour described as 'criminal' has been accepted as rationalized by many on grounds of expediency, necessity and compulsion. Crime is an act forbidden by the law of the land for which penalty is prescribed. It is a known fact that the available statistics on crime covers only those arrested and even those figures are not reliable. For centuries, the criminal behaviour of women has been a neglected area of research. The incidence of crime by women has also shown increase in recent times. Women commit crime either singly or in groups. In crimes like illicit distillation of liquor, gambling, prostitution and dacoity, females seek the help of men folk to accomplish their objectives. With regard to murder, mostly the victims are persons known to women and are often their own relatives.

Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of this study were to:

1. Understand the socio-economic background of female criminals.
2. Measures the consequences of female criminality on the individual, children, family and society at large.
3. Assess the facilities provided in prison and the impact of prison life on women.
4. Study the future plans of respondents and perceived acceptance by family and society, and to suggest suitable preventive and rehabilitative programmes.

Methodology

The study on women criminals in Tamil Nadu covered jails in Vellore and Madurai. These two prisons are exclusively meant for women and are managed by women. In Vellore Prison half the prisoners, and in Madurai Prison all the women prisoners were interviewed. Thus the sample consisted of 94 convicted criminals (38+56) and 31 under trial prisoners (21+10). Interview schedules and observation method was used to collect information.

Findings and Conclusions

1. There has been a tendency to conceptualize crime in general terms which many times leads to confusion in understanding.
2. About 70.40% under trials and women prisoners were below 40 years of age.
3. A majority of the women prisoners (66.4%) were illiterate. However, 33.6% of the women were literates with either primary (8.80%) or middle (12.80%) or high school (8.00%) or higher secondary and above (4.00%) education, with mean years of schooling being 2.03 years.
4. About 50% respondents were married. Nearly 81.60% respondents were hindus, 12% were christians and 6.40% were muslims.
5. Around 39.20% were occupied as agricultural manual workers, 16% were agriculturists, and 12.80% were involved in trade or business. About 48.80% earned a monthly income of Rs.251 to Rs.500, 16.80% earned below Rs.250, while one-fifth (20.80%) earned between Rs.501 and Rs.750. The mean income was Rs. 534.56 with a range of Rs. 60 to Rs. 3000,

and a standard deviation of Rs. 434.60. Hence it could be inferred that the majority of them were employed in low paid occupations.

6. Higher proportion of respondents who committed murder were above 45 years of age.
7. Majority of married respondents (60.31%) belonged to non-murder category.
8. Rural respondents tend to commit more crimes relating to murder, while urban respondents tend to commit more crimes relating to non-murder.
9. Nearly 50% respondents committed crimes relating to murder, and around 50% of the respondents were involved in crimes relating to non-murder such as dacoity, theft, cheating, illicit distillation of liquor, gambling, prostitution, etc.
10. A majority of the respondents belonged to large families with 5 or more children, indicating overcrowding in their families.
11. It was observed that in 50% of the respondents' families both male and female children were treated equally. Guardians of a majority of the respondents (77.78%) were illiterates.
12. About 20% of the childhood friends of respondents and 33% relatives had criminal records. Hence it can be concluded that women prisoners came from families that had previous history of crime or had links with crime.
13. About 33% of the respondents proposed to stay with their parents and 33% with their husbands after release.
14. About 56% respondents felt that their family would accept them back after release.
15. It was found that more than 26.4% respondents and around 46.67% husbands had illegal relationships with other persons.
16. About 55% respondents mentioned that they had a conflict with their husbands. Respondents also faced ill-treatment from husbands (50.83%), parents-in-law (23.3%), other in-laws (15.83%), and other relatives of husbands (14.17%). The various forms of ill-treatment included attempt to murder, beating, scolding, house arrest, not allowing the lady to meet her husband, starving, quarrelling, etc.
17. The habits and behaviour of husbands showed that 6 out of 10 (61.67%) husbands were alcoholics, and 3 out of 10 (29.17%) husbands were drug addicts. A little less than half (46.67%) husbands had illegal relationships, and about 35.83% were indulging in criminal activities. It was also observed that 14.17% husbands were imprisoned for criminal activities at the time of the study.
18. Economic causes were the main reason for committing crimes. These included unemployment (51), low income (48), poverty (47), and property dispute (9). The personal reasons listed by respondents were to lead a luxurious life (48), to make more money (42), emotional reasons (17), self defence (9), for survival (4), and conflict with daughter (1). Both illegitimacy and ill-treatment have also played a crucial role in motivating the respondents to get involved in criminal activities.
19. Majority of the respondents agreed that academic life, social status, personal life and individual freedom were affected due to their criminal behaviour and aftermath effects.
20. Almost all respondents mentioned that their criminal conduct affected their children's upbringing, education, morality and personal development, and their children had to face social harassment and exposure to criminal risk.

21. Although majority of the respondents agreed that the consequence on the individual, on children, on family and society at large were significant, some of them said that they would indulge in crime again in the future. Therefore, urgent remedial steps need to be taken to prevent these women from getting involved in crime again.
22. It was observed that the facilities provided in prison such as food, accommodation, bathing facilities, clothing, medical services, recreation, education and vocational training, work incentives, grievance redressal and other facilities were not satisfactory.

Recommendations

1. The public should be educated through mass media, community programmes, and participation of youth and children in small group discussions on issues of social relevance. The focus should be on social defence and preventive aspects.
2. Voluntary organizations can play an immensely useful role in prevention of crime.
3. School children could be the largest target group where criminal tendencies can be spotted in time. This could be done at the national level. Teachers can play an important role in identifying children who need special counselling services.
4. Welfare services must be started when a woman criminal enters the prison system and completed when she gets resettled into society again.
5. Correctional, medical and mental health services can play a constructive part in the rehabilitation of women prisoners right from the moment the prisoner is admitted in a penitentiary.
6. The need for education is paramount. All out efforts must be made to ensure that maximum number of girls are educated.
7. Training should be imparted only after identifying the training needs and aptitude of women prisoners.
8. After release, these women should be looked after adequately and considerable help should be extended so that they do not indulge in crime in future.

Women in Tihar Jail: A Report on the Training Programme in Skill Development

Seema Malhotra

Introduction

Illiterate people often fall into the trap of crime as they are unable to earn a living. While they are in prison, undertrials and prisoners are taught skills and given vocational training so that they are able to earn a living after they finish their sentence. This study was conducted to assess the effectiveness of a skill training and education programme imparted to under trials in Tihar Jail.

Aims and Objectives

The objective of the study was to discover the impact of the training programme in skill development among women in Tihar Jail.

Methodology

Three specific groups were targeted, namely the workers (under trials in Tihar Jail), the volunteers (people working in the NGO Scope Plus), and the Tihar Employees' Wives. Through the NGO Scope Plus, direct access was available to all three target groups.

Findings and Conclusions

1. About 75% respondents preferred working in groups rather than individually; while 18% felt that it depended on the kind of work given to them.
2. Nearly 96% respondents believed that taking part in the programme raised their self esteem either a little or a lot. Only 4% believed that their self esteem had not increased at all. Due to lack of activities within the Jail, prisoners have plenty of time to dwell on their unfortunate circumstances.
3. More than 66.7% respondents replied that their self confidence had increased as a result of their involvement with the skills training programme in Jail.
4. Team work necessitates reliance on others to complete one's task. Nearly 66.7% respondents stated that their patience increased since they joined the skills training programme.
5. Almost two-third respondents felt that they now have skills which might be applicable outside the Jail, and this will give them more independence, and they need not be as totally reliant on their husbands as they were before.
6. Less than half the respondents felt that their involvement in the skills programme had increased their communication skills, whereas more than a quarter believed that their communication skills had shown no signs of improvement during the programme.
7. Some of the innovations made in Tihar Jail were improved lodging of prisoners, food, clothing and bedding, medical care of prisoners, communication facilities to prisoners, educational activities, moral teaching (meditation and counselling), legal assistance, special courts and *rehnumai remand* (remand on compassionate grounds), vocational training, recreational activities in prison, future programmes, rehabilitation activities, etc.
8. The general feeling garnered from the questionnaires, analysis and charts related to the responses given by under trials made it clear that the volunteers and prison officials' wives also found their participation in the skills programme as a wholly positive experience.

9. In Tihar Jail prisoners were provided special vocational training in various fields with the help of NGOs/ inmates teachers like CASP Association of Concerned Women, Family Vision, Mahila Pratiraksha Mandal, Navjyoti Foundation, Scope Plus, Sterlite Foundation, Jamia Institute of Beauty Culture. Moral education was provided by organizations like Art of Living, Bharatiya Charitra Nirman Sansthan, Divya Jyoti Jagruti Sansthan, Katha Khazana, Naz Foundation, Prajapita Brahma Kumari Ishwariya Vishwavidyalaya, Missionaries of Charity, Tablegh Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia, Sawan Kripal Ruhani Mission, etc.
10. Prisoners were taught trades such as phenyl manufacturing, soap making, furniture making, weaving, tailoring, file folder making, envelope making, etc.
11. In Tihar Jail, baking schools were also opened which taught prisoners how to make bread, salted savories and other confectionary items, which were sold to the general public. For such gainful activities prisoners were paid gratuity, skilled prisoners were paid Rs. 16 per day, semi-skilled prisoners were paid Rs.12 per day, and unskilled prisoners were paid Rs. 10 per day. The annual turnover of the Jail Factory for the year 2003-04 was Rs. 40 million.
12. About 42 under trials were engaged in creating folders and bags from paper and cloth, chit pads, diaries, carry bags, and bottle holders made from jute.
13. The NGO Scope Plus had been working in Tihar Jail since 1993 under the guidance of trained functionaries specializing in counselling. During the 10 years (1996-2005) of its functioning, the NGO had sensitized about 10,000 students, teachers, under trials, slum dwellers, NGOs and Corporates on various aspects of social development. The NGO Navjyoti Foundation introduced meditation and yoga for prisoners among other initiatives.
14. India Vision Foundation and Navjyoti Foundation collaboratively started several vocational training projects. These projects, such as Weaving Project, Bottle Cover Project, Paper Recycling Project, Handmade Paper Project, Pottery School, etc. developed the entrepreneurial skills of prisoners and became very successful and reputed, both in India and abroad. The products produced were marketed in National and International Fairs.

Recommendations

1. Skills development, personality development and communication skills development programmes should be undertaken for other batches of women prisoners.
2. The vocational training programmes started in Tihar Jail should be replicated in other jails so that prisoners can learn trades which enable them to earn a living after they are released.