



An Study of Recommendations made by Justice Verma Committee relating to security of women in India

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Abstract : It is not a matter of rape alone, but about respect that is given to women in public places, homes or at work.

That women not being recognized as equals is a matter of deep concern. What is also disturbing is the fact that it is not

only in the capital city where women are accorded scant respect, but that it is widespread across the country in varying degrees.

Women are supposed to be Goddess in India and has been worshiped in various forms like Durga, Saraswati, Luxmi, Sita in Indian culture and civilization since ancient times. It is the extreme form of providing honor to the dignity of womanhood. Contrary to this, sometimes we feel ashamed of current time's occurrence of events pertaining to heinous crimes like Delhi Gang rape, Mumbai Gang Rape and many such incidents that happen daily at some or other parts of the country, . Such incidents of assault on the modesty of woman compel us to review the plight and status of women in the existing so called modern society. Such incidents forces us to have concern for the security and safety of women in our society. The sparking of public outrage following Delhi Gang rape and self geared protests of men and women; young or old, even children on streets across the country for demanding Justice to brave heart led to amend the criminal Laws relating women. However it appears that mere enactment of strong Laws is not sufficient.

Panel headed by Justice Verma

A panel set up in response to public outcry over the brutal gang rape and murder of a young woman has delivered its report outlining recommendations on how to tackle gender violence in the largely patriarchal country.

The panel, headed by former Chief Justice of India J.S. Verma, received over 80,000 responses from the public as well as women's rights groups, academics, gender experts and lawyers, compiling their suggestions into what commentators have described as a "path-breaking" and "progressive" report.





Justice J.S.Verma panel provided a valuable blueprint for women's safety on the basis of which the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013 was enacted which provides not only the severest punishment for heinous crime against women but also added new specific crimes (though less heinous) as Sexual harassment, Stalking, Voyeurism, Disrobing of women at public places, Acid throwing, and Trafficking to be dealt with penal provisions.

Recommendations : Recommendations put forward by the Verma Committee in its 630-page report:

1. Make Voyeurism, Stalking And Intentional Touching An Offence

Make voyeurism an offence punishable by a maximum jail term of three years - Make stalking an offence punishable by a maximum jail term of three years - Intentional touching, using obscene language or gestures should be treated as a sexual assault offence

2. Amend Rape Laws

Rape of a minor should carry a minimum jail term of 10 years - Gang rape should be defined in the Indian Penal Code and be punishable by at least 20 years imprisonment - Death caused by rape should carry a minimum penalty of 20 years in jail - Make marital rape a criminal offence

3. Review Security Laws In Conflict Zones

Due to the number of reports of sexual offences committed by the armed forces in India's conflict areas such as Kashmir and the North East, the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) - a controversial law that gives sweeping powers to and often confers immunity on security forces - must be reviewed - Security forces must be brought under the purview of ordinary criminal law rather than under army law - Special commissioners for women's security must be deployed in all areas of conflict. Such commissioners will have powers to monitor and take action in all cases of sexual violence against women by armed personnel - Introduce "Breach of command responsibility" - making a senior officer of security forces or police liable to a jail term of at least seven years if his/her subordinate commits rape

4. Monitor Illegal, Patriarchal Village Councils



Put in place measures to monitor illegal village councils known as "Khap Panchayats" that sanction so-called "honor killings" and impose oppressive diktats such as banning girls and women from using mobile phones, wearing western clothes or venturing out unaccompanied

5. Review Medical Examination Of Rape Victims

Put in place medico-legal guidelines on how to perform a medical examination of a victim of sexual assault - Scrap the so-called "two-finger" test - an outdated practice that examines the laxity of the vagina to determine whether the victim is "habituated to sex"

6. Police Reforms

Institute a Police Complaints Authority at district level to look into complaints against police officers who do not register complaints of gender crimes. Police who fail to register complaints or abort an investigation should be punished. This will provide more police accountability, said the commission - All police stations should have CCTV to ensure proper procedures are being followed in handling, recording and filing complaints - Provide appropriate technical equipment and training to police to ensure the highest standards of investigation of forensic evidence for sexual assault crimes - Separate police investigating gender crimes from law and order police to ensure speedier investigation, better expertise and improved rapport with the public - Increase the number of female police on patrol and on duty in police stations so that women feel comfortable filing sexual assault complaints.

Reforms in management of cases related to crime against women:

- A Rape Crisis Cell should be set up. The Cell should be immediately notified when an FIR in relation to sexual assault is made. The Cell must provide legal assistance to the victim.
- All police stations should have CCTVs at the entrance and in the questioning room.
- A complainant should be able to file FIRs online.
- Police officers should be duty bound to assist victims of sexual offences irrespective of the crime's jurisdiction.
- Members of the public who help the victims should not be treated as wrong doers.
- The police should be trained to deal with sexual offences appropriately.
- Number of police personnel should be increased. Community policing should be developed by providing training to volunteers.



7. Electoral Reforms

Lawmakers who have been charged in a court of law with serious offences such as sexual offences or dowry crimes should be disqualified from contesting elections - Sitting parliamentarians with criminal cases against them, including those of rape and other types of sexual assault, should voluntarily vacate their seats - There should be a code of conduct for political parties, instituting transparency in receiving donations and declaring whether parties had sanctioned people to run for elections who have criminal records

8. Gender Sensitisation Through Education

The formal curriculum in Indian schools must be drastically revamped and sex education must be made an integral part of the curriculum

9. Bill Of Rights

India should institute a "Bill of Rights" for women, along the lines of similar bills in South Africa and New Zealand

- The bill would set out the rights guaranteed to women, which would include the right to life, security, bodily integrity, democratic and civil rights and equality

10. Human Trafficking

Define the offence of trafficking in the Indian Penal Code - Trafficking should be punishable with a jail term of no less than seven years and may extend to life imprisonment - Employing a trafficked person, for example as a domestic servant, should carry a jail term of no less than three years.

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