

Article for Online International Interdisciplinary Research Journal Crime against Women: Issues and Challenges

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Abstract

India, the largest democracy of the world, is faced with a situation of 'gender paradox', i.e., the increasing number of crimes against women amidst increasing measures to prevent such crimes. The National Crime Records Bureau (A Government of India Agency under the Ministry of Home Affairs) recorded 405861 crimes against women in 2019 as against 377278 crimes in 2018 with increase in crimes like rape, dowry death, abduction and molestation in the same period. There is a plethora of laws, constitutional measures as well as administrative mechanisms to ensure equal treatment to women and prevent crime and violence against them, yet the outcome is just the opposite. This paper is primarily concerned with the analysis of those social, political, cultural and administrative factors in Indian context, which throw light on this gender paradox. The underlying assumption of this analysis is that only the legal and administrative measures, which focus on controlling external deviant behaviour, may not be effective in controlling or moderating attitudes, values and perceptions of people, which permeate the criminal behaviour against women. This brings us to the larger domain of social, cultural and economic environment, where the enforcement of law takes place.

In light of the above, the paper is a humble attempt to –

- a. Examine the various constitutional, legal and administrative measures relating to gender justice as against increasing crimes against women i.e., gender paradox;
- b. Understand and analyse the gender paradox in the larger perspective of various socio-cultural, economic, political and administrative factors; and,
- c. Outline the need of a comprehensive and holistic approach to prevent crime against women in India.

KEYWORDS: women empowerment, gender justice, gender paradox, crime against women

Women throughout the globe are a discriminated lot. They constitute half of the humanity. No society can march on the path of progress, if half of its people are obstructed from joining the social mainstream. From household chores to the position of power, women's contribution to society's development needs no emphasis. Yet, the recognition of this contribution by the male dominated society is more in rhetoric than in behaviour and actual realization. Otherwise, how this perception can be explained that the women are assigned second rate roles, treated as secondary members of society and subjected to all forms of discrimination, exploitation and crimes. Women are worst victims in all form of displacement and disasters, may it be manmade or natural. The rising trend of crimes against women and social complicity to these crimes ranging from all forms of discrimination, denial to human rights and sexual harassment to female feticide, rape and outright killing is the direct consequence of the prevailing male

dominated values, attitudes and behaviour. This is more so in the developing countries of the globe. The democracy or no democracy, the crimes against women are on rise in many developing societies. The crimes against women are not only committed in the large public sphere but also within the four walls of the family, where law hesitates to reach. Though national and international efforts are being made to end discrimination and crimes against women, they result in partial success and huge failures. The gender justice is supposed to percolate down to all domains of public and private affairs; it is played lip service in actual practice.

India, the largest democracy of the world, is faced with a situation of '**gender paradox**', i.e. the increasing number of crimes against women amidst increasing measures to prevent such crimes. Women have demonstrated their contribution to '**Rising India**' in 21st century, yet the sex ratio is moving adversely. There is increase in the level of literacy and social consciousness in general, yet the violence against women is not coming down. There is a plethora of laws, constitutional measures as well as administrative mechanisms to ensure equal treatment to women and prevent crime and violence against them, yet the outcome is just opposite.

Some of these measures include: Constitutional provisions (1950) granting equal rights to women; National Women Commission (1990), announcement of National Policy on Empowerment of Women (2001); legal enactments for dealing with women relating problems like female feticide, child marriage, honour killing, rape and sexual harassment, dowry death, domestic violence, indecent presentation of women in media, and so on; and various administrative mechanisms. These measures have not proved effective. The National Crime Records Bureau (A Government of India Agency under the Ministry of Home Affairs) recorded 405861 crimes against women in 2019 as against 377278 crimes in 2018 with increase in crimes like rape, dowry death, abduction and molestation in the same period. How to explain this paradox? This paper is primarily concerned with the analysis of those social, political, cultural and administrative factors in Indian context, which throw light on this gender paradox. The analysis may also be relevant to those nations and societies, which are placed on the similar socio-economic development scale. The underlying assumption of this analysis is that legal and administrative measures, which focus on controlling external deviant behaviour, may not be effective in controlling or moderating attitudes, values and perceptions of people, which permeate the criminal behaviour against women. This brings us to the larger domain of social, cultural and economic environment, where the enforcement of law takes place. Accordingly, this paper is divided into three parts: part one dealing with the status of legal and administrative measures and the rising crimes against women to focus on gender paradox; second part is concerned with the analysis of this paradox in larger perspective and; the third part focuses on the need of a comprehensive and holistic approach to prevent crime against women in India.

PART ONE

India is a multi-religious, multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic society with a long history of culture and tradition. Even, if we go by the available records, Indian cultural tradition has 5000 years long history. This cultural tradition, updated and modified with new internal and external elements, provides for norms and values relevant for each aspect of human behaviour. This cultural tradition acts as a double edged weapon as far

as the status of women in India is concerned. On the one hand, this tradition is summoned to underline the higher status of women in ancient Indian society, but on the other, it is also blamed for the plight of women in modern Indian society. The dominant discourse on the status of women in India reiterates that women in India enjoyed higher status in ancient times; they were placed under subordination and seclusion during the centralized alien rule in middle period; and again moved on the path of progress and equality in modern times since the British rule and thereafter under the democratic polity of independent India.

Whatever may be the factual merits and demerits of this presumption, there is no denying the fact that the beginning of cultural renaissance in India in 19th century during British rule brought forth certain reformatory and revival tendencies which supported the cause of women equality and dignity. Efforts were made to discard and modify practices and traditions derogatory to women such as practice of Sati (burning of widowed women at the pyre of dead husband as a religious requirement), child marriage, widow remarriage, veil system, reluctance to women education and so on. This social reform movement got credence and success because it was led and supported by leading figures of time and was viewed by Indian middle class as an essential ingredient of larger national revival and regeneration. This social reform movement provided a solid supportive platform to launch more egalitarian measures for women equality and rights in Independent India. This is how the message of Indian renaissance was carried forward in the post-independent democratic India.

After independence, India moved on the path of rapid socio-economic development with democratic political framework. The new constitution, among other things provided for a secular democratic polity, independence of judiciary, rule of law as well as fundamental rights of equality and freedom to all citizens without any discrimination on any ground. Within the framework of a democratic polity, our laws, development policies, plans and programmes have aimed at women's advancement in different spheres. India has also ratified various international conventions and human rights instruments committing to secure equal rights of women. Key among them is the ratification of the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW-1979) in 1993.

Gender Justice Measures

There are three broad categories of measures/provisions to ensure rights and liberty on equal basis: Constitutional measures; legal measures with specific requirement of crime against women and; administrative measures including policies and programmes for the protection of rights of women or for their growth and development. These three categories of measures are based on two-pronged approach, i.e. preventing the violation of rights of and discrimination against women on the one hand and providing for measures of positive discrimination in favour of women to ensure their specific growth and development.

A. Constitutional Provisions:

The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles. The

Constitution not only grants equality to women but also empowers the state to adopt measures of Positive Discrimination in favour of women for removing the cumulative socio-economic, educational and political disadvantages faced by them. The Preamble of Indian Constitution calls for ensuring equality, liberty, justice and human dignity to all people of India including women. Some specific Constitutional provisions for the protection of rights of women and advancement of their development are listed below (Bakshi: 2016):

- **Article 14:** Fundamental right to equality before law and equal protection of law to all persons.
- **Article 15:** Prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of religion, race, caste, **sex** or place of birth.
- **Article 15 (3):** Provision enabling state to make special provisions (measures of positive discrimination) for women and children, i.e. provisions providing for reservation of seats for women in local bodies or in educational institutions are valid.
- **Article 16:** Fundamental right to equality of opportunity in matters of public employment.
- **Article 16 (2):** Prohibition on discrimination in public employment on the grounds of religion, race, caste, **sex**, descent, place of birth or residence.
- **Article 39(d) :** Direction to the state to ensure equal pay for equal work for both men and women
- **Article 42:** Direction to state to make provisions for maternity relief to women.
- **Article 44:** Directing the state to enact Uniform Civil Code (rational Marriage and divorce laws) for all communities of India. This provision has not been implemented because of political reasons.
- **Article 51(A)(e):** Duty of citizens to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.
- **Article 243:** Mandatory provision for one-third reservation for women in Panchayats (local bodies in rural areas) and Municipalities (Local bodies in urban areas). Some of the provincial governments have made legal provision for the fifty percent reservation of seats in local bodies in rural areas. Also, another legislative proposal providing for one-third reservation of seats in favour of women in central and provincial legislature is pending before the Indian Parliament. These are important steps for women empowerment in India.

The Women's Reservation Bill, pending in Lok Sabha (lower house of Indian Parliament) since 2010 provides for 33 percent reservation for women in the Lower House of Parliament and State Assemblies for 15 years.

B. Women Specific Legislations:

Besides, the above Constitutional provisions, the Indian government has enacted various legislative measures which specifically address to the problems of and discrimination against women. Some of these provisions were enacted in pre-independence days and continue to exist today. It should be noted that there are general legal provisions preventing the crimes in general, which are applicable to all citizens. Recognizing the need for involving women in various development activities, the Government of India has initiated several affirmative measures by way of programmes and schemes to bring them into the mainstream of development. The major women specific legal provisions are (NCW:2017):

The Married Women Property Act, 1874; Special Marriage Act 1954, providing for inter-caste marriages in India; Hindu Marriage Act 1955, which provides for rational rule for regulating marriage relations among Hindus; Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956; The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961; The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961; The Muslim Women Protection of Rights on Dowry Act, 1986; The Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986; The commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987; The Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1994, which makes feticide of female child a punishable offence; Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005; The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (prevention, prohibition & redressal) Act, 2013. The Supreme Court of India also issued Vishakha Guidelines in 1997 to prevent the harassment of women at work place, which are also enforced.

C. Administrative Measures:

In tune with the constitutional mandate and other legal provisions the central and provincial governments have launched various policies and programmes and put in place many administrative mechanisms, which not only ensure the enjoyment of equal rights by women but also provide for the betterment of women as a marginalized community. Some of these measures are discussed below (India: 2020):

- 1) National Commission for Women:** It is a statutory body established on January 1992 to represent the rights of women in India as guaranteed under different legal and constitutional provisions. Dowry deaths, rape, equal representation for women in jobs, exploitation of women for labour are some of the issues raised by NCW over the years.
- 2) The National Plan of Action for the Girl child (1991-2000):** It is a special initiative by the Government of India to save the girl child. It seeks to prevent female feticide and infanticide, eliminate female bias and to protect girls from all forms of exploitation and abuse. The plan aims to achieve its aforesaid goal by providing education facilities in unserved areas, facilitating child care services by community mobilization and involvement, stepping up immunization where coverage is low, etc.
- 3) National Policy for the Empowerment of Women, 2001:** The policy aims towards the advancement, development and empowerment of women. The objectives include equal privilege for women in decision making in all spheres,

quality education of women at all levels, social security, strengthening legal systems to eliminate all forms of discrimination, changing societal attitudes and community practices with active participation of men and women, among others.

Status of Crimes against Women

Women of all sections are a vulnerable community in India. The crime against women refers to all illegal acts, which impede the enjoyment of equal rights by women, which are guaranteed by the law of the land. The data compiled by the government agencies suggests increasing trend in all types of crimes against women.

Table 1: Crimes against women and conviction Rate 2001-2019

Year	No of Criminal cases against women	Conviction rate in percentage
2001	143,795	NA
2005	155,553	NA
2010	213,585	27.8
2015	329243	NA
2016	338954	NA
2017	359849	24.6
2018	378277	23.1
2019	405861	23.7

Courtesy: National Crime Records Bureau, Govt. of India (ncrb.govt.in/)

The analysis of data given in Table 1 further suggests that the crimes against women during 2001-19 period have more than doubled from 1.43 lakhs in 2001 to 4.05 lakhs in 2019. The reported crimes against women have increased in the country by 7.3 percent in 2019 over the previous year (Rajya Sabha: 2021). This is in spite of the fact that many far reaching legal and administrative measures were put in place during the same period. Another wrong trend is the poor conviction rate in crimes against women. The conviction rate during the study period hovered around 21 to 27 percent in respect of all crimes against women taken together.

Table 2: Trends of some major Crimes against women during 2015-2019

S.N.	Types of Crime against Women	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
1.	Dowry Deaths	7634	7621	7466	7166	7115
2.	Rape	34651	38947	32559	33356	32033
3.	Murder with Rape/Gang Rape	N A	NA	223	294	283
4.	Cruelty by husband or his relatives	113403	110378	104551	103272	125298
5.	Assault on women to outrage her modesty	82422	84746	86001	89097	88367
6	Kidnapping, abduction of women and girls	59283	64519	66333	72751	72780
7.	Acid Attacks	140	160	148	131	150
8.	Cyber Crimes					

Courtesy: National Crime Records Bureau, Govt. of India (ncrb.govt.in/ and Rajya Sabha: 2021).

The Table 2 lists some major types of crimes against women in India and their increasing trends during 2015-2019. The figures show that except rape and dowry deaths, all other crimes display an increasing g trends. The crimes like Acid Attacks, Cruelty by family members, and Cyber crimes have displayed a major jump during the last five years. The Cyber crime is a new category of crimes against women and incidents of cyber crimes have increased by 30 percent in 2019 in comparison to previous year. Again, the conviction rate suggests the poor performance of criminal justice and administration in India. Even the conviction in these cases take long time, which makes the justice delivered as redundant. It should also be pointed out that many of the crimes against women go unreported due to social taboo or ignorance or fear. The administration also appears insensitive to crimes against women till political hue and cry is not raised. It still remains true that of the total case of violence against women only a fraction is reported to the police, and again, only a small proportion of these cases receive media publicity, usually depending upon their sensational character (UNESCO:1993).

In a survey (The Hindu: 2012) conducted by **Thomson Reuters' Trust Law Women**, a hub of legal information and legal support for women's rights, India ranks with Afghanistan, Congo and Somalia as one of the most dangerous place for women. While women in India generally face numerous disadvantages — poor health indicators, lower literacy rates, lower income levels, poor female to male ratio due to sex-selective abortions and female infanticide, to list a few — the last few years have witnessed some astonishing acts of violence against women and children. The idea of women empowerment remains a pipedream for women. In the present Lok Sabha (2019-24) only 78 members out of total 543 elected members are women. The women have dismal presence in the state legislatures also. In 24 out of 31 States and UTs, the average share of women MLAs between 2012 and 2019 has been less than 10 percent (The Hindu: 2021).

PART TWO

Gender paradox Explained

The gender paradox i.e. increasing rates of crimes against women in spite of increasing awareness about women issues as well as legal and other measures highlights the fundamental issues involved with the plight of women in India. No law functions in vacuum. Rather it functions in a given social, political and economic context. Moreover, legal and administrative measures influence the external behaviour of human beings. The attitudes, values and unequal social structures militate against the practice of equal treatment of women in different walks of life. The discriminatory practices against women are pervasive and sustained and supported by the prevailing socio-cultural environment in India, which is based on the ideology of patriarchy. Even the **Ministry of Women and Child Development (2021)** which is nodal agency for improving the status of women in India, admits the fact that 'there still exists a wide gap between the goals enunciated in the Constitution, legislation, policies, plans, programmes, and related mechanisms on the one hand and the situational reality of the status of women in India, on the other'. The Ministry's assessment is based on the Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India, "Towards Equality", 1974 which were further highlighted in the National Perspective Plan for Women, 1988-2000, the Shramshakti Report, 1988 and

the Platform for Action, Five Years After- An assessment. Of course there are lacunae in the administration of criminal justice system, but there are certain social, economic and political factors, which sustain the environment inimical to women's cause. These factors are discussed below:

1. Socio-Cultural Factors: India bears the imprint of long tradition of patriarchy, well entrenched in the religious and cultural norms of Indian society. The subordinate position of women both within family and outside society is sustained by the ideology and practice of society. This ideology has generated and sustained insensitivity on the issue of violence and crimes against women. Patriarchy has led to the practice of preference to male child, which is resulting in the ever reducing male female ratio. In spite of stringent legal provision female feticide is well prevalent in many parts of north India. Beating of wife by their husbands is taken for granted in rural families. A study(UNESCO: 1993) conducted by the UNESCO Principal Regional office for the Asia and the pacific of the violence against women in India and South Korea finds the male dominated social ideology as the main culprit of violence and crimes against women in two countries. The pervasiveness of the patriarchal social structure and ideology emphasize male supremacy and relegate women to a distinct subordinate status, which ensure and perpetuate women's economic and emotional dependence upon men, flaunts a double standard of morality for men and women and which utilize modern technological progress for reinforcing women subservience.

2.Economic Factors: Economic self-reliance is the prerequisite for the enjoyment of various rights and benefits granted by the law. Majority of women in India are economically dependent on their husbands and family members. In case of marriage breakdown, they face the crisis of survival. This makes them easy target for all kind of violence and discrimination within the family itself. In spite of legal provisions, they are denied property rights in their parental property, a practice which is largely supported by the prevailing social norms. The condition of women get worse particularly in rural areas, as they lack education and skill required for gainful employment. There is a law providing for equal pay for equal work, but in actual practice they are denied equal wages in formal sector. Those, who are employed, face many discriminatory practices in work place and are assigned inferior positions in office.

3.Political Factors:Though some steps are initiated for the political empowerment of women through seats reservation in local bodies, yet their effective role in political decision-making is virtually non-existent. With few exceptions, women are effectively denied political leadership position in the political system. Political parties and leaders adopt casual attitude towards crimes and violence against women, until political hue and cry affecting their vote banks. The political leaders of different political parties are great upholders of ideology of patriarchy and even commit serious crimes against women. A report (Times of India: 2012) was prepared by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) and National Election Watch (NEW) who looked at the background of lawmakers (MPs and MLAs) with respect to rape cases and other crimes against women. The report is prepared on the basis of declaration made by candidates in their affidavit submitted before the Election Commission of India. The report shows that there are many MPs/MLAs with declared cases of rape and other crimes against women. The political parties continue to field such candidates. Different political parties gave tickets to 27

candidates, charged with rape, who contested the provincial elections in the last five years.

4. Administrative Factors: Administration of justice in India suffers from many maladies, such as archaic laws, putting burden of proof in many cases on women victims, delays in finalizing criminal case against women, poor law enforcement machinery, low conviction rate and to cap it all the insensitivity of officials towards crimes against women. For example a report by UNESCO (1993) mentions that during 1986-90 there were 6500 cases of dowry death registered with the police; 1500 arrests were made; but all of them were released on bail. Rape in India has been described as one of the “India's most common crime against women.” Rape cultures are nourished by norms, attitudes, and practices that trivialize, tolerate, or even condone violence against women. They are further normalized if there is impunity for perpetrators either due to a lack of effective legal mechanisms or apathy to prosecuting crimes against women. The need for a new law on sexual assault was felt as the present law does not define and reflect the various kinds of sexual assault that women are subjected to in our country. The Supreme Court in **Sakshi vs. union of India** (on 26th may 2004) had recognized the inadequacies in the law relating to rape and had suggested that the legislature should bring about the required changes (Ranjan: 2013).

Lata Sinha (2013) has identified many factors responsible for the increasing rate of crimes against women. Some of these factors are: Persistent and increasing burden of poverty on woman; unequal access to education; inadequate access to health care services; Inequality in sharing power and decision making; In-sufficient mechanism to promote the advancement of women; Lack of commitment to women's human rights; In-sufficient mobilization of mass-media; Deteriorating law and order situation; Fall of moral values; Ineffective implementation of existing rules and regulations made to protect women from violence; Inadequacy of ill-equipped, insensitive, understaffed police and investigative machinery; A number of government mandated commissions including the National Commission of Women (NCW) and Law Commission existing without teeth; Lack of political will to overhaul Indian Penal Code (section 354), Indian Evidence Act and Code of Criminal Procedure.

PART THREE

Approaches Towards Prevention of crime against women

The measures for prevention of crime and violence against women face rough weather as they operate in a complex environment beset by many adverse social, cultural, economic and other factors. The crime against women is not a simple law and order problem to be tackled by legal and administrative measures. It needs a holistic approach with waging war at many fronts at the same time. Short term measures should be supported by a long term strategy. Many scholars and organizations have suggested various measures for the prevention of crime against women in India.

A. Ranjan (2013) has suggested following measures for the prevention of crime against women: Increase in reporting of rape and assault cases. Women and children must be

educated on their rights and encouraged to come forward to register the cases; There should be an attitude of “**Zero- tolerance**” of sex offenders. More and more fast track courts should be established; Every city should be planned in a very specific manner with proper lighting and development; Finally, a nationwide campaign is needed to reignite India's core values and traditions that respect and nurture women and children. This can only be borne out of consensus in society. Action from courts and police will not suffice if the community remains defiantly opposed to change.

B. A survey conducted by **Thomson Reuters’ Trust Law Women** (The Hindu: 2012) suggests that: this social malaise needs to be treated as a national security issue at the highest levels of government, both at the Centre and in States; mandatory child and women’s rights education should be included in the school curriculum; prosecution and strict legal action are likely to provide an important deterrent; increase reporting of rape and assault: women and children be educated on their rights on reporting of a violent act against them through an active social media campaign; training of law enforcement personnel to react swiftly and with sensitivity to women and children who have been harassed, assaulted or raped; fast track courts should be established to ensure that the offenders face the full force of justice, regardless of their rank and stature.

C. The Government of India in close co-ordination with various state governments has intensified measures to curb violence against women in the country. In this regard, the **Ministry of Home Affairs** (MHA: 2009) has detailed measures that are pivotal to contain violence against this vulnerable section of the society as follows: Develop a community monitoring system to check cases of violence and take necessary steps to curb the same; organize legal literacy and legal awareness camps; there should be no delay in registration of FIR in all cases of crime against women; the administration should also focus on rehabilitation of the victims and provide all required support; in order to improve safety conditions on the road the government must take suitable steps to increase police patrolling during night and set up telephone booths for easy access to police.

D. The UN Women, the premier global agency on women empowerment (UN Women: 2011) has outlined the following policy agenda to end violence against women: Ratify international and regional treaties that protect the rights of women and girls, and ensure that national laws and services meet international human rights standards; develop national and local action plans that bring the government, the mass media and the private sector into a coordinated and collective front against such human rights violations; make justice accessible to women and girls by providing free legal services to them.

E. Collective self -action: Collective action by civil society members or by women themselves are equally important to promoting awareness as well as a sense of responsibility among all those actors which are involved in the task of preventing crimes and violence against women. Some of the major self-collective action initiatives organized in India in recent times are discussed below:

- 1) **Self Employed Women’s Association of India:** It’s a trade union for poor self-employed women workers in India founded by noted gandhian leader Dr.

Ela Bhatt in 1972. Its main aim is to organize women workers for complete employment and self-reliance (SEWA: 2020).

- 2) **All India Women's Conference (AIWC: 2019):** It's an organization based in Delhi founded by Margaret Cousins in 1927 dedicated to the upliftment and betterment of women and children. AIWC is recognized worldwide as a premier organization working for women's development and empowerment.
- 3) **The Gulabi Gang:** It is a group of Indian women activists from Uttar Pradesh founded by Sampat Pal Devi as a response to widespread domestic abuse and other violence against women. The Hindustan Times reported that the group has more than three lakhs members. its mission statement reads: Support and train women to enhance their basic skills to become economically secure and develop confidence to protect themselves from abuse through sustainable livelihood options(Gulabi Gang: 2021).
- 4) **Red Rickshaw Revolution (RRR: 2018):** It is an initiative launched by the Vodafone Foundation to empower women for social advancement. The revolution started in 2013 when 3 women riding a red auto rickshaw departed from Delhi to reach Mumbai to raise money for NGOs working to empower Indian women. The initiative also aims to educate women about their rights, and share the stories of successful women.

Women have also initiated many other collective actions to strengthen their position in society. The Chipko movement in Uttarakhand and anti-Arrack movement in Andhra Pradesh are some notable examples in modern India.

Conclusion: Need for a Holistic Approach:

The crime and violence against women is a very complex issue in Indian society as it involves social, cultural, economic and political dimensions. It is not purely a law and order problem as the values and attitudes underlying this malaise are hard to give way by the means of legal and administrative measures. Thus it requires a holistic and multidimensional approach to mitigate this challenge. The following points should be integrated into a policy framework to prevent crime, violence and discrimination against women:

- Long term measures for the promoting awareness, education and orientation against the values and norms underlying the ideology of patriarchy, which will pave the way for a democratic social culture of equality and dignity for women. Education system and media can play crucial role in this field.
- Generating awareness, skill and abilities among women to give them access to viable means of self-help and self-reliance.
- Strengthening legal and administrative system to deliver quick and fast justice with respect to the crimes against women.
- Steps for the involvement of women in decision-making at various levels. Political empowerment will prove catalytic to the all round improvement in the position of women.

- Promoting self-collective action among women to address their own issues. The role of civil society organization in general needs to be encouraged to deal with women related issues.
- The idea of 'Gender Justice' should percolate down to all activities, policies and programmes of the government, which will strengthen a women friendly public sphere.

All the above elements need to be integrated into a policy framework to devise a holistic approach for addressing the issues of crime, violence and discrimination against women in effective manner.

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