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Reflections on the Society's Reaction towards Rape Victims in Delhi City

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In general, most people display stronger beliefs in 'aggravated rape' or 'real rape'; including victims of such rape cases who often identify themselves as 'rape victims' than the victims of 'simple rape', where none of the aggravating circumstances are present. Despite myths to the contrary these 'simple rape' cases in fact make up the majority of cases. This article considers the implications of 'real rape' and demonstrates how notions about what a 'typical rape' should be, in the form of rape myths, directly impact on societal attitudes towards rape victims and how the media continue to reinforce and perpetuate the notion of real rape through their selective reporting of 'serial rape', 'stranger rape' or especially 'violent rapes'.

Keywords: attitude, myths, violence, rape, culture.

Introduction

According to Liz Kelly (2008) rape violates personal, intimate and psychological boundaries – what in human rights language is designated human dignity and bodily integrity, and in feminist and critical theory is termed sexual autonomy or sexual sovereignty (Richardson, 2000). The rape is broadly understood as penetration of the vagina and/or anus with a penis without consent. The meaning of rape for women, within gender and generational relations and cultural contexts, underlies its emotional, psychological and social impacts and consequences. Feminist writers have argued that the prevalence of sexual violence contributes to gender

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inequality and supports the status quo of male dominance by keeping all women, including those women who are not directly victimized, in a state of constant fear (Brownmiller, 1975). The fear of rape is a daily reality for many women, limiting their freedom of movement and reducing their quality of life as is confirmed by empirical research (Gordon et al., 1980; Dobash, Dobash, 1992; Mirrlees-Black, Allen, 1998).

Sexual violence against women is deeply entrenched in the feudal, patriarchal Indian society. Sec. 375 of Indian Penal Code (IPC) reads as follows: "The offence of rape is one which is committed 1) by a man who has a sexual intercourse with a woman against her will, 2) without her consent or even with her consent when that consent has been obtained by putting her in fear of death or hurt, 3) when by fraud when he is not her husband, he obtains her consent by making her believe that he is another man to whom she is a wife, or believes herself to be lawfully married, 4) when she is intoxicated or 5) when she is under sixteen years of age irrespective of her consent. Penetration is sufficient to constitute the sexual intercourse necessary to the offence of rape". Full penetration is not an essential component of rape. It would amount to penetration if some part of male organ goes within the labium of the pudendum of the woman, no matter how little (Indian Penal Code, 1872).

Sec. 376 of IPC reads: "A man convicted of an offence of rape is punished with imprisonment for a term which shall not be less than seven years but may extend to ten years or for life and shall also be liable to fine". According to Sec. 376 (2) "Whoever, – (g) commits gang rape, shall be punished with rigorous imprisonment for a term not less than ten years but which may be for life and shall also be liable to fine. (Explanation 1. – Where a woman is raped by one or more in a group of persons acting in furtherance of their common intention, each of the persons shall be deemed to have committed gang rape within the meaning of this subsection)".

The aim of the article is to analyse the reaction of the society towards rape cases and its victims. The society is misled by rape myths prevalent on a large scale which affect the attitude of the people in general and the rape victims in particular. The victims of rape tend to withdraw from the social surrounding fearing the reprisals from the neighbours. The research paper covers three case studies which discusses in detail the impact of rape on minor victims with adult men being the perpetrators and the people's overall understanding of the rape cases. Rape myths entail the common beliefs that posit doubts about rape. The magnitude of the problems highlights the

seriousness of the rape crimes. In the end, the common and the antagonistic findings are discussed. The conclusion provides an exemplary think-tank to persuade people to contribute in to the catharsis and closure deemed necessary to heal the victims.

Rape Myths: Social Knowledge and Discourse

Rape myths are defined as “attitudes and beliefs that are generally false but are widely and persistently held, and that serve to deny and justify male sexual aggression against women” (Lonsway, Fitzgerald, 1994). Rape myths are “descriptive or prescriptive beliefs about rape (i.e. about its causes, context, consequences, perpetrators, victims and their interaction) that serve to deny, downplay or justify sexual violence that men commit against women” (Bohner, 1998).

Social knowledge is the resource used by all members of society to formulate their attitudes and all the actors in a rape (victim, perpetrator, police officer, prosecutor and judge) are not immune from their influence in terms of the decisions they make at key points in the criminal justice process. Attitudes are summary evaluations of an object of thought. Attitudes have been defined as consisting of three components: affective (how a person feels about some object or class of person), cognitive (the beliefs, opinions or ideas about the attitude object) and behavioural (what a person does in relation to the attitude object) (Stahlberg, Frey, 1996). There’s a bias that operates in the mind of decision makers – stereotyping women, blaming the victim, trying to find out if she played any role in causing the rape. The courts usually set free the accused on the basis that the victims did not raise an alarm, she was not physically injured, and since she was sexually active, she would have “voluntarily” consented to sex. The reality of sexual violence and its harmful effects on the individual and on society are indisputable. The Supreme Court was of the opinion that it is well settled law that absence of injuries on the person prosecuted would not itself be sufficient to discard the prosecution case in *Dastagir Sab and Another vs State of Karnataka*, 2004 (2) SCALE 8. In the case of *Sheikh Zakir*, 1983 Cri.L.J.1285, the Supreme Court observed that the absence of any injuries on the person of the complainant may not by itself discredit the statement of the complainant. Merely because the complainant was a helpless victim who was by force pre-

vented from offering serious physical resistance, she cannot be disbelieved. The Supreme Court has observed that even if the victim has been promiscuous in her sexual behaviour earlier, she has a right to refuse to submit herself to sexual intercourse to anyone and everyone because she is not a vulnerable object or prey for being sexually assaulted by anyone and everyone in *State of U.P. vs Pappu, Yunus and Another*, 2004 (10) SCALE 147. The Supreme Court was of the opinion that even assuming that the victim was previously accustomed to sexual intercourse that was not a determinative question. On the contrary, the question which required to be adjudicated was, whether the accused committed rape on the victim on the occasion complained of. Even if it was hypothetically accepted that the victim had lost her virginity earlier, it did not and cannot in law give license to any person to rape her. It was the accused who was on trial and not the victim.

The Supreme Court further held that it is well settled law that a person complaining of having been a victim of the offence of rape does not mean becoming an accomplice of the crime. There is no rule of law that her testimony cannot be acted without corroboration in material particulars. She stands at a higher pedestal than an injured witness. In the latter case, there is injury on the physical form, while in the former it is physical as well as psychological and emotional.

The Supreme Court observed that sexual violence apart from being a dehumanizing act was an unlawful intrusion on the right of privacy and sanctity of a female in *Dinesh and Buddha vs State of Rajasthan*, 2006 (2) SCALE 734. It was a serious blow to her supreme honour and offended her self-esteem and dignity, it degraded and humiliated the victim and where the victim was helpless innocent child or a minor, it left behind a traumatic experience. A rapist not only caused physical injuries but more indelibly left a scar on the most cherished possession of a woman i.e. her dignity, honour, reputation and not the least her chastity. Rape was not only a crime against the person of a woman; it was crime against the entire society. As noted by the Supreme Court in *Shri Bodhisattwa Gautam vs Miss Subhra Chakraborty*, AIR 1996 SC 922, 'a socially sensitized judge', in the opinion of the Supreme Court was better statutory armour in cases of crime against women, than long clauses of penal provisions, containing complex exceptions and provisions.

The protagonist is every (wo)man as social actors who are subject to social and societal influences that contribute to values, attitudes, social knowledge underpinning beliefs, perceptions and behaviours related to rape. Rape Myth

Acceptance (RMA) influences information processing and behaviour by serving as a cognitive schema. In the 1970s the concept of rape myths became a topic of interest and closer inspection for various researchers (Schwendinger, Schwendinger, 1974; Brownmiller, 1975; Field, 1978). Burt (1980) has defined rape myths as “prejudicial, stereotyped, or false beliefs about rape, rape victims, and rapists”. According to Payne et al. (1999) rape myths usually entail: blame the victim for their rape, express a disbelief in claims of rape, exonerate the perpetrator and allude that only certain types of women are raped.

These rape myths paint a distorted picture of the antecedents and consequences of rape and are widely held by the general public (Gergeret et al., 2007) and by those in the criminal justice system (Field, 1978; Brown, King, 1998). Rape myths are also propagated by the media (Franiuket et al., 2008). It affects the offending behaviour of perpetrators, the reporting behaviour of victims, the decision-making behaviour of investigators and prosecutors, and the assessment of guilt or innocence by jurors (Temkin, Krahe, 2008; Wilson, Scholes, 2008).

Research examining why women from South Asian communities, in particular, tend not to disclose rape or sexual abuse have revealed three key explanatory factors. The first factor suggests that the women tend to feel ‘betrayed’ by the male perpetrators of these acts. These men are often well known to their victims as members of the same community (Uberoi, 1996; Gupta, 2003; Thiara, 2003; Siddique et al., 2008). The second factor suggests that some women do not report sexual violence because they believe that the assault is not violent enough to constitute rape (Gangoli, 2007; Haven, 2008; Rape Crisis, 2008). Rape myth acceptance influences the victims’ responses to rape and determines whether they will even label what has happened to them as rape. The third key factor is that these women often fear that they will not be believed, especially since the criminal justice system does not usually prosecute in cases where the only evidence is the victim’s testimony (Wilson, 2006; Gill, 2008; Patel, 2008). Researchers have recognized that a major cause of this widening ‘justice gap’ are pervasive beliefs about rape, or *rape myths* (Brownmiller, 1975; Burt, 1980). The proportion of rapes reported to the police is notoriously low, and within those relatively few cases that are reported, conviction rates have been declining (Kellyet al., 2005; Temkin, Krahe, 2008).

Stereotypical attitudes about rape pose a major obstacle to unbiased and fair decisions of the society. People take their actions with an eye to

the ethical and cultural views of the influential others above them in the institutional hierarchy.

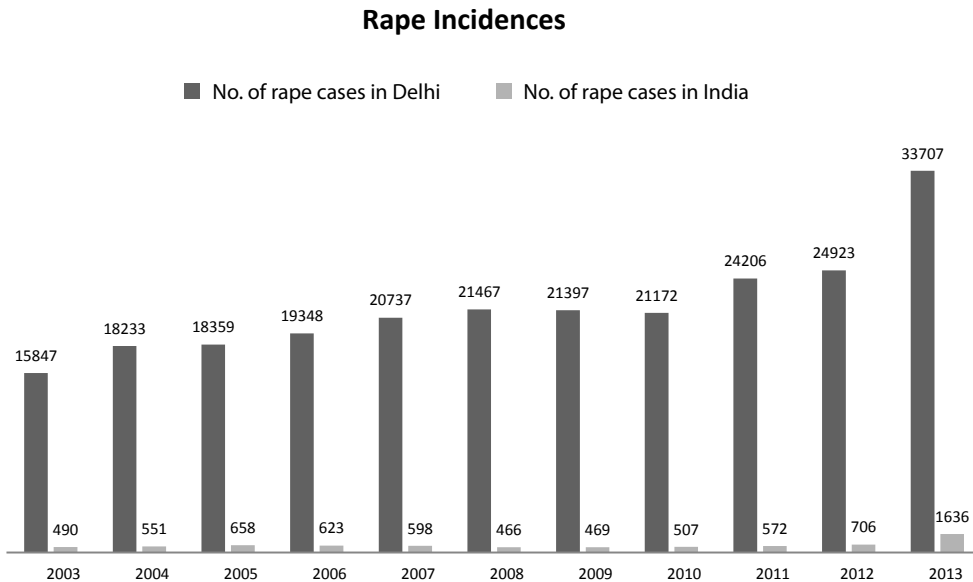
Real Rape

The term 'real rape' (or 'stereotypical rape') confirms to the widely held belief that genuine rapes contain the following elements: the victim and rapist are strangers; the assault occurs in an outdoors location; the victim shows active visible resistance; and the rapist perpetrates violence by using some kind of weapon or threatens to force the victim (Estrich, 1987) whereas 'simple rapes' (Kalven, Zeisel, 1966) mean ambiguous or contested sex between people who know each other. These rapes are also 'real' rapes and should be acknowledged as such. Estrich's (1987) articulation of 'real rape' focuses on reasons and explanations for the huge disparities between the numbers of women estimated to have suffered a sexual assault and those willing to report, the dropping out of cases by police and prosecutors and the apparent reluctance of juries to convict.

Estrich describes the 'jump from the bushes' stereotype in which an unsuspecting woman is forced to have sex without her consent by a man she does not know and who has a weapon with which he threatens or uses to overcome her resistance. She also observes that a 'real rape' victim reports her attack directly to the police without washing away any of the forensic traces of her attacker. She points out that the presence of all these elements in rape is relatively rare. Yet, women themselves, police investigators, prosecutors and judges appear to use the 'real rape' scenario as some notional standard such that deviations seriously undermine a judgment that what occurred was a rape. 'Real rape' is said to be the only kind of assault that the criminal justice system recognizes as being in fact rape: other incidents especially "ambiguous or contested sex between people who know each other" are not considered rape at all. There is significant differences in treatment of victims depending on the 'type' of rape they have experienced; those who have suffered an 'aggravated rape', are more likely to be believed and have their case prosecuted than those, who in fact are victims of 'simple rapes' (Walby, Allen, 2004).

Magnitude of the Problem Figure: Rape Incidences

Rape cases are increasing in the country every year. A total rape cases of 15847 in 2003 has increased to 33707 in 2013. Rape cases have increased more than twice in eleven years (2003-2013). The figure mentioned below shows the trend of rape crime in the period from 2003 to 2013.



It can be seen from the graph that rape cases have reported mixed trend over the last eleven years with an increase of 15% in 2004 over 2003, an increase of 1% in 2005 over 2004, again an increase of 5% in 2006 over 2005, an increase of 7% in 2007 over 2006, a substantial increase of 3.5% in 2008 over 2007, a decrease of 0.3% in 2009 over 2008, an increase of 3.6% in 2010 over 2009, an increase of 9% in 2011 over 2010, 3% increase in 2012 over 2011 and a huge increase of 35% in 2013 over 2012 (Crime in India, 2013).

As per statistics collected by Delhi Police, the total number of rape cases reported shows mixed trend over the last eleven years with an increase of 12% in 2004 over 2003, an increase of 19% in 2005 over 2004, decrease of 5% in 2006 over 2005, decrease of 4% in 2007 over 2006, decrease of 22% in 2008 over 2007, an increase of 0.6% in 2009 over 2008, an increase of 8% in 2010 over 2009, an increase of 12.8% in 2011 over 2010, 23% increase in 2012 over 2011 and a huge increase of 132% in 2013 over 2012 (Crime in India, 2013).

It means that reported rape cases have increased more than three times in Delhi City. Among all the cities in the country, reported rape cases are the highest in Delhi City. There may be more than one victim in few rape cases reported. No separate data were available for gang rapes in terms of number of the accused involved.

Table 1: Rape Case Disposal by Criminal Justice System

| Year | Area | police | | court | | Conviction Rate |
|------|--------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------------|
| | | % disposal | % pendency | % disposal | % pendency | |
| 2003 | India | 70.1 | 29.9 | 19 | 81 | 26.1 |
| | Delhi* | | | | | 22.1 |
| 2004 | India | 69.1 | 30.9 | 19.7 | 79.4 | 25.2 |
| | Delhi | 61.7 | 32.3 | 30.3 | 69.7 | 16.4 |
| 2005 | India | 69.1 | 30.9 | 20 | 80 | 25.5 |
| | Delhi | 68.1 | 31.9 | 45.5 | 54.5 | 15.8 |
| 2006 | India | 63 | 37 | 19 | 81 | 27.2 |
| | Delhi | 89.2 | 11.8 | 32.7 | 67.3 | 25 |
| 2007 | India | 68 | 31.9 | 17.9 | 82 | 26.4 |
| | Delhi | 82.5 | 17.5 | 32.9 | 67.1 | 27.7 |
| 2008 | India | 66.6 | 33.4 | 17.6 | 82.4 | 26.6 |
| | Delhi | 87.9 | 12.1 | 22.4 | 77.6 | 30.6 |
| 2009 | India | 64.6 | 35.3 | 16.2 | 83.6 | 26.9 |
| | Delhi | 87.9 | 12.1 | 21.6 | 78.4 | 47.3 |
| 2010 | India | 64 | 35.8 | 15.9 | 83.9 | 26.6 |
| | Delhi | 82.4 | 13.6 | 22.4 | 77.6 | 34.6 |
| 2011 | India | 63.3 | 36.6 | 16.2 | 83.6 | 26.4 |
| | Delhi | 77.4 | 22.6 | 23.7 | 76.2 | 41.5 |
| 2012 | India | 63.9 | 35.9 | 14.9 | 85.1 | 24.2 |
| | Delhi | 70.1 | 29.9 | 30 | 70 | 49.3 |
| 2013 | India | 68.5 | 31.5 | 16.6 | 83.4 | 27.1 |
| | Delhi* | | | | | 35.7 |

* 2003 and 2013 Data of Delhi City could not be found.

Percent disposal of rape cases by the police¹ stands to be far better in comparison to the percent disposal of rape cases by court² in India. The same happens to be true for the Delhi City. It shows that the courts are getting piled up with the cases each year and the verdicts are delayed leaving the victim frustrated.

The Aim and the Scope of the Study

The utility of interrogating single case studies in order to test sophisticated theoretical postulations about interlinked and idiosyncratic phenomena has been demonstrated across a range of social scientific fields (Yin, 2009). The case study analysis that follows is offered in this spirit. It focuses on interviews with victims of rape cases that comprise just a small part of my PhD work on "Human Rights Violation of Rape Victims: A Sociological Study in Delhi City".³ 130 unmarried rape victims were studied from the age group of between 3 and 25.

I have concentrated on minor women as victims, survivors or complainants of rape with adult men being the perpetrators, accused, offenders or defendants because this is the most frequently occurring dyad (Greenfield, according to Avakame, 1999). I have chosen to use 'victims': this is because I had taken police data which identifies them as such, and for the victims it was a wish to identify the harm that has been done to them by the perpetrator. If someone has been accused of rape they may simply be referred to as 'the accused'; similarly, if someone is standing trial for an alleged rape they are the 'defendant'. The term 'perpetrator' and 'offender' are used interchangeably and imply those accounts that have yet to be tested in court. However, the accused and the defendant are also alleged rapists. 'Rapist' and 'rape victim' are very emotive and pejorative terms, which can label an individual with a social stigma they are likely to carry all their life and face the consequential shame.

This article aims to analyse the reaction of the society towards rape cases and its victims. The society puts a strong belief in stranger rape than the rapes

¹ Total percentage of cases in which police has filed investigation report in the court of law.

² Total percentage of cases in which court has passed a judgment.

³ Government of India Fellowship Scheme for Doctoral Work in Criminology and Police Science from Bureau of Police Research and Development (vide order No. 32/29/2007-RD). The duration of PhD was from November, 2006 to March, 2011.

where the offender is well known to the victims. The victims of stranger rape cases are ascribed victim status whereas society treats the victims of other rape cases, such as acquaintance rape, with a facet of doubt. Media also reinforces the same belief by choosing and reporting rape cases that incorporate elements of 'real rape' and not the 'simple rape'. This gives rise to the belief that only strangers are committing rape whereas the findings are antagonistic.

Methodology

The pen portrait of Kriya (name changed), Pooja (name changed), and Vimla (name changed) that follows is derived from the four interviews that I conducted with each victim using the Free Association Narrative Interview Method (Hollway, Jefferson, 2000). The article is about rape victim's experiences as an example of particular circumstances under which rape occurs. The focus is on circumstances where the victim is especially vulnerable, being viewed as: (a) an undeserving or stigmatized victim, (b) contributing to her own victimization and/or (c) being incapacitated through mental health issues or intoxication. These case studies focus on rape stereotypes; it confronts existing stereotypes and challenges current thinking with regard to the crime of rape. There are particular difficulties when seeking to engage rape survivors in research, for example gaining access, particularly where this is mediated by gatekeepers, and ensuring ethical concerns and matters of confidentiality and anonymity are adequately addressed.

Case Study I

Kriya (name changed) was a regular school pupil. She was 17 years old studying in 10th class. She became friendly with a man name Manohar staying nearby her school. He used to work in a tailor's shop and was earning Rs. 4,000/month. He was very good in cutting and stitching salwar-kameez, blouses and in embroidery. Manohar was from 'Bhagalpur' in Bihar. It had been three years that he was working as a tailor and a year had passed while staying in Delhi. She always used to cross-by his shop and Manohar started taking notice of her. Her school was in the same direction of the tailor's shop. And from now on, whenever she crossed-by she saw him standing in front of

the shop everyday at the time when she went to school and then going back home after school. He used to hymn a song whenever he saw her.

Slowly, they both began talking to each other and after few days they started meeting at different locations - sometimes in park, nearby stalls, at the back of college, inside someone's private farm, etc. They simply used to sneak out after her school, at times before her school ended when she managed to get out earlier. When they felt that the people around had started taking interest in their affair, on many occasions she actually made an excuse to her parents that she had to learn something from her friend Neema (name changed) who stayed close by during the evening. She would first visit Neema's house in order to ensure that those who must be watching out or must have seen her will think that she went to visit her friend's house. But, just after spending ten minutes with Neema, she would come out and after examining both sides of the road, she would cross the road, walk a while and just ten steps away she would find Manohar waiting. He would take her for a movie or just go somewhere. By this time, they had shared some kind of physical intimacy. After sharing some personal moments, she started putting pressure on him to marry her. She was now compelling him to run away as her parents had started creating trouble for her as putting restrictions on her movements and asking too many questions about her whereabouts. They had heard some rumours about her. One day both of them ran away. They came to a place called 'Meerut' in Uttar Pradesh. He had booked a room in three story building. One of his friends, Amit (name changed) was very helpful. He worked in the same tailor's shop, too.

When Kriya did not return, the parents turned to police. Police did not put any effort in trying to find the girl as Amit was staying in the same place all the time and worked in the same tailor's shop throughout the period Manohar and Kriya went missing. Police otherwise had registered a First Information Report (FIR) but did not call Amit for questioning nor went to his flat or working place to find him. Amit only had advised Manohar to tell Kriya to apply sindoor⁴ from the moment they had started to live together in Meerut so that people in that colony do not suspect that they were unmarried. From that time, she was applying sindoor to look married to all the people around but was not actually married to him.

⁴ Vermillion usually applied by the married women on their head so as to be known to be married.

Manohar had found out from Amit that the kidnapping case was registered against him by Kriya's parents. Although he was a skilled person, he was not able to find a job in that new area. He was running out of money as a month had passed and they both were living on the savings. Now, the relationship was taking an ugly turn. Fights started to occur between them very often. She would ask him everyday as to when will he marry her; and he would make an excuse of whenever he finds a job. Kriya was becoming very restless. Forty seven days had passed by now. One day, Amit came to meet Manohar. Seeing his bad condition, he felt deeply disturbed. That very night, both of them drank alcohol and came to the rented room. Kriya was much tensed as it was already 10 pm. She started hurling bad words at Manohar for coming late. He was in no mood to listen to her; he slapped her across the face.

Amit encouraged Manohar to beat her. He beat her up. Things did not stop at that Manohar ripped her clothes and actually raped her in front of his friend. All the time he was saying that 'she has spoilt his life and he wants to teach her a lesson'. While he was raping her, Amit was holding Kriya's hands. When Manohar was done, he persuaded Amit to rape her. First, Amit refused, but after his friend's encouragement he raped her. Kriya was so exhausted after her first rape that she did not fight back at all when Amit was on top of her. That night, when both of them were asleep in the room, she escaped. She reached her house in the early morning. Her parents were shocked to see her but at the same time very supportive and sympathetic towards her. A section of rape was added in FIR after the girl had returned. Six months after reporting, Manohar and Amit were apprehended.

She is now preparing for her 10th exam which is due in three months. When she returned back, she faced the worst time of her life. She said 'all the people look at me with accusation.' They made her feel like as if she was dirty. The neighbours passed immoral comments against her character. The best thing was her family's great support to her. She also suffered from psychological problems such as fear, anxiety, nervousness, self-blame, anger and shame. She had difficulty in sleeping.

Discussion

Kriya was in a very young age when she had decided to run away with Manohar without thinking of the consequences. Unfortunately, she was gang raped by her boyfriend and his friend. She was more as disturbed as feeling

betrayed, and her self-belief and self-esteem was shaken. The neighbours passed comments such as 'Yeh! Ladkibhaggayithi'.⁵ They always pinpointed to her saying 'Iskesaathbalatkarhuatha'.⁶ Such words were hurled by neighbours, it was meant to humiliate and devalue her. Everyone would look at her whenever she went out as if she was a person different to all others and all enjoyed looking at her.

People have strange thinking about females such as 'they are weak and vulnerable; and can get easily influenced by people.' The words 'ladkikoladkabahlaphuslakar le gayaur rape kardiya'⁷ were used by the victim's parents in order to defend the girl as she had eloped. Parents often spoke these words to defend any compliancy by the girl in the act; they wanted the society not to treat the girl with doubt. Even though she had eloped she was nowhere to be held responsible for her rape. But, she became dirty and impure because she had lost her virginity before marriage and the people did everything to restrict her movement in a way making it so miserable as if trying to shun her from the society. It was not surprising that media did not find this case worth reporting as it was not an 'aggravated rape case' but a contested sex between two people who knew each other from before. She is recovering but the comments of the people around still haunts her and she has spent many nights awake. Many of her school friends do not talk to her. Worst of all, she was asked by the school authorities to leave the school as they felt that all other parents were uncomfortable with the fact that a rape victim was studying together with them.

Case Study II

A girl name Pooja (name changed) had known a man Sudhir (name changed) who was running a shop in the same neighbourhood. He used to see her often whenever she crossed by to go to a college and she always felt that he stared at her. She said that somehow she felt uncomfortable whenever she passed-by his shop. This man was around twenty five years old and had tried to stop her on two to three occasions when she was alone as most of the time

⁵ This girl had run away.

⁶ She was raped.

⁷ The girl was influenced by the boy to come with him and thereby, raped by him.

she was either accompanied by her elder sister Neeta (name changed) or by her friend Seema (name changed) who was studying in the same class. Both of them were studying in the 12th class. She was often telling Seema about feeling uncomfortable and uneasy whenever she came out of her house to go to school as she always had to pass-by his shop. His shop was just three houses away from her house.

She was 17 year old girl and little more bulky and tall in comparison to all other girls of her age. She hated being called fat by her friends, so she remained close to Seema. She was not that friendly with her mother and very apprehensive of sharing her feelings. She was scared of even getting shouted by her parents and to be blamed for whatever was happening to her, particularly with being taken away the opportunity of continuing her studies. She decided to go on by ignoring of whatever was taking place with her with a hope that one day everything will finally end. But, no one wondered that this thing might take a worst turn one day and affect her whole life.

One day, while walking down to her house after school at around 3.00 pm, Sudhir called out to her 'Hey Pooja'. As soon as she heard his voice she looked in that direction and he stepped out of his shop, pulled her immediately within a fraction of a minute and put the shutter down. On that unfortunate day, there was nobody on that road or nearby. The road was a very narrow 'Gali'.⁸ The shop was small; at the back, there was a room and there was an upper floor with one room. Nobody was in the house. He gave her to drink something. She said that she was so intimidated and shocked that she drank. Later on, she started feeling giddy. She does not remember whatever happened after that. She has a vivid memory that when she woke up her upper clothes was messed up and down she had nothing on. When she put on her clothes, she started to knock on the shutter, but it did not open. She went around that small house but there was no one in it. She went upstairs but the upstairs' room was also locked from inside. She came down and started banging the door aggressively. She could hear some voice coming from outside. Someone broke the lock on the shutter and rescued her.

She covered herself with 'duppatta'.⁹ She slowly walked to her house. Many people saw her going and could suspect that there was something wrong,

⁸ A narrow pathway through which barely two people could walk or could be used by two-wheelers only.

⁹ A cloth usually worn over traditional Indian attire called 'Kurta pajama'.

but did not come to help her. When her mother opened the door; she did not understand her condition. Pooja narrated the whole incident to her parents. By this time, the colony people found out about the incident as a neighbour had opened the shutter for her. Neighbours only forced her father to report a rape case. Her parents did not understand the trauma she had gone through. They kept accusing her of what had happened to her by saying her in face that they 'wished she had died then and there; and we would not have to face such a disgrace from the neighbours.' The saddest part is that Pooja has never put her feet outside after that incident. Her house is often surrounded by people; they keep coming to sympathize with her parents.

Pooja hardly talks to anyone because whosoever comes to her usually ask her about the incident. She said that 'people don't realize that the words spoken can bleed the heart of the person hearing it'. They purposely ask such questions as trying to find fault with her statements. She has dropped her studies. Her mother never let her enter kitchen believing her to be dirty as she is deflowered virgin now.

She hates herself. She suffers from suicidal tendencies. At times, she behaves in an abnormal manner that she hardly eats, does not want to take bath and clean herself during her periods. She has developed chronic PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder).

Discussion

In this case, neighbours were so insensitive to her that even when they suspected that there was something wrong with Pooja; nobody came to help her. Instead, they now keep surrounding her house all the times and more so if any new person is entering her house, the questions they pose are 'are you from media?'; 'are you from the court?' Wonder, what they benefit from asking such questions and what kind of answers they are seeking. Not even for a bit they understand that their behaviour causes misery to the victim. They simply do not relate to other's pain and treat it as a matter of fun and pleasure. The people pose one question again and again to her parents: 'What will you do now about the girl?' as per their belief she has lost her chance of future conjugal relationship. This case was also not reported by any form of media, although the accused was a neighbour to the victim and was also a resident of the same colony but she was in no way familiar with this person and had no interaction with him ever. Definition of 'stranger' as given in Oxford dictionary

is 'a person whom one does not know or with whom one is not familiar'. This was a case of 'stranger rape' but it did not involve extrinsic violence.

Case Study III

This is a story about Vimla (name changed) who used to go to teach a child of seven years in a house which was just two blocks away from her home. She used to go regularly to teach a boy for an hour except for Sunday. That house had five members: mother, father, uncle, one child and grandmother. Every day she entered the house at 7.30 am and left at 8.30 am to go to her own tuition classes. She was 16 years old studying in the 10th class. She took tuitions in four houses of small children to support her own studies. Where other girls of her age spent time in playing and enjoying leisure hours after school; she was in a way different to all her classmates. She was sincere, hardworking and responsible girl. She had a dream of becoming a teacher.

On an unfortunate day; when Vimla was getting ready to go to teach her student of seven years, her mother stopped her as she was in the bed the whole day yesterday; not feeling well. But, she felt better that morning and never wanted to miss any of the tuition classes that she was taking. She got ready and went to the house at 7.30 am to teach the child. When she knocked on the door, an unknown person opened the door. She was a bit surprised to find a stranger at the door. She told him that she has come to teach the child. He let her in. She entered the house and grabbed a chair. Her daily routine was to enter the house at 7.30 am sharp and sit at the hall where she would always find the child sitting and studying. As always she entered the same room. He closed the main gate from inside. Afterwards, he came to the hall and asked her about whether she would like to have a tea or coffee. She refused to take any drink and asked him to call the child. He said that he is going to call him from inside. He obviously knew that there was nobody in the house. He had come on the previous day in the morning and the whole family had left for the village in the afternoon. She was not teaching the boy on that previous day and nobody in the family bothered to inform her about their plans to go to the village.

She was exhausted from staying in the bed the whole previous day; she felt tired and sleepy in the morning. She did not feel that there was something unusual in the house as there was nobody around. In fact, she could not put

her mind to that. He came with two cups of tea. She refused again to take it and asked about the child. He told her that the child is taking a bath. After a while she was ready to go, but he came on her way and she got startled. Fifteen minutes had already passed sitting in the house. She was just five feet tall and very lean and thin. The man was a sturdy and robust man as tall as 6 feet. He grabbed her from back and closed her mouth when she tried to by-pass him.

It was a big fight between them. The more she struggled, the more he tried to control her by hitting her more and more by his fist. She had started bleeding from her mouth while he was actually carrying her in his hands to the room at the back. He raped her in the back room. He had closed her mouth by tying a cloth over her mouth and also her mouth was stuffed with the cloths. She fought till the end to get away from his clutches, but he was too big for her to be won by her physically. He got up from the bed and told her that if she wants to get away alive, she will have to keep her mouth shut. She was already so drained that she was not in her senses to decide as to what to say. Her mouth was also closed. Her eyes were shading tears and she just made some baffling sounds. Her head was swinging and the utmost she could think of was getting to her house and to her mother.

He warned her not to tell anyone about what had happened to her. She said that she found his glimpse very threatening. When he moved the knot of the clothes from her mouth and wanted to leave her at the door, he was shocked to see a neighbour standing at the door when he opened the door from inside. She was just beside him and the neighbour saw both of them together. The girl simply walked away to her house brushing across both of them. It was 8.45 am already. When the mother saw her, she could not believe her eyes. She was shocked to see her face swollen and bleeding. Vimla was so broken that as soon as she got to her bed she fainted. She was put in the hospital ICU (Intensive Care Unit) for five days to recover from shock and sickness. Her case was reported by electronic media as well as printed media. The parents had registered FIR (First Information Report) in the evening, but by this time, the accused had run away fearing the reprisals from the victim's family and the neighbours. The police caught the accused after seven months. The victim suffers from depression, anxiety, flashbacks, shame and persistent fears.

The same happened to her when it came to neighbours' attitudes towards her. Whenever and wherever she went out, people pointed out

saying 'isskiizzatlutgayi'¹⁰; 'iskesaath hi balatkarhua'¹¹. Such statements were devaluing in nature and were frequently used by the neighbours towards the victim so that victim felt disgraced and felt lowly as if she was the one who was dishonoured.

Discussion

In this case, when the neighbour had seen the girl at the door, she did not raise any alarm or asked the girl if she needed any help knowing well that the family of that house had gone to another village for some days; she simply took off from there. The neighbour being a female also had seen the culprit going from that house with some luggage, yet she did not spread the word, never thought of going to the police station. She never felt sympathetic towards that girl who was badly bruised or felt the need for asking her if she needed any company to get to her house and/or encourage her to go to police station to report the incident. Thanks to the neighbour, the police had a tough time to catch the accused; this could be materialized only after seven months. The best she could do was to spread the word about girl being raped and she did it with her whole heart and now the whole neighbourhood knows what had happened that day.

The insensitive attitude of the neighbour who saw the victim in a terrible condition but did not put her feet forward to help her in anyway, but, satisfied the fluttering tongue by gossiping about her rape to each and everyone she came across with adding some more lascivious elements to her talks speaks in favour of apathy towards the victim's condition. It became hot cake news for few months and what the entire neighbourhood could do was to talk about her. Things started spreading all together in a very different manner where neighbours started to discuss on things such as 'she herself had gone to the room and what was she wearing while coming out of the house'.

This rape case was a typical example of 'real rape' (or 'stereotypical rape') so it was reported by the media. Since her case was well known to the people around; it added a fuel to the case and people somehow discovered that it was the same case reported by the media because of the details. No doubt that the reporting did have some influence on the police as ultimately the

¹⁰ This girl has lost her honor.

¹¹ This girl is raped.

accused was caught. The society's negative reaction and blameworthiness had made the girl's and her family's life miserable so they decided to move. They even had difficulty finding a buyer for their own house as the people knew that the family was desperate to sell their house. The buyer bargained and got the house at a very cheap rate.

Conclusion

Through exploring these accounts, it is possible to understand the condition of females in Indian society when they are raped and the way the victims cope with the aftermath in their lives. Socio-cultural expectations, reinforced by conservative patriarchal values, often cause women from these communities to feel unable to challenge these norms: silencing their voices, and blaming them for what happened to them and denying opportunities for meeting justice. Rape Myth Acceptance offers insights into how rape is perceived in such communities: this perception plays a major role in both the personal and social effects of rape on victims and their families. The rape victims have felt more aggrieved by the way they were treated by the neighbours and more so, their words left them feeling drowned causing insult to their injuries. Legal provisions on sexual assault have had no effect on the mindset of people as people tend to be driven by the patriarchal norms, which are extremely insensitive towards such victims. Rape cases are on rise in spite of stringent punishments incorporated for sexual assault; it has not deterred potential rapist in indulging rape.

Even media seems to propagate the same. Their reporting is only based on the conception that confirms to the norms of Rape Myth Acceptance. It had not reported two cases discussed earlier in the article but only the last case which has a stranger as a culprit and involves extrinsic violence. Media's selective reporting of 'aggravated rape case' influences the mindset of the people to think in the same way. It is especially important that the media should carry no biasness in terms of reporting but consider giving equal weight to both 'simple rape' as well as 'real rape'. Portrayal of rape cases by media influences the common beliefs of the society that strangers are responsible for perpetrating rape, so, females are unsafe outside the house. The Criminal Justice System (CJS) does not get influenced by media's reporting of rape cases. The system imparts justice on the basis of facts and evidences. It is pertinent to

educate and train agencies to ensure that they go into such communities as diverse as these in order to 'gender' sensitize them to help wipe out rape myths from the people's mindset and teach them to be sensitive towards the needs of rape victims. It can go a long way in healing the victims as well as helping the people connect to them. More flexible and more diverse support systems must be put in place to respond to the needs of victims and facilitate the provision of aid to them. By examining individual stories, research can give voice to the voiceless and provide an impassioned advocacy for those whose experiences are typically ignored ultimately, large-scale change must derive from learning more about the experiences of individual victims.

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Osvrt na reakciju društva prema žrtvama silovanja u gradu Delhiju

Uopšteno gledano, većina ljudi je uverena da je došlo do silovanja u slučajevima kada su prisutne otežavajuće okolnosti, na primer, nasilje, odnosno, kada je u pitanju „pravo silovanje“. Čak i žrtve takvih slučajeva silovanja češće sebe identifikuju kao prave žrtve silovanja nego što je to slučaj kada se radi o žrtvama tzv. „običnog silovanja“ u kojim slučajevima nisu prisutne otežavajuće okolnosti. I pored mitova koji govore suprotno, slučajevi „običnog silovanja“ predstavljaju većinu slučajeva. Ovaj rad analizira implikacije „pravog silovanja“ i pokazuje kako uverenja o tome kako bi trebalo da izgleda „tipično silovanje“ u formi mitova o silovanju, direktno utiču na socijalne stavove prema žrtvama silovanja. Takođe se analizira kako mediji nastavljaju da pojačavaju i održavaju ideju o pravim silovanjima kroz selektivno novinarstvo o „serijskim silovateljima“, „nepoznatim učiniocima silovanja“ i posebno „nasilnim silovanjima“.

Ključne reči: stavovi, mitovi, nasilje, silovanje, kultura.