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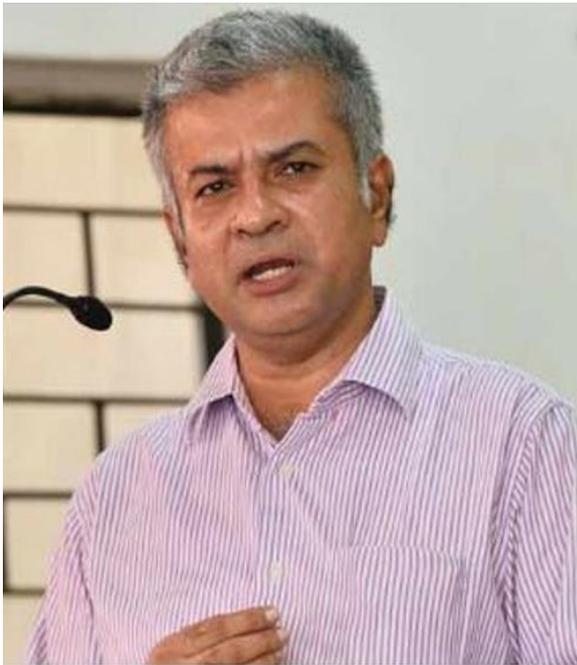
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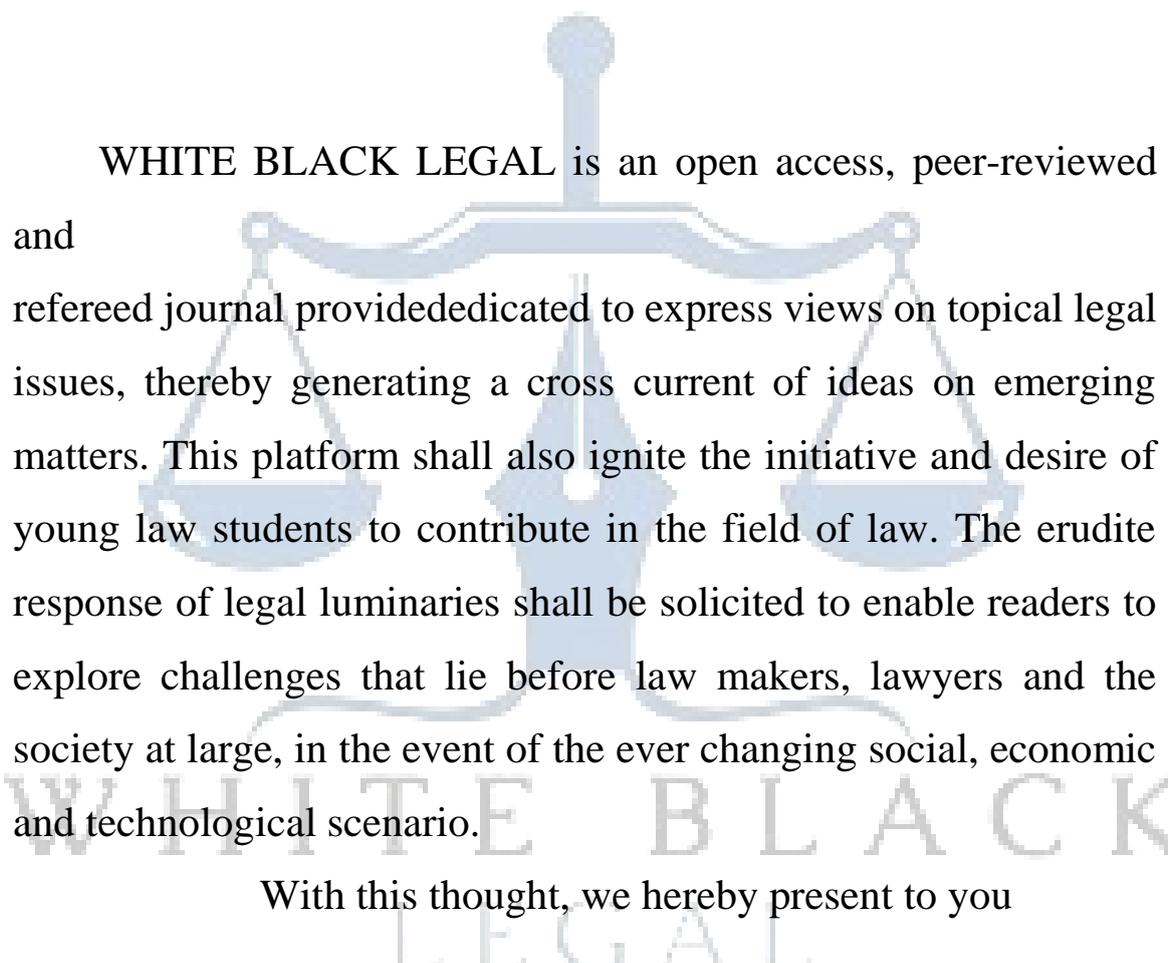


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WHITE BLACK LEGAL is an open access, peer-reviewed and refereed journal providededicated to express views on topical legal issues, thereby generating a cross current of ideas on emerging matters. This platform shall also ignite the initiative and desire of young law students to contribute in the field of law. The erudite response of legal luminaries shall be solicited to enable readers to explore challenges that lie before law makers, lawyers and the society at large, in the event of the ever changing social, economic and technological scenario.

With this thought, we hereby present to you

# **ATROCITIES AGAINST WOMEN: GLOBAL INITIATIVES AND NATIONAL ENDAVOURS**

AUTHORED BY - AVIRAL SAINI

## **ABSTRACT**

The atrocities against women have been a global issue, they happen irrespective of age, race, ethnicity, nationality, financial background and social status etc. The progress of the society depends upon the position of women, but despite knowing the fact, most of the socio-political structures along with the economic forces contribute to harbor the practice of demeaning women various forms like harassing them in physical, mental and psychological forms. There have been voices raised against injustice against women all over the globe as a result many treaties, conventions, declarations and UN resolutions have emerged to address the issues like Universal Declaration of Human Rights, CEDAW etc. At the national level, provisions of Indian Constitution, legislations like Domestic Violence Act, 2005; Prevention of Women against Sexual Harassment Act, 2013 and many other offences have been added in Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023. The amendments in Criminal Law to cope up with dynamic society also ensures that crimes against women in contemporary era should not go unnoticed and Information Technology Act, 2000 covers the offences against women which are committed in virtual world. The judiciary has also played key role in protecting women rights. The article focuses on atrocities, measures taken to combat them, their implementation, relation between law and society in matters of women empowerment and the existing loopholes along with concluding remarks.

Keywords: Atrocities, women, laws and society

## **INTRODUCTION**

The women have been important factor in existence of the human race, their rights, status and position in the society has been a debatable topic from the times immemorial. There have been many codes, statutes etc. on this concept, the women have been victim of atrocities in various forms i.e. physical, mental, verbal, emotional or psychological forms. These owe their origins to societal norms, sex- based stereotypes, misogynistic mindset and customs. The times have

changed but the atrocities still persist, only the manner in which atrocities are committed has evolved with the passage of the time. The developed countries along with the developing and underdeveloped countries are in the same boat regarding atrocities. India has also history of oppression of women and till the date women continue to face oppression due to many factors despite having the legal framework for addressing the same. Now the question arises why this topic acquires important position in contemporary world which has become the global village and the grey shades of this sensitive topic.

## **WOMEN IN INDIAN SOCIETY**

The women have been given important position in the culture, the religions, their texts and cultural norms affirm this. Gargi and Maitreyi were prominent scholars of Vedic Age. The verse “Yatra naryastu pujiyante ramante tatra devata, yatra itaastu na pujiyante sarvaastatrafalaah kriyah” mentioned in Manusmriti emphasizes on how the women are respected in Hindu traditions, the concept of treating women equivalent to Devi is enough to testify the position of women in Hindu culture. The worship of goddess Saraswati, goddess Lakshmi and goddess Durga strengthen this belief. The concepts of Sikhism also mention that women have the same souls as men and thus possess an equal as that of man right to cultivate their spirituality, Guru Nank Dev Ji was advocate for equality between men and women. The Sikhism is testimony to versatility of women, portraying them as equals to men in service, devotion, sacrifice, and bravery. The Buddhism does not discriminate on the basis of the sex, even Mahatma Buddha who was the founder of Buddhism allowed women to join the monastic order. According to Susan Murcott, "The nun's sangha was a radical experiment for its time."<sup>1</sup> The other religions in India along with the tribal people's traditional religions also emphasize on the empowerment of women in one or another way.

## **CONSTRUCT BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICAL**

The beliefs exist mostly in theory but the practical aspects of women life are quite different, in reality the women are treated at sub-humane level in the most of the parts of the India, they are treated as unpaid employee or slave. There are certain practices in religions which are discriminatory, the personal laws of the religions have prejudice towards especially in the matters of inheritance, maintenance etc. It was the 2005 Amendment in Hindu Succession Act,

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<sup>1</sup>SUSAN MURCOTT (1991), THE FIRST BUDDHIST WOMEN: TRANSLATIONS AND COMMENTARY ON THERIGHATA 4 (PARALLAX PRESS 1991)

2005 which abolished discrimination against women in inheritance by recognizing them as coparceners in ancestral property, the Shah Bano case<sup>2</sup> and Daniel Latifi<sup>3</sup> case are the landmark judgements which throws light on plight of Muslim women post-divorce and held that divorced women also have right to maintenance under Section 125 of Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 which has been included as Section 144 of Bhartiya Nagrik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023. The customs laws also discriminate between men and women, the practice of child marriage, ill treatment of widows, female genital mutilation etc. are some examples of cruelty against women. These instances show that its irony where goddess Durga is worshipped for strength, goddess Lakshmi is worshipped for Wealth and goddess Saraswati for education, the women is denied strength, wealth and education. The people want mother, sister, aunt and wife but don't want female child in family, the hypocrisy of the society is revealed and horizon between theory and practical is huge in margin.

### **ATROCITIES OVER THE WOMEN**

The violence against can be classified broadly into 3 forms: domestic violence, mob violence and state violence. Domestic Violence can be broadly termed as violence committed by near and dear ones in the closed walls. Mob

Violence refers to the form of violence which are committed in form of mob like lynching, witch hunting, gangrape etc. State based violence refers to the violence committed by the agencies of the state like custodial rape. The violences are committed throughout the stages of the life, so the classification of atrocities can also be done on the basis of the stages of life in following manner:

- I. Pre-birth: It includes female foeticide
- II. Infancy: It includes female infanticide, pedophilic abuse
- III. Girlhood: It includes trafficking, child marriage, child pornography, genital mutilation, neglect and abandonment.
- IV. Adolescence and adulthood: It includes partner violence, dowry abuse, marital rape, acid attack due to male chauvinism
- V. Old age: It cover abandonment by family members, forced suicide or homicide <sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Mohammad Ahmad Khan v Shah Bano Begum, AIR 1985 SC 945

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Latifi & Anr. vs. Union of India, AIR 2001 SC 3958

<sup>4</sup> BASABI CHAKRABORTY, WOMEN'S STUDIES: VARIOUS ASPECTS 260 -261 (URBEE PRAKASHAN 2014)

The atrocities against women are committed in all classes whether rich or poor, no caste; race or religion remains untouched in matters of various forms of violence, the offences like rape, sexual harassment, molestation, domestic violence, cruelty etc. are prevalent in the contemporary era, some of the offences which are covered in the project as following:

### **I Rape:**

The rape has been the one of the forms of sexual violence against women, the rape consists of forceful sexual intercourse or forceful sexual penetration without the consent of a woman. According to Meriam Webster dictionary, rape is unlawful sexual activity and a sexual intercourse which is carried out with the help of force or under threat of injury against the will of the person or against a person who is beneath a certain age or incapable of valid consent because of mental illness, mental deficiency, intoxication, unconsciousness, or deception. It was defined in Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 and in Section 63 of the Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023. There are many causes of rape like lust, revenge, showing dominance over women and to target opposition community in case of the conflict or war, like in 1984 anti-Sikh riots Sikh women were raped, 1990 exodus of Kashmiri Pandits the women belonging to Kashmiri Pandit community were raped by the militants, in Gujarat Riots of 2002, Muslim women were targeted by the communal mob. The Nirbhaya Rape case of 2012, the Hyderabad rape case of 2019 and recent incident of R.G. Kar hospital and rape of girl belonging to Scheduled Caste in Muzaffarpur highlights the brutality while committing rape and how humanity crisis are prevalent. Though there is provision for death penalty for rape with girl below 12 years post 2018 amendment in Criminal Law and even BNS, 2023 but the incidents are still happening on regular basis which shows that problem is in society's mindset which blames women for incident and such people are not socially ostracized like that is done in case of love marriage, the choices of women are neglected on the aspect how they want to live their life

### **II Sexual Harassment:**

The sexual harassment has been the highly prevailing violence against women. According to National Crime Records Bureau Report, 2022; there has been reporting of more than 400 sexual-harassment at workplace cases every year from 2018 to 2022 on consistent basis. The Himachal Pradesh witnessed highest reporting of the cases as 97 cases were reported in this matter, the other states which witnessed high reporting were Kerala, Maharashtra and Karnataka respectively. The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention,

Prohibition and Redressal), 2013 has been enacted to ensure prevention of sexual harassment at workplace, formations of complaints committee for the purpose. The Section 354-A in Indian Penal Code, 1860 was added by virtue of 2013 Criminal Law Amendment, the offences under clause (i), (ii), (iii) of the Section were punishable for up to 3 years rigorous imprisonment along with fine and for offence under clause (iv), the punishment up to 1 year along with fine. The Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita also kept this provision in the act by virtue of Section 75 of the Act.

### **III Domestic Violence**

The Domestic Violence has is one of the prevalent offense being committed against the women, it is the irony that violence committed inside four walls of the house is not a offence in eyes of the society, even women also refer it as trifles. The violence can be physical, mental, verbal, psychological, or economical. The Domestic Violence Act, 2006 is legislation which provides for remedy against domestic violence. Section 3 of the Act defines what actually the violence is, the Act was wider scope than Section 498-A of Indian Penal Code, 1860 which has been covered under Section 85 and 86 of Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023. It covers even live-in relations and blood relations also. According to World Health Organization report, around more than 25 % of women ranging of age-group from 15–49 years who have been in a relationship have been victim of physical, sexual violence by their partner at least once in their lifespan. The estimates indicate that violence range from 20% in the Western Pacific, while it is around 22% in high-income countries and Europe and 25% in the WHO Regions of the Americas to 33% in the WHO African region, whereas it is approximately 31% in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region and 33% in the WHO South-East Asia region.<sup>5</sup>

### **IV Eve-Teasing**

In India, the term is used for public sexual harassment / sexual assault of women. The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal), 2013 covers this, there are provisions of Section 292 and 294 of Indian Penal Code, 1860 which are numbered as Section 294 and 296 in Bharitya Nyaya Sanhita,2023 respectively. The Bollywood films are blamed for promoting eve-teasing like they tend to encourage stalking under the garb of the love, no of girl is also yes. There have been many public initiatives for combatting eve-teasing like in Mumbai, "Ladies Special" train compartments have been introduced to allow women to

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<sup>5</sup> WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION, <https://who.int> (last visited Oct.14,2024)

travel without the fear of being sexually harassed; starting in 2017, the Drukpa nuns of Amitabha, known as the "Kung Fu Nuns", started teaching women's self-defense for the Ladakh/Himalayan towns, the first class was held at Hemis Monastery.<sup>6</sup>

## **V Atrocities in Cyber World**

The technology seems to be double-edged sword for the entire mankind as on one hand it acts as boon whereas on another hand it acts as bane. The offences which are mentioned in the POCSO Act, 2012; Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 and The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal), 2013 are also committed with the help of modern gadgets. The stalking of women, send her lewd messages and post offensive content against women has become a common norm these days, such offences have become a tool of blackmailing the women and means of extortion. The Section 66-E of Information Technology Act, 2000 mentions about the provision of law that anyone who intentionally or knowingly captures, publishes, or transmits an image of private part of person without their consent can be sentenced up to 3 years imprisonment along with fine up to two lakh rupees or both. The methods to tackle atrocities over cyberspace is need of an hour as with changing scenario, the modus operandi of criminals also evolve.

## **INTERNATIONAL MEASURES FOR TACKLING ATROCITIES**

The atrocities against the women are global phenomena, the 20th and 21st century has witnessed wide range of reforms all around the globe. The new concepts emerged in the discipline of human rights, feminism, anti-racism etc. The observing of International Women's Day on 8 March every year to highlight certain issues gender equality, reproductive rights, and violence and abuse against women so that they can live life of a dignified human. Many conventions and declarations at international level to protect women from atrocities which are as follows:

### **I Universal Declaration of Human Rights**

The following are the main provisions of Universal Declaration of Human Rights

- Article 2 of the Declaration mentions that it is equally applicable on men and women.
- Article 7 of the Declaration mentions that everyone is equal before the law and

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<sup>6</sup> THE NBC, <https://www.nbcnews.com/> (last visited Oct.14,2024)

are entitled to equal protection of the law without any discrimination. It also mentions that people are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination that violates the principles of declaration.

- Article 16 mentions that all people of full age have the right to marry and form a family, without any bar on the basis of the race, nationality, or religion.
- Article 26 mentions everyone has right to education without any discrimination

## **II Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women**

The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is an international treaty adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly. Described as an international bill of rights for women, it was instituted on 3 September 1981 and has been ratified by 189 states, following are the main provisions of the Convention

Part I (Articles 1–6) emphasizes on non-discrimination, sex stereotypes, and sex trafficking.

Part II (Articles 7–9) covers women's rights in the public sphere with an emphasis on political life, representation, and rights to nationality.

Part III (Articles 10–14) describes the economic and social rights of women, particularly focusing on education, employment, and health. It also includes special protections for rural women and their problems

Part IV (Article 15 and 16) outlines women's right to equality in marriage and family life.

Part V (Articles 17–22) establishes the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women as well as the states parties' reporting procedure.

Part VI (Articles 23–30) describes the effects of the convention on other treaties, the commitment of the state parties and the administration of the convention.

## **PROVISIONS OF THE INDIAN LAW FOR PREVENTION OF ATROCITIES**

- I. Constitution's Provisions: Article 14, 15, 16, 21 as a Fundamental Rights; Article 39(d) and Article 42 as Directive Principle of State Policy and in Article 51-A (e) as a Fundamental Duty of every citizen
- II. Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023: Chapter V (Section 63 to 99) covers punishments for sexual offences against women
- III. The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal), 2013

- IV. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2006
- V. Section 66-E of Information Technology Act, 2000
- VI. The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012
- VII. Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956
- VIII. Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986.

## **ROLE OF INDIAN JUDICIARY IN COMBATTING ATROCITIES**

The judiciary has played key role in combatting atrocities against the women, it has given time to time progressive judgements which act as torchbearers for legislators to frame laws for ensuring women safety and acted as agents of social transformations, some of the judgements are as follows:

### **I Mohammad Ahmad Khan v. Shah Bano <sup>7</sup>**

It was upheld in this claim that Muslim women is entitled for maintenance post Idat period which has been undergone post -divorce under Section 125 of Criminal Procedure Code, 1973 and Section 125 is applicable to all the religions.

### **II Vishakha and Ors. v. State of Rajasthan <sup>8</sup>**

The court held that the International Conventions and norms are vital for the purpose of interpretation for ensuring gender equality, right to work with human dignity in Articles 14, 15, 19(1)(g) and 21 of the Constitution and the safeguards against sexual harassment implicit therein. It led to formation of Vishaka Guidelines. The judgment was given by a bench of J. S. Verma (then C.J.I.), Sujata Manohar and B. N. Kirpal, provided the basic definitions of sexual harassment at the workplace and provided guidelines to deal with it. It is seen as a significant legal victory for women's groups in India. It become the basis of formation of The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal), 2013

### **III Santosh Bakshi v. State of Punjab<sup>9</sup>**

It was held by the Apex Court that “If a complaint is made by a woman alleging offence under the DV Act, 2005, committed by any member of a family, matter is to be looked upon seriously. The police cannot submit a report that no case is made out without proper verification and investigation.”

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<sup>7</sup> Mohammad Ahmad Khan v Shah Bano Begum, AIR 1985 SC 945

<sup>8</sup> Vishakha v, State of Rajasthan, AIR 1997 SC 3011

<sup>9</sup> Santosh Singh v State of Punjab, (2014) 13 SCC 25

#### **IV Swornalata Dash v. State of Odisha and ors.<sup>10</sup>**

The Odisha High Court on 26 July, 2023 upheld that maternity leave is basic human right and its denial is assault on dignity of women.

### **ECONOMIC STATUS AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT**

The women across all the classes have been vulnerable to exploitation, it is only the means of exploitation which varies from various strata of society but the concept of class conflict still exists in the empowerment of the women as the women who sound financial condition tend to become victim of atrocities less than the women having poor financial condition. The self-reliance emancipates women from shackles of the repressive norms up to the large extent. Like in history of Booker Prize, white women have dominated rather than black women due to better socio-economic condition of the white people. The shortlisting of Chinua Achebe's work for Booker Prize after 18 years of the inception of the Booker Prize in 1987 is glaring example of how class conflict occurs in women empowerment at the global level. The wordings of the chairperson of 2024 jury Mr. Edmund de Waal which mentioned that the books which have been shortlisted explores the "fault lines of our times...conflicts of identity, race and sexuality." These quotes expose the difference between women belonging to the different section of society. Even in India, the women who use English as medium of the communication are better represented in writing and publishing.<sup>11</sup> There have been many incidents where outrage has been there by society when the victim has been from the elite section of society like in Nirbhaya incident, R.G. Kar incident etc. where victim belonged to educated class of the society, the wide spread protests happen in the support of the victim and still the protest is being done for justice in R.G. Kar incident till date but the silence on incidents of Muzaffarpur incident where a girl belonging to Scheduled Caste was brutally raped and killed and lack of concerns over other incidents exposed double standards of the society. The Muzaffarpur incident was sidelined as girl was weaker socio- economic section of the society. These incidents how economic status play key role in ensuring justice though the victims are women and the public is also standing for educated women rather than poor women.

Even the United Nations also emphasize over the women empowerment at the global level in the following key points:

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<sup>10</sup> BAR AND BENCH, <https://www.barandbench.com/> (last visited Oct.14,2024)

<sup>11</sup> Parvati Sharma, "Identity of a writer" The Indian Express, Sep.21,2024

- I. Women's economic Upliftment is vital to achieve women's rights and gender equality.
- II. The promotion of women's economic justice and rights in the economy and closing gender gaps in the world of work are key to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.
- III. The economic empowerment of women increases diversity of economy and income equality for shared prosperity. It is estimated that closing the gender gap could give the global economy a USD 7 trillion boost.

The main barrier in achieving gender equality in terms of economy is digital divide among male and female. According to the statistics, 37 per cent of women globally not using the internet, meaning 259 million fewer women have access to the internet than men. The other challenges which exist in ensuring economic power can be analyzed via report of the Sustainable Development Goals Report 2023 are like around 2.4 billion women of working age are not afforded equal economic opportunity. Nearly 2.4 billion women globally don't have same economic rights as men and in 178 countries maintain legal barriers that prevent women's full economic participation. The report has to be deeply analyzed by the Indian government so that the adequate measures can be taken to ensure economic upliftment of women can be ensured to prevent atrocities against them.<sup>12</sup>

### **MISUSE OF EMPOWERING LAWS**

The women in the Indian have been victim of exploitation in the several ways, many customs and practices were derogatory towards and their lives have been worse even than an animal in certain cases. When India become republic on 26 January, 1950 i.e. when Constitution was enforced and the framers ensured that women don't face any discrimination in post - independence Indian society as a result Article 14 and 15 were added in the Constitution which mentioned equality before law and no discrimination against anyone on the basis of caste, creed, sex, race and descent. The Article 39(d) and Article 42 of the Constitution are part of Directive Principles of State Policy which mention about equal pay for equal work for both men and women and seeks to ensure humane work conditions and provide for maternity relief respectively. Article 51-A(e) of the Constitution also mentions the fundamental duty of citizens of India in the following words to ensure dignity of women in the following words, "to promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India transcending

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<sup>12</sup> UN WOMEN. <https://www.unwomen.org/> (last visited Oct.15,2024)

religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities, to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women.” The other laws like the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal), 2013 and the Domestic Violence Act, 2006 ensure that women get remedy from atrocities but these laws have been now become notorious for being the prone to misuse. The reasons have been many like seeking revenge, to settle scores in case of disputes or using such laws as a weapon to secure favorable negotiation in jobs. The cases of legendary Indian cricketers Mohammad Shami and Shikhar Dhawan are glaring examples of how such laws are misused.

The judiciary has expressed its concern over the misuse of the women empowering laws from time to time. Recently, **Bombay High Court** in recent judgement of **Dhananjay Mohan Zombade vs Prachi Dhananjay Zombade** expressed its concern over the trend of estranged wives misusing the provisions of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 with the intention to harass their husbands and his family members, even distant relatives are not spared.<sup>13</sup> The legislation related to the sexual harassment at the workplace has also become unpopular due to becoming potent weapon for harassing the innocent people and in the judgement in **Union of India v. Reema Srinivasan Iyengar**,<sup>14</sup> it was held by the Madras High Court that, “Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 is intended to have an equal standing for women in the work place and to have a cordial workplace in which their dignity and self- respect are protected, it cannot be allowed to be misused by women to harass someone with an exaggerated or non-existent allegations.” The Section 498-A of Indian Penal Code, 1860 which has been renumbered as Section 85 and Section 86 of Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023. It’s the judgement in case of **Arnesh Kumar**<sup>15</sup> which provided some respite in such cases as the **Apex Court** directed all state governments to instruct police not to automatically arrest individuals after registering a case under Section 498A of Indian Penal Code, 1860 which has been renumbered as Section 85 and 86 of Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023. These precedents clearly depict that such legislations literally act as double-edged sword because most of the women genuinely face such atrocities are unaware of such legislations or those who are aware but still suffer silently owing to societal pressure on one hand, whereas a significant number of women uses such laws to

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<sup>13</sup> Narsi Benwal, “Bombay High Court voices concern over rise in trend of women misusing Domestic Violence Act.”, The Bar and Bench (Aug.1,2023 9:29 P.M.) <https://www.barandbench.com/news/bombay-high-court-concern-rise-trend-women-misusing-domestic-violence-act>

<sup>14</sup> Unreported Judgements, 4339 OF 2019, decided on 17 February,2020 (Madras HC)

<sup>15</sup> Arnesh Kumar v State of Bihar, (2014) 8 SCC 273

traumatize innocent people on another hand. The innocent people face harassment in one or another way, their reputation is tarnished; career prospects are ruined or some also commit suicide like in August 2024, a 19-year-old student died by suicide at his home in Indore on Tuesday night after a woman teacher filed a rape complaint against him. The family members said that the female teacher was threatening him continuously that she will implicate him in a rape case. The police demanded bribe of rupees 300000 lakhs for settling the case and the boy was released after paying rupees 45000.<sup>16</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The women had been the victim of atrocities from the many centuries and their dignity has been outraged by the society in one way or another and it has been the prevailing issue all around the globe. The measures have been taken to curb the menace and India in post-independence also framed many legislations along with Constitutional provisions to ensure women are also given equal rights to that of the men but the implementation has not been up to the mark till date and the benefits have been reaped by the women who have economic stability and the women from economically vulnerable strata continue to suffer throughout their lives, leading to the creation of the division between the women. The misuse of such laws has to be matter of concern for the policy makers because such practices are violative of **Article 21** of the Constitution and it is only **POCSO Act, 2012** and **Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal), 2013** which have provision for punishment for malicious and false complaint, the other legislations also need to add the such provisions so that misuse of such laws are minimized and the certain legislations like Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal), 2013 and The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2006 etc. have to be made gender neutral so that men who become victim to such atrocities also have redressal to their grievances and woman also harasses a woman many a times and women also become victims of misuse of such legislations. The awareness campaigns regarding the misuse of such laws and the transparency in government institutions will play key role in nipping the evil in the bud. The **Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power, 1985** has to be taken in consideration while reforming such laws so that rights of victim and accused can be balanced and genuine victims are not viewed by the suspicious eyes.

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<sup>16</sup> THE TIMES OF INDIA, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/> (last visited Oct.15,2024)