
PROTECTING HUMAN DIGNITY: THE MANIPUR PARADING INCIDENT & ITS LEGAL TRAJECTORY

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Introduction

The incidents of violence that took place in Manipur brought great shame to the country and the rest of the world in May 2023. The two women were paraded naked on the road in the public eye, which subsequently sparked national outrage in the country and the world. Beyond this case was the prevailing preponderance of trial start India has to deal with it battling gender based violence and rebuffing the vulnerability of women in far off lands.

India and the rest of the globe continue to grapple with immense challenges of gender based violence and women being vulnerable in less developed countries. One cannot help but view gender violence as something that transcends country and culture being a violence against the most basic of human rights. Even while India may have progressive laws many would say that gender violence these days is as prevalent as it can get. The attack, stripping and humiliation of those victims was an all encompassing and traumatic experience. This act was meant in a strategic order, to send a deep psychological shock with a view to inflicting layers of culture of men's dominion. The incident amounted to a psychological shock on the victims that was meant to inflict layers of patriarchal powers. All of these again raise the question that India and the institution and the role of law, were the coupled enough for the actions called for? The essay will look at the incident related to GBV through different lenses. It will describe the domestic legal work and will also be an analysis of cultural and social dynamics which highlighting are brought pattern of gender and equality, emphasising the critical role played by civil society, activist and legal institutions. The mean aim is to present at the incident as a form of gender violence and an indictment of personal laws in government.

Contextualising Gender Based Violence

The GBV also commonly known as gender violence, refers to any form of violence which is directed at a person because of their gender. The core idea of gender based violence is about using a power to control someone based on their gender. This also highlights that gender can

take anywhere within their homes or a community or in a particular culture etc. as it is not confined to a particular setting.

Cultural norms and practice

When GV is examining the most important parties to consider the cultural norms and practises that create an attitude towards gender roles and relationships. In many contexts, the patriarchal system or an unequal power system places women and normalises acts of violence against them. The whole cultural prescription is of masculinity or femininity, which brings the patriarchal society that women play a certain kind of role in sustaining or challenging gender based violence. For instance in many traditional norms it emphasises that male dominance can create a cultural of impunity for per operators, allowing wall be unchecked.

Geographic context

This is one of the highlights which shapes the impact and rule of gender base violence. In the urban and ruler settings have distinct kind of challenges. But at the same time urban areas tend to report a higher rate of violence compared to ruler areas because the physical structural barriers and Limited healthcare facilities. The urban areas has higher rates because due to their population density and also greater awareness. GBV intersects with other types of discrimination, particularly race, ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation. Women's access to some basic services, such as healthcare, is often denied due to discrimination. The prism of intersectionality as its understand this gap as oppression against women.

Legal and Political environment

As a legal construct within a society adequate law enforcement, strong legal framework and a balance of providing justice is central to providing accountability and justice for survivors. India is one of the country despite significant advanced attributed to women rights moment suffers the most alarming data on gender discrimination within almost many reports of NCB on the level of domestic violence and honour killings one of the consequence of general base violence is that the profound and difficult to address, as a survivors have a tendency of self silencing and often choose not to report such act due to social stigma and social encasement which is a primary problem. Also for many survivors the experiences too painful and traumatic often leading to great deal of suffering in silence. GAV is a development in itself the main

reason is that the restriction of women exist education, employment port and lack of healthcare at the same time the cycle of poverty. At a broad level, GBV undermine development by perpetuating inequality and the well-being of the entire community.

The Manipur Parading Incident

Manipur is a state which is located in the north east of India which faced a complicated social issue in May 2023. The state has a strong patriarchal norms but it also features a unique mix of ethnic backgrounds and culture. Indigenous communities follow their own kind of traditions and social quotes some of which intersect with patriarchal values. This result in layered expectation for women which heightens their vulnerability to violence based on gender. One of the horrific incident, which is commonly known as Manipur parading incident shows how gender based violence can be weaponised as a tool of humiliation and control. In this case the violence extend and went beyond any kind of assault. The humiliation was not limited to control it was an aim to publicly degrade and defame those two women, the parading and assault of two women was not random as they were calculated to inflate deep trauma and destroy the standing of a broader community, particularly women. By stripping those women naked and subjecting them to a mob violence and to reinforce existing power to silence the resistance the incident highlights how gender based violence is not nearly a harm to an individual but strategy to intimidate and control woman. This incident came to attention in July 2023 when a video of that parade went viral. The video showed that two tribal woman one in her early 20s and other in her middle 40s from the *Kuki-Zomi* community being parade naked on the road of Manipur by a mob of men. The women were also attacked and the situation was taking place in the backdrop of ethnic tension between *Meitei* community that mainly recites in the valley regions and tribal groups living in the hills. The identity of the victim was kept hidden and some verifiable public testimonies including one from the husband of a Kargil war veteran, exposed the trauma caused. The authorities arrested four people including the suspected mastermind soon after the video appeared later a chargesheet was filed against six individuals and juvenile, indicating a larger network.

Judicial response to gender based violence

The need to adopt a sensitive and efficient approach to GBV has always been recognised by the Indian judiciary. One of the important steps taken in this direction is the setting up of FastTrack courts to streamline the procedures for the education of gender based violence cases.

These quotes which assigned dedicated judges to deal with gender based violence cases and simplify procedural obstacles and to enable a quicker resolution of sensitive matters. They also substantially reduce the pile of unsolved cases in the court. This serves to boost the trust of victim in the justice delivery system and discourages prospective offenders one of the equally important victims support system that was beyond the courtroom to address the holistic needs of survivors. A truly victim centric approach means placing emphasis on safety and dignity of survivors at every stage of the process. In one of the significant cases of Phoolan Devi¹ revealed her experience that gender violence intersect with cast. Intersecting consist of serious sexual assault, suppression by one on caste and social stigmatization . The Supreme Court concedes such intend social and structure origins of the suffering and it's not that the compared to the Manipur parading incident, women at the edges of society suffers more severely and unequally. There is a noticeable trend even after decades of legal changes that systematic inequalities and while women specially from lower caste have only grown. The Verma committee report 2013 was a significant turning point in India legal approach to gender based violence. It suggested broad reforms that included tougher laws and sexual violence and greater police accountability in the context of supporting victims. And this report influence the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 2013. Legal changes need to occur along with wider social transformation, patriarchal norms need to be challenged and cast based her structures should be dismantled. Together with this we must ensure gender equality across all domains of life, the narratives of fool and Devi and the parading incident reveal the gender violence in India is both socially and legally based and a future without such volunteer commands and an integrated strategy that includes both legal action and soc.

Conclusion and Suggestions

The Manipur incident highlights how gender violence are all over the world including India. Manipur depicts that manifestation of violence and weight of the mental wounds born by the survivors along with the social and organisational in adequacies. GBV is an issue that encompasses a wide scope of violence that is biased and deep. A comprehensive approach which integrates the legal, cultural, and social is necessary to avoid and reduce the violence. Among the social methods, legal approach is of utmost importance which is the reason why the proposed GBV court system and faster court would be invaluable either fully swiftly and

¹ Phoolan Devi v. State of Madhya Pradesh AIR ONLINE 1996 SC 1038.

compassionate Ateli dealing with gender base violence while ensuring a softer approach.

GBV is best understood or commonly understood as social and cultural violence. There is pivotal involvement from civil society as well when it comes to the aid of survivors which is civil legal aid, healthcare and psychological support which is desperate and aims to uphold the dignity of the survivor during the process. Therefore a country is only progressive by implementing protective policies and law as well as the Manipur parading incident is a manifest vigilant symbol of enforceable laws consolidated and active. A united effort from cultural, society and law is necessary to dismantle such structure that sustained such kind of violence. Only through a collaboration we can move towards a building a society where woman's are safe, empowered and valued and gender based violence is no longer tolerated.

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