



Economic Distress and Rising Crime against Women in Our Society

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Abstract

In underdeveloped countries most of the families live below poverty line. Poverty is common phenomenon in our society. Most of the people live in poverty and die in poverty. Generally economic power rests with men and place of women in the society is not at par with men. Such critical social status transforms the women into unproductive resources. Economic distress compels them to involve in unethical activities. They become the victims of sexual exploitation and physical harassment. It is seen that absolute poverty among the women is the determining factor of crime against women in the general society. This paper is mainly concerned with the concept of vicious circle of poverty, relation between crime against women and economic distress. This paper will also highlight situation of women empowerment in the civil society.

Key words: *underdeveloped, Poverty, vicious, physical, harassment etc.*

I. INTRODUCTION:

Roles and performances of a person determine his or her status in the society. In our society, generally decision-making power is rest upon the male. And role of women is secondary one. Women are confined to household activities and they carry out the orders given by male. Mental horizons of women are set in a manner that they are not in a position to nullify the decisions of men. In underdeveloped countries, women are differentiated in real life on the basis of economic class, religion, caste etc. Socio-economic environment in our society shape the behavior and place of women. Many women related issues like hunger and malnutrition, ill health, unhygienic housing condition, living in unsafe environment, social discrimination have been ignored intentionally or unintentionally. Multiple factors are responsible in this regard but economic distress is considered one of the major factors responsible for rising crime against women in our society.

II. OBJECTIVES:

The major objectives of this analysis:

- To find out the interlink between economic distress and rising crime against women.
- To find out the relationship between women empowerment and rate of crime against women.

III. METHODOLOGY:

This paper is based on secondary data. Mainly information is collected from various studies done by different scholars nationally and internationally. Officially published crime records published by the government from time to time have been collected in a systematic manner. On the basis of these studies, major conclusions have been derived regarding crime and poverty against women in our society.

IV. DISCUSSION:

Economic distress of women leads to create many problems such as poor performance, lower enrollment, and high dropout ratio in the rural settings. The UNESCO published that almost a quarter of young women, aged 15 to 24 nearly, 16 million in underdeveloped countries unable to complete primary education. It means they become lack of skills for getting good jobs and loss of confidence to protect their right in the society. Women, who are poor, they become more dependent on men to support them financially. Having no money, it becomes difficult for them to find shelter; to buy food is one of the critical reasons why women stay in violent relationships.

Crime against women keeps women poor: Women who experienced violence at the hands of an intimate partner often also have their behavior controlled and are less likely to be able to find work. They may also miss days of work or other opportunities due to injury. The physical and psychological harms cause women to leave jobs, miss days of work, and deter them from pursuing promotional opportunities, or seeking compensation. Poor women are at the higher risk of sexual exploitation and trafficking:

Women living in poverty are more vulnerable to sexual exploitation, including trafficking. Violence has huge social and economic costs: Violence against women results physical and psychological damage affecting women worldwide including broken limbs, depression, and disability, infections such as HIV, miscarriage and even death. Aizer, Anna (1994Poverty,)

Women and Vicious Circle of Poverty: In Economics, the vicious circle of poverty is the set of factors or events by which poverty, once started, is likely to continue unless there is outside intervention. Poor social status of the women directly linked with the poverty problem. The majority of the women in backward society like India generally possess low level of income because of their low productivity. The low productivity directly linked with low level of education, health condition etc. Low productivity is the major cause of the low income and in its turn, the low income results in mass poverty among the women. In this way, the circle of poverty is complete. Until the developing economies are out of this vicious circle of poverty they cannot move forward on the path of economic development because the women constitute the half of the total population of these countries.

Meaning of Empowerment: Studies show that when women are supported and empowered, the entire society is benefitted at large. Their families are healthier, more children go to school, agricultural productivity improves and incomes increase. In short, communities become more resilient. One of the most important ways to break the vicious circle of poverty among women is the empowerment of the women section.

Women's empowerment refers to the ability of women to transform economic and social development when empowerment to fully participate in the decisions that affect their lives through leadership training, coaching, consulting and the provision of enabling tools for women to lead within their communities, regions and countries(Nayar, 2008).

The World Bank defines empowerment as "the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choice and to transform those choices in to desired actions and outcomes. Central to this process is actions which both build individual and collective assets and improve the efficiency and fairness of the organizational and institutional context which govern the use of these assets."

The empowerment is a multidimensional concept and refers to the expansion of freedom of choice and action in all spheres (social, economic and political) to shape one's life. It also implies control over resources and decisions (Chattopadhyay, 2005). Empowerment of Indian women is intrinsically linked to their status in the society. It should be noted that social empowerment of women is a long and difficult process, as it requires a change in the mindset of the people. In Indian society there is a strong preference for male child, as sons are perceived to be future bread earners and also the old age security for parents. For this reason the girl child faces discrimination from birth till death. As the social empowerment process is very difficult process therefore we should provide much importance on the economic empowerment process.

Women's Participation in Non Farm Enterprises: From the various research studies it has been proved that the women participation rate in the non-farm enterprises is comparatively lower than the men. The comparative picture has been shown in the **table (1)**. From the table it is clear to us that in the year 1972-73 the women participation rate were only 10.3 percent and it became 16.7 per cent in 2004-05. The additional growth rate was 6.4 per cent. On the contrary during the same period of time the men workforce participation rate has increased by 16.8 per cent. Thus one can easily imagine the tragic situation. One point must be noted here that although the women participation rate is very low but it is increasing steadily.

Table: 1
Workforce Participation Rate in the Non Farm Sector (In Percent):

Year	Person	Male	Female
1972-73	NA	16.7	10.3
1977-78	16.6	19.3	11.8
1983	18.5	22.2	12.5
1987-88	21.7	25.4	15.3
1993-94	21.6	26.0	13.8
1999-2000	23.7	28.6	14.6
2004-2005	27.6	33.5	16.7

Source: Various Rounds of NSSO

An analysis of the industrial division of the workforce could help us to assess the significance of the different productive activities in the rural areas. The **Table (2)** shows the industrial distribution of the workforce in the rural areas of Assam as well as all India during 2009-10. The Table shows that agricultural activities continue to be the main working place for rural workers. It provided employment to 39.9 per cent male and 60.1 per cent female in the rural areas of Assam. Thus we may comment that agricultural sector has been providing larger employment opportunity to the rural female. On the other hand, agriculture provided employment opportunity to 49.7 per cent rural male and 67.5 per cent rural female in all India.

Table:2

Sl no	Sectors	Rural Male		Rural Female		Rural Persons	
		Assam	India	Assam	India	Assam	India
1	Agriculture	39.9	49.7	60.1	67.5	41.8	54.0
2	Mining and Quarrying	1.4	1.4	5.4	3.0	1.8	3.0
3	Manufacturing	4.8	6.0	2.3	6.4	4.6	6.1
4	Utilities	0.4	1.9	1.4	0.7	0.5	1.6
5	Construction	10.8	15.1	2.9	7.6	10.1	13.3
6	Trade & Hotel	3.1	3.3	9.5	1.8	2.8	3.0
7	Transport	6.8	3.1	0	0.5	6.1	2.5
8	Other services	15.8	17.9	18.4	12.5	32.3	16.5
	All	100	100	100	100	100	100
	Secondary	17.4	26	12	17	17.7	24
	Tertiary	42.7	24.3	27.9	14.8	41.2	22
	Non Farm workers	60.1	50.3	39.9	32.5	58.2	46

Source: Report on employment and unemployment

In non-farm sector, trade, hotel and restaurant, and other services are the largest source of non-farm employment in rural male section. In 2009-10, the male workforce participation rate in the other services and construction sectors were 15.8 per cent and 10.8 per cent respectively. But in case of India, largest rural male employment to the other sector and construction sector were 17.9 and 15.1 per cent respectively in 2009-10. Thus manufacturing sector did not play any significant role in job creation in rural areas in Assam as well as in India. In the year 2009-10, 60.1 per cent male workers were engaged in nonfarm sector in Assam against 50.3 per cent in all India level.

In the rural area of Assam, in nonfarm sector the female workforce participation rate was 39.9 per cent in 2009-10 against national rate 32.5 per cent. In nonfarm sector, other services sector and trade-hotel were the largest source of employment and their share were 18.4 per cent and 9.5 per cent respectively. The **Table (2)** clearly shows that there exists gender discrimination in nonfarm sector workforce participation rate.

The Importance of the Non Farm Micro Enterprises the Empowerment process:

- 1) They provide regular employment opportunities to the poor women in the rural areas. Especially to the agricultural women laborers and marginal women workers.
- 2) They help to utilize the local resources efficiently and purposefully.
- 3) In the rural areas some traditional non-farm enterprises such as, weaving, pottery, bamboo works etc. empower the poor women easily as because these activities are very much known activities among the rural women. They require less capital and technical skill.
- 4) On the other hand, modern nonfarm activities such as DTP and printing press, beauty parlor, hotel, easy recharge counter, readymade garment factory, processed food making factories, candle factory etc can be developed with large amount of capital and modern skill. Such skill may be formed through the NGO support and capital may be arranged through the nationalized banks and govt. schemes.

5) The development of these non- farm based enterprises in the rural areas gives the economic freedom to the women entrepreneurs which in turn improve their decision making position in the family as well as in the community.

The constraints for the Women Entrance in the Non Farm Enterprises: Several factors act as the serious constraints for the entrance of the women laborers in the nonfarm enterprises.

(a) Low educational profile of the rural women hinders the common entry of the rural poor women in the non- farm enterprises.

(b) Social orthodoxy of the rural families hinders the entry of women in to the nonfarm enterprises.

(c) Low asset base of the women community in the rural areas hinders the common entry of them in to the productive work places. In the rural areas most of the assets are occupied by the male head of the family and he uses them according to his will. Even in some families the male head directs his woman how to use her assets.

(d) The social confidence level of the women is much lower than the men section. For this reason they, even the educated women, do not come forward to capture the opportunity.

V. Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that the spread of poverty among the women can be solved through the development of the non-farm based activities in the rural areas. The success of these enterprises makes them independent economically and provides an identity.

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