



POWER, POLITICS & THE ISSUE OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

VOL - III

Proceedings of Seminar

Editor

Abul Foyes Md Malik



Srijon Shitya Chora
DIGBOI MAHILA MAHAVIDYALAYA
DIGBOI- ASSAM

Power, Politics & the Issue of Gender Based Violence

Edited by : Abul Foyes Md Malik

Published By : AGRA BOOK INTERNATIONAL

First Published: October 2024

Copyright – Editor

Price - 1200 /- (Rupees One Thousand Two Hundred) only

ISBN - 978--93-94151-64-2

PRINTED AT : AGRA BOOK INTERNATIONAL

105, Grand Fort, Paschimpuri Sikandra Agra - 282007

Mobile : 9068440609 ; e-mail : agrabooki@gmail.com

CONTENTS

- Chapter 1 The Dual Role of Media in Perpetuating and Challenging Gender Based Violence in the Society/ Afrida Ahmed / 06
- Chapter 2 Women Leadership & Innovation/ Karishmita Rajbongshi / 09
- Chapter 3 Gender Roles and Societal Expectations in Perpetuating/ Abdulla Hussain Laskar / 13
- Chapter 4 Media's Role in the Dissemination of Gender Based-Violence/ Adan Fatima / 20
- Chapter 5 Legislative Measures and Their Effectiveness in Combating Gender Based Violence/Aditi Saikia / 27
- Chapter 6 Women Leadership and Innovation: Activities of North-East Network/ Amreen Razzak / 33
- Chapter 7 The Impact of Global Economic Policies on Gender-Based Violence in Vulnerable Populations/ Anamika Dutta / 41
- Chapter 8 Significance of Panchayati Raj in Empowering Women of Assam: An Overview/ Angkita Ray / 50
- Chapter 9 The Witchcraft of Queenship: The survival of Elizabeth Woodville in Early Modern England portrayed in The White Queen/ Aniket Bakshi / 57
- Chapter 10 Determinants of Women Trafficking: An Analysis of Its Vulnerability in Indian States/Ankita Hazarikia, Jitu Tamuli, Payel Priya Kashyap / 64
- Chapter 11 From Ground Breaking to Guiding: Theresa Elmendorf's Role in Shaping Women's Leadership in Libraries/ Annanya Baruah / 70
- Chapter 12 Gender-Based Violence and Its Impact on Electoral Participation: A Study of Barriers and Implications for Democratic Processes/ Anushka Kashyap / 80
- Chapter 13 Women, Leadership and Innovation / Arbita Naiding/ 86
- Chapter 14 Interspersion of Women in the Emerging Climate Crisis Situations in the Peri-urban Regions / Dr. Arti Kumari / 93

- Chapter 15 The Unseen Epidemic: Understanding Gender-Based Violence in India - A Review/ Ashim Nath / 98
- Chapter 16 Intersectionality and Vulnerability to Violence: The Role of Race, Class, Ethnicity, Sexuality and Disability in Gendered Experiences/ Asim Mahata / 106
- Chapter 17 Gender-Based Discrimination in Northeast India: A Comprehensive Study/ Ms. Babymoon Gogoi / 117
- Chapter 18 Gender Based Violence in India: From the Perspective of Culture, Tradition and Religion/ Barasha Das / 123
- Chapter 19 Rethinking Domestic Violence: Berth a Mason and the Trope to Insanity in Bronte's/ Bhaswati Chetia / 128
- Chapter 20 The Role of Media in Shaping Public Perception of GBV/ Biplob Koch / 134
- Chapter 21 Women Leadership in Indian Academic Libraries: Addressing Challenges and Future Direction for Women Leaders/ Deepanjali Bora / 138
- Chapter 22 Religious and Gender Marginalization in Ahmed Ali's Twilight in Delhi/ Dikshita Kashyap / 144
- Chapter 23 Impact of Colonial Rule on Gender Based-Violence in India/ Dipankar Mohan / 148
- Chapter 24 Menstruation as a Taboo: Socio Cultural Issues in India/ Dipshikha Rabha, Dr. Nabarun Purkayastha / 153
- Chapter 25 Economic Abuse used Against Female Literary Characters/ Dristanta Bormudoi / 157
- Chapter 26 Gender Roles and Societal Expectations in Perpetrating Violence/ Durga Rangaswamy Pandian, Darshini Madanagopal / 162
- Chapter 27 The Experience of the Marginalized Voices Reading the text God of Small Things/ Gargee Gariasi Buragohain / 168
- Chapter 28 The Influence of Political Ideologies and Systems on Gender Violence/ Gobindra Borah / 171
- Chapter 29 Gender based Violence and Legal Remedies in India/ Dr. Gongesh Bhattacharjee / 178
- Chapter 30 Gender Based Inequalities: Jharkhand Context/ Dr. Harihar Padhan, Pooravi Pradhan / 182

Impact of Colonial Rule on Gender Based Violence in India



Dipankar Mohan

Introduction

Gender-based violence has deep historical roots in India, a phenomenon shaped by multiple forces, including colonial rule. When the British arrived in the 18th century, they imposed foreign legal and social systems, often disregarding local nuances and cultural intricacies. The British Empire's introduction of new legal frameworks and social policies left an enduring impact on Indian society, altering the traditional power dynamics and roles of women. This article examines the extent to which colonial rule influenced gender-based violence, focusing on how the British codified and reinforced patriarchal norms, contributed to the marginalization of women, and how these effects lingered in post-colonial India.

Objectives

The Objectives of the Study are

- To examine Colonial Influence on Gender Norms.
- To discuss the Colonial Legacy in Post-Colonial Gender Relations.
- To understand British Stereotypes and Social Interventions.

Methodology

The approach of this study is analytical and historical in nature and sources used in preparing this article is based on secondary sources and these are collected from various books and articles.

Discussion

The British colonial era in India (1858–1947) was a period marked by profound social, legal, and economic transformations, which reshaped many aspects of Indian society, including gender dynamics. While colonial rule sought to “civilize” India by intervening in practices considered morally objectionable, such as *sati* (widow immolation), it also reinforced and entrenched patriarchal norms in ways that increased women’s vulnerability to gender-based violence. This article explores how British policies, legal reforms, and economic strategies impacted gender-based violence, with effects that persist in modern India.

Colonial Policies and Social Practices

1. Reshaping Family Structures and Legal Norms: The British saw traditional Indian practices with a lens of moral superiority, often leading to interventions in local customs. For example, the British prohibited the practice of *sati*, where widows would self-immolate on their husband's funeral pyre, viewing this ban as a moral and civilizational mission. While ending *sati* was progressive, British authorities were selective in their interventions, leaving other violent practices, such as child marriage and dowry demands, largely unaddressed. The introduction of personal laws codified by religion – such as the Hindu Code and Sharia-based Muslim Personal Law – enforced patriarchal structures by freezing women's roles within family systems. These laws restricted women's rights to property, custody, and divorce, heightening their dependency and vulnerability to violence within the family.

2. Reinforcement of Patriarchal Structures: The British administration's approach to governance relied on alliances with Indian patriarchal elites, which led to an implicit reinforcement of male-dominated power structures. Laws that denied women access to education, property, and public roles were strengthened, deepening the divide between genders. Additionally, British administrators stereotyped Indian women as victims in need of Western "rescue," leading to a paternalistic attitude that ignored the voices of local women and their advocacy.

By viewing Indian society through a colonial and paternalistic lens, the British often attributed gender-based violence to Indian "tradition" rather than recognizing their role in its perpetuation. This framework sidelined indigenous women's movements and contributed to a legacy that viewed violence against women as an issue to be addressed only within Indian society rather than as an effect of colonial structures.

The Role of British Education and Employment Policies

1. Limited Access to Education and Employment for Women: Under British rule, education for women was limited, focusing primarily on missionary-led instruction that promoted Western ideals and skills deemed suitable for domestic life. This approach restricted women's participation in public and professional domains, heightening gender disparities. Limited education, paired with the absence of employment opportunities, confined women to the private sphere, where they were more susceptible to domestic violence.

2. Economic Policies and the Impact on Women: The British focus on cash-crop agriculture, taxation, and resource extraction displaced many traditional industries where women played significant roles, such as weaving and artisanal

crafts. This economic shift led to the marginalization of women's economic contributions, making them financially dependent on male family members and more vulnerable to domestic violence and exploitation.

Legal Frameworks and Gender-Based Violence

1. Criminalization and the Colonial Justice System: British colonial authorities selectively criminalized practices to enforce moral superiority, such as the prohibition of *sati*, without a broader commitment to women's rights. The British criminal justice system marginalized women's voices, often dismissing domestic violence cases as private, family matters rather than criminal offenses. This legal bias left women with limited recourse for protection against violence, reinforcing patriarchal norms and limiting the effectiveness of legal reforms.

2. Impact of Personal Law on Women's Rights: The imposition of personal laws based on religious identity created a fragmented legal system that often entrenched gender inequality. Hindu and Muslim personal laws maintained traditional family structures where women's rights to inheritance, property, and divorce were severely limited, increasing their dependence on male family members. By codifying these laws, the British solidified patriarchal practices, making it difficult for women to seek justice for violence, discrimination, or exploitation within their own households.

Legacy of Colonial Rule in Post-Colonial Gender Dynamics

The colonial era left a lasting impact on Indian society, with many gender-based inequalities codified into law that persisted beyond independence. The British reinforcement of patriarchal structures and their reliance on male elites meant that systemic violence against women continued post-independence, embedded in both cultural norms and legal frameworks.

1. Continuation of Patriarchal Legal Structures: After independence, personal laws largely remained in place, contributing to ongoing gender-based violence. Efforts to reform these laws, such as the Hindu Code Bills and later campaigns for uniform civil codes, faced resistance due to the deep entrenchment of colonial-era divisions in family law.

2. Cultural Legacy and Stereotypes: Colonial narratives that portrayed Indian women as oppressed victims or as bearers of "tradition" shaped both national and international perspectives on gender-based violence in India. These stereotypes have contributed to framing gender-based violence as a cultural issue, complicating efforts for gender equality by emphasizing cultural sensitivity over systemic change.

Conclusion

The British colonial rule in India left a complex legacy that continues to impact gender dynamics and gender-based violence. By selectively intervening in social practices and codifying patriarchal norms through personal laws, the British administration contributed to a framework that marginalized women and perpetuated violence. The emphasis on male-dominated legal structures, lack of attention to women's economic independence, and stereotypes established during this period have had long-lasting effects on Indian society. Understanding this colonial impact is essential to contextualize the ongoing struggle for women's rights in India and to challenge the systemic structures that perpetuate gender-based violence even in the modern era.

Works Cited

- Chatterjee, P. (1989). "Colonialism, Nationalism, and Colonialized Women: The Contest in India." *American Ethnologist*, 16(4), 622-633.
- Mani, L. (1998). *Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India*. University of California Press.
- Sarkar, T. (2001). *Hindu Wife, Hindu Nation: Community, Religion, and Cultural Nationalism*. Indiana University Press.
- Sinha, M. (1995). *Colonial Masculinity: The 'Manly Englishman' and the 'Effeminate Bengali' in the Late Nineteenth Century*. Manchester University Press.

