An Intersectional Study of Pandemic and Domestic Violence with Special Reference to India

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Abstract

COVID-19 pandemic projected the shadow pandemic of domestic violence in a glaring way in India. From being locked with their abusers to lack of support because of inaccessibility of socioeconomic support mechanisms, several women faced a double layered lockdown. Long standing inequities and inequalities have been brought to light. This paper will investigate the links between the COVID-19 pandemic and the surge in cases of Domestic Violence in India through an intersectional analysis of gender, identity, caste, religion and masculinity. It will also assess the feminist legal theories which today require a remodeling to cater to such emergent conditions to specifically ask whose rights are dispensable when an emergency occurs? The paper will also assess and critique the gender-blind governmental response during the pandemic since emergency laws and policies devoid of any understanding about the implications on the marginalized women furthered the problem. In countries like India where the domestic violence goes unreported, lack of gender expertise in pandemic planning, response and recovery requires an immediate review. While studying the situation in India, the paper will also endeavor to analyze other countries primarily to collate the reasons why despite extensive articulation of rights and propagation of women’s rights in domestic and international spheres, the impact of pandemic was so severe on women. The silence on this issue in the policymaking, and human rights circles as the pandemic loses its grip is also something to ponder over. Thus, while acknowledging that immediate action to the pandemic was essential, paper will emphasize on the need to rebuild equality and equity structures.

Keywords: COVID-19, equality, gender, policy, shadow pandemic