

Rage **against** Rape

The heinous crime of rape happens everywhere: it happens inside homes, in families, in neighbourhoods, in police stations, in towns and cities, in villages, and its incidence increases, as is happening in India.

Modern industrial times have increasingly brought women out of the confines of their homes and women's roles have changed phenomenally. But the ruling capitalist system, driven and controlled by the values of feudalism & patriarchy is yet to come to terms with it. Across the political spectrum, irrespective of the party or the colour there is a contempt and impunity towards women and their rights. This system's mind-set perpetuates hatred against women and disregards the fundamental right of women for freedom.

STOP VOILENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Figures of Outrage :

- Rape is the biggest crime in India ; 24206 rape cases in 2011.
- Incidents of rape in the country have increased by 791% since 1971
- Only 50% of rapes are actually reported.
- A rape occurs every 20 minutes.
- A child is raped every 76 minutes.
- Conviction rates for rape dipped from 41% in 1971 to 27% in 2010.
- Among 53 cities, Delhi accounted for 13.3% (4,489) of total such crimes followed by Bengaluru 5.6% (1,890) and Hyderabad 5.5% (1,860).
- In a country where Dalits are considered the "Untouchables" Dalith girls are raped with impunity and for revenge.

Bangalore's Share of Shame

- Rape: 97
- Dowry deaths: 53
- Molestation: 250
- Sexual harassment: 40

The unprecedented anger of the youth in Delhi and across many other cities in the country against the gang rape of 23 year old para medical student on a bus was an expression of the seething discontent that has been building against the system for a long time.

The fear of the 'Power of the Streets' that manifested in Delhi engulfing the entire country resulted in suppression of these protests. Contrast to the spontaneous empathy and demand for justice by young women and men, the administration was ham-handed in brutalising the protests through vicious crack down. This speaks volumes about the skewed democracy of this largest democracy called India.

It is a fact that violence against women in India is particularly rampant amongst the marginalized communities such as Daliths, Adivasis, women in unorganised industries, sexuality minorities, Sex Workers etc., for which conviction rate is abysmally low or non-existent, with the perpetrators largely roaming free.

More so is the fact that most of the incidents of rape and sexual assaults go unreported as the feudal values that dominate the Indian culture and society. The custodial torture and rape and the sexual crimes committed by the state agencies is something that does not evoke much indignation.

Sexual violence affects women of all backgrounds and ethnicities. It is perpetrated by a minority of men of all backgrounds and identities.

It is widespread and embedded in capitalist society. Working class women suffer sexism in addition to the oppression that all working class people face.

The map of India is dotted with the crimes against women, starting with the Mathura rape case in 1972 when NCRB started counting and documenting the rapes in the country. The infamous Gujarat riots where countless Muslim women were subjected to torture and rape, Soni Soori case in Chattisgarh and the AFSPA atrocities in the North East and J&K hardly finds any space in the main stream media owned by the big business. A rape occurs every 20 minutes. A child is raped every 76 minutes, and a relentless, silent war against women is waged in various ways. From killing them in their mother's womb to punishing women for giving birth to girls to persecuting women for challenging traditional male bastions.

Objectification

Sexuality is distorted by pornography which is more and more accessible, and at younger ages; male and female sexual stereotypes are foisted on us from birth; and women's bodies are objectified and used everywhere to 'entertain' and sell products.

Men who are sexually violent need to take responsibility for the role they play as perpetrators. But we can't, however, get rid of sexual violence just by punishing individuals.

Sexual violence against women is a product of capitalist society where people are conditioned to see women as inferior and to see women's bodies as commodities or objects and separate from their humanity.

Sexism aids the capitalist system. The family provides a base for the reproduction and bringing up of future workers and the servicing and care of current (and unemployed) workers and retired workers.

This work which, in the home, is usually carried out by unpaid women (who may also work outside the home) saves capitalism millions of Rupees, increasing the profits of a few.

Rape is no joke

Portrayed as 'ironic', the sexist jokes can actually normalise sexism, making cat-calling, sexual harassment of women and lewd jokes somehow acceptable. It can also further perpetuate the bullying of women who call out people making inappropriate jokes as 'prudes' and lacking a sense of humour.

How can a woman feel safe walking home at night if she fears that the men she passes laugh about raping women?

Band aid solutions are not the answer

While the perpetrators of such crimes must definitely be punished, but the solution does not lie in reverting back to medieval practices such as death penalty or castration nor does the solution lie in increasing surveillance by police which is not going to solve the problem. This will only end up empowering the government with unprecedented powers and act without impunity against the working people. For so widespread a crime, band aid solutions are not the answer!

By no stretch of imagination can we absolve the system and the ruling classes from this malady, as they have thoroughly failed in developing and taking forward the society from feudal and medieval values and practices.

The violence against women is a product of a diseased system called capitalism where people are conditioned to see women as inferior and to see women's bodies as commodities or objects meant for pleasure.

A campaign against rape in isolation from all other aspects of women's oppression will not serve the purpose. Rape, like domestic violence and sexual harassment, is a symptom of a deeply unequal class-based society that leads some men to think that they can control women, including sexually. This is reinforced by women's material inequality and lower status in society. We must challenge sexism and through the process of struggle will see millions of people questioning the brutal, sexist and exploitative capitalist society in which we live and look for alternative beyond capitalism.

BUILD A MASS MOVEMENT TO FIGHT AGAINST SEXISM, CASTEISM & CAPITALISM

New Socialist Alternative (CWI-India) demands:

- An immediate action to be taken against perpetrators of violent crimes against women and adequate relief measures for victims of such crimes
- An independent investigation into the response of the police and state administration to sexual violence, with involvement of the trade unions, women, student and other progressive organizations and action against those siding with the perpetrators of such crime.
- No to Death Penalty! No to Castration! Yes to fast track courts for rape & other forms of sexual violence.
- The working people cannot rely on the state authorities to do justice, hence Peoples' Defence committees must be formed involving trade unions, community organisations, working people and other progressive organizations to make the streets safer for women and fight the menace of violence against women through a campaign against sexual violence, exploitation of women; debunking myths about rape and advocating women's right over their bodies.
- End this capitalist system that continues to discriminate and oppress women. For a democratic, secular and socialist society based on real equality and putting the needs of the people before the profits of a few.

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