



When womb becomes the tomb

BY K P SHASHIDHARAN

The recent incident of gangrape and homicide of a Nepali woman, whose body was found dumped in the field along the Rohtak-Hisar Highway in Haryana shows the psychopathic, bestial sexual aggravation of a group of men against the victim. The occurrence of such incidents repeatedly in different parts of the country even after the 2012 gangrape of a student on a bus in New Delhi triggering a massive public outcry, the Government's follow up legislation, tightening patrolling and ensuring women's safety remind the tragic state of women's existence in a sexually hungry male aggressive society.

Besides probing the case immediately and convicting and punishing criminals under the law, there should be a comprehensive review of gender crimes to find out the root causes of such obnoxious animalistic behaviour by a group of men. We feel proud and boast in every forum about our great ancient civilization, culture and tradition, but what has happened to the present society and how to bring a better civilized society is much more important than eulogizing the past.

According to the National Crime Records Bureau, there were 3,09,546 crimes against women reported to the police last year against 2,44,270 in 2012, indicating a 26.7 percent increase as compared to the previous year. The number of rapes in the country rose by 35.2 percent to 33,707 in 2013 with Delhi reporting 1,441 rapes in 2013 making it the city with the notorious distinction of having the highest number of rapes confirming it as India's "rape capital".

Experts opine that Indian men "act in a manner that is fairly predetermined by their gendered roles and expectations, socio-economic characteristics and childhood experiences, masculinity, intimate partner violence and son preference". We have to engage men and boys more effectively to become change agents in addressing gender discrimination, violence and crime and help carving out an equitable social system.

How do we as a nation prevent such assaults against women in future? Just enacting laws will not do. Along with strict Acts, there should be adequate

policing, round-the-clock patrolling and lighted streets. But these solutions are not good enough. Enlightened men and women should help community policing to help the police in enforcing the law by engaging community leaders, social activists and NGOs as change agents. Many of the allied issues need to be addressed to prevent such onslaughts against women.

The deeper issues are: Does our education system inculcate the right values in students? Do our media, films, literature, especially the regional print and visual media, highlight and educate our society to be better citizens and better individuals with a right attitude, values and culture? Do our family, schools, local administration, Panchayati Raj institutions, urban local bodies and State and Central Governments give adequate attention to create a conducive environment to blossom the personality of 50 percent of people in this country by inculcating sublime human values, including gender equality, gender development and empowerment?

It is important to go deep into the social and cultural fabric seeking the root cause of the deranged behaviour of the youth of certain socio-economic strata and understand the social psychology of this section of the Indian male. We have to ask ourselves: What can be done to prevent such incidents in future? Have we done any research to know the socio-psychopath's mental makeup and the rationale and motive to do such heinous crime against women? How can the educational system be improved to inculcate human values, ethics, morality and culture?

The gender development issue needs an integrated approach beginning from saving the child conceived in the womb from foeticide and empowering her giving protection, education and equal status in the society in every sphere. The female gender is vulnerable and faces injustice and crime throughout her life's journey from the mother's womb to the tomb, as the first threat could come from her own mother's womb and the womb itself becomes the tomb for many female foetuses in India. ■

*The writer is a visiting Professor of NIFM, LBSNAA, IIMs, IMT and other premier institutions and a former DG in the CAG office. He has authored two volumes of poetry, *Whispering Mind*, and *Painting Symphony* and a business book, *BIG, Business India Guru*. The views expressed are personal.*

send your feedback to:
info@bureaucracytoday.com