

# **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE STATE OF PUNJAB**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **STATUS OF WOMEN**

The Social fabric of Punjab consists of hierarchy based on caste, class and community. Another significant characteristic of the Status of Women in the State is the absence of a homogeneous social, cultural and economic structure that makes any generalizations about the conditions of women impossible. There are huge regional differences to contend with. The obvious diversities in women's situation in the different regions of the State extend to health, literacy, education and sex ratio of mortality, employment, incidence of poverty, political participation and so forth. Such diversities can be attributed to the pre-existing levels of development, availability or otherwise of natural resources, policies of the State Government and regional socio-cultural norms and beliefs.

Notwithstanding the disparities, however, deprivation of women cuts across all regions, classes and castes of women in the State. For example, the success of the Green Revolution has pushed back women, so far important contributions in the production process, back into the private domain. They thus lost their economic independence and their higher status within their class, because, with the increased income and consequent higher social status for the families as a whole, women were the first to be withdrawn from the work force as symbols of that newly gained status.

Violence against Women has always remained a part of patriarchal value system. This violence may take place at various levels i.e. within the

Family, at workplace, at Public Places and even in the State/Judicial Custody. The State of Punjab being dominated by patriarchal and feudal values is one of the states, which come under this domain. But, where previously the women was victim of the family or culture, now the market forces have also joined against her and the culmination of the same can be seen in the form of sex selection or mis-use of the PNDT Techniques resulting into the Female Foeticide. In other words, it can be said that now with modernization and urbanization, the violence against women has got increased in many forms resulting in the form of increase in Dowry Deaths, Domestic violence, Sexual Harassment at Workplace, Molestation and Eve teasing, Increase in rape cases, Child abuse, Bigamy, Abandoning of new born girl child and also the declining sex ratio. The Violence against Women senior citizen has also got increased. The menace of use of alcohol and other intoxicants has perpetuated the phenomenon of violence against women and has got increased in the State in Punjab in manifolds resulting into more and more women becoming victim of this menace. Even the suicide rate has gone up so far the women in State of Punjab are concerned. One of the reason that due to patriarchal and feudal values women are oriented not to come back to their parental house in case of dispute with her husband and in-laws and since either there are very less support systems available to the women in distress or they are not aware about the existing support systems finally there is no way out left and number of women are reduced to commit suicide. Recently, the plight of abused married girls deserted by their NRI husbands (through fraudulency and treachery) is also setting an alarming situation in the State of Punjab. **To state the obvious position, Data tables on the following pages are enough to support our contention about**

**Violence Against Women and also Discrimination / Biases expressed by the holders of patriarchal values against Women.**

**UNDERSTANDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE STATE OF PUNJAB:-**

Violence Against Women is largely prevailing because of the societal mechanism combined with patriarchal values by which women are forced into a subordinate position. Thus it can be said that basically it is a manifestation of unequal power relation.

Violence is defined as a physical act of aggression of one individual or group against another or others. Violence results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, psychological harm or suffering. This also includes the threat of such act, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty in public or private life and violation of human rights of women in situation of armed conflicts.

While the basic reason for violence against women is their lower status in a male dominated society educationally, economically, politically and socially, there are other factors too. The increasing criminalisation of society, media images of violence, poor enforcement of legal provision, unabashed, and rising incidents of alcoholism and addiction alongwith erosion of traditional values have all added to it.

Violence against women is also getting manifested in the form of Rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment at workplace, dowry death, suicide, Female Foeticide and Female Infanticide, harassment by NRIs to their wives, Social Violence against Widows and Psychological and Physical Violence by Alcoholic / Addict Husband to their Wives.

## **VIOLENCE WOMEN FACE OVER THE LIFE CYCLE**

1. Foetal Stage
  - Sex Selection
  - Female Foeticide
  - Female Infanticide
  
2. Infancy
  - Infanticide
  - Malnutrition
  
3. Childhood
  - Neglect due to absence of medical care and education
  - Sexual abuse
  - Physical Violence
  
4. Adolescence and Adulthood
  - Early Marriage
  - Early Pregnancy
  - Sexual Violence
  - Domestic Violence
  - Dowry Harassment
  - Harassment due to infertility / failure to produce sons
  - Desertion
  - Witch hunt
  
5. Older Women and Widows
  - Desertion
  - Neglect-Emotional, Financial, Social and Physical

### **Adult sex ratio above 6 years**

India	934
Punjab	886

### **Adult sex ratio over the decade 1991-2001**

State	2001	1991	Difference 2001-1991
India	934	923	11
Punjab	886	883	3

### **Child sex ratio**

Punjab	793
India	927

### **Child sex ratio over the decade 1991-2001**

State	2001	1991	Difference 2001-1991
India	793	875	-82
Punjab	927	945	-18

### **Some means adopted to eliminate girl children**

- Poisonous oleander berries
- Lacing feed with pesticides
- Stuffing poppy seeds/rice husk to slit tender gullets
- Stuffing mouth of baby with black salt/urea
- Poison rubbed to mother's breast
- Suffocation with wet towel or bag of sand
- Asphyxiation by exposure to strong current of pedestal fan
- Starvation

**Infant mortality rates among females and gender differences-  
1998&1999 (Rural & Urban)**

1998

States	Total		Rural		Urban		
	IMRF	GAP	IMRF	GAP	IMRF	GAP	
Punjab	56	3	67	15	18	-39	
India	73	3	79	3	49	7	

1999

States	Total		Rural		Urban		
	IMRF	GAP	IMRF	GAP	IMRF	GAP	
Punjab	56.4	5.9	67.2	18.4	16.2	-40.3	
India	70.8	1	75.2	0.4	39.7	-7.7	

**NUMBER & PERCENTAGE FOR POPULATION BELOW POVERTY LINE  
1999-2000**

State	No. of Persons	% of Persons
India	2602.50	26.10
Punjab	14.49	6.16

**FEMALE LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH 1992-96 & 1993-97  
RURAL AND URBAN**

**Female Life Expectancy at Birth – Total**

State	1992-96	1993-97
Punjab	68.6	68.8
India	61.4	61.8

## **Female Life Expectancy at Birth – Rural**

State	1992-96	1993-97
Punjab	67.5	67.8
India	59.8	60.2

## **Female Life Expectancy at Birth Urban**

State	1992-96	1993-97
Punjab	71.5	71.5
India	67.7	68.1

## **WOMEN HEALTH**

State	Mean Age at the Marriage (1991 Census)	% of Women (25-49 Years) Married before the age of 18 (NFHS-2, 1998-1999)
Punjab	19.70	23
India	17.68	65

## **MEAN AGE OF MARRIAGE**

State	Total	Rural	Urban
Punjab	19.70	19.66	19.80
India	17.68	17.44	18.46

## **Total and Desirable Fertility rates**

State	Total wanted fertility rate	Total fertility rate
Punjab	1.55	2.21
India	2.13	2.85

### **Women suffering from anaemia**

State	% of women with any anaemia	% of mild	% of moderate	% of severe
Punjab	41.4	28.4	12.3	0.7
India	51.8	35	14.8	1.9

### **Effective couple protection rate (CPR)**

State	1998	1999
Punjab	68.9	73.1
India	45.4	48.6

### **Delivery care indicators**

State	% of births delivered in medical institution	% of deliveries assisted by health professional
Punjab	37.5	62.6
India	33.6	42.6

### **Post natal care indicators**

State	% of non institutional deliveries with postpartum check-up with in two months of birth	% of non institutional deliveries with postpartum check-up with in two days of birth
Punjab	20.3	5.7
India	16.5	2.3

### **Female literacy & Gender Gap in literacy rates 1991-2001**

Female literacy			Literacy gap		
State	2001	1991	State	2001	1991
Punjab	63.55	50.41	Punjab	12.08	15.25
India	54.16	38.79	India	21.69	24.52

### **Female literacy & Gender Gap in literacy levels - Rural**

State	FLIT	State	LGAP
Punjab	58	Punjab	14
India	47	India	25

### **Female literacy & Gender Gap in literacy levels - Urban**

State	FLIT	State	LGAP
Punjab	75	Punjab	8
India	73	India	13

### **Enrolment ratio in classes 1-V & V1-VIII of schools for general education (all students)1999-2000**

State	Classes I-V (6-11Years)			Classes VI-VIII(11-14 yer.		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Punjab	79.91	81.71	80.75	64.53	64.95	64.73
India	104.08	85.18	94.9	67.15	49.66	58.79

### **Dropout rate**

Primary (99-00)

State	Total	Girls
Punjab	22.49	20.15
India	40.25	42.28

### **Labour force participation rates by states union Territories**

	1993-94		1999-2000		1993-94		1999-2000	
	Rural		Rural		Urban		Urban	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Punjab	55.4	22.3	54.3	28.2	57.1	9.9	56.5	12.5
India	56.1	33	54	30.2	54.3	16.5	54.2	14.7

### **Female work participation & Gender GAP in participation**

State	FWPR	MWPR	WGAP
Punjab	21.2	62.4	41.1
India	30.3	61.3	31.0

### **Female workforce participation rate**

State	Rural		urban	
	1993-94	1999-2000	1993-94	1999-2000
Punjab	22	28	9.3	12.5
India	32.8	29.9	15.5	13.9

### **Employment in organized sector as on 31<sup>st</sup> march 1999**

State	1999		1998	
	Total employed (lakhs)	% of women employment to total employment	Total employed (lakhs)	% of women employment to total employment
Punjab	8.5	15.4	9.2	15
India	281.1	17.2	281.9	17.2