

# Personal Crimes: A Case Study of Asansol and Durgapur City, Paschim Barddhaman, W.B,India

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Received: January 21, 2019

Accepted: March 03, 2019

**ABSTRACT:** *A Crime is defined as any act that is contrary to legal code or laws. There are many different types of crimes, from crimes against persons to victimless crimes and violent crimes to white collar crimes. The study of crime and deviance is a large subfield within Geography, with much attention paid to who commits which types of crimes and why. Crimes against persons also called personal crimes include murder, aggravated assault, rape, and robbery. Personal crimes are unevenly distributed in the Asansol, with young, urban, poor, and racial minorities both more often affected by these crimes and arrested for them than white, middle- and upper-class people are. This research paper investigates impact of personal crimes on society of Asansol and Durgapur city, Paschim Barddhaman and its surroundings area.*

**Key Words :** *Crimes, murder, rape, robbery, gambling, illegal coalmines etc*

## INTRODUCTION

In Indian society, woman occupies a vital position and venerable place. The Vedas glorified women as the mother, the creator, and one who gives life and worshipped her as a 'Devi' or Goddess. But their glorification was rather mythical for at the same time, in India women found her totally suppressed and subjugated in a patriarchal society. Indian women through the countries remained subjugated and oppressed because society believed in clinging on to orthodox beliefs for the brunt of violence—domestic as well as public, Physical, emotional and mental(Andiappan, P. 1981:23-29).

Crime against women is partly a result of gender relations that assumes men to be superior to women. Given the subordinate status of women, much of gender violence is considered normal and enjoys social sanction. Manifestations of crime include physical aggression, such as blows of varying intensity, burns, attempted hanging, sexual abuse and rape, psychological violence through insults, humiliation, coercion, blackmail, economic or emotional threats, and control over speech and actions. In extreme, but not unknown cases, death is the result (. Haraway, D. 1991:210-231). Women are vulnerable to various forms of violent treatment for several reasons, all based on gender in the Asansol and Durgapur city of Paschim Barddhaman District.

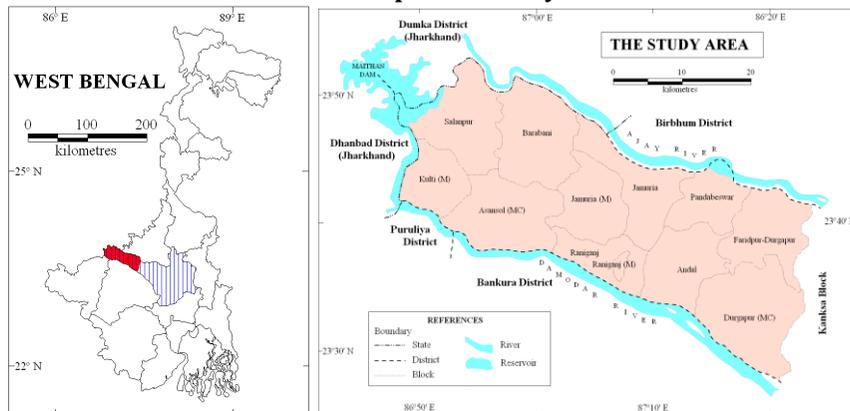
## OBJECTIVES:

The prime objectives of the present paper are:

- to identify the different types of crimes in the mining and industrial economy in the western part of Barddhaman District, West Bengal, for the last fifty years;
- to explore the effects of those changes on the environment of the area; and
- to find out the harassment of working women is primarily a problem faced by men in the study area

## METHODOLOGY

The fieldwork stage includes intensive field works to generate data on various aspects of physical and social environment, present conditions of the women workers in economic activities, rate of decrease in income and expenditure, data on economic constraints faced by women and children through empiric observations, oral interviews and surveys with structured questionnaire schedules.

**STUDY AREA****Location map of the study area**

Source: 73 I/13, 73 M/2, 73 M/7, 73 I/14, 73 M/6 and Office of the Asansol Durgapur Development Authority, 2003

**CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN IN THE STUDY AREA*****Sexual Harassment***

Sexual harassment of working women is primarily a problem faced by men, that men rarely face this problem and therefore it should be considered a form of sex discrimination. 368 incidents of sexual harassment were reported. Woman was sexually harassed every day in 2018 in the study area. An increase in incidents of sexual harassment was seen between 1995-2018 (Table No: 1 and 2).

***Rape***

In criminal law, rape is an assault by a person involving sexual intercourse with another person without that person's consent. Outside of law, the term is often used interchangeably with sexual assault, a closely related (but in most jurisdictions technically distinct) form of assault typically including rape. Rape is the fastest growing crime in the study area today and as many as 18 women are assaulted in some form or the other every hour across the study area. Over the last few months cases of rapes and assault have made it to the headlines with alarming frequency. 373 women were raped during the year 2016-18, 1 woman was raped every day. An increase in the incidents of rape was seen between 1995-2018 (Table No: 1 and 2).

***Eve Teasing***

Eve teasing is an act of terror that violates a woman's body, space and self-respect. It is one of the many ways through which a woman is systematically made to feel inferior, weak and afraid. Whether it is an obscene word whispered into a woman's ear; offensive remarks on her appearance; an intrusive way of touching any part of a woman's body; a gesture which is perceived and intended to be vulgar: all these acts represent a violation of a woman's person, her bodily integrity. Eve teasing denies a woman's fundamental right to move freely and carry herself with dignity, solely on the basis of her sex (Hindu, August 2, 2018). 21 women were eve teasing during the year 2018. An increase in the incidents was seen between 1995-2018 (Table No.1 and 2).

***Kidnapping of women and girls***

130 women and minor girls were kidnapped in 2010, 1 woman and minor girls were kidnapped every 3 day. An increase in the incidents was seen between 1995-2018 (Table No. 1 and 2)

***Dowry Related Murders***

16 women were murdered due to dowry in 2010. Records show that in the study area dowry murder increased from 5 in 1995 to 16 in 2018 (Table No.1 and 2).

***Dowry Related Death***

Dowry deaths went up from 80 in 1995 to 269 in 2018, all the while showing a steady rise in rate of crime. Committee for Police Matters reported that in the preceding years ,reports of dowry deaths and cruelty by husband and relatives had increased a great deal ,especially in the village areas such as Jamuria, Barabani, Kulti, Pandabeswar and Raniganj. Together, the dowry related cases of suicide and homicide show an alarming rise in the violence women face in their own homes. Unfortunately, though more and more cases of dowry harassment and death are continuing , there seems to be a strange apathy a path among people who have now taken it for granted that this is in -built into the customs of marriage communities (Table No: 1 and 2).

***Dowry related violence***

Implies the death (by murder or suicide) of a young bride who is harassed by her husband and in-laws by making exorbitant and ever-increasing demands for money and for household articles to be brought from her parents' house or at their expense. The phenomenon of demanding dowry has filtered down to the poorer sections of society in the study area. Some see this as a result of the devaluation of women. As women become housewives instead of earners or producers, they are considered to be economic parasites (Field Survey, 2008-2018).

In some C.D Blocks such as Jamuria, Barabani, Pandabeswar and Kult, weddings are preceded by the payment of an agreed-upon dowry by the bride's family. Failure to pay the dowry can lead to violence. In the study area averages of 1 woman a day are violated by in dowry-related disputes and many more cases are never reported (Table No: 1 and 2).

***Early marriage***

Early marriage, especially without the consent of the girl, is another form of human rights violation. Early marriage followed by multiple pregnancies can affect the health of women for life. Discrimination against them begins even before their birth and continues as they grow. Their psychological, physical and economic dependence on the family makes them vulnerable to violence and child abuse within or outside the family. 14 incidents of early marriage were reported in 2010. An increase was seen in incidents of early marriage between 2016-2018 (Table No: 1 and 2).

***Domestic Violence***

Domestic Violence can be described as when one adult in a relationship misuses power to control another. It is the establishment of control and fear in a relationship through violence and other forms of abuse. The violence may involve physical abuse, sexual assault and threats. Sometimes it's more subtle, like making someone feel worthless, not letting them have any money, or not allowing them to leave the home. Social isolation and emotional abuse can have long-lasting effects as well as physical violence. 237 women faced domestic violence in their marital homes in the study area (Table No: 1 and 2).

"Bride tortured to death for dowry", "School going kid succumbs to his injuries after beaten by father", "A seventy year old man killed over property dispute", All these and what not, turn to any newspaper at random and you would find the reports of such kind of violence all over the study area (Field Survey, 2018). This form of domestic violence is most common of all. One of the reasons for it being so prevalent is the orthodox and idiotic mind set of the society that women are physically and emotionally weaker than the males. If the ratio of domestic violence in the study area is related to the Blocks such as Faridpur-Durgapur, Raniganj Block, Jamuria Block, Pandabeswar Block and Barabani Block. Graphically represents the rise in crimes registered under cruelty by husbands and other relatives in the study area from 2016-2018 (Table: 1 and 2).

***Female Feticide***

Female feticide is a heinous act and an indicator of crime against women. Women in the study area have suffered a lot and have swallowed innumerable atrocities for so many generations. Be it wife battering, rapes or dowry deaths, she has been suffering and subjected to discrimination. The determination of the sex of the fetus by ultrasound scanning, amniocentesis, and in vitro fertilization has aggravated this situation. Although no moral or ethical principle supports such a procedure for gender identification. The situation is further worsened by lack of awareness of women's rights and by the indifferent attitude of governments and medical professionals. The private fetal sex determination clinics were first established in the place of Barakar (Field Survey, 2006-2010). The practice of selective abortion became popular from the late 1970s. Surprisingly, the trend is far stronger in urban rather than rural areas, and among literate rather than illiterate women, exploding the myth that growing affluence and spread of basic education alone will result in the erosion of gender bias. The need for a dowry for girl children, and the ability to demand a dowry for boys exerts considerable economic pressure on families to use any means to avoid having girls, who are seen as a liability. If the ratio of female feticide in the study area is related to the Blocks such as Faridpur-Durgapur, Raniganj Block, Jamuria Block, Pandabeswar Block and Barabani Block. Graphically represents the rise in crimes registered under female feticide in the study area from 2016-2018 (Table No: 1 and 2).

***Sale of Wife***

In traditional farming communities, women helped in farming and bridegrooms paid a bride price to her parents. In the past this used to be a token amount. If a widow or a married woman chose to enter into a live-in relationship with another man, the latter in turn paid the first husband the amount he had spent at the time of the marriage. This system has, in the last decade become completely distorted with women being sold and resold for astronomical sums and the panchayats and police turning a blind eye to these goings on.

9 incidents of sale of wife were reported in 2010. An increase was seen in incidents of sale of wife between 2016-2018 (Table no: 1 and 2).

### **Violence against the old women**

Elder abuse as 'harm to an elder person caused by someone in apposition of trust, who may have control over the victim. This includes material abuse such as financial exploitation, physical abuse, such as pushing, physical assault, and psychological abuse, such as chronically threatening, swearing at or insulting the older person, and neglect or failing to provide necessary help such as meal preparation, housework or personal care. 16 incidents of violence against old women were reported in 2010. An increase was seen in incidents of violence against old women between 2016-2018 (Table no: 1 and 2).

### **Violence against Widows**

Widow Remarriage is not common and not sanctioned by society; however men were allowed to remarry. Widows are called inauspicious and are avoided, whenever possible (. Haraway, D. 1991: 13-25). 6 incidents of violence against widow were reported in 2010. An increase was seen in incidents of violence against widow between 2016-2018 (Table: 1 and 2).

**Table No: 1 Crime against Women in the western part of Bardhaman District**

Crime heads	No of cases registered			
	1995	1998	2008	2018
Sexual Harassment	136	231	298	365
Rape	16	29	96	102
Eve teasing	13	16	18	21
Kidnapping of women and girls	52	95	105	130
Dowry murder	5	9	12	16
Dowry deaths	80	99	241	269
Early marriage	9	12	13	14
Domestic Violence	112	123	159	237
Female feticide	6	8	9	11
Sale of wife	3	4	6	9
Violence against old women	9	11	13	16
Violence against widow	4	5	6	6
Child sexual abuse	19	20	21	35
Son Preference	39	36	29	29

Source: The Additional Director General of police, State Crime Records Bureau, Kolkata; Superintendent of police, Asansol, and Durgapur, 2018 and Field Survey, 2008-2018

**Table No:2 Incidents of Crimes in the study area**

Incidents of crimes in 2018									
Police Station	Status	Sexual Harass- Ment	Rape	Eve teasing	Kidnapping	Dowry deaths	Domestic Violence	Son Preference	others
Durgapur	M.C	19	4	5	16	9	12	-	2
Asansol	M.C	17	5	4	12	8	13	-	3
Kulti	M	29	6	4	10	29	11	-	4
Andal	Block	28	9	-	9	22	19	3	5
Salanpur	Block	29	5	-	9	24	18	4	5
Pandabeswar	Block	27	11	-	8	29	22	4	14
Jamuria	M	33	9	3	11	19	19	1	9
Jamuria	Block	36	14	-	9	35	24	4	15
Raniganj	M	31	6	4	12	18	13	1	6
Barabani	Block	39	10	-	9	31	21	5	13
Faridpur-									
Durgapur	Block	36	11	1	15	19	39	4	16
Raniganj	Block	41	12	-	10	26	26	3	15
<b>Total</b>		<b>365</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>269</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>107</b>

Source: The Additional Director General of police, State Crime Records Bureau, Kolkata; Superintendent of police, Asansol, and Durgapur, 2018

### **Child Sexual Abuse**

Out of 35 school girls 42% had experienced sexual abuse at the hands of family members 25% had been raped, forced to masturbate the perpetrator or forced to perform oral sex, nearly 33% said the perpetrator

had been a male friend of the family in 2018. An increase was seen in incidents of child sexual abuse between 1995-2018(Field Survey, 2004-2018 and Table: 1 and 2).

### ***Violence of Traditional practices***

In the study area, women fall victim to traditional practices that violate their human rights. The persistence of the problem has much to do with the fact that most of these physically and psychologically harmful customs are deeply rooted in the tradition.

### ***Son preference***

Son preference affects women in the study area, particularly in Jamuria, Pandabeswar and Kulti C.D .Block. Its consequences can be anything from fetal or female infanticide to neglect of the girl child over her brother in terms of such essential needs as nutrition, basic health care and education. In the study area, some women choose to terminate their pregnancies when expecting daughters but carry their pregnancies to term when expecting sons. 29 incidents of violence against son preference were reported in 2018. An increase was seen in incidents of violence against son preference between 1995-2018 (Table: 1 and 2).

### **CONCLUSION**

Days after day's social crimes have risen to such an extent that both male and female sections of the society are losing their sanctity, self honours, manliness etc. There is a limit of poverty. Increase women awareness for remedy of women violence. It excels the limit and all things become topsy-turvy. This sort of situation is seen in these areas finding no other alternative, particularly women section indulge themselves in such sorts of heinous, antisocial and corrupted works because they bear the burden of a large section of family members where their counterpart fail to mitigate the problems of their family. Increased health care costs and sick pay costs because of the health consequences of harassment. (Field Survey, 2016-2018).

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