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WOMEN ISSUES AND MEDIA: KARNATAKA



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Short Profile

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ABSTRACT:

The Indian print media's liberal and reformist legacy of the pre-independence period has helped address women's issues. Journalists have striven hard to give women's issues a legitimacy so as to bring them within the ambit of "what makes news." yet, several media researches conducted over a period of time continue to reveal that most women's issues remain within the confines of inside pages and analyzed only if they have socio-political implications and not independently as women's issues. However, only political freedom in terms of universal suffrage did not

mean that other women's issues took centre stage. "Interaction between media and women's activists and groups have brought these issues to the forefront and generate public awareness especially about 'less complicated and contentious ones – such as education, healthcare, income-generation, savings and credit and to some extent, legal action. but, these issues still fail to make it to the first page or headlines in the media in a sustained manner. The entire article discussed the matter relate to women issues in media.

KEYWORDS

The Hindu, The Economic Times, Dna News, The Hindubusiness Line, Daily Bhaskar, Zee News

INTRODUCTION

Media in India has become a world whose existence mirrors reality, magnifies issues to bring it to the national consciousness, sometimes distorts with conflicting messages to touch base with existing paradoxes, but definitely a medium that is vibrant in the Indian democratic set up India's cultural and linguistic diversity, and her huge population coupled with high illiteracy rates makes the role of media in dissemination of information and knowledge about women's issues not only very significant, but also a highly challenging task. Media has the power to influence the attitudes of the policy-makers as well as ordinary people. However, this can be achieved only when sufficient coverage is given with the prominence and frequency it deserves. With media - print, audio-visual and cyber - growing in leaps and bounds, competition has also increased, necessitating packaging and marketing of news effectively in order to survive in a highly competitive market. There have been repercussions at political and social levels regarding the portrayal of women in the media. To cite two instances: In 2003, advertisements promoting 'fairness creams' as being thereto successful women were termed by the government of India as "objectionable" and a "demeaning portrayal of women". While the Information and Broadcasting Ministry sent notices to several television channels to withdraw these advertisements, the National Commission for Women has mooted the formation of a media watch group to monitor advertisements. Ten years later, in 2013, such creams continue to be promoted. Now with an addition to the platter that such fairness creams are also promoted for men with film celebrities as the brand ambassadors! Whether this is a way to promote gender equality needs to be researched further.

Women Issues Discussed in Media a perspective of Karnataka:

THE HINDU

BANGALORE, January 4, 2013

Helpline launched for women to report sexual assault cases

Stepping up measures for women's safety in the wake of the recent gang-rape in Delhi, the State government on Thursday announced several initiatives, including the launch of a dedicated helpline for Bangalore city. Women in distress and those facing threat of attack, including molestation, could call on the toll free phone number 1091.

Addressing presspersons here on Thursday, Deputy Chief Minister R. Ashok, who also holds the Home and Transport portfolios, said that the helpline in Bangalore would work 24 x 7. The State police would operate the helpline and register sexual abuse complaints from women. The police would be rushed to the spot for providing protection to women, he said.

"Call the helpline number 1091 if you feel intimidated by strangers. The helpline will intimate the Hoysala patrol and you will receive assistance," he promised. A special squad would be created to address exclusive issues of security and safety, he said.

Mr. Ashok said that the police would map isolated places on campuses of universities and the outskirts and step up Hoysala patrolling. As many as 110 Hoysala vehicles and 367 Cheetah squads

would patrol the city round the clock, he said. Colleges Special Bandobust will be made near all schools and colleges within Bangalore police limits to prevent eve-teasing and action will be taken against habitual eve-teasers.

CCTVs would be installed in public places in the city, he said while releasing a brochure, "Your Protection Our Responsibility". Another guideline manual has been issued specifying dos and don'ts for the public at large. One lakh copies of the manual will be printed and distributed to people in public places such as bus stands and railway stations. They would also be pasted on walls in public places, he said. Hostels The government has mandated all women hostels and women paying guest accommodations to register with the police. Action would be taken against owners of paying guest accommodations who decline to provide details to the police, he warned.

A high-level committee comprising senior officers of Home and Law Ministries would be constituted to look into pending sexual harassment and assault cases and ensure quick justice to the aggrieved. Severe action would be taken against police officers refusing to register cases and also for showing laxity in solving cases. All cases involving rapes would be registered in a time frame, he said.

Mr. Ashok advised elderly women not to open the door for strangers when they are alone at home and receive post/courier through windows. Director-General and Inspector-General of Police Lalrokhuma Pachau and Bangalore Police Commissioner Jyotiprakash Mirji attended the press conference.

Meanwhile, voicing concern over rape incidents, Energy Minister Shoba Karandlaje has urged the government to amend laws to provide for stringent punishment, including surgical castration, to perpetrators of crime against women.

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

ET Bureau Nov 15, 2014, 10.37AM IST

Karnataka government sets up panel to probe sexual abuse in prison

BENGALURU: The Karnataka government has set up a committee to inquire into allegations of women prisoners at Bangalore Central Prison being forced into sex by prison officials and wardens. Chief Secretary Kaushik Mukherjee told ET: "The committee, which will meet inmates and inquire, will be headed by a woman officer. We will do a thorough investigation. We are a civilized society and if these allegations are proved to be true, we will take severe action. The government is not going to spare anybody." The matter came to light when a judge came across two letters, detailing sexual exploitation, written by a group of women prisoners. They alleged wardens and a few officials - who were named in the letter - were charging male prisoners ` ` 500 and forcing .300-. women prisoners to comply.

[The letters were addressed to the Chief Justice of Karnataka High Court.](#)

However, Bengaluru central prison DIG PN Jayasimha told ET there was "no truth" in the allegations. The male barrack was half-a-kilometer away from the female barrack and there were CCTVs keeping watch. "Let the committee come and talk to the women wardens. They are so disturbed by the allegations, they are contemplating suicide," he said.

Former Karnataka chief minister HD Kumaraswamy demanded sacking of Home Minister KJ George from the Cabinet. "The home minister has failed completely in securing the safety of women, even inside the central prison.

The matter has reached the high court and the home minister remains detached from the issue," he said. BJP MP ShobhaKarandlaje said, "What kind of a jail are they running? There cannot be anything worse than this. I am going to write to the National Commission for Women, and raise it in the Lok Sabha. We will draw the government's attention to inquire into the possible exploitation of women prisons across India. The government should hold high level inquiry and send those involved in this to the same ParappanaAgrahara prison."

Karnataka State Human Rights Commission's acting chairperson MeeraSaxena told ET it will register a suomoto complaint and investigate the allegations.

DNA NEWS

Karnataka sets up 24-hour helpline for women

Thursday, 3 January 2013 - 4:49pm IST | Place: Bangalore | Agency: IANS

Karnataka government on Thursday set up "SahayaVahini" - a dedicated 24-hour helpline to protect women and ensure their safety and security by reaching out to them at the earliest across the state. "With hunting facility for quick response, the helpline 1091 will be available to the public, especially women and girls, to lodge complaint, seek help, information and alert police against any form of attack on them by anyone," Deputy Chief Minister R Ashoka told reporters in Bangalore. Admitting that the heinous December 16 gang-rape in New Delhi and the nationwide outrage against it had hastened the need for such a facility, Ashoka, who also holds charge of the home department, said citizens, particularly women and girls, can dial the dedicated number for any kind of help or assistance any time round the clock. "Any affected woman or girl can reach the police and seek help or information in Kannada, Hindi or English. In the event of any attack or assault on any women, girls or even minors, our personnel will take the complaint and alert the jurisdictional police station for quick response, including medical assistance," he assured. For attending to complaints in quick time or provide help for the affected, the state government is also creating the required infrastructure support. "As our police force has the highest number of motorcycles and Hoysala jeeps for patrolling and investigations and are equipped with wireless devices for effective communication, efforts will be made to ensure they respond to any complaint or help will be equally in quick time," Ashoka said. To augment the police force, the state government has recently recruited about 3,000 people for the post of constables, inspectors and security personnel across the state. "In addition, about 2,000 people will be selected and trained for deploying them as industrial security force to secure vital installations and provide protection to the workforce, including women and children," said the minister. Noting that all calls to the helpline will be recorded and complaints or queries will be relayed to other police stations on real-time basis for quick and coordinated response, Ashoka said taxis/cabs and other types of vehicles ferrying women/girls to workplace in the IT & biotech sectors and back, especially during the graveyard shift, will have to install global positioning system (GPS) within the next 30 days to track and locate them in the event of any complaint against their drivers or others in the vehicles. "As safety and

security of women, girls, and minors is our primary concern, we are doing our best to instill confidence among them and create a fear element among perpetrators so as to reduce crimes against them with zero tolerance," he said. Reiterating that a high-level committee comprising senior officials of home and law departments will deal with the pending cases of sexual abuse against women, Ashoka said the accused would be booked under the Goonda Act for stringent action and speedy investigation of such criminal acts. "Strict action will be taken against police officials who delay or refuse to register cases by women against anyone, however mighty. We will set timeframes for the speedy investigation, trial, conviction and sentencing that will act as a deterrent for others," he added.

Police have directed owners/landlords renting out or providing paying guest (PG) accommodation to girl students, working women or singles to furnish their details at the jurisdictional police station for compiling the data as a ready reckoned. The state government's response came a day after the state's lone woman cabinet minister, Shobha Karandlaje, wrote to Chief Minister Jagadish Shettar on Wednesday seeking stringent laws against crimes on women.

ZEE NEWS

Bangalore student sexual assault: Karnataka CM for action against school management

Last Updated: Friday, October 24, 2014 - 10:10

Bangalore: Assuring swift action into the alleged sexual assault of a three-and-half-year-old girl student at a private school, Karnataka Chief Minister S Siddaramaiah on Friday directed police to take action against the institution's management. Siddaramaiah's statement comes a day after the state government decided to file a criminal case against the institution for violating several rules. There has been a huge outrage over the alleged sexual assault of the girl student in Orchid The International School here on October 21. According to the complaint, the girl was crying when her mother picked her from the school in Jalahalli and was not behaving normal and had symptoms of fever. While the girl initially told her mother that someone beat her up, she later said she was sexually abused. A case was registered late Tuesday under sections of PoCSO Act (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012) and the Indian Penal Code (IPC) on a complaint by the child's father. This is the third incident of a minor girl student being allegedly sexually assaulted on school campus in the city in the last four months. An eight year-old girl was allegedly sexually assaulted by her 63-year-old teacher inside her school premises over a period of time, with the offence coming to fore in early August, barely a month after the "gang-rape" of a six-year-old girl at Vibgyor High School in the city evoked public outrage. The Vibgyor school incident saw public erupt in anger on the streets leading to police issuing stringent guidelines to schools to ensure safety of children and the government amending the Goondas Act to bring sexual offences under its ambit.

DAILY BHASKAR

Dailybaskar.com | Jul 25, 2013, 14:18PM IST

Karnataka shocker: Dalit woman raped and filmed at Buddhist ashram for six years; alleges other girls

face 'similar treatment' Bangalore: Making her plight which she encountered for over six years known to police, a Dalit woman has accused an owner and workers of a Buddhist ashram in Kothanur of raping her since she was thirteen. DNA reports that she approached Kothanur police on July 17 with the help of a Dalit organisation and alleged in the complaint that she was in the Peace House Ashram at BhairathiBande since she was nine years old, until her marriage at the age of 19. She said Do Wrong Choice, a director of the ashram, started to harass her when she was 13-year old. She alleged that he raped her regularly till she was 19 and got married. She alleges that another employee of the ashram, Manual Joysing, told her to co-operate with the director and also threatened her against revealing the matter to anyone. He allegedly also recorded the rapes with his handy cam. She remained quiet about the abuse. At the age of 19, she fell in love with a construction labourer who came to ashram for work. She married him and left the ashram. Her husband came to know that several girls and women were allegedly raped in the ashram and suspected that his wife too might have been sexually abused. Owing to repeated questioning by him in this regard, she separated from him a few months ago. A Dalit organization came to know about her and advised her to complain about the matter with police. The police have registered a case of rape and threatening against Choie and Joysing. Both are said to be absconding. Kothanur police said a manhunt has been launched to nab the accused.

THE HINDU

BUSINESS LINE

(This article was published on January 3, 2013)
Karnataka sets up dedicated Women's helpline

BANGALORE, JAN 3:

Stepping up measures for women's safety in the backdrop of growing demand for such action, Karnataka Government today set up a dedicated helpline. Women in distress and those facing threat of attack including molestation could call on phone number 1091. The helpline in Bangalore would work 24x7, state Home Minister R Ashok told reporters here. The government initiative comes in the backdrop of the national outrage over the gang rape of para-medical student in Delhi and several incidents of rapes in the state in the past fortnight. Voicing concern over rape incidents, state Energy Minister Shoba Karandlaje yesterday urged the BJP government in the state to amend laws to provide for stringent punishment, including surgical castration, to perpetrators of crime against women. State Home Minister Ashok said the new helpline to be operated in the city will soon be extended to the entire state. "Till such time people particularly women could call at 100 to report crimes against women", he said. He also said police have issued an "advisory" to all the BPO firms and IT firms employing women staff to inform the government about the steps they have initiated for security of women in their establishments. He said all BPO, MNCs and IT companies have been directed to maintain a record of details about drivers and installation of GPS system in all vehicles is mandatory. The government has also made it compulsory for those running Paying Guest units and hostels for women to register with police. Police have stepped up vigil across all women colleges to check eve-teasing cases and patrolling in vast vacant lands owned by Universities and defence establishments, he said, adding

CCTV cameras would also be installed in these places, besides public places. The Minister said all private schools have been directed to furnish details of drivers hired by them to police in the backdrop of allegation of sexual harassment of girl children by vehicle crew. Commenting on the cases booked against traffic violators, Ashoka said during last year, 50 lakh cases were registered and Rs. 52 crore fine collected in the city. Ashoka sought to side step queries on Karandlaje's letter seeking surgical castration for rapists and also blaming police laxity in dealing with rape cases. "We have taken the advice of several women and women organisations in issuing fresh guidelines for women's safety", he said.

CONCLUSION:

The media, especially mainstream cinema, often plays a very negative role in this scheme of things, by projecting an image of women as sex objects. It can also serve to reinforce some of the stereotypes. Perceived religious sanctions against a woman quitting an unhappy marriage, or standing up against discrimination are other possible alienating factors.

Women's issues need to be dealt with not just as gender issues but as an integral part of development concerns and processes. Proactive media participation in women empowerment is the need today, going beyond mere coverage of incidents to larger issues on a regular basis. To ensure sustained and effective coverage, all those working in the field of women empowerment must understand media needs too if media has to effectively disseminate information. It is equally necessary for organizations working in this area to understand the language and style of media presentation and to recognize the importance of timeliness - a basic tenet of journalism. Despite facing stiff commercial competition to sustain itself, media can act as effective agents of change and will never ignore people's issues. For, people's issues form the basis of media survival and purpose.

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