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 RAPE A SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Sexual violence is a serious problem that can have lasting, harmful effects on victims and their family, friends, and communities. The goal of sexual violence prevention is to stop it from happening in the first place. The solutions are just as complex as the problem.

The legal definition of rape has changed substantially since the late 20th century. The traditional definition was narrow with respect to both [gender](https://www.britannica.com/topic/gender-grammar) and age; rape was an act of sexual intercourse by a man with a woman against her will. As rape is now understood, a rapist or a victim may be an adult of either gender or a child. Although rape can occur in [same-sex](https://www.britannica.com/topic/homosexuality) intercourse, it is most often committed by a male against a female. There is also an increasing tendency to treat as rape an act of sexual intercourse by a husband with his wife against her will and to consider forced [prostitution](https://www.britannica.com/topic/prostitution) and sexual slavery as forms of rape.

Rape is often explained or excused as a [manifestation](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/manifestation) of racial, ethnic, and class hatred or as stemming from a patriarchal system in which [women](https://www.britannica.com/topic/women) are viewed as the property of men. Whatever its origins, rape is a serious crime and is treated as a [felony](https://www.britannica.com/topic/felony) in most countries with [common-law](https://www.britannica.com/topic/common-law) systems. In many rape trials, the guilt or innocence of the accused hinges on whether or not the victim [consented](https://www.britannica.com/topic/consent-law) to sexual intercourse. The determination of consent often can lead to distressing [cross-examinations](https://www.britannica.com/topic/cross-examination) of rape victims in court. As a result, many rape victims choose not to report the crime to [police](https://www.britannica.com/topic/police) or refuse to press charges against their assailants. According to a study conducted in the United States in the 1990s, for example, fewer than one-third of rapes in the country are reported to police, and about half of all rape victims do not discuss the incident with anyone. Even when brought to trial, those charged with rape have a higher-than-average rate of acquittal, mainly because it is difficult to prove a crime for which there are usually no third-party witnesses and because the testimony of women often may be given less [credence](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/credence) than that of men. Rape is thus both underreported and under prosecuted. To protect women from humiliating cross-examination, many jurisdictions have adopted [rape shield laws](https://www.britannica.com/topic/rape-shield-law), which limit the ability of the defendant’s [counsel](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/counsel) to introduce the accuser’s sexual history as [evidence](https://www.britannica.com/topic/evidence-law).

The psychological motivations of rapists are more complex than was formerly thought. They may include the desire to punish, to gain revenge, to cause pain, to prove sexual prowess, and to control through fear. The psychological reactions of victims of rape also vary but usually include feelings of shame, humiliation, confusion, fear, and rage. Victims often report a feeling of perpetual defilement, an inability to feel clean, an overwhelming sense of vulnerability, and a paralyzing feeling of lack of control over their lives. Many are haunted by fear of the place in which the crime occurred, or of being followed, or of all sexual relationships. Others experience long-term disruption of sleep or eating patterns or an inability to function at work. The duration of the psychological trauma varies from individual to individual; many feel the effects for years, even with considerable supportive therapy. In view of the great psychological harm it causes, many psychologists regard rape as a form of [torture](https://www.britannica.com/topic/torture)—a permanent mutilation of an individual’s life. In addition to these psychological effects, in some societies victims of rape face the danger of ostracism or even death at the hands of relatives seeking to preserve their family’s honour (victims of abduction without rape may be treated in the same way).

There are various scenarios and issues that can contribute to someone being raped. Is the size of a woman’s dress an invitation to all and sundry to rape her? Available data reveal that in India, on an average 106 rapes are reported every day, out of which 40 per cent of the victims are minors. It is even more shocking that in nearly 95 per cent of the cases, rapes are committed by none other than the relatives and family members, or people known to the victims. Rapes are a universal occurrence, they are not restricted to any particular country, region, race, caste or class. They happen as much among the poor, rural, illiterates as among the rich, urban and the so-called elites. Rapists have all sorts of excuses and justifications for their acts. The reasons quoted are so diverse that it is nearly herculean to generalize. Rapes are committed by religious leaders, teachers, father, brother, relatives, neighbours, friends, acquaintances or even strangers. In this patriarchal and gendered world, rape is a stigmatized crime wherein aspersions are cast on the victim instead of the accused. This emboldens menfolk who bank heavily on a woman’s silence to preserve her honour. It is also very easy to put the blame on the woman for bringing out the beast in a man. There is a justification that she should be punished for arousing him. Afterall if there were no women, who would men rape? So maybe it is the very existence of woman that needs to be blamed for turning our holier-than-thou men into rapists.

One important issue raised time and again is related to the size of a woman’s dress. Do the dresses provoke? Are women clad in sarees and burqas not raped? We have instances where men sexually abuse animals. Should we clothe animals too? Another oft-cited reason is makeup. Rapists allege that women apply heavy makeup especially lipstick to lure men. How do you explain rape on minors, infants, old and aged women, women suffering from unsoundness of mind, women in comma or those hospitalized with severe ailments? What could they have done to catch a rapist’s fancy? Earlier men kept sex slaves, now they hire escort girls. Prostitution is the world’s oldest profession. Sugar daddies- ‘I sponsor you’ is a common western concept fast gaining in popularity in our sub-continent. Wife swapping is a notorious fact. People rape their daughters, sisters and sometimes even mothers. What causes such extreme depravity? The pathology is an obsession for sex.

Another reason is the desire to control. Rape is a power crime. Narcissistic tendencies are common in celebrities, especially among actors and sportspersons. Their popularity among females causes them to mistake themselves as demigods whom women are dying to please in bed. Men like to boast about their sexual encounters equating them with conquests. Sex requires a man to be aggressive, he feels superior and in control. It is all about the need to control and assert power. Rapes are committed with impunity during wars. Husbands rape their wives and seek to justify it as a means of punishment to her or to put her in her place or simply to vent out their frustrations. Spurned suitors, jilted lovers and all those who believe the woman to be theirs cannot take no for an answer and force sex to punish or avenge.  People rape their girlfriends, live-in partners, friends and acquaintances. There is patriarchy fueled male desire to dominate. Men are scared of a woman’s sexuality, so that needs to be suppressed. She evokes the need in them, thus there is a dislike for the passive yet undeniable power that she wields over them.

There are rape myths- No means yes; a lady never says yes; women like to be taken by force; Women who drink are an easy lay; outgoing women like to experiment in all areas including sex, etc. By perpetuating such myths women have been deprived of their voice or agency to exercise her choice. Most of the time the accused are not even aware that what they have done amounts to rape. They admit to forced sex but refuse to accept it as an act of rape. Then, there are date rapes. Boyfriends who don’t know when to stop because they fail to comprehend the concept of consent. In some tribal areas, there are customary practices of taking women by force. Lack of safety measures also plays a part. In villages, women have to venture out at night as there are no toilet facilities at home. This puts them at risk.

Another reason is the lack of sex education. Adolescent boys have an urge to explore. A skewed sex ratio, lack of accessibility and negligible interaction with people of the opposite sex play havoc on impressionable minds fed with easy access to porn. Also, the profanity of using vulgar lyrics in songs needs to be curbed. There are item numbers where the woman is projected as no more than an object of desire. This causes women to be viewed as commodities, meant to be consumed and ravished. Sexually obsessed rapists don’t consider women as human beings but as an object that can be violated with impunity.

Education, gender sensitization and legal awareness are indispensable to control rapes. We need better policing and CCTV mapping of desolate areas. Cognitive restructuring is needed to remove the myths clogging our minds. Behavioural and emotional intelligence is very different from academic intelligence. We need to question the accused and not the victim, the time of rape or the dress she wore. Society needs to stigmatize the perpetrator instead of the victim. Sensible sensitivity is essential to counter this crime which is rightly classified as the ‘worst crime against womanhood’.

Rape has a lot of bad effect on the victims, rape is a traumatic experience that impacts its victims in a physical, psychological, and sociological way. Even though the effects and aftermath of rape differentiate among victims, individuals tend to suffer from similar issues found within these three categories. Long term reactions may involve the development of [coping mechanisms](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coping_%28psychology%29) that will either benefit the victim, such as social support, or inhibit their recovery. Seeking support and professional resources may assist the victim in numerous ways, both physically, psychologically and emotionally. the effects of rape can include both the initial physical trauma as well as deep psychological trauma. Although rape victims commonly report injuries and issues with their reproductive health after the [sexual assault](https://www.healthyplace.com/abuse/sexual-assault/what-is-sexual-assault), rape doesn't always involve physical force. The most common and lasting effects of rape involve mental health concerns and diminished social confidence.

A rape victim can be affected physically by forced sexual assault and those not involving forcible submission, such as drug-assisted [date rape](https://www.healthyplace.com/abuse/rape/what-is-date-rape-acquaintance-rape). Forced sexual assault frequently causes visible bruising or bleeding in and around the vaginal or anal area and bruises on other parts of the body from coercive violence. But both forced and other types of rape can have many other physical consequences like; Painful intercourse (with significant other), Urinary infections, Uterine fibroids – non-cancerous tumors in muscle wall, Pregnancy, Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) – HIV, genital warts, syphilis, gonorrhea, chlamydia, and others.

Victims can be affected psychologically as victims experience both short and long-term psychological effects of rape. One of the most common psychological consequences of rape is self-blame. Victims use self-blame as an avoidance-based coping tool. Self-blame slows or, in many cases, stops the healing process. Other common emotional and psychological effects of rape, whether or not they were injured during a [sexual assault](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sexual_assault), survivors exhibit higher rates of poor health in the months and years after an assault,] including acute [somatoform disorders](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Somatoform_disorder) (physical symptoms with no identifiable cause).[]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rape_trauma_syndrome#cite_note-psychiatryonline1974-1) [Physiological](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Physiological) reactions such as [tension headaches](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tension_headaches), [fatigue](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fatigue_%28medical%29), general feelings of soreness or localized pain in the chest, throat, arms or legs. Specific symptoms may occur that relate to the area of the body assaulted. Survivors of oral rape may have a variety of mouth and throat complaints, while survivors of vaginal or anal rape have physical reactions related to these areas.

There are various ways in which rape can be curbed and prevemted and Preventing sexual violence requires addressing factors at all levels of the [social ecology](https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/publichealthissue/social-ecologicalmodel.html)—the individual, relational, community, and societal levels.

One of the major ways can be by must be by the Promotion **Social Norms** that Protect Against Violence which can be approached by bystander approaches and the mobilization of men and boys as allies.

Further, by **Teaching s**kills to Prevent Sexual Violence and that can be done **Teach**Skills to Prevent Sexual Violence Social-emotional learning, Teaching healthy, safe dating and intimate relationship skills to adolescents, Promoting healthy sexuality, Empowerment-based training.

Moreover by the Provision of **Opportunities** to Empower and Support Girls and Women by the Strengthening economic supports for women and families and Strengthening leadership and opportunities for girls.

In colclusion rape is a social problem which has emotionally, psychologically, physically, mentally distorted the life of its victims. Stigmatization of rape victims has to stop and all sex offenders must be reprimanded and face the letters of the law.