As educated and financially independent women begin to question male dominance, there is a sharp increase in atrocities against them leading to more broken homes.

1. Brutal Retribution

India Today, p 36, Nov. 13, 1998
2. Dusting off a potent weapon

Instances of sexual harassment in the workplace, at public places and even at educational institutions have become all too common. And it is the latter which gives cause for the greatest concern, writes Jitu Srivastav:

MEN and Woman are two halves of a whole! Two complementary aspects, both are essential for the propagation of the species, yet are not willing to extend to each other the respect and courtesy due to both by virtue of the important roles they play. I do not take sides but merely observe that the battle lines have been drawn, the trenches dug and war declared!

Allocation of blame is a tedious and sometimes impossible affair. All that is important to understand and accept is that the young minds have already been tainted with ideas and attitudes that will warp and sicken the person who bears it. This very mindset that propagates and encourages sexual harassment is like a disease whose manifestations will ultimately disfigure the person who bears it.

While all this theorising might have given you a remote and a safe sense of vagueness, it is the little countless instances in our daily lives that awaken us to the horrifying ugly pictures that we ourselves make sometimes. Every time, somebody makes a sexually based comment behind someone's back its called eve-teasing and every time you join in it or the ensuing laughter, you and your friends, are committing a crime punishable by law. Sounds scary, doesn’t it? But it’s true.

Some say that in the rising era of feminism, man feels emasculated and in order to overcome that feeling, he asserts his dominance in the manner he feels will be the most threatening, thereby leading to sexual harassment. Some discuss this as a sign of puberty that, amazingly enough, seems to affect one per cent of the girls and 50 per cent of the boys but then again, this section probably also believes that something called female puberty does not exist. There are yet others who believe that permission and mental sickness are the root causes for this malignant mindset. It could be one of these or all of the above or none. To do justice to this topic would even be beyond the scope of a psychologist.

But ultimately, I believe that all these problems arise from one common factor—‘a lack of respect’. A lack of respect for that person, his privacy, his weakness, his vulnerability, his wishes and his desires. If you can respect people in their entirety, no matter who or what they are, then I believe you have got the problem licked.
Empowering women power

Special investigation and prosecution rights have helped the Kerala Women's Commission succeed where its counterparts have failed, says Meera Nair.

Though there are 11 other states which have such women's commissions — besides the NCW in Delhi — none matches the Kerala body's record. The NCW, which has been in operation for the past six years, has till now received just 2,000 petitions. The 11 other state commissions have managed to together register only 6,000 cases. In comparison, the KWC — which was set up just two years ago — has registered 15,800 cases as of today and the numbers keep growing by the day. Of these 15,800 cases, almost 8,500 are in various stages of settlement while some others have already been settled a commendable conviction rate.

CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN IN STATE (1990-1997)

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<td>5</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
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<td>Dowry death after marriage and within 7 years</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>Offences relating to cruelty to women</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>237</td>
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<td>380</td>
<td>551</td>
<td>676</td>
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<td>1,894</td>
<td>1,745</td>
<td>3,313</td>
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SOURCE: DIG, WING, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM
Planning commission deputy adviser says that violence against women has been increasing every year. Dowry death, rape, harassment, and kidnap are the major violence against women. Social, economic, and political powers given to women are not sufficient. Women commissions, women police station, women legal centres, court, and women counselling centres should be started in all districts to reduce violence against women.

The Central home ministry has released few statistical informations (data) about the violence against women in four metropolitan cities Chennai, Mumbai, Calcutta and Delhi.
WITH rape being reported once every 54 minutes, even using every 11 minutes and dowry death every 17 hours, legal experts call for reviewing existing laws relating to women to protect them against growing incidents of crime and violence.

The need of the hour, says noted woman lawyer, Indira Jaisingh, is to review the existing laws and suggest remedies especially against domestic violence, an area which has traditionally been unaddressed by the law, mainly because it was considered a private domain.

"It has been found that criminal courts are powerless to grant any protection to women against dispossession from the matrimonial home or even grant any maintenance to her or her children during the pendence of the trial," says Jaisingh.

Since the concept of 'matrimonial home' remains unrecognised in Indian law, the courts have often refused to recognise the right of the wife to reside in the matrimonial house, says Jaisingh.

"Mere legislation will not help. While we strive to reform and restructure our legal system to enable women survivors of domestic violence to seek justice with dignity, we must also transform our systems of belief and acceptance radically to enable violence against women to be perceived as the abhorrent act that it is," PTI

MUSLIM women in the country have called for a ban on the 'triple talaq system' of divorce and demanded a compulsory registration of marriages and divorces. About 200 women from 43 organisations across the country gathered at Malad last week for a three-day national conference on 'Muslim Personal Law and Women'.

Other demands include the reinstatement of maintenance for divorced Muslim women, mehr (dower paid by the husband) be paid at the time of marriage and its dereference to incur value addition, guardianship rights for the mother over her children and other reforms. The conference also drew up a demand for karah-e-panduan (pin money) that should be compulsorily given to the woman.

FOR MANY of South Korea’s working women, marriage means losing a lot. Though government officials say it is not true and quote figures, as of March 1.2 million women and 5,77,000 women were out of work. The figure excludes the 3,40,000 women who lost jobs and became full-time housewives last year. In January, about two dozen women who lost their jobs because of marriage, founded an activist group that educates women on their rights and helps them take legal action against employers. But since Asia’s economic crisis began two years ago, it would be a hard task. Companies are cutting jobs and the victims are largely women.
Woman’s claim to maintenance dismissed

Express News Service

Mumbai, Sept 6: The Bombay High Court recently dismissed Saraswati Baburao Bugad’s claim for maintenance from her second husband. Reason: she couldn’t prove her divorce from her first husband.

The twelve-year-old legal battle waged by Saraswati, a labourer from Vita village in Sanghi district, is not only tragic, but also indicates the social conditions prevalent in the Devang Koshti community to which she belongs.

The High Court has dismissed her application by upholding the order of the Sangli trial court, which didn’t entertain her claim in 1992. But HC judge S S Parkar has observed that the respondent husband shouldn’t insist on refund of the maintenance amount already deposited by him following the initial order of payment of maintenance by the judicial magistrate of Vita in 1986.

Teenager Saraswati was married to one Vilas Rokade in 1977. The marriage lasted a little less than a decade and was dissolved by mutual consent. The petitioner claimed such a dissolution was a common custom in the Devang Koshti community. Thereafter, in January 1986, she married Baburao Bugad. After three months of marriage, Bugad declined to maintain her.

Meanwhile, she conceived a child in August 1986. She then filed an application before the judicial magistrate, Vita. The magistrate ordered monthly maintenance of Rs 250 for the petitioner and Rs 100 for the child. This order was challenged by the husband in the trial court, which ruled in his favour. Therefore, Saraswati moved HC, stating that the Sangli court shouldn’t have interfered with the magistrate’s order.

She claimed she was divorced by her former husband by publishing a public notice in the newspaper Daily Vishal Sahyadri. Her counsel S V Sadavarte claims her consent to the divorce is implied in the fact that she didn’t challenge the notice. As a result, she becomes the legally-wedded wife of the second husband.

But Justice Parkar ruled a unilateral public notice can’t amount to divorce by mutual consent. Therefore, the second marriage is null and void in the eyes of law.

It is also brought on record that Saraswati was actually working as a maid-servant in the second husband’s house. A document with a stamp paper was produced in the trial court, which mentions an amount of Rs 900 paid to her by Bugad in 1986.

Lastly, the judge ruled, the vast age difference between Saraswati (25) and her second husband (60), who is stated to have suffered infertility, doesn’t support her claim of having conceived the child from him.

Indian Express, p 8, Sept 6 1998
8. Daughter-in-laws are the Legal Heir for Orphan Mother-in-laws

Supreme court of India has declared that daughter-in-laws have all legal rights to enjoy all properties which are owned by her widow mother-in-laws, if a daughter-in-law is a widow.
9. Means of Giving Dowry in Kanyakumari District

Indian Express, p9, Sept 8 1997
Bride's Brother offering a Gold Chain value Rs 20,000 at the Time of Marriage to Bride Groom
10. Harassment for More Dowry

A T.V. serial actor harassed his wife for more dowry. At the time of marriage the bride's father had promised to give 10 lakh cash and a new car as dowry. But he could not give this amount. So this actor harassed her wife. The wife reported this matter to all women police station and the police have arrested the T.V. actor and registered a complaint against him.
11. Is Any Solution for Divorce?

Divorce is not the only solution for family problem between husband and wife. Both the partners are come from different family, social and cultural backgrounds. If they sit and discuss their problem openly, they can avoid divorce mutual understanding and adjustment help reducing divorce.
12. Bride Market

In some part of India, parents sell their young daughters for few thousands. Rich young boys are ready to offer money, jewels and cattles for beautiful young girls. This is a most common custom in many tribal areas.