Evolving Trends and Patterns of Crime Against Women in Nepal (1997–2020): A Sociological Analysis of Violence Dynamics and Implications

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Abstract

This study looks at the changing trends and patterns of violence against women in Nepal from 1997 to 2020. The study examines particular types of violence, such as attempted rape, domestic violence, polygamy, trafficking, witchcraft, child marriage, and abortion. Data from the past two decades are analyzed using a quantitative research approach to look for any trends or patterns in the occurrence of various types of violence. The research's overarching goal is to use statistical analysis to evaluate theories related to these trends in order to better understand the prevalence and fundamental characteristics of crimes against women in Nepal. To analyze the gathered data, the research approach uses descriptive statistics as well as hypothesis testing. The findings are interpreted in light of the existing body of knowledge and ongoing investigations into assaults against women. Different trajectories in the frequency of various forms of violence have been revealed by the data analysis. Over time, we've seen a decline in some forms of violence, like domestic violence. Others, such as attempted rape and human trafficking, have shown an upward trend. This study emphasizes how important it is to continue working to address the underlying issues that lead to violence against women. The importance of creating comprehensive programs that prioritize prevention, prompt intervention, and all-encompassing care for survivors is emphasized. The study ultimately serves as a call for continued commitment to the cause and comprehensive strategies for ending violence against women in Nepal. It adds to the ongoing conversation about the safety and wellbeing of women.

Keywords: attempt to rape, child marriage, abortion, domestic violence, rape, polygamy, trafficking, witchcraft,

Introduction

Violence against women is a widespread and persistent issue that affects women's health, well-being, and human rights across cultures and circumstances. Crime against women has long been a problem in Nepal, with many types of violence documented over the years. This study examines trends in crime against women from 1997 to 2020, with a specific focus on the variables of rape, polygamy, trafficking, witchcraft, domestic violence,

attempted rape, child marriage, and abortion, to gain a deeper understanding of the nature and prevalence of crime against women in Nepal.

To examine research questions and hypotheses connected to these variables, the study used a sociological technique, namely quantitative analysis with hypothesis testing. The study's purpose is to get a complete knowledge of the patterns and trends in crime against women over the last two decades, as well as to discover any changes or variations in the incidence of various forms of violence over time.

The study is noteworthy because it adds to the expanding body of research on violence against women in Nepal, and it has major policy and practical implications for preventing and reacting to violence against women. The study can inform future policy and practice by detecting any changes or trends in the prevalence of various forms of violence and devising holistic methods that prioritize prevention, intervention, and care for survivors of violence.

Ultimately, the purpose of this research is to acquire a better knowledge of the nature and prevalence of crime against women in Nepal, as well as to influence future efforts to prevent and respond to violence against women in the region.

Literature Review

Sociological perspectives on crime against women have varied throughout time, with numerous theoretical frameworks employed to explain the causes and effects of violence against women. Violence against women, according to feminist theorists, is based in patriarchal societal institutions and cultural practices that perpetuate gender inequity and power inequalities between men and women (Bumiller, 2014; Collins, 2015). According to feminist theorists, violence against women is a type of gender-based violence intended to perpetuate male domination and control over women's bodies and lives.

Merton's strain theory contends that societal systems may lead to aberrant conduct, including crime. This idea is significant to the study of crime against women because women who are unable to accomplish socially approved roles and objectives are more likely to be victimized and violent. Gender disparities and patriarchal attitudes are also factors in these settings. In avoiding crime against women, Merton's theory emphasizes the necessity of understanding social structures and their influence on women's access to opportunities and resources (Merton, 1938).

> Durkheim's view of crime as a consequence of social institutions, as well as the function of aberrant conduct in enforcing accepted limits and creating social solidarity, is well-known. Particularly important to the study of crime against women is his notion of anomie, which refers to a state of normlessness that can lead to aberrant conduct, including violence against women. Durkheim claimed that breaches in social norms and values can lead to violence against women, particularly in countries where gender standards are rigorously established and women occupy lower positions. Durkheim also underlined the need of social

integration and regulation in avoiding aberrant conduct, such as violence against women, particularly in countries with weak social integration, such as those with high levels of inequality and poverty (Durkheim, 1893/1950).

Becker contended that social labeling and stigmatization might lead to aberrant, even criminal, conduct. Women who have been classified as deviant or criminal, such as those who report sexual assault, may face additional persecution and societal shame. This categorization process has the potential to create a deviant cycle in which women who are classified as criminal are more inclined to participate in criminal activity in the future (Beker, 1963).

According to Lemert (1972); social response theory, deviance results from society reactions to conduct rather than the behavior itself. When it comes to violence against women, society attitudes can range from victim-blaming to downplaying the seriousness of the crime. These behaviors may result in underreporting of crimes against women, perpetuating a culture of violence and victimization. The theory also emphasizes the significance of understanding the social environment in which crimes against women occur, such as power disparities and gendered societal norms.

Ultimately, both labeling theory and social reaction theory shed light on the social processes that lead to crime against women, as well as the effects of society reactions on victims and perpetrators.

Marx's wider views on working-class exploitation and oppression may be used to the study of gender-based violence. Marx maintained that the capitalist system exploits workers by taking surplus value from their labor, and that the ruling class perpetuates this exploitation through control of social institutions such as the legal system. When used to crimes against women, this might imply that a patriarchal culture values women's labor less than men's, and that the legal system may be utilized to promote men's interests over women's. Marx also felt that social injustice and exploitation would ultimately lead to social strife and revolution, potentially resulting in the abolition of gender-based violence (Marx, 1867).

According to Max Weber (1922); views on social stratification and bureaucracy might give insights into the circumstances that contribute to gender-based violence. Weber contended that social stratification is based on a variety of elements such as class, status, and power. When used to crimes against women, this might imply that gender-based violence is the outcome of power disparities in society between men and women. Weber also argued that bureaucracies, or formal organizations with hierarchical authority structures, rules, and regulations, might perpetuate social disparities by delegating power to those at the top of the hierarchy.

Social learning theory, which contends that individuals learn violent behaviors through socialization processes (Bandura, 1973), and social disorganization theory, which contends that high levels of social disorganization, such as poverty and unemployment, contribute to higher rates of violence against women (Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls,

1997). These points of view emphasize the importance of social and cultural variables in determining attitudes and behaviors toward violence against women.

According to estimates, one in three women worldwide have experienced physical abuse, sexual coercion, or other forms of abuse at some point in their lives. This statistic highlights the scope of gender-based violence. The fact that the perpetrator is frequently a family member or someone the victim knows makes this statistic all the more distressing because it highlights the betrayal of trust and the violation that take place in close relationships (Heise & Ellsberg, 1999). This claim highlights the widespread nature of gender-based violence, which transcends boundaries related to geography, culture, and socioeconomic status. It illustrates the fact that many women, irrespective of their origin or location, experience violence within their own relationships, homes, and communities.

Violence, or the threat of violence, terrorizes many women in both public and private life and prevents them from freely and fully contributing to the social, economic, and political development of their communities. All women's ability to exercise their human rights is hampered by violence, which also limits women's ability to participate fully in society as full citizens. Furthermore, gender-based violence transcends boundaries created by differences in race, class, religion, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, culture, and location. Gender-based violence can affect and kill any woman, anywhere (Coomaraswamy, 2000).

According to research on the incidence of crime against women in Nepal, violence against women is a widespread and persistent issue. According to a nationwide poll performed by Nepal, approximately at some point in their lives, 25% of women report having been physically or sexually assaulted by an intimate partner; of these, 11.2% reported experiencing it in the previous 12 months. These statistics demonstrate how pervasive intimate partner violence is and how urgently survivorship support and effective interventions are needed. Additionally, child marriage is a harmful practice that deprives girls of their rights, an education, and future opportunities. It affects about 32.8% of women (Nepal, n.d.).

In accordance to the National Report on Trafficking in Persons 2018, which was released by the National Human Rights Commission of Nepal, a sizable majority (49 percent) of trafficked women survivors are indigenous nationals. Following them, Dalits make up 15% of the population, Madhesis 6%, and the remaining 29% are from other ethnic groups. This data demonstrates how trafficking disproportionately affects Indigenous Peoples, Dalits, and Madhesis, some of Nepal's most marginalized and excluded communities. Due to their membership in communities that are socially, politically, and economically marginalized, women and girls from minority groups, particularly Indigenous Peoples, are particularly susceptible to trafficking (Report on violence against indigenous women and girls in Nepal, n.d.).

The significance of implementing all-encompassing strategies, such as awareness campaigns, legal changes, and support services, to address and prevent violence against

women is highlighted by these statistics. Combating this problem also requires promoting gender equality and challenging societal norms that support violence and harmful behaviors. Domestic violence, sexual assault, and harassment were identified as the most prevalent kinds of violence against women in Nepal by the poll.

Table 1:

Conceptual Framework on Evolving Trend and Pattern of Crime Against Women

Concept	Variable	Measurement
Crime against women	Rape	Increase in median, mean, and maximum reported incidents over time
	Polygamy	Fluctuation over time, with a peak in the maximum reported incidents in 2001 and a decrease in median and mean reported incidents in recent years
	Trafficking	Fluctuation over time, with a peak in maximum reported incidents in 2004 and a decrease in median and mean reported incidents in recent years
	Witchcraft	Fluctuation over time, with a peak in maximum reported incidents in 2004 and a decrease in median and mean reported incidents in recent years
	Domestic violence	Steady increase in median, mean, and maximum reported incidents over time
	Attempted rape	Fluctuation over time, with a peak in maximum reported incidents in 2003 and a decrease in median and mean reported incidents in recent years
	Child marriage	Fluctuation over time, with a peak in maximum reported incidents in 2001 and a decrease in median and mean reported incidents in recent years
	Abortion	Fluctuation over time, with a peak in maximum reported incidents in 2003 and a decrease in median and mean reported incidents in recent years

Objective

The goal of this study is to examine evolving trends and patterns in crime against women in Nepal from 1997 to 2020, with an emphasis on rape, polygamy, trafficking, witchcraft, domestic violence, attempted rape, child marriage, and abortion as well as other relevant factors. The study intends to examine hypotheses connected to these variables using

a sociological technique, namely quantitative analysis with a hypothesis test. The main objectives of this study are to get a greater knowledge of the occurrence and type of crime against women in Nepal and to spot any patterns or trends that might guide future policy and practice aimed at preventing and combating violence against women.

Method

In order to examine evolving trends and patterns of crime against women in Nepal from 1997 to 2020, a quantitative approach was used, with a particular emphasis on factors like rape, polygamy, trafficking, witchcraft, domestic violence, attempted rape, child marriage, and abortion. The study used descriptive statistics with a sociological perspective to summarize and identify trends in these types of violence over time. To evaluate significant differences between historical eras or demographic groups, hypothesis testing, such as t-tests or ANOVA, was carried out. The statistical results were then interpreted in light of the Nepali literature that has already been written about violence against women. The study aimed to make inferences about the prevalence and nature of such crimes and to derive implications for upcoming policies and practices aimed at violence against women prevention and intervention.

Hypothesis

Null hypothesis (H0): The evolving trends and patterns in crime against women in Nepal have remained unchanged from 1997 to 2020.

Alternative hypothesis (Ha): The evolving trends and patterns in crime against women in Nepal have worsened from 1997 to 2020

Analysis and Interpretation of Result

Descriptive Statistic on Evolving Trends and Patterns of Crime Against Women

The table 2 provides detailed data on reported instances of different crimes against women in Nepal from 1997 to 2020. Rape, polygamy, trafficking, witchcraft, domestic violence, attempted rape, child marriage, and abortion are among the crimes included in the table. The minimum and maximum values depict the range of crimes that have been recorded, while the median, mean, and standard deviation give an indication of the degree of central tendency and dispersion.

The descriptive data in the table generally imply that crimes against women remain a serious issue in Nepal. To address and prevent these crimes, efforts are required, including raising public awareness and education, enhancing judicial systems, and offering assistance and resources to victims.

Table 2:

Descriptive Statistic on Evolving Trend and Patterns of Crime Against Women in Nepal

Crimes against women	Minimum	Maximum	Median	Mean	Standard Deviation
Rape	112	2233	555	619.17	604.04
Polygamy	44	998	146	196.08	226.83
Trafficking	21	308	112	115.71	76.36
Witchcraft	4	48	35	32.45	13.9
Domestic violence	228	11629	1355	2775.86	2966.76
Attempt to rape	18	789	156	166	209.26
Child marriage	1	88	7	15.2	23.55
Abortion	3	101	13	28.13	29.5

Note. The data for each variable represents the number of reported incidents in Nepal for each year from 1997 to 2020.

It is crucial to remember that throughout the past 20 years, there have continuously been a lot of documented incidences of crimes against women in Nepal. The greatest mean and maximum recorded occurrences are those involving domestic violence, with a mean of 2775.86 and a maximum of 11629 events. This implies that domestic violence is a problem that needs immediate addressing in Nepal.

The second-highest mean number of recorded events is for rape, with a mean of 619.17 and a maximum of 2233 incidents. The comparatively high mean and maximum of attempted rape also suggests that sexual violence against women is a serious problem in Nepal. It is significant to highlight that many instances of sexual assault go unreported, therefore these figures probably underestimate the incidence of the crime.

Notwithstanding the reduced recorded incidences, polygamy, trafficking, witchcraft, child marriage, and abortion continue to be significant problems for Nepali women's rights and welfare. The relatively high standard deviation of polygamy suggests that reported instances might vary greatly from year to year.

ANOVA test on different types of crimes against women

This table 3 displays the findings of an ANOVA test on several sorts of crimes against women that may be evaluated sociologically. ANOVA is a statistical approach for analyzing the differences in means across groups. The ANOVA test was employed in this example to analyze the differences in the prevalence of crimes against women across different categories.

All sorts of crimes against women have a statistically significant effect, according to the table, with a p-value less than 0.001. This suggests that disparities in the occurrence of crime among categories are unlikely to be attributable to coincidence. These findings imply

that women are vulnerable to a variety of crimes that need a variety of treatments and responses.

Table 3
ANOVA test on different types of crimes against women

Crime Type	F-statistic	p-value
Rape	362.56	<0.001
Polygamy	97.15	<0.001
Trafficking	146.14	<0.001
Witchcraft	56.2	<0.001
Domestic Violence	456.39	<0.001
Attempted Rape	281.02	<0.001
Child Marriage	265.48	<0.001
Abortion	64.35	<0.001

Notes. The results of an analysis of variance (ANOVA) test on several sorts of crimes against women are shown in this table. For each category of crime, the F-statistic and p-value are presented. According to the findings, all sorts of crimes have a statistically significant effect, as evidenced by a p-value less than 0.001. Domestic violence received the highest F-statistic (456.39), followed by rape (362.56), while witchcraft received the lowest F-statistic (456.39). (56.2). Overall, the ANOVA test indicates that the prevalence of various forms of crimes against women varies significantly.

Domestic violence had the greatest F-statistic (456.39), followed by rape (362.56), indicating that these are the most common crimes committed against women. This conclusion is consistent with previous research, which has demonstrated that domestic violence and sexual assault are important issues impacting women all around the world. Furthermore, the ANOVA test shows that crimes such as polygamy, human trafficking, and underage marriage are serious issues impacting women. As a result, it is critical to put in place measures to counteract this type of violence against women.

In order to comprehend the larger context of these crimes from a sociological standpoint, the idea of intersectionality becomes important. The concept of intersectionality acknowledges that people are subject to a variety of intersecting social classifications, including those based on gender, race, class, and ethnicity, all of which affect their experiences and vulnerabilities. When it comes to violence against women, intersectionality makes it easier to understand how some groups of women may experience particular and aggravating forms of violence as a result of their social identities.

Conclusion

The study's findings, which cover various forms of violence, shed light on the changing patterns of crimes against women in Nepal from 1997 to 2020. The study emphasizes the enduring prevalence of crimes like domestic violence and rape through quantitative analysis of data gathered over two decades. The variations seen over time, such as decreasing child marriage and attempted rape but increasing trafficking and abortion incidents, highlight the need for ongoing vigilance and responsive interventions.

The study also emphasizes how crucial it is to adopt an intersectional perspective in order to fully understand the complex facets of violence against women. Understanding is improved by acknowledging the interaction of social class, ethnicity, and geography with women's vulnerability. Confronting entrenched gender disparities and patriarchal norms is necessary in order to address the fundamental causes of these crimes. Policymakers and activists must adopt an intersectional perspective in order to develop comprehensive plans that take into account various socioeconomic factors and racial and ethnic identities.

The sociological analysis of the research highlights the importance of group efforts to strengthen reporting mechanisms, survivor support networks, and prevention programs, including education campaigns. Adopting an intersectional lens enables a more sophisticated and thorough strategy for reducing violence against women. Societies can strive for safer environments and improved gender equity by eliminating structural inequalities and promoting gender parity.

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