



Rise in Violence Against Women

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Why in News

The **National Commission for Women (NCW)** has recorded a **more than twofold rise** in **gender-based violence**.

It has been argued that the national **lockdown** has left many people jobless, uncertain over salaries, in forced isolation and in stressed households which have resulted in a **steep rise in violence against women**.

Key Points

- **Data Analysis:**
 - **Total complaints-** Rose from 116 in the first week of March to 257 in the final week of March.
 - **Rape or attempt to rape-** Rose sharply from 2 to 13.
 - **Domestic violence-** Increased from 30 to 69 over the same comparative period.
 - **Police apathy towards women-** Almost threefold increase as the police are busy enforcing the lockdown to curb the spread of **Covid-19**.
 - **Right to live with dignity (Article 21)-** Rose to 77 from 35. Such cases could pertain to discrimination on the basis of gender, class or caste or all three of them combined.
 - These cases might be a **fragment of the actual number** as many women will not be able to reach out due to various reasons.

- **Possible Reasons:**

- **Privacy:** Women are not be able to reach out because of restrictions on movement as well as a lack of privacy within homes. Women need privacy and certainty that they will not be discovered by their family but that becomes impossible in the presence of the entire house.
- **Frustration among Males:** There is a lot of **anxiety in people's minds** about their jobs, salaries and livelihood. **Women become easy targets for men** for venting out their anger in **patriarchal societies**.
- **Lockdown:** It has **restricted the movement** and closed women's avenues to escape violence such as by relocating to their natal homes or contacting the local police.
- There is evidence that in situations of crisis or calamity there is an increase in violence against women.

- **Suggestions:**

- The police do not seem the first port of call for victims of domestic violence and, therefore, **alternative arrangements** should be put in place.
- The government should **ensure resources to help** women in **distress**, and put **health services** to women and abortion in the list of essential services.
- **Inspiration** can be taken from **France** which announced that it would pay for 20,000 hotel bookings and contribute €1 million to organisations that fight domestic abuse as well as set up assistance points at supermarkets and pharmacies.

National Commission for Women

- It was set up as a **statutory body** in January 1992 under the National Commission for Women Act, 1990.
- Its **mission** is to strive towards enabling women to achieve equality and equal participation in all spheres of life by securing her due rights and entitlements through suitable policy formulation, legislative measures, etc.
- Its **functions** are to:
 - Review the **constitutional and legal safeguards for women**.
 - Recommend remedial legislative measures.
 - Facilitate redressal of grievances.
 - Advise the Government on all policy matters affecting women.

Source: TH