



## IS INDIA STRUGGLING WITH ITS MORAL VALUES

Peter Adamis 30 May 2014

Is India struggling with its moral values because it is steeped into in its own paradigms and traditions of a bygone era.

Not living or having visited India, one can be expected to say yes. This is a great pity because India has come onto the world stage after maturing as a nation of many communities and cultures.

However having said this, India is still struggling to come to terms with its own internal values on a traditional and moral level. It is therefore with great regret and revulsion to read on a daily basis the actions of a nation that has embraced democracy and yet is struggling with its moral values.

India is the largest democracy in the world today and is fast becoming a world power that is seeking acknowledgment of its power and influence in the world. Unlike China which despite having its own internal problems of human rights amongst other matters does not appear to be suffering from any moral values deficiencies.

India could well do with taking a good hard look at its own internal matters and address them once and for all without the need of further embarrassing its self airing dirty laundry for all the world to look at and not be taken seriously when in the company of its neighbours on the world stage.

It is time that the people of India stood up against their lawmakers and made their voices heard regarding the degradation of moral values and a review of past traditions whose paradigms are stepped in a past that is filled with superstition and a caste system that is no longer valid in today's enlightened society.

Here in Australia, our Indian residents are aghast at what is occurring in their native land and go to great lengths to demonstrate their disapproval of such matters. They know full well that what occurs in India will also affect and influence Western thought and society against them in a manner which may appear discriminatory and racial harassment if accosted in a public place.

Our Australian Indian community have embedded and integrated well into Australian society abiding by its laws and institutions, while at the same time practicing their faith and traditional home life within the serenity of the homes and communities.

India could well do without the negative publicity and action is need to be conducted by the implementation of mass education and re-education programmes that could be embedded as part of the public education system. Programmes that demonstrate that the law of the land according to the constitution of India must be upheld and adhered to when it comes to basic moral values, basic respect for one another, basic human rights of all individuals, and that law enforcement agencies act upon any injustices without fear or favour in order that the paradigms of the past become irrelevant.

As an observer of human global events, I am never surprised by the brutality of man and only occasional would I be surprised when in the darkest of moments there is a glimmer of hope in the act of one human kindness. That one act could be stretching out a hand to these in need, helping someone who is not of the same faith or supporting a community that is being oppressed.

Then in these tiny moments, I feel that as an observer that hope is still shining amongst the deadwood of misery and grief. India as a nation needs to look closely at its own back yard and review its stance the behaviour of the few that is giving India and Indians in general a bad name and a poor image of its people. Therefore such acts of stoning, honour killings, gang rapes, ritualising, caste system and traditions that belong to a bygone era be abolished and that the full force of the law according to its constitution be acted upon.

If India fails to take positive action that is long lasting and creates an environment that the people can trust then and only then will they as a nation be taken seriously. It will matter little if the world's largest democracy sits on its hands, or with its hands on its mouth, or over its ear and/or over its eyes doing nothing, then it will be condemned by the whole world. I am of the belief that social media can be as effective if sufficient media attention is focussed on such vile and disgusting practices of gang rapes, ritual and honour killings as well as the ancient practice of stoning and child marriages.

If India is truly struggling with its moral values, should not the world global social media be the judge of what is to be acceptable in this enlightened age of technology and science; or should social media be harnessed to shine a light and educate people that the barbaric practices that belong to an age that is no longer valid and a new beginning is required.



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## INDIA GANG RAPES ARRESTS OVER HANGED GIRLS IN UTTAR PRADESH

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Ever since the fatal gang rape of a student in Delhi in December 2012, there have been public protests and an outcry against sexual violence

At least three men, including one police officer, have been arrested after two teenage girls were gang raped and hanged from a tree in India. Authorities in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh said they were looking for one more suspect and one constable. The victims' family earlier complained that police had refused to help find the missing girls, aged 14 and 16.

Violence and discrimination against women in India remains deeply entrenched. But scrutiny of sexual violence has grown since the 2012 gang rape and murder of a student on a Delhi bus. The government tightened laws on sexual violence laws in India last year after widespread protests following that attack.

**Silent protest.** Police said two men had been arrested for the gang rape and murder of the two girls, who were cousins from a low caste. Large crowds of villagers gathered in protest at the scene of the crime, as Joanna Jolly reports. A constable was also detained for conspiring with the suspects and for dereliction of duty, authorities added. Earlier on Thursday, officials had confirmed that three policemen had been removed from duty for not registering cases when the girls were reported missing on Tuesday night.

The bodies of the teenagers were found in Katra Shahadatganj village in Badaun district on Wednesday morning. A post-mortem examination confirmed rape and death due to hanging, police said. Hundreds of villagers held a silent demonstration at the scene of the crime in protest at the police's perceived inaction. Earlier this year, a 20-year-old tribal woman was gang raped in eastern West Bengal state - allegedly on the orders of village elders who objected to her relationship with a man.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-27629211>



## RAPE OF TEENAGE COUSINS IN INDIA SHOWS WOMEN STILL NOT SAFE, ACTIVISTS SAY

Raveena Aulakh The Star  
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TSERING TOPGYAL / THE  
ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE  
PHOTO

India has tightened its anti-rape laws, but sexual violence against women still pervasive, activists say, as yet another horrific case illustrates. Less than 18 months after the brutal gang rape and murder of a 23-year-old medical student in the capital triggered laws to fight sexual violence, a horrific case in a remote part of central India is again sparking nationwide outrage, but activists say nothing has changed for women.

In the photo above, Indian women shout slogans during a protest over the gang-rape of four girls in Haryana's Hisar district earlier this year. Despite tougher rape laws, activists say male attitudes toward sexual violence haven't changed. "That one case got everyone angry but there were rapes and molestations the day before that, the day after that and every day since," said Roopa Rekha Verma, a women's rights activist.

"Even the death penalty (for rape) hasn't scared criminals away." Two teenage cousins were gang-raped on Tuesday and their bodies were found hanging from a mango tree in Katra village in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh. Villagers found them Wednesday morning, hours after they had disappeared from fields near their home, Atul Saxena, a senior police officer told the Star. The two girls, aged 14 and 15, had reportedly gone to the fields because there was no washroom in their home.

Saxena said the autopsy suggested ante mortem hanging, "which means they were gang-raped and then they probably committed suicide . . . but we are still looking at all aspects." He said two police constables, aged 19 and 35, had been arrested and a hunt was on for three other suspects. The police constables have been suspended, he said.

On Wednesday, there was tension in the village, which is about 300 kilometres from Lucknow, the capital of Uttar Pradesh. Angry villagers accused the local police chief of ignoring a complaint by the girls' family on Tuesday night that the teenagers were missing. Villagers did not let the police take down the bodies until the accused had been arrested. The chief has been suspended for not taking immediate action, said Saxena.

Mahika Pandit, a human-rights activist in Allahabad, another city in Uttar Pradesh, said even though people now talk more openly about sexual violence, "male attitudes haven't really changed, especially in this part of the country. They (men) do whatever they want because they think it is their right." Uttar Pradesh is one of the most populous and poor states in India. *Dalits*, or the so-called untouchables, form a sizeable part of the population.

Verma, who works with Saajhi Duniya, an NGO in Lucknow that focuses on gender issues, said she was glad the brutal gang-rape and murder of a medical student in New Delhi garnered the attention it did. "What happened was awful. I had hoped it would change things . . . that it would change mindsets, and even men," she said. "But it hasn't happened, women are still unsafe in rural India and even in big cities."

Following the December 2012 attack on a moving bus, there were protests, vigils and loud demands for stricter laws. The government bowed to pressure and tightened laws on sexual violence last year. But newspapers are still full of stories of sexual assault, the activists say. A woman in a village in eastern India was recently ordered gang-raped by the village elders because she had declared her love for a man from a different caste. In another recent case, an 11-year-old girl in a Delhi suburb was abducted, raped, killed and her body dumped in a drain by an uncle.

"Frankly, I don't know how it will stop, what will make this stop," said Verma. Statistics are still grim: government statistics show a rape is committed every 22 minutes in India. Activists say this number is low because most cases are never reported — women are often pressured by their families and even the police to stay quiet about sexual assault. It hasn't helped that some political leaders have brushed aside sexual assault. A few weeks ago, while campaigning for the national elections, the head of Uttar Pradesh state's governing party told an election rally that his party was opposed to the law calling for the death penalty for gang rapists.

**"Boys will be boys," Mulayam Singh Yadav said then. "They make mistakes."**

[http://www.thestar.com/news/world/2014/05/29/rape\\_of\\_teenage\\_cousins\\_in\\_india\\_shows\\_women\\_still\\_not\\_safe\\_activists\\_say.html](http://www.thestar.com/news/world/2014/05/29/rape_of_teenage_cousins_in_india_shows_women_still_not_safe_activists_say.html)



## TEENAGE GIRLS GANG-RAPED, HANGED

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**New Delhi:** Police have arrested one man and are looking for four other suspects after two teenage girls were gang-raped and then hanged from a tree in a village in Uttar Pradesh, police said on Thursday. The two cousins, who were from the Dalit community and aged 14 and 16.

They went missing from their village home in Uttar Pradesh's Badaun district when they went out to go to the toilet on Tuesday evening. The following morning, villagers found the bodies of the two teenagers hanging from a mango tree in a nearby orchard. "We have registered a case under various sections, including that of rape, and one of the accused has been taken into custody. There were five people involved, one has been arrested and we are looking for the others," Badaun's superintendent of police Man Singh Chouhan told reporters. Chouhan said a post-mortem confirmed the two minors were raped and died from the hanging.

DNA samples have been also been taken to help identify the perpetrators, he added. The victim's families say the girls were gang-raped and then hanged by five men from the village. They allege that local police were shielding the attackers as they refused to take action when the girls were first reported missing.

It was only after angry villagers found the hanging corpses and took the bodies to a nearby highway and blocked it in protest, say the families, that police registered a case of rape and murder. A case of conspiracy has also been registered against two constables, said Chouhan, adding that they had also been suspended. Sex crimes against young girls and women are widespread in India, say activists, adding that females from poor, marginalized, low-caste communities are often the victims.

A report by the Asian Centre for Human Rights in April last year said 48,338 child rape cases were recorded in India from 2001 to 2011, and the annual number of reported cases had risen more than fourfold—336%—over that period. Women's rights experts and lawyers say rape victims also have to endure harsh treatment from an archaic, poorly funded and insensitive criminal justice system.

Police often try to dissuade victims from complaining and suggest a "compromise" between the victim and the perpetrator, largely because of their insensitivity to sex crimes, but also because police officials are rarely held accountable.

Public outrage over the fatal gang rape of a woman in New Delhi in December 2012 pushed the government into passing a tougher new law to punish sex crimes. This includes sentences of up to two years' jail for police and hospital authorities if they fail to register a complaint or treat a victim.

<http://www.livemint.com/Politics/h1TEZvTNWo7u0of9woHr3L/Teenage-girls-gangraped-hanged-in-UP.html>