

## Chapter 1

# Revisting 'Urban' in Indian Political Thought

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### Introduction

This paper seeks to revisit the notion of 'urban' in original writings and thoughts of Indian political thinkers such as M.K Gandhi and B.R Ambedkar. It seeks to bring together the collective ideas of these thinkers about urban spaces, ecologies, inclusion, exclusion and more. This is an attempt to fill the scholarly gap of urbanization in contemporary India through an analysis of the notions of urban in Indian Political thought. It needs a contextualization within caste system in India and beyond. Gandhi was not a supporter of urbanization and promoted rural development. However, Ambedkar was in favour of urban spaces and not rural as they acted as an exit from caste system temporarily for lower caste individuals. For Ambedkar, the permanent exit from caste system in India was only after migrating to a foreign country about which he discusses in his work titled, *Waiting for a Visa*. The objective of this paper is to bring fresh insights into the notion of 'urban' through a study of perspectives of Indian political thinkers such as B.R Ambedkar and M.K Gandhi. The methodology is to study primary writings and thoughts of these thinkers using a descriptive and analytical method. The paper addresses few central questions such as: First, how is urbanization linked to migration in India? Second, how is urbanization linked to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)? Third, how is urbanization linked to climate change? Fourth, how do views of Indian political thinkers find their resonance on urbanization in contemporary India? The paper moves with an approach of socio-cultural and political-economic notions of urban and urbanization in India, keeping in view the contemporary debates in Social Sciences, Architecture, Science and more around these notions. This paper seeks to study primary writings and thoughts of the Indian political thinkers to provide newer conclusions to debates around urban and urbanization and start fresh debates which has been of utmost significance in the context of the notion of sustainable development and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the global level. The notions of urban and urbanization is often associated with migration. Movement from one place to another, a fundamental right has been enshrined in Article 19 (1) (d) of the Indian constitution. This migration often takes place from rural to urban and urban to rural in some cases. The question which needs to be explored is whether rural equals developing and urban equals developed. The notion of 'urban poor' dismisses the term urban being equal to developed. 'Urban' also requires development. Whenever we use the terms urban and rural, a psychological connotation is added to it. For example, often there has been a perception of urban women as developed and modern and rural women as conservative and backward. In the *covid* period, India saw migration back to home to one's village and re-migration to city life. A number of citizens migrate to urban areas in search of employment opportunities and better living standards. However, *covid* period exposed the extremities of urban life when lockdown was initiated and the urban poor who usually earned per day basis were forced to hunt for basic food and shelter. A number of them walked back to their villages so that at least they could provide meals to their families in their native places. Tragedies struck these migrants as a number of them tried to 'walk' back to their villages with no transportation functioning in cities. Some got dehydrated, met with accidents and all other sorts of mishaps happened on their way back home to their rural spaces. Unlike the developed countries, India is inhabited with class and caste hierarchies. The post *covid* period exposed these hierarchies. While the middle class and upper class citizens sat back at their homes with grocery and other essentials stocked up, the daily wage migrant labourers (working class) did not have the luxury to sit at home. With no money to pay room rent, they were forced to vacate their urban rented homes. As a consequence of 'social distancing' during *covid* phase, a number of employers stopped calling their maid, drivers and more leaving them jobless and cashless. Though some of these employers tried to help them financially to some extent, life in an urban space was difficult and the migrants were forced to travel back

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home. After around a month when situations were somewhat better, the government arranged for special trains and buses for the migrant labourers, construction workers and more to be sent back to their villages. However, after *covid* restrictions were lifted up completely around the year 2022, a number of these migrants re-migrated to cities. The move of sudden lockdown in India was heavily criticized. The significance of Dr. B.R Ambedkar's writings and thoughts in contemporary India is not a hidden aspect. Ambedkar always promoted social inclusion and strived to eliminate social exclusion. While M.K Gandhi is famously known as *mahatma* or *bapu*, Ambedkar has respectfully been given the name, *babasaheb*. It may be noticed that the contemporary sanitation initiatives such as the *Swachh Bharat* (clean India) mission is known to be inspired by Gandhi's ideas on cleanliness and sanitation. However, Ambedkar's view on equal ecological space for all and more has certainly been undermined. It may be surprising to note that environment and climate change in a country are also affected by social structures of its individuals besides other factors. For example, lifestyles of dominant castes are different from those who are marginalized. It is not that environment is only influenced by major factors such as energy consumption, deforestation and more but it goes beyond. The environment is influenced by ecological spaces in which each individual dwells. The caste system in India is deep and its existence in all spheres cannot be denied, be it zero role of the marginalized *dalits* in environmental policy making, lack of awareness, forced to perform traditional activities such as scavenging/cleaning despite being educated in some cases and more. In this context, the paper will explore the 1st, 2nd 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th and 10th SDGs contextually within Ambedkar and Gandhi's primary works. It may be observed that SDG1 strives to eradicate poverty at global level and SDG2 to eliminate hunger. SDG3 strives towards a good and healthy life for all; SDG4 emphasizes on education for all; SDG5 is concerned with equality of each gender for sustaining peace in the world and ensure its development; SDG6 makes an attempt to provide clean water and ensure its access to all; SDG10 observes that the marginalized and dominated individuals do not suffer. In the wake of *covid* 19 and the migration followed by it in India, the paper discusses Indian thinkers' perspectives on migration and its significance in contemporary India. Similarly, climate change will be viewed in retrospective of thinkers' ideas and perceptions in the past finding its relevance in the present context.

## Migration and Urbanization

Dr B. R Ambedkar propagated social inclusion and strived to eliminate exclusions inherent in Indian society. On these lines, his idea of *samajik samrasta* (social harmony) is widely known (Ambedkar, Vol.1, preface). For Ambedkar, a society which was ideal was a mobile one. He propagates migration from one place to another. Ambedkar calls caste system in India, a local problem (Vol.1, p.1). For him, movement from rural to urban will provide a temporary exit from caste. This maybe owing to the reason that in urban areas there are less caste clustered residences than rural; castes often living in segregated residences. In the contemporary period, a number of politicians have attempted to evoke casteless colonies and eliminate some of the existing caste clustered colonies. In the context of migration in contemporary India, Gyan Pandey mentions of dalits in Bhojpuri region which is dominated by few landowners. The majority of the labourers just work on the fields of these few. These traditional landowners or *zamindars* are upper castes in India so it may be assumed that those who do not own lands are *dalits* in Pandey's description (Guha, 1999, p.65). They are not allowed to own lands, given the fact that castes were based on traditional occupations in India which has been mentioned in a number of works on caste system in India. On migration in Bhojpuri region, Dr Mahesh Kumar Sinha writes that it is famous for being a place where the villagers move to cities in search of employment opportunities (Sinha, 2001, p.111). Bhojpuri region has witnessed tremendous migrations in the recent times owing to certainly economic backwardness in the region on a similar note pointed out by Gyan Pandey. It was March 25, 2020 when novel Corona Virus (Covid 19), led India to shut down completely. This announcement was made on 24th March, 2020 in PM's address to the nation at 8 pm, leaving only four hours for individuals to decide what to do and where to go? This sudden lockdown in the country brought the phenomena of a much debated and discussed issue of migrant crisis in India. It is to be noted that after flipping pages of newspapers and watching news channels, a term which came to be in limelight is *pravasi mazdoor* (migrant labourer). The aspect of migration can be prominently seen in Bhojpuri region in India. As the region is dominated by agriculture, individuals who want to better their employment opportunities than being an agricultural labourer often move to metropolitan cities in search of work. These individuals can be seen as labourers at construction sites, eateries and more. When pandemic hit country and public transportation came to a halt, these labourers were left with no jobs and no way available to return their native places. This was the migration crisis which India suffered with lack of food, no shelter to afford and more. A number of Bhojpuri songs were released exposing migrant crisis in India during the pandemic period. When pandemic had just hit India and the country went into a sudden lockdown of the country. Unlike developed countries which went into total lockdown, situations were far from equal in India. This point towards a sad fact that a majority of migrant labourers earn on a per day basis and had to survive with their families, did not have the 'luxury' to sit at their homes as directed by the government. With lack of money, they were unable to make their survival in cities anymore and were forced to 'walk' towards their home with no trace of public

transport in the country. When their sources of employment were shut down, it came as a shock to them. While the middle and upper classes in India locked themselves in their rooms with grocery items to eat and other items which they might need, the migrant labourers who are majorly the lower classes of the country could not afford to do the same. After a number of days, some special trains and buses were run to send back migrants to their homes where life was already filled with economic insecurities. As soon as restrictions were lifted up and work at construction sites, eateries and more was allowed by the Indian government, labourers returned soon to their work places majorly in metropolitan cities. This migration and reverse migration certainly exposes the weak economy of Bhojpuri region, which constitutes up of a major number of migrant labourers. This is not to limit the aspect of migrant labourers coming only from Bhojpuri region but to underline their plight in the Indian context. When Bhojpuri language is related to better employment opportunities, certainly individuals will have more options to explore besides being a labourer with weak structures exposing lack of any job security. In one of the recently published books, Akshaya Kumar discusses various aspects of migrant labourers of Bhojpuri region and more (Kumar, 2021).

## Sustainable Development Goals and Urbanization

In the context of Sustainable Development Goals, SDG1 strives for no poverty. In his journal *Harijan*, Gandhi's idea of economy was based on economic justice for all (Gandhi, 1937). Gandhi attached food with life and strived that Indians do not sleep hungry. This goes in consonance with SDG2 which emphasizes on total elimination of hunger at the global level. In *Hind Swaraj* writing on poverty, Gandhi writes that being indifferent to money will help achieve the goal of passive resistance (Gandhi, 1938, p.74). In his work *Ruskin Unto This Last*, Gandhi gives an example of a family who only have a single bread crust to eat and questions whether the mother or the children should eat it. If a mother does not eat, she goes hungry for work and if children do not eat it would instigate her motherly instincts to feed her children. However, Gandhi says that there is no question of antagonism between the two as there is a diversity of interests (Gandhi, 1956, p.7). In his work *Constructive Programme*, Gandhi suggests growth of village industries as an end to starvation (Gandhi, 1941, p.12). Ambedkar talks about poor or the then untouchables who were forced to be poor or marginalized and be outcast as a compulsion as they had no choice (Ambedkar, Vol.5, p.5). Similarly, in contemporary period these outcast individuals even if educated are forced to profess their traditional occupation such as scavenging/cleaning and more by the dominant caste communities. The situations have been such that the movement of marginalized was restricted. Ambedkar advocates mobility of individuals from one place to another freely (Ibid.) and it has been mentioned in fundamental rights too given its significance to crush caste based social hierarchies. Article 19 (1) (d) of the Indian constitution (a fundamental right) in this context, ensures free mobility of individuals from one part of India to another without any restrictions based on caste, creed, gender and more. It is to be noted that untouchability in India is abolished under Article 17 of the Indian Constitution. SDG3 strives to achieve good health for all. In *Harijan*, (Gandhi, 1933, p.2) Gandhi writes that his ideas from one work to another might vary and this owes to growth of his inner truth. In *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi writes that an individual's body is healed after taking medicine but his mind becomes weak as he continues to overeat even in future due to which he/she had fallen sick. For Gandhi, self-control was better than going to a doctor for maintaining health. (Ibid., p.52). He connects being healthy with being moral (Ibid., p.53). In his book *Key to Health*, Gandhi writes that an individual needs to lessen his visits to a doctor (Gandhi, 1954, p.2). He emphasizes that one should have knowledge of one's own body made up of *panch tatva* (five elements) earth, water, light, air, vacancy. For a good health, he advises self-restraint (Ibid., p.8). He compares body of a human to a place of dirt which needs to be cleansed (Ibid., p.9). For a good health, he considers milk to be important in one's diet (Ibid., p.14). SDG4 strives towards education made available to all. In *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi defines education as merely a restriction of letters. He propagates education being work-based giving an example of a farmer who knows everything besides writing his name even without being educated (Ibid., p.76). Gandhi propagates knowledge of one's own native language as knowledge of other languages enslaves a country (Ibid., p.79). In his work *Constructive Programme*, Gandhi seeks to provide basic education to transform children of villages. Education links children from both cities and villages to the best of the country (Ibid., p.14). Writing on adult education, he says that villagers be politically educated. They need to have knowledge of geographical expansion of the country (Ibid., p.15). Gandhi emphasizes on the need to make 'Hygiene' be taught as a subject in educational institutions to avoid future disease deaths. Healthy people need to have clean food, water, air and surroundings (Ibid., p.17). SDG 5 enshrines equality of all gender. A human right to life with dignity is a central aspect of the Indian Constitution. Dignity meant a lot for DR Ambedkar because since his childhood, he faced indignities at many parts of life. In DR. B.R Ambedkar's view, every woman deserves 'dignity'. The preamble of the constitution of India 'assures the dignity of the individual'. It can be argued that rape leads towards violation of this dignity. A dalit woman always requires more efforts to reach the step of dignity than a man. Ambedkar in his work *Castes in India* writes about a surplus woman and a surplus man, that a surplus

man is an asset to the group, surplus woman a burden to the group. He defines surplus man as a man whose wife is dead and a surplus woman as a woman whose husband is dead. Both need to find newer place in their own group. A *dalit* woman needs higher ladder to reach the step of dignity. She is at a lower rank within the *dalit* community and Ambedkar uses the term *untouchable* (used in pre-independent times) and not *dalit*, a term which emerged in independent India (Ambedkar, Vol.1, pp.3-22). Dr B R Ambedkar emphasized on protection of dignity of women. Ambedkar was against the indignity of women and spoke for the development of *dalit* woman and to live a dignified life. Certainly in the contemporary period, one may see with the growing number of violation of human right to life with dignity, Ambedkar's thoughts on dignity have faced serious challenges. The violent crimes posing serious threats to bodily dignity such as rapes, gang rapes, marital rapes have brought an urgent need to discuss these crimes within the realm of constitutional right to life with dignity. Ambedkar saw education as an empowerment tool towards dignity of women. He talks about dignity of *dalit (mahar)* women being different from that of upper-caste women. Upper caste women have been described as elite women. In his journal *Janata* on 4th July, 1936 Ambedkar writes that he does not support prostitution. (Ambedkar, 1936, p.56). M.K Gandhi was a supporter of women. Gandhi writes on role of women in Indian society. He advocated women's liberation though it was traditional in nature. Many women joined India's freedom movement as Gandhi was a leader of the masses. Gandhi has written immensely on women in India. In his *Constructive Programme*, Gandhi establishes that women are equal in fight for independence of India. He considers women equal to men. Men should not be lords of women but friends. He strives that status of women need to be altered radically (Ibid., p.16). Gandhi writes in *Harijan* in 1940, on women's honour that it is not possible to violate a woman against her will and before she is raped she should commit suicide (Gandhi, 1940). This is ironical. This is one aspect of the statement provided by Gandhi. The fact of the culprit trying to dishonour a woman is not bestowed upon any lessons of morality and he is completely ignored. At a first glance, it seems like presenting a picture of sheer placing of morality on a woman's shoulder, removing all guilt from the culprit's shoulder, who is the wrongdoer and shifting the guilt of rape towards woman that if she cannot escape rape, she should die before getting raped. This is the possible sense though not limited. However, with a deep insight it comes out clearly that this has been written by Gandhi in specific historical context of India. A context, or in this paper, a historical context of Gandhi's words needs to be analysed in relation to what India was going through in 1940s. This paper seeks to argue that to analyse Gandhi's statements and find its relevance in contemporary times, historical context of India in which Gandhi wrote, cannot be ignored. Ignoring this particular context of history, several scholars have found Gandhi patriarchal. Some quotes of him may be misogynistic, but he cannot be called a patriarchal person as he supported many aspects of women who in those times didn't have their voices. In 1940s, when communal riots were rising followed by the news of partition, it was best for men to die saving the honour of 'women' of their families. Men were killed and women were raped by the 'other' community. This aspect can be seen even in contemporary time, where fathers, brothers and husbands have died saving the women of their family if they have been dishonoured at incidents of rape. Gandhi urges victims of rape during partition (as he writes during partition times), to die saving their honour. He says that it is brave to die than living a life after being dishonoured. In this context, it can be argued that within any social, historical, political context a particular 'act' cannot be justified. But to contradict this view, it can be brought here that a piece of 'writing' is someone's thought on a particular act and not the act itself. A piece of 'writing' is subjective in nature. For example, analysis of Gandhi's 'writing' on suicide (a thought) can be done in a historical, social, political context with its own justifications depending upon the author's views but the very 'act' of suicide (a crime) cannot be justified under any context. A piece of 'writing' is someone's view on a particular topic in a particular context. One may or may not agree with a piece of 'writing'. Various interpretations of a piece of 'writing' could be made. An act is something which has occurred in reality. It is objective in nature. If the 'act' is a crime, it cannot be justified. Rape is an act which is done with an objective to humiliate a body, the body of a victim. The guilty is to be punished and not the victim. The victim cannot be blamed and the culprit cannot be freed. However, to get into further complexity, one can argue that Gandhi's 'writing' on a particular issue is not an ordinary 'writing'. He has huge number of followers in Indian society and worldwide. People follow his 'writing' and relate it to 'act'. To add to this, it need to be seen whether people of Indian society follow Gandhi's writings judiciously or make it applicable according to their comforts and interests. Gandhi's writings are not simple and therefore the real meaning should be understood before followed. This calls for an urgent need that Gandhi's writings be correctly borrowed and applied to a possible patriarchal mind behind rape. Women were raped to humiliate and win over by the 'other' community during communal riots in pre-partition and post-partition period. Writing on passive resistance in *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi connects chastity with discipline. According to him, a married man defines perfection by being loyal to his wife otherwise he is not a human and is just being an animal (Ibid., p.74). SDG6 strives to provide clean water to all. In his book *Key to Health*, Gandhi writes that water is necessary for life (Ibid., p.12). He says that pure drinking water must be ensured to all. He suggests not drinking water from an unknown well or water body as looking at water one cannot figure out whether it is clean or not (Ibid., p.13). SDG10 ensures protecting the

marginalized sections of the society. While for Gandhi caste system was towards its eradication if all caste individuals get involved in cleaning/scavenging but for Ambedkar, there was no safe or permanent exit from caste in India. For upper caste individuals cleaning is an achieved identity which implies by choice but for lower caste individuals cleaning is an ascribed identity implying an identity by birth. Ambedkar argues for permanent exit from caste system in India only after migrating to a foreign country about which he mentions in his work titled *Waiting for a Visa*. In *Waiting for a Visa*, Ambedkar narrates the incident of his dignity being lower than a bullock cart driver, as Ambedkar was a *mahar*, an Untouchable, as he says and the bullock cart driver was scared of being polluted by driving with an Untouchable. His being a barrister at law did not matter (Ambedkar, Vol.12, p.681). This exclusion of his identity as an Untouchable, made him demand for dignity for each caste. The story of indignity faced by DR Ambedkar may be seen in the light of what happened with Mahatma Gandhi. While he was travelling in a first class train in South Africa, he was thrown out of the train as he was Indian and Indians were supposed to travel in third class compartment of a train. However, according to Ambedkar, both these situations of indignity were different from each other. He explains his statement saying that even if Gandhi faced indignity in a foreign country, he was not an Untouchable in his own country, India but Ambedkar was an Untouchable in his own country.

## Climate Change and Urbanization

Gandhi was a supporter of rural development in India. Gandhi stressed for a clean city criticizing urban life which deteriorates climate change. In his work *Constructive Programme*, Gandhi propagates *khadi* products which also implied decentralization. He emphasized upon development of villages (Ibid., p.9). He talks about promoting village industries such as hand grinding, paper soap making and more (Ibid., p.12). He propagates villages being sanitized. He tries to eliminate the situation of covering nose and closing eyes after seeing dirt in villages. The need is identification of cleanliness of villages by the leaders (Ibid., p.13). In a journal *Young India*, he writes that "cleanliness is next to godliness" (Gandhi, 1925). In *Satyagraha in South Africa*, he argues for heavy fine for those not maintaining proper sanitation (Gandhi, 1968, p.240) which seems of relevance to be included as a part of newly emerging sanitation practices and policies in contemporary India. In *Harijan*, Gandhi propagates elimination of traditional occupation of cleaning/scavenging only by *bhangis/ doms* and other lower castes in India. He encourages and calls upon individuals of all castes to be responsible for their cleanliness, residences, neighbourhood and city in totality (Gandhi, 1939). The sanitation policies in the contemporary period have strived towards total elimination of manual scavenging in India. In *Young India*, his approach towards sanitation is not just physical in appearance but it needs to be attained by citizens in spiritual form within (Gandhi, 1929). Sanitation was of utmost significance in his notion of *swaraj* or self-rule. The *Swachh Bharat* (clean India) Mission initiated in 2014 vouches to be inspired by Gandhi's ideas on cleanliness and sanitation in India. Supporting rural development of Gandhi *Swachh Bharat* strives to achieve ODF (Open Defecation Free) villages in India. In Indian villages since long it was observed that there were open defecation in fields or back of the mud houses which was leading to unclean environment, lack of cleanliness, bad health and climate change. The goal has been to achieve ODF villages by 2019 and is still being under regulation for its maintenance (*Swachh Bharat* rural). Amongst the recent debates on climate change globally, Gandhi's ideas on environment need to be revisited to find their relevance in the contemporary period as well, besides the early days. He incorporated the idea of *gram swaraj* (self-reliance of village) in village life.

## Conclusion

There is an urgent need for social inclusion in urban life, given the diversities of urban population – migrants, rich and poor, men and women, dominant and subjugated individuals it accommodates within itself. The paper tries to conclude with fresh insights into pro bono (public good) culture in India through an analysis of B.R Ambedkar's primary works within the context of law and justice in India. Ambedkar strived to provide social justice for all in the past which the emerging pro bono initiatives attempt to integrate in contemporary India. Given the unequal socio-political and economic structures in India, the need arises for social inclusion and not exclusion in matters of ensuring justice and beyond. In one of his works titled *Unfit for Human Association*, Ambedkar mentions how one of the judgments came in where the court ruled out the possibilities of purity and pollution concerning *touchables* (a term introduced by Ambedkar) and the then *untouchables* (known as *dalits* today) respectively (Ambedkar, Vol 5, p.27). In his *Untouchability and Lawlessness*, he mentions of an established legal system which is unequal (Ibid., p.35). This is the need of the hour in a country which constitutes up of rich and poor, marginalized and dominant, weak and powerful and more. In *Why Lawlessness is Lawful?* Ambedkar mentions of antagonist feelings existing deep rooted between *touchables* and *untouchables*. He elaborates upon how an untouchable cannot demand justice like the *touchable*. The *touchables* ensure that this lawlessness appears lawful as according to them untouchables do not deserve to rise above a particular status even in front of the law (Ibid., p.62). Even today, a number of

cases arise where justice is delayed or denied to the weak or the marginalized. In his *Touchables v/ Untouchables*, Ambedkar mentions that *touchables* are not a heterogeneous category but imply towards the caste system in India which follows the hierarchy of *Brahmins*, *Vaishyas* and *Kshatriyas* and *Shudras* at the lowest. This ensures discrimination having not a single but multiple layers even in contemporary India (Ibid., p.192). In his *Their Wishes are Laws Unto Us*, Ambedkar highlights discriminatory patterns where 'wishes' of *touchables* such as an untouchable not wearing clean clothes, not having a proper roof and more become 'laws' in eyes of the society. Ambedkar himself being a *dalit* defines the distinction between 'them' and 'us' (Ibid., p.272) which is existent even in present Indian context in both visible and invisible forms and beyond. In the context of gender equality, the story of survivors, need more attention as form of bravery. Such individuals have survived a brutal form of crime. When survivors come out with complaints they need to be encouraged and appreciated or may be awarded for their brave act of fighting through a brutal crime. This will certainly ensure more and more women speaking up and sharing their pain and when they survive they could share their stories and not hide everything for being blamed or shamed. The number of unreported and undetected cases will certainly decrease when women are provided with a voice by the society and adequate assurance of their dignity by the law. The identities of women before they were raped, needs to be preserved such as her image as a doctor, lawyer, teacher and more needs to be cherished in order to support them and not image them as rape victims. The notion of rape need to be seen as a crime and not dishonoured character of a female or a male. The emphasis needs to be placed to see it only as a heinous criminal activity where the offender needs punishment by the law. Families need to be more supportive of their married daughters who have an urgent need to step out of their marriages. The victims need to be motivated and not blamed. The aspect of victim blaming/shaming needs to be stepped out from the very gates of civilized societies. Then the dignity in the preamble, 'the assurance of the dignity of the individual' as enshrined in the constitution of India, will be preserved and protected. Each individual needs to be socialized in a manner that nobody waits for the crime of rape to occur within the fourfold of their family. However, awareness needs to be created in this regard in schools where minor girls may be a soft target for rapists. A number of sessions of sex education in schools may prove a beneficial factor in this regard. In this context, children need to be told about these issues at home with much sensitivity owing to their growing age. Each child needs to be provided assurance from one of the parents at least who could prevent any incidents of rape from family members themselves or extended families and relatives. In a similar context, Gandhi writes in a period which witnessed a division of India into two countries, India and Pakistan. He writes on honour of women in India. The rape cases of the contemporary period are no less in heinousness than rapes in partitioned India. India is still 'developing', and women are still destroyed and then society defines it as their honour being tarnished. Not to lessen their pain, an added mark is put on the victims of rape when they are shamed by the society. The victim in India becomes the culprit. The questions arise on her morality such as wearing a short dress, having more number of male friends, hanging out with male colleagues, going out late at night and so on. The examples of various cases of India, clearly represent that the onus of family's honour is put on shoulder of women. Even in case of honour killings in India, it is family of woman who are the major accused. They cannot tolerate the fact that a woman from their family has dared to choose a partner of her own going against the family and broadly going against the deep rooted social structures in India, such as caste or in some cases *gotra* (lineage). This point towards the fact that as in Gandhi's time, women are still the ones to bear the responsibilities of maintaining the 'honour' of family, by being 'moral'. The killings in Gandhi's time (partition phase) by families of women were mass killings, existing as a result of partitioned India. The fact that several years have passed, should have brought changes onto this heinousness. On the contrary, it has brought the period of single cases of honour killings in a single year in various states of India. To this effect, it can be added that issues of honour and morality goes beyond gender, in case of families of a gay or a lesbian adult whose families make all efforts to hide their identity, as it is a shame for them and they want to protect the honour of family. This however, points out the fact that hierarchical societal structures providing definitions of honour and morality affect individuals beyond gender, many times the victims being a gay or a lesbian individual or a couple. The major atrocities are on the couples as and when they show affection in public. It comes out clear to the society that they do not fit within the deeply crooked structural conventional patterns of patterns of Indian society.

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The author declares no conflict of interest.

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