

SEXUAL VIOLENCE: AN ENDEMIC

Gowrishankar N R, Assistant Professor in English, Dr.SNSRajalakshmi College of Arts and Science, (Part-time Ph.D., scholar, Government Arts College, Coimbatore, Race Course)

Dr. S Joy Isabella, Assistant Professor in English, Government Arts College, Coimbatore, Race Course

ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the violence that takes place in our society. It mainly depicts on the sexual assault against children in the real life. *A Time to Kill* (1989), is a novel written by John Grisham, describes the life of a ten-year-old black girl, named Tonya, who is shattered by two drunken and remorseless white men. *The Innocent Man* (2006), tells the story about the rape and murder of Debra Sue Carter in Ada. *The Confession* (2010), is about the brutal rape and murder of Nicole Yerber, a high school cheerleader. It explores that how violence on an individual affects the family, society and a community. It describes the social gap in United States between the black and white, and why black are less likely than other groups to feel confident about being respectful in interaction. As like Grisham's novel, this paper explores how the sexual violence against women has been most dangerous in India. Rape has been one of the most common crimes in India. The probability of sexual abuse in India is increased by the forms of cultural, environmental, individual and family factors. The sexual assault or abuse can affect both physical and mental health of women. This paper also describes few ways of stopping or reducing sexual violence in conflict.

Keywords: *inequality, violence, intolerance, retribution, racism, sexual abuse, etc.,*

Violence is a kind of behaviour that harms or damages something or somebody physically. It is also a use of physical force to injure or abuse or damage or destroy something. World Health Organization defined violence as “the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development or deprivation”. There are several types of violence, such as, (i) Physical Violence- it occurs when somebody uses a part of their body or an object to control the actions of another person, (ii) Sexual Violence- it occurs when a person is forced to take part in sexual activity unwillingly, (iii) Emotional Violence- it occurs when someone does or says something to hurt a person by making them to feel stupid or worthless, (iv) Domestic violence- this means that the abuser learns violent behaviour from their own family, culture or community, (v) Gender-biased violence is a phenomenon that deeply rooted in gender inequality, and continues to be one of the most notable human rights violation within all societies. It is a violence that directed against a person because of their gender. Both women and men experience gender-based violence but the majority of victims are girls and women. John Ray Grisham, a construction worker and a cotton farmer, and his wife Wanda, a homemaker, had five children, and the second child of the five is named as John Ray Grisham Jr. John Grisham is an American novelist, lawyer and former member of the Mississippi House of Representative, born on 8th February 1955, known for his best-selling legal thrillers. His first novel *A Time to Kill* was published four years after he started writing.

In John Grisham's *A Time to Kill*, Tonya, a ten-year old small girl, who has sent to store by her mother which is a mile away, has not returned home even after two hours. She has been kidnapped by two rednecks, Ray Cobb and Willard. They tied the right leg to an Oak sapling and left leg to leaning post of the fence, as her both legs were spread. Tonya, has been raped by both the men. They have hurt her, slapped her and threatened her to keep quiet or she might be killed. After hurting her lot, they loaded the girl in a yellow pickup and flew over the bridges to find a suitable place to unload the girl. They lowered the tailgate, dragged the girl out from the pickup and threw her near the bridge over Foggy Creek. People who were fishing down by Foggy Creek found Tonya lying in

the middle of the road. They brought her home as she murmured her daddy's name. As, Tonya being a nigger and the two reedbucks are white, *A Time to Kill* not only depicts about sexual violence, it also exposes the racial discrimination in the society.

Grisham's *The Innocent Man: Murder and Injustice in a Small Town* (2006), is based on an American true crime documentary tells about the rape and murder of Debra Sue Carter, a 21-year-old cocktail waitress. It is reported that Carter visited the bar before the previous night. The initial view of the murder confirmed that Carter had been beaten, raped and suffocated in the bedroom of her own apartment. After a long stretched investigation, two innocent men were arrested, where as, Ron Williamson sentenced to death and Fritz has to face a life prison sentence.

The Confession (2010), a legal thriller by Grisham, depicts the rape of a teenage girl and high school student in Slone, Texas, named Nicola 'Nikki' Yarber. Nicole Yarber has been trapped near her car at the mall parking lot and forced to comply at gunpoint. She has been kidnapped and raped repeatedly before being strangled to death by Travis Boyette, and her body is buried and never found.

Travis Boyette, 44 years old, is a serial rapist, was sexually abused by his stepfather's brother, Uncle Chett, from the age of eight, and threatened with death, if he ever told anyone. He is suffering from terminal brain cancer and because of an apparent limp he always carries a cane with him. Learning of that his brain cancer will kill him soon, he needs to rectify his mistakes by confessing to Nicole's murder. Similar to John Grisham's novels, journalist Robert Mayer's *The Dreams of Ada* recounts the true bewildering story of a young women's disappearance and murder from Ada. Donna Denice Haraway disappeared by the store where she had the job. Denice has been kidnapped, raped and murder, and her body was not found. The novels *A Time to Kill*, *The Innocent man*, *The Confession* and *The Dreams of Ada*, not only says about the sexual assault on women, it also explores major flaws, irregularities, forced confessions and possible miscarriages of Justice in the society. As like these novels, few of the Tamil movies, such as, *Asuravadham* (2018), *Maharaja* (2024) and *Salim* (2014), depicts how sexual assault on individual, affects the life of the whole family and society. *Salim*, a movie written and directed by Nirmal Kumar, shows the anger of a common man, a doctor, who runs into trouble for being too generous towards his patient, a college girl, who is hurt and been Brutally raped by a gang, and bleeding on the road. Later, he finds the four young men who raped the girl and punishes. *Asuravadham*, written and directed by Maruthupandian, plots the revenge of a father against a rapist, who has raped, murdered and buried in a field, as the parents unable to discover the body. *Maharaja*, written and directed by NithilanSwaminathan, depicts the vengeance of a father, one who comes to know that his daughter, Jothi, active in sports at school, has been hurt, beaten and raped repeatedly. Similar to the movies *Asuravadham* and *Maharaja*, Grisham's *A Time to Kill*, explores the vengeance of Carl Lee Hailey, father the victim Tonya, guns down the monsters who raped his child. Not only the novels and movies, even the people live in our society, both men and women faces sexual assaults in their day-to-day life. The sexual violence includes rape, sexual assaults on child, marital or partner rape, sexual harassment which motivated by the desire to control, humiliate and harm others. It happens to people of all ages, races, genders, religions which violates a person's trust and feelings of safety. It affects the parents, friends, partners, children, spouses and co-workers as the sexual violence is psychologically linked to the long-term health risk behaviours.

The National Sexual Violence Resource Center, says that nearly 1 in 5 women and 1 in 71 men are victims of rape in 2016. Currently the reports show that 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys sexually abused before 18 years. It is also reported that 1 in 5 children are solicited sexually by the internet. Nationwide, all of us are impacted by sexual violence and that is because sexual violence affects communities and societies. These kind of violence takes place in our society as there is no sustainable punishment to the perpetrator. Unless, a sexual violence becomes a social issue, none of the people bothers. As the statistics points that around 20% of children are sexual abused in daily life. But, the people protest and fight for the justice only when it gives trouble to the politicians and higher government officials, sometimes if it is for rich people. In India, a few rape cases have been as a breaking news and people had protest for the justice. In 1992, a series of gang rapes, where the

victims lured into a remote farmhouse or bungalow, which is considered to be disgrace in Ajmer. 250 students in either schools/colleges aged between 11 and 20 years old victims were reported of this crime. It is considered to be as a communalized or religious issue, as the main accused were Muslims and the majority of the victims were Hindus. In 1996, a 16-year-old school girl of Suryanelli, Kerala, has been kidnapped and met a subsequent rape by 37 persons over a period of 40 days. Among the 37, most of them belong to government politics, which has become the biggest social issue of the period in Kerala. Many other rape cases, such as, a young tribal girl (1972) said to be custodial rape in India, Nirbhaya (2012) Delhi gang rape, a 22-year-old photojournalist and an 18-year-old call Centre employee had been gang raped in Mumbai (2013), an 8-year-old Muslim girl AsifaBano (2018) brutally raped and Murder by seven Hindu Males, the gang rape and murder of a 26-year-old veterinary doctor (2019) in Hyderabad. Ethnic violence of Manipur (2023), outrage of two women (one in her 20s and the other in her 40s) being made walk naked towards a field by a mob of men. Like these, there are so many sexual harassment, rape and murder cases remained unsolved. Only case that met solution is Hyderabad (2019) case, all four accused were shot dead by the Telangana Police, which made the public to celebrate the men's death. In most of the cases the accused are rich and politicians. The poor victims are unable to meet the justice, as Marvin E. Frankel said "Justice is more or less for sale". The men and women those who are fond of alcohol and other drugs are the one who involve in more number of sexual abuses. But, it is found that the sexual harassment is mostly perpetrated by the known relatives or co-workers. Some measures to avoid sexual violence in the society are, (i) Teaching young minds about the risks of sexual exploitation, (ii) educating how the survivors are perceived and treated in their communities, (iii) creating safer spaces by improving the infrastructure, (iv) reporting practices on protection. Other ways to stop sexual violence as an individual are, (i) starting an anti-violence project at school centers, (ii) being volunteer at local domestic violence center, and (iii) being a role model for some healthy relationships. Apart from ten years of imprisonment and fine for rape (IPC 376), the government of India has to sustain a strong punishment to stop sexual violence in the society.

WORKS CITED :

- Grisham, John. *A Time to Kill*. London: Arrow books. 2010. Print.
Grisham, John. *The Innocent Man*. London: Arrow books. 2017. Print.
Grisham, John. *The Confession*. London: Arrow books. 2011. Print.
Mayer, Robert. *The Dreams of Ada*. Signet. 2006. Print.
Asuravatham. Dir. Maruthupandian. Prod. LeelaLalitikumar. Perf. Sasikumar, Vasumithra and NanditaSwetha. Seven Screen Studio Productions, 2018. Film.
Maharaja. Dir. NithilanSwaminathan. Prod. JagadishPalanisamy and SudhanSundaram. Perf. Vijay Sethupathi, Anurag Kashyap and SachanaNamidass. The Route, Think Studios and Passion Studios Productions, 2024. Film.
Salim. Dir. N.V. Nirmal Kumar. Prod. R.K. Suresh. Perf. Vijay Antony and Aruldoss. SreeGreen Productions, 2014. Film.
www.nsvrc.org/saam