

# Gruesome Murder of a Woman Doctor at the Workplace: Implications and Impact

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## Editorial

India being the world's most populated country with a demand higher than most of the countries is also home to world class healthcare at economical prices. Every child dream of becoming something in life and one of the most desirable professions across the world remains becoming a doctor, the calling and passion for health care drives people to invest their lifetimes to learning and education and hardships to become one. This fact is undeniable. During the Covid-19 Pandemic the health care professionals have been lauded as heroes, their sacrifices undeniably discussed. There is more passion and proven resilience to making of a doctor, the path for women doctors comes with their inherent challenges of society added. In 2018, the National Crime Records Bureau recorded one rape in India every fifteen minutes. Furthermore, the NCRB data shows that on any one day, up to 91 rapes were reported nationwide. According to the 2020 NCRB report, 28,046 crimes in India were reported year (Crime in India 2020)(NCRB, 2024).

The recent event of a gang rape of a doctor on duty is a particularly egregious and alarming crime. The rape of a doctor on duty is a profound violation with severe and far-reaching impacts (J K et al., 2022). The impact is multifaceted, affecting the individual, the medical profession, and the broader community. Medical and sociological literature talks about rape as one of the heinous crimes. The Incident of Kolkata and then the following aftermath of events have led to widespread protests across the country and demand for safety at the workplace for health care workers. Progressing towards a nation with equality where all citizens are assets to the nation where the crème-de la-crème face such gruesome circumstances forces one to think about the state of affairs and the society as whole (Chauhan and Garg, 2023).

The violation of safety within the workplace can lead to a loss of trust in the workplace environment, and general anxiety about personal safety. The assault may cause a crisis of identity for the doctor, affecting their confidence in their professional abilities and leading to doubts about their career choice. It may also discourage others from entering or continuing in the profession, particularly in high-risk areas.

The rape of a doctor on duty can erode public trust in healthcare institutions, as patients and the public may feel that if healthcare professionals are not safe, the overall security of healthcare environments is compromised. Hopes of achieving gender equality and social development include the inclusion of women in the workplace and presence at every facet of the same. But phenomena of such brutality results into a state of mass fear and it effects the population, and the results will include the following like fear of educating the girl child, women deterred from pursuing higher education, women being disallowed from participating in high risk and high prestige jobs stating their risk for safety. Public view and distortion of facts and threat to integrity and subsequent shame and guilt tripping. Such machinery has already sprung into motion (United nations Human Rights, 2021). This can be observed by the actions being taken by institutions in names of advisories regarding movement and restrictions placed on the women perusing medical, nursing and allied health professionals. Somehow making them responsible for their own safety and questioning the behavior of women and trying to keep their actions in check to prevent negative consequences for their actions. Hereby reinforcing the narrative that the rest of the community has no responsibility to prevent such perversions leading to workplace rape and murder. The Psychological consequences will include fear and anxiety among all the health care professional's majority of that consists of women.

Incidents of this nature lead to calls for stronger security protocols in healthcare settings, including better staffing during night shifts, increased security presence, and the installation of panic buttons or other emergency measures. There is an ethical responsibility for healthcare institutions to ensure a safe working environment, which includes implementing robust safety measures, providing psychological support to victims, and fostering a culture of zero tolerance towards sexual violence. Achieving such change requires "strong victim-centred laws and procedures, gender sensitive investigations and prosecutions, and services for

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survivors". It is vital that those responsible for implementing sexual violence laws have the necessary expertise and technical skills to be able to collect evidence and hold offenders to account. To ensure that laws are responsive to victims' needs and are being effectively implemented, laws must be monitored, and all community actors should be involved in this process. Expedited legal procedures for gang rape cases are essential to reduce trauma for survivors and ensure swifter justice. Delays can further traumatize survivors and discourage reporting.

The gravity of the psychological aftermath of this event will be subtle and long standing the undercurrent of fear and anxiety and lack of trust will impact psyche in ways that may not be obvious physical harms (even though physical attacks happened on the doctors) but psychological wounds and changed attitudes that will impact the generations to come.

**Burden of Violence against doctors:** Doctors have been historically considered close to Godliness until the past few decades (Mishra, 2015) but the status has drastically changed as there has been information availability. Even then the people put their trust on the doctors to provide authentic and case specific information to them (Singh, 2017), still there is a rising trend of violence against doctors and other health care professionals in the Indian Subcontinent and Abroad. The COVID 19 Pandemic highlighted the importance of the doctors and medical professionals and helped them gain more repute but violence has not been sporadic, reports of violence on doctors regarding mis-communication (Jain et al., 2023), and patient perceived factors in treatments (Ghosh, 2018). The last historical case of Aruna Shanbaugh who passed away after 2 years in coma (Deshpande, 2017) the case under discussion of RG Kar has been this horrible and gruesome. It appeals at so many levels that health care spaces need to be safer for the doctors and other working women professionals in the health care arena.

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