

Crime against Girl Child- A Case Study on Rape and Murder

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ABSTRACT

Crime against 'girl child' has been a heinous situation worldwide. Sexual abuse and physical violence cases in India have taken lives of many such innocent children, predominantly the girls. This article covers a case study on a six year old girl who was found raped and murder near the lane of her own residence. A day before the incident occurred, the victim's father including other family members filed a missing complaint in the local police station. The next day, her body was found in a plastic rack close by in the slum dwelling. The victim was covered in blood and her face was brutally smashed. She was found half naked. The rack was dumped on the roadside and it smelled heavily of kerosene oil. On opening it, decaying vegetables, strewn debris, grain straw as well as the victim's body were found. Later all the evidences were sent to the forensic science laboratory for investigation. These trace evidence examination and post-mortem reports revealed, the victim was raped and then murdered. The police investigating officers could seize the culprit based on all the forensic reports that included serological testing and DNA analysis. The postmortem examination also confirmed the injuries found on the victim's body were from force asserted during the sexual assault. The details of the entire case have been discussed in the paper.

Keywords: Rape, Murder, Forensic science, Trace evidence

INTRODUCTION

Rape and murder are crimes that falls under section 375,376 and 302 respectively of the Indian Penal Code (I.P.C). The Protection of Children from Sexual (Kumar and Saini, 2020) Offenses Act (POCSO) of 2012, which was drafted to strengthen legal provisions for the exploitation and protection of children from sexual abuse, defines a child as anyone under the age of 18 and protects all children under the age of 18 from sexual assault, sexual harassment, and other forms of sexual abuse. Still, a woman is raped every 20 minutes in India, according to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India reports. In Madhya Pradesh, 2,341 females were raped in 2020, according to reports filed under Section 376 of the IPC and Sections 4 and 6 of the POCSO. According to the

NCRB report 2020 (Crime in India, 2020), Madhya Pradesh ranked third in rape cases. Even though strict laws and capital punishments for raping a minor have been enacted; the numbers of incidents have not decreased. Delay in justice and lower conviction rates, as well as pending cases in POCSO courts, are some of the major reasons.

There are various reasons for killing the victim after having sex, such as eradicating evidence, honour killing, sadistic satisfaction, promiscuous sexual activity, contempt for women, rage, frustration, etc. In order to successfully investigate rape and murder cases (MP NCRB 2022), the police investigating and forensic team (Nath, 2018) must examine the undisturbed crime scene as soon as possible after the incident and collect evidence on the following items to link the victim, crime scene, and potential suspect. These are some of them:

- a. Scientific crime scene management
- b. Photography, sketching of scene and victim's body; including private parts
- c. Any struggle marks on victim, strangulation etc
- d. Collecting serological evidences like vaginal/oral/anal swabs by reg. medical officer
- e. Collection of blood stained, soiled items like victims clothing and other personal belongings as well as from the surroundings at scene
- f. Public hair of the victim/suspect on the spot/undergarments
- g. Nail clippings of the victim for examination of blood/skin/tissue
- h. Viscera/urine of the victim for rape-drug analysis
- i. Biological samples (blood, semen, saliva, hair) of the suspect for DNA analysis and comparison

CASE STUDY

On the 24th of March, a six-year-old girl went to her aunt's house for a feast known as "Kanya Bhojan." Her aunt dropped her off at the main lane near her house at 4 p.m. after they finished the ceremony and lunch. However, the girl's father in his missing child report stated that she never returned home. The following day, on the 25th, a lady from their neighbourhood approached the family and informed them that she had seen a white plastic rack abandoned near the slum dwelling on the roadway. The body of the victim was discovered inside this rack. The

plastic rack smelled heavily of kerosene oil which gathered the attention of people in the vicinity who called the police then.

OBSERVATIONS

Police response

The police investigating officers and team headed to Krishnagar (Bhopal), where they discovered the white plastic rack containing the victim's body. According to their initial observations, the dead body's rack was rolled between two other racks and disposed of near a slum housing on the road side.

Forensic evidences at scene of crime

When police opened the rack, they discovered the victim's body laying in a right supine posture with both hands and feet parallel to the body. The fingers of hands were folded inwards towards the palm. To conceal the deceased's identity, the face was brutally smashed. There were front and back head injuries, as well as blood coming out of the head. The victim was half-naked, pants removed and undergarments rolled inside out down her knees. Scratches were found on the back upper side of her thighs (Pratihari et al. 2019). A few strands of hair were also found stuck to her thighs. In addition, there was blood and faeces in the rack.

The various evidences found at the crime scene:

- a. A white plastic rack with decaying vegetables, strewn debris, coral flowers, grain straw, and the body of the victim.
- b. Blood stains on the victim's face, head, and body, as well as the victim's surroundings, including the rack and the place where it was dumped
- c. There were two electricity cables beside the rack.
- d. A shredded piece of forest paper inside the rack
- e. Copy paper with scrawled notes inside the rack
- f. Earrings that belonged to the victim
- g. The victim's clothes

POSTMORTEM EXAMINATION

External examination

A dead body of a six-year-old girl with average built wearing a brown jacket, red underwear and brown full pant. A saffron colour black printed clothing wrapped around her having kerosene oil smell. Dried wheat twigs

stuck over scalp along with garbage of dried leaves, papers etc. Head crushed compressed from both sides. Eyes closed. Mouth closed with lips slightly apart. Blood stains present on face, lips and perineum.

Injuries

Multiple contusions and abrasions on right side of face extending from frontal prominence to the ramus of mandible. Reddish purple bruising of 16×10 cm extending from right eye to right ear. Right ear pinna lacerated. There were also multiple contusions over lower side of neck extending up till middle of sterna region of about 18×4 cm. Reddish purple contusions of 7×10 cm present over anterior -medial aspect of right thigh and upper anterior aspect of left thigh.

Head crushed and compressed on both sides with lacerated wound on left temporal region of 7×3 cm. Sagittal area with exposed fracture, bone visible underlying and brain matter oozing out. Multiple lacerated wounds found over left cheek 6×3 cm and 2×10cm. The whole area was surrounded by contusion reddish purple in colour.

Internal examination

The labia majora and minora were contused and inflamed extending till perianal region. The introitus was red, abraded and inflamed. There was a tear in posterior vaginal wall till posterior fourchette of size 1.5× 0.1 cm. Clotted blood and ecchymosis present at the site of injuries. Vaginal and anal smears were prepared. Faecal matter present around anus. Uterine cavity was empty and no other abnormalities were detected in any other organs of the body.

Cause of death

Death occurred due to shock and haemorrhage as a result of crush injuries to the head. Injury had been caused by a hard blunt and heavy object. Death was homicidal in nature. Signs suggestive of forceful vaginal and anal penetration present.

FORENSIC EXAMINATION

Blood, sperm, and hair samples were sent to the forensic science laboratories RFSL Bhopal and FSL Sagar in Madhya Pradesh. For the examination, a vaginal swab slide was made, and a separate vaginal swab was separated for DNA analysis. Dry and wet swabs of blood

found at the crime scene were collected and sent for serological testing. Blood stains discovered on the victim's clothing was compared. In addition, sperm samples taken from the accused at the hospital were sent. The racks with foul odour were sent to be tested for flammable compounds. All other items, including torn jungle paper, dispersed rubbish, and electricity cables, were sent to get forensic opinion. For handwriting analysis, the copy paper with a scribbled note was sent. All of these forms of evidence combined helped the police find the culprit. DNA analysis was performed when the serological samples were matched. The weapon that was used to injure the deceased was also checked for trace evidence and fingerprints.

CONCLUSION

This case of rape, sodomy and murder of a six year old girl child is horrendous and rarest to have been reported. Two middle-aged men who resided in the victim's neighbourhood perpetrated the crime. The way the young girl's face was crushed suggested they were trying to conceal her identity. The crime's modus operandi further shows that after rapping the child, they planned to dump the body in a secluded area and burn it. The presence of kerosene oil in the rack strongly suggested the perpetrators' intentions. But, out of fear, they simply abandoned it on the side of the road. The killers' motive appears to be psychopathic, with the small child being murdered even after receiving sexual gratification. Rape and murder cases are always challenging for the victim's families, the police and legal system. Therefore, bringing all the evidences and working together in a multidisciplinary manner brings utmost justice to the deceased.

Conflicts of interest: The authors stated that no conflicts of interest.

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