



Australian Government
Refugee Review Tribunal

Country Advice

India

India – IND39546 – Single mothers –
Children born out wedlock – police
protection

2 December 2011

1. What are the societal attitudes towards single mothers and children born out of wedlock in India/Andhra Pradesh?

No information was found in relation to societal attitudes towards single mothers and children born out of wedlock in Andhra Pradesh. Information is, however, provided below on the attitudes towards single mothers and children born out of wedlock in India.

Single mothers

Reports indicate that single mothers in India are subject to social stigmatisation.¹

A report published by *The Hindu*, on 11 October 2011, states that according to a recent survey single women in India face violence, harassment, exploitation and social restrictions:

The number of Single Women in India is very large — 39.8 million as per 2002 Census.

...Insufficient provisions at the top, lead to single women in need being turned away, at the bottom, according to a survey “Are We Forgotten Women? A study on the status of low-income single women in India” released by the National Forum for Single Women’s Rights here on Tuesday.

Seeking to debunk the general belief that all single women are old women at the last stage of their life, the survey points out there are **many young single women in extremely challenging circumstances. Many have much to cope with — broken marriage, widowhood, disease, raising children alone, no place to go, violence, harassment, exploitation, little formal education, lack of employment, loneliness, social restrictions, and more.**

...Ever-married women living in their natal homes often face abuse and are made to feel like a burden. Unmarried women also do not have security of shelter after the death of the parents.

“Single women are harassed by family members and neighbours; they are viewed with suspicion and are often accused of immoral behaviour. Many of them do not have a secure roof over their heads; they live with the fear of being thrown out by landlords.

...Single women often face problems keeping their land and house secure from unscrupulous elements wanting to establish control over it.²

¹ Nandy, A. 2011 ‘Single and ready to adopt’, Business Line (The Hindu), 14 October; Ansari, H 2011, Surviving as a single parent, Diligent Media Corporation (DNA Sunday), 2 January; Kalyanwala, S, A J. Xavier, Jejeebhoyand, S & Kumar, R. 2010, ‘Abortion Experiences of Unmarried Young Women in India: Evidence from a Facility-Based Study in Bihar and Jharkhand’, *International Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, vol. 36, no. 2, June, pp.62 – 63; Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2011, *IND103726.E – India: Whether women who head their own households without male support can obtain housing and employment in Delhi, Mumbai and Chandigarh; government support services available to female-headed households in these cities; violence against women in these cities*, 9 May http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca:8080/RIR_RDI/RIR_RDI.aspx?id=453434&l=e – Accessed 25 November 2011.

² Dhar, A. 2011 ‘Low income single women demand public funds to live with dignity’, *The Hindu*, 11 October <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article2528926.ece> - Accessed 2 December 2011.

A May 2011 research response from the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB) provides the following information on negative societal attitudes towards single women in India:

Media sources report that, according to India's census of 2001, there are approximately 36 million women in India who are widowed, divorced or separated from their husbands (IPS 22 Oct. 2009; The Times of India 8 Oct. 2009; Womens eNews 10 Jan. 2010). The National Forum for Single Women's Rights indicates that these single women are rejected by society and treated with indifference by the federal government (ibid.). For example, widows are said to face "deep social stigma" (IPS 22 Oct. 2009), "social marginalisation" (IANS 6 Oct. 2009) and "cruel" treatment by in-laws (The Hindu 7 Oct. 2009). Media sources similarly note that divorced women face social "stigma" (ibid. 30 Dec. 2009) and "ridicule" (Mail Today 2 Feb. 2011).

According to activist involved in launching a national forum for single women's rights in 2009, single women in India are subject to "unjust social customs" (IANS 6 Oct. 2009). Women's eNews, a non-profit Internet-based news service reporting on women's issues (n.d.), likewise explains that women who are unmarried or who were left by their husbands generally "live invisibly, often at the mercy of callous family customs" (10 Jan. 2010).

However, media sources also indicate that India's economy is booming, leading to an increase in the number of young, single women working in cities (The New York Times 26 Mar. 2011; The Tribune 9 Mar. 2011). These women have greater freedoms and opportunities than in the past (ibid.; The New York Times 26 Mar. 2011; DNA 4 July 2010).³

Three Indian news reports, published in 2011 and late 2010, also indicate that single mothers in India are subject to social discrimination:

- On 14 October 2011, *Business Line (The Hindu)*, provided the following information on the social rejection of single mothers:

One of the reasons single mothers are spurned is their real or perceived 'rejection' of marriage. As motherhood is bracketed within the institution of marriage, they are seen to sever and subvert the "link between the two sacred roles". But while most of these women do not consider their single status a major personal loss, some fear it may have an adverse impact on the growth and development of their children.⁴
- On 2 January 2011, *DNA Sunday (Diligent Media Corporation)* reported on the social stigma for single parents in India. The report contains the advice of a 'consultant psychiatrist' who states that while there is not "complete" acceptance of single parents the stigma had reduced from 20 years earlier. The report states that the stigma attached with bearing children out of wedlock is "always much more" than that for abandoned marriages.⁵
- On 13 November 2010, *The Times of India*, reported on an orphanage in Rajkot which takes care of girls who have conceived out of the wedlock. The report cites a member of the orphanage who stated that:

³ Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2011, *IND103726.E – India: Whether women who head their own households without male support can obtain housing and employment in Delhi, Mumbai and Chandigarh; government support services available to female-headed households in these cities; violence against women in these cities*, 9 May http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca:8080/RIR_RDI/RIR_RDI.aspx?id=453434&l=e – Accessed 25 November 2011.

⁴ Nandy, A. 2011 'Single and ready to adopt', *Business Line (The Hindu)*, 14 October

⁵ Ansari, H 2011, Surviving as a single parent, Diligent Media Corporation (DNA Sunday), 2 January

The stigma of having an 'illegitimate child' and the societal trauma she and her family has to suffer may force these girls to commit suicide or abandon the newborn. We are trying to save them from this trauma."⁶

A journal article, published in June 2010, titled *Abortion Experiences of Unmarried Young Women in India*, describes the extreme social stigmatisation of single mothers who have children out of wedlock. The report states that in one study young single mothers reported physical abuse from parents. The following are relevant extracts from the article:

Premarital sex is widely discouraged in India, particularly for young women, yet there is evidence that significant minorities of young men and women have engaged in sex before marriage.

... Although evidence is sparse, in this conservative setting in which **pregnancy among unmarried women is extremely stigmatized, such unintended pregnancies are almost always terminated.**

...Stigma is another major factor in getting an abortion: Pregnancy among the unmarried is so stigmatized that it is perceived to ruin a family's reputation, and in extreme cases, suicide is perceived at the family and societal levels as an option for pregnant, unmarried young women. In one study, 24% of 500 unmarried adolescent abortion seekers reported that their parents had taken punitive measures, including beating or starving them for pro longed periods.⁷

Country Advice IND37712, dated 1 November 2010, contains reports which similarly indicate that having a child outside of wedlock in India is frowned upon by society and that single mothers may be the subject of community ridicule, ostracism and negative stereotyping.⁸

Children Born Out Of Wedlock

Limited information was found in relation to societal attitudes towards children born out of wedlock. Three recent news media reports indicate that children born out of wedlock may experience societal discrimination.⁹

- On 7 April 2011 a report published by *The Indian Express* which states that:

An illegitimate child could have a fraught relationship with the society around — from minor taunts to greater discrimination to a sense of displacement in a rigidly structured, deeply patriarchal community that has its own idea of what a family should be.¹⁰
- On 15 February 2011, *The Times of India* reported on Masaba, born out of wedlock by cricketer Vivian Richards. The report provides the following information on attitudes towards children born out of wedlock:

But society has a long way to go, believes Masaba. She says, "The concept of a lovechild being openly accepted in India is a far-fetched idea. Though it's not discussed in a bad

⁶ Parmar, V. 2010, 'Unwed mothers get shelter here', *The Times of India*, 13 November http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2010-11-13/rajkot/28257449_1_baby-girl-child-home-orphanage - Accessed 1 December 2011.

⁷ Kalyanwala, S, A J. Zavier, Jejeebhoyand, S & Kumar, R. 2010, 'Abortion Experiences of Unmarried Young Women in India: Evidence from a Facility-Based Study in Bihar and Jharkhand', *International Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, vol. 36, no. 2, June, pp.62 – 63

⁸ RRT County Advice Service 2010, *Country Advice IND37712*, 1 November

⁹ Judges, reformers' 2011, *The Indian Express*, 7 April <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/judges-reformers/772760/0> - Accessed 1 December 2011; 'Born a love child' 2011, *The Times of India*, 15 February http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-02-15/man-woman/28378157_1_lovechild-love-child-unwed-mother - Accessed 1 December 2011; Harikrishnan, K.S. 2011, 'India: Unwed Tribal Mothers Face Starvation, Shame', *Inter Press Service*, 31 May

¹⁰ Judges, reformers' 2011, *The Indian Express*, 7 April <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/judges-reformers/772760/0> - Accessed 1 December 2011

light today, a child born out of wedlock will never be welcomed with warmth. Divorce and extra-marital affairs have slowly found acceptance in our society, but if you look at it, **Aren't live-in relationships still taboo? And, a child born out of this 'perceived' taboo you think will be accepted? Never."**

...In a generation of single parenting and live-in relationships, it may soon become easier to take such a decision. Unwed mother Mrinalini (name changed) was sure she wanted to keep the baby. And almost a year on, she's at peace with her decision. Says Mrinalini, "I always wanted a baby. I was crossing 35 and chances of a normal delivery were low. I also didn't believe in abortion. I had been living on my own for some years and while life was good, it felt without purpose. There are moments when I miss a companion, but overall, my happiness has more than doubled. I don't care for society. I have shared an open relationship with my parents. They were initially hesitant, but once my son was born, they fell in love with him. **People who know you, accept you for what you are."**

...Attitudes towards unconventional relationships and decisions are gradually becoming more relaxed. Says psychiatrist Anjali Chhabria, "Women, in general, have become emotionally and sexually bolder. It is still looked down upon. **However, there are more educated people who are open and accepting towards someone having a 'lovechild' as the dynamics of relationships have been showing a changing trend."**¹¹

- On 31 May 2011, *Inter Press Service*, reported on the plight of unwed tribal mothers in Kerala. The report cites a state committee member who states that the children born out of wedlock have poor living conditions and fear being 'taunted':

Bolan, a state committee member and KAF [Kerala Adivasi Forum]Wayanad district president, wants government to start planning a long-term programme for the welfare of these mothers. "**Living conditions of children born out of wedlock are worst. Most of them have inhibitions to face others, fearing being taunted as the children of harlots.**"¹²

Two 2011 news media reports were also found in relation to the abandoning of children born out of wedlock:

- On 23 June 2011, *The Times of India*, reported on an abandoned male infant in Delhi. The report states that:

Police said such cases are common. "It can be a case of teenage pregnancy or a child born out of wedlock. There are many unmarried girls who prefer to abandon the child than own up their responsibility."¹³

- On 30 January 2011, *The Hindustan Times*, reported on three abandoned girl infants in Delhi. The report states that:

"**Earlier, only illegitimate children were abandoned**, but now more girls are left behind than boys. It's obviously a convenient way to get rid of an unwanted girl child. We get reports of one or two abandoned newborns every week," said Prof Radhey Mohan Misra, who runs an NGO called Samarpan Santhasan for children's rights in Varanasi.¹⁴

¹¹ 'Born a love child' 2011, *The Times of India*, 15 February http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-02-15/man-woman/28378157_1_lovechild-love-child-unwed-mother - Accessed 1 December 2011

¹² Harikrishnan, K.S. 2011, 'India: Unwed Tribal Mothers Face Starvation, Shame', *Inter Press Service*, 31 May

¹³ 'Newborn abandoned in South Delhi' 2011, *The Times of India*, 23 June http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-06-23/delhi/29694022_1_child-south-delhi-male-infant - Accessed 1 December 2011

¹⁴ Sharma, S. 2011, 'Unwanted and alone, but not for long', *Hindustan Times*, 30 January <http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/Print/656293.aspx> - Accessed 1 December 2011

2. Are there any reported instances of honour killings in recent years around Hyderabad?

Yes, the following reports were found which indicate that honour killings occur in Andhra Pradesh, including in and near the city of Hyderabad:

- In August 2011 a man murdered his 18 year old daughter and her 21 year old boyfriend for being in a relationship. The two were struck with ‘boulders’ and their bodies were left by railway tracks near the town of Guntakal.¹⁵
- In August 2011 a man forced his 16 year old daughter to consume pesticide near the town of Mahbubnagar. The girl had reportedly fallen in love with a person from another caste. According to the report, the daughter died “within minutes of consuming the pesticide”.¹⁶
- In May 2011 a woman murdered her teenage daughter near the town of Mahbubnagar. The murder was allegedly related to a land dispute, but was nevertheless described as an ‘honour killing’.¹⁷
- In January 2011 a man and woman murdered their 16 year old pregnant daughter, who was not married, in a small village in the Nalgonda district, which is about 100 km from Hyderabad. The father allegedly “slashed [the daughter’s] stomach with a sharp knife”.¹⁸
- In January 2011 a man and woman murdered their daughter and her boyfriend in a village near the town of Owk. The boyfriend was reportedly married to another woman.¹⁹
- In August 2010 a man, with his sons, murdered his daughter in Hyderabad. The woman had separated from her husband and was living in a flat with her children. The report states that she was murdered in response to rumours that she was in a new relationship.²⁰
- A woman and man were beaten to death by the woman’s family in Nizimabad in May 2010. The woman’s family were reportedly unhappy about the fact that the man and woman were from different castes.²¹

A June 2010 report was found in which it is suggested that honour killings, which are traditionally associated with northern Indian states, are becoming a, so called, “all India phenomenon.” The report states:

Recently, disturbing reports of honour killings have come from Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu and **Andhra Pradesh**. Worst, in the national capital... If this happens in New Delhi, one can imagine the situation in remote areas.²² (emphasis added)

¹⁵ ‘Honour Killing in AP: Girl’s father murders couple’ 2011, One India, 26 August

<http://news.oneindia.mobi/2011/08/26/857190.html> - Accessed 1 December 2011.

¹⁶ ‘Honour Killing: Father kills Daughter’ 2011, *The Indian Express*, 10 August

<http://expressbuzz.com/topic/honour-killing-father-kills-daughter/302845.html> - Accessed 1 December 2011.

¹⁷ ‘Honour Killing linked to land dispute’ 2011, *The Hindu*, 9 May

<http://www.hindu.com/2011/05/09/stories/2011050962950700.htm> - Accessed 1 December 2011.

¹⁸ ‘Pregnant girl killed by dad for honour’ 2011, *The Times of India*, 24 January

http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-01-24/hyderabad/28354581_1_tribal-youth-pregnancy-severe-stomach-pain - Accessed 1 December 2011; and also: ‘Honour Killing of Minor Tribal’ 2011, *The Hindu*, 24 January

<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-miscellaneous/article1120096.ece?css=print> - Accessed 1 December 2011.

¹⁹ ‘Honour Killing: Girl murdered by parents in Kurnool’ 2011, *The Times of India*, 18 June

http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-06-18/india/29673735_1_honour-parents-hillocks - Accessed 1 December 2011.

²⁰ ‘Father, brothers confess to ‘honour killing’ 2010, Stop Honour Killings website, 3 August

http://www.stophonourkillings.com/?q=node/4912&utm_source=twitterfeed&utm_medium=twitter - Accessed 1 December 2011.

²¹ ‘Couple Stoned to Death in AP Honour Killing’ 2010, *Indian Express*, 27 May

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/couple-stoned-to-death-in-ap-honour-killing/624490/> - Accessed 1 December 2011.

Although not exclusively related to the issue of ‘honour killings’, it should be noted that in its 2010 Human Rights Report for India, published in 2011, the US Department of States stated that:

The state of Andhra Pradesh recorded the worst record with 23,224 crimes against women, including 1,188 cases of rape, 1,526 cases of kidnapping and abduction, 546 cases of dowry deaths, and 11,297 cases of domestic violence.²³

3. What assistance (financial, social, accommodation, education, etc) would be available to single mothers and children born out of wedlock without fathers, particularly in Andhra Pradesh?

No information was found in relation to assistance for single mothers and children born out of wedlock without fathers in Andhra Pradesh. However, reports indicate that single mothers in India face difficulties in accessing housing and government support services.²⁴

The abovementioned report published by *The Hindu*, on 11 October 2011, states that single women face major difficulties accessing housing and social security benefits:

Not willing to rely on the charitable impulses of family and society for support, the low-income single women in the country — comprising the most vulnerable 10 per cent of the entire female population in the country — on Tuesday said **public funds were required for them to live with dignity.**

The number of Single Women in India is very large — 39.8 million as per 2002 Census. **The Central and the State governments need to make adequate budgetary provisions to reach out to this large number of women.**

...A study on the status of low-income single women in India” released by the National Forum for Single Women’s Rights here on Tuesday.

“Given the many disadvantages that come with being a woman and being single, it cannot be believed that just because they are young and able bodied, they would be able to fulfill all their needs, and those of their children. **The security net of the government has to include younger single women as well,**” Ginny Shrivastava, author of the survey, told reporters.

...Of the total respondents, 15.5 per cent lived alone. **Housing and shelter needs of single women are not adequately met.** Most respondents live in 1 to 2 room *kutchra* houses, lacking in basic amenities such as water, electricity and sanitation. While at least around 60 per cent of the widowed women are able to retain control of the home that they built during the years of their marriage, while separated and divorced women are instantly dispossessed when the marriage breaks up. Ever-married women living in their natal homes often face abuse and are made to feel like a burden. **Unmarried women also do not have security of shelter after the death of the parents.**

²² Joseph, G. ‘Vested Interests and Musclemen rule khap panchayats: Swami Agnivesh’ 2010, *Headlines India*, 20 June <http://headlinesindia.mapsofindia.com/social-interest-news/social-awareness/vested-interests-and-musclemen-rule-khap-panchayats-swami-agnivesh-53376.html> - Accessed 1 December 2011.

²³ US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2010 – India*, 8 April.

²⁴ Dhar, A. 2011 ‘Low income single women demand public funds to live with dignity’, *The Hindu*, 11 October <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article2528926.ece> - Accessed 2 December 2011; Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2011, *IND103726.E – India: Whether women who head their own households without male support can obtain housing and employment in Delhi, Mumbai and Chandigarh; government support services available to female-headed households in these cities; violence against women in these cities*, 9 May http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca:8080/RIR_RDI/RIR_RDI.aspx?id=453434&l=e - Accessed 25 November 2011; ‘Single women list their demands’ 2009, *The Hindu*, 7 October <http://www.hindu.com/2009/10/07/stories/2009100761340300.htm> - Accessed 30 November 2011; UK Home Office 2008, *Operational Guidance Note: India*, April p.15

“Single women are harassed by family members and neighbours; they are viewed with suspicion and are often accused of immoral behaviour. Many of them do not have a secure roof over their heads; they live with the fear of being thrown out by landlords. **Only 12.7 per cent of the respondents could benefit from Government housing schemes** such as the Indira Awas Yojana,” Ms. Shrivastava said.

...Single women often face problems keeping their land and house secure from unscrupulous elements wanting to establish control over it.

Social security pensions only reach about a quarter of the respondents. This is far from adequate. Pension schemes have issues at both the level of policy and of implementation. **The existing pension scheme does not take into account social security needs of separated and divorced women, of unmarried women, or of widows younger than 40 years. It is targeted to cover only BPL households, leaving out many of the poor.**²⁵

A May 2011 research response from the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB) provides detailed information on housing and employment for single women, including single mothers, in India. The response also provides information on government funded support services for single women. Information contained in the response indicates difficulties for single women accessing housing and limited government support services.²⁶

An October 2009 report, published by *The Hindu* also provides information indicating that the Indian government does not provide certain forms of welfare to single women, such as separate ration cards, social security pensions and specialised healthcare.²⁷

The most recent UK Home Office operational guidance note for India is dated April 2008. The operational guidance note provides information on relocation for women within India which indicates that single mothers may experience difficulties accessing housing:

The situation as regards internal relocation for single women, divorcees with or without children, and widows may differ from the situation for men as it may be difficult for women on their own to find secure accommodation. Although rents are high and landlords are often unwilling to rent to single women there are hostels particularly in urban areas where a large number of call centres provide employment.⁷⁹ The situation for women with children is likely to be more difficult as children may not be accepted in hostels.⁸⁰ Illiterate women from rural areas are likely to find it particularly difficult to obtain accommodation as a lone woman.⁸¹ For some women in India relocation will not be unduly harsh but this is only likely to be the case where the individual is single, without children to support and is educated enough to be able to support herself. Some single women may also be able to relocate to live with extended family or friends in other parts of the country. However, where these circumstances do not apply internal relocation is likely to be unduly harsh.²⁸

²⁵ Dhar, A. 2011 ‘Low income single women demand public funds to live with dignity’, *The Hindu*, 11 October <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article2528926.ece> - Accessed 2 December 2011

²⁶ Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2011, *IND103726.E – India: Whether women who head their own households without male support can obtain housing and employment in Delhi, Mumbai and Chandigarh; government support services available to female-headed households in these cities; violence against women in these cities*, 9 May http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca:8080/RIR_RDI/RIR_RDI.aspx?id=453434&l=e – Accessed 25 November 2011.

²⁷ ‘Single women list their demands’ 2009, *The Hindu*, 7 October <http://www.hindu.com/2009/10/07/stories/2009100761340300.htm> – Accessed 30 November 2011

²⁸ UK Home Office 2008, *Operational Guidance Note: India*, April p.15; Freedom House 2011, ‘Freedom in the World 2011 – India’, 26 May, http://www.freedomhouse.org/inc/content/pubs/fiw/inc_country_detail.cfm?year=2011&country=8055&pf – Accessed 28 November 2011; Human Rights Watch 2009, *Broken System: Dysfunction, Abuse and Impunity in the Indian Police*, August, pp.9 & 51-52 <http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/india0809web.pdf> – Accessed 7 December 2009.

4. What legal protection against violence would be available to women and children in such circumstances? Is there anything to suggest that they would not be protected by the police and authorities?

Question two of *Country Advice IND39520*, dated 1 December 2011, provides information on the legal protection available to women in India. Information contained in the response indicates that the law in India includes a number of provisions which provide women with protection against all forms of domestic abuse and the right to police assistance and legal aid. Despite these reforms a range of sources report that violence against women remains a serious problem in India. The rape and torture of women in custody also continue to occur.²⁹

The 2011 Freedom House report for India provides the following information on violence against women and poor law enforcement:

Each year, several thousand women are killed or driven to suicide, and countless others are abused or deserted by husbands, in the context of domestic disputes. Rape and other violence against women are serious problems, and lower-caste and tribal women are particularly vulnerable. Despite the criminalization of dowry demands and hundreds of convictions each year, the practice continues. A 2006 law banned dowry-related harassment, widened the definition of domestic violence to include emotional or verbal abuse, and criminalized spousal rape. However, reports released in 2009 by the Delhi-based Lawyers' Collective indicated that enforcement of the law was poor in many states. So-called honor killings, in which women are murdered by relatives for perceived sexual or moral transgressions, remain a problem, especially in the northwestern states of Punjab and Haryana.³⁰

Human Rights Watch published a report in August 2009 on the police in India, based on research in three states: Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Karnataka. The report states that police treated claims of violence against women and girls differently from other crimes due to their 'private' nature. The report stated:

Police, including specially designated Crimes Against Women cells, fail to sufficiently aid victims of domestic violence. According to NGOs and police themselves, police often urge victims to "compromise" with their spouses or spouses' families, even when women allege repeated and severe physical abuse. Women's rights activists say that police often do not investigate rape cases and re-traumatize victims who approach them for help through their hostile or inadequate response.

...While the police usually deny engaging in caste-based discrimination, they admit to treating claims of violence against women and girls differently from other crimes due to their "private" nature. Discriminatory attitudes and lack of sensitization to the dynamics of crimes involving sexual or domestic violence leave victims without critical police aid or the redress to which they are entitled.

...Victims often turn to the police only as a last resort and typically when the violence has escalated. Yet, in interviews with Human Right Watch, virtually all police—including those working at women's cells and departments—said that they do not treat domestic violence as a normal criminal offense to be registered and investigated, with the perpetrators arrested or monitored. Instead, they encourage "compromise" between domestic violence victims and their spouses or spouses' families, even when women allege repeated physical abuse. Police fail women victims of violence when they promote reconciliation and ignore police obligations to promote safety and enforce the laws.³¹

²⁹ RRT Country Advice Services 2011, *Country Advice IND39520*, 1 December

³⁰ Freedom House 2011, 'Freedom in the World 2011 – India', 26 May, http://www.freedomhouse.org/inc/content/pubs/fiw/inc_country_detail.cfm?year=2011&country=8055&pf – Accessed 28 November 2011

³¹ Human Rights Watch 2009, *Broken System: Dysfunction, Abuse and Impunity in the Indian Police*, August, pp.9 & 51-52 <http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/india0809web.pdf> – Accessed 7 December 2009.

References

- 'Born a love child' 2011, *The Times of India*, 15 February
http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-02-15/man-woman/28378157_1_lovechild-love-child-unwed-mother - Accessed 1 December 2011.
- 'Couple Stoned to Death in AP Honour Killing' 2010, *Indian Express*, 27 May
<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/couple-stoned-to-death-in-ap-honour-killing/624490/> - Accessed 1 December 2011.
- 'Father, brothers confess to 'honour killing' 2010, Stop Honour Killings website, 3 August
http://www.stophonourkillings.com/?q=node/4912&utm_source=twitterfeed&utm_medium=twitter - Accessed 1 December 2011.
- 'Honour Killing in AP: Girl's father murders couple' 2011, One India, 26 August
<http://news.oneindia.mobi/2011/08/26/857190.html> - Accessed 1 December 2011.
- 'Honour Killing linked to land dispute' 2011, *The Hindu*, 9 May
<http://www.hindu.com/2011/05/09/stories/2011050962950700.htm> - Accessed 1 December 2011.
- 'Honour Killing of Minor Tribal' 2011, *The Hindu*, 24 January <http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-miscellaneous/article1120096.ece?css=print> - Accessed 1 December 2011.
- 'Honour Killing: Father kills Daughter' 2011, *The Indian Express*, 10 August
<http://expressbuzz.com/topic/honour-killing-father-kills-daughter/302845.html> - Accessed 1 December 2011.
- 'Honour Killing: Girl murdered by parents in Kurnool' 2011, *The Times of India*, 18 June
http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-06-18/india/29673735_1_honour-parents-hillocks - Accessed 1 December 2011.
- 'Newborn abandoned in South Delhi' 2011, *The Times of India*, 23 June
http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-06-23/delhi/29694022_1_child-south-delhi-male-infant - Accessed 1 December 2011.
- 'Pregnant girl killed by dad for honour' 2011, *The Times of India*, 24 January
http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2011-01-24/hyderabad/28354581_1_tribal-youth-pregnancy-severe-stomach-pain - Accessed 1 December 2011.
- 'Single women list their demands' 2009, *The Hindu*, 7 October
<http://www.hindu.com/2009/10/07/stories/2009100761340300.htm> - Accessed 30 November 2011.
- 'Single women list their demands' 2009, *The Hindu*, 7 October
<http://www.hindu.com/2009/10/07/stories/2009100761340300.htm> - Accessed 30 November 2011.
- Ansari, H 2011, Surviving as a single parent, Diligent Media Corporation (DNA Sunday), 2 January. (FACTIVA)
- Dhar, A. 2011 'Low income single women demand public funds to live with dignity', *The Hindu*, 11 October <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article2528926.ece> - Accessed 2 December 2011.
- Freedom House 2011, 'Freedom in the World 2011 – India', 26 May,
http://www.freedomhouse.org/inc/content/pubs/fiw/inc_country_detail.cfm?year=2011&country=8055&pf - Accessed 28 November 2011.
- Harikrishnan, K.S. 2011, 'India: Unwed Tribal Mothers Face Starvation, Shame', *Inter Press Service*, 31 May. (FACTIVA)

Human Rights Watch 2009, *Broken System: Dysfunction, Abuse and Impunity in the Indian Police*, August <http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/india0809web.pdf> – Accessed 7 December 2009.

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2011, *IND103726.E – India: Whether women who head their own households without male support can obtain housing and employment in Delhi, Mumbai and Chandigarh; government support services available to female-headed households in these cities; violence against women in these cities*, 9 May http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca:8080/RIR_RDI/RIR_RDI.aspx?id=453434&l=e – Accessed 25 November 2011.

Joseph, G. ‘Vested Interests and Musclemen rule khap panchayats: Swami Agnivesh’ 2010, *Headlines India*, 20 June <http://headlinesindia.mapsofindia.com/social-interest-news/social-awareness/vested-interests-and-musclemen-rule-khap-panchayats-swami-agnivesh-53376.html> - Accessed 1 December 2011.

Judges, reformers’ 2011, *The Indian Express*, 7 April <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/judges-reformers/772760/0> - Accessed 1 December 2011.

Kalyanwala, S, A J. Zavier, Jejeebhoyand, S & Kumar, R. 2010, ‘Abortion Experiences of Unmarried Young Women in India: Evidence from a Facility-Based Study in Bihar and Jharkhand’, *International Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, vol. 36, no. 2, June.

Nandy, A. 2011 ‘Single and ready to adopt’, *Business Line (The Hindu)*, 14 October. (FACTIVA)

Parmar, V. 2010, ‘Unwed mothers get shelter here’, *The Times of India*, 13 November http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2010-11-13/rajkot/28257449_1_baby-girl-child-home-orphanage - Accessed 1 December 2011.

RRT Country Advice Services 2011, *Country Advice IND39520*, 1 December.

RRT County Advice Service 2010, *Country Advice IND37712*, 1 November.

Sharma, S. 2011, ‘Unwanted and alone, but not for long’, *Hindustan Times*, 30 January <http://www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/Print/656293.aspx> - Accessed 1 December 2011.

UK Home Office 2008, *Operational Guidance Note: India*, April p.15

US Department of State 2011, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2010 – India*, 8 April.