E-ISSN: 2664-603X
P-ISSN: 2664-6021
IJPSG 2025; 7(4): 274-280
www.journalofpoliticalscience.com
Received: 01-01-2025
Accepted: 05-02-2025

Sourish Jha
Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata, West Bengal, India

Corresponding Author:
Sourish Jha
Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata, West Bengal, India

The R.G. Kar tragedy, workplace violence, and everyday injustice: A critical policy and gendered perspective

Sourish Jha

DOI: https://doi.org/10.33545/26646021.2025.v7.i4d.508

Abstract
The tragic death of Dr. Abhaya at R.G. Kar Medical College, Kolkata, highlights the truly endemic nature of workplace violence faced by women in the Indian healthcare institutions. Despite the efforts to establish norms of conduct such as Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013, National Policy on Safety, Health and Environment at Workplace, 2009, there are wide gaps in both existing policies and their implementation. This article critically explores how these gaps combined with everyday injustice compromise women safety in the workplace with reference to the tragedy and advocates for an integrated approach includes gender sensitive reforms, robust enforcement mechanisms and cultural transformation.

Keywords: Everyday injustice, gender-sensitive reform, R.G. Kar tragedy, workplace violence

Introduction
The tragic death of junior doctor Abhaya from R.G. Kar Medical College in Kolkata has brought into focus the dangers that continues to be faced by women in their workplaces - and particularly in the health sector. Just like many professional environments in India, this is not an isolated incident, but the result of several long-standing systemic failures, descendent culture, and institutional collusion (Gupta, Fatima, Kandikuppa, 2020, p. 1) [7]. It is a reflection of the normalization of workplace violence, where institution implicitly or explicitly accept unhealthy levels of discrimination, harassment, lack of adequate institutional protection and dangerous working conditions for women as part and parcel of their everyday life. Hierarchical structures in the healthcare sector, studies show, often place the women working in them at gendered vulnerabilities such as verbal abuse, professional exclusion and unsafe working environments (Saxena, 2021, p. 25) [17]. These challenges persist despite promises of reform. Currently women practice in professions such as healthcare in ways that leaves them disproportionately at risk of violence and exploitation (Lippel, 2016, p. 12) [11].
Against the backdrop, this article seeks to explore the link between systemic neglect, everyday cultural normalization, and policy failure that enables workplace violence to continue. It revisits the issue of women vulnerability and the problem of violence at workplace, though in a particular context, which highlighted in the “Towards Equality Report” (1974), a document prepared approximately five decades ago.

Contextual framework
Workplace violence against women reflects deeply entrenched broader structural and systemic inequalities in our society. However, Toward Equality Report, (1974) played a prime role in tracing socio economic and cultural reasons behind this; more precisely in male dominated professions. Building on its findings, workplace violence is explicated a spectrum of physical, emotional, and psychological harm disproportionately experienced by women. These harms are powered by systemic biases that not only justify exclusionary practices but which silence women’s voices in the workplace. In the healthcare sector, an area where women tend to be concentrated in the lower end of the

gauged specification, is a classic case of this inequality. Research shows what creates an environment ripe with opportunity for harassment and exploitation: power imbalances and hierarchical structures (Lippel 2016, p 12) [11].

Workplace violence needs to be defined as the intersection between socio cultural norms and institutional failures and its definition demands a multidimensional approach laced with the human factor. Van De Griend & Messias (2020) [22] write in one of their studies that cultural stereotypes that cast women as secondary and subordinate figures in professional environments are instrumental in shaping them (p. 2). In other words, the ILO Convention on Workplace Violence demonstrates how discriminatory norms work with insufficient institutional policies to sustain harm (Ahuja, 2020) [1]. Juxtaposing systemic neglect and vulnerability as a ground of risk, it lays bare the way complicity to abuse extends to institutional complicity to harm. Framed in a similar fashion as the broader concept of violence, which is understood as being not just episodic, but embedded in the everyday structures of injustice that permeate professional spaces (Kumar, & Sharma, 2022) [10].

The phenomenon of everyday injustice, however, is a very significant contributor to workplace violence since it is a very active mechanism of normalizing harm. These are mostly subtle but churning injustices - professional disrespect, exclusion or in the most primitive cases, plain harassment. Regularized harm is how everyday injustice works: minor transgressions become habitual, so that people will grow to accept the injustices in time. This normalization drives a 'normalization of the normal'-an eroding of the sensitivity to harm that becomes a routine of professional, social interaction. Additionally, there is also everyday injustice that is not mere category specific injustice, i.e. class based, caste based, gender based, but everyday injustice that occurs at intersection of all these and other identities where the ground is common experiences of harm that are shared in daily motifs of life. These practices were described in the Towards Equality Report in correspondence to a wider picture of systemic inequity, where routine neglect and coercion lay the groundwork for more overt forms of violence. Research also suggests that institutional inaction and cultural acquiesce to relatively minor transgressions predispose violence not only to happen, but to be inevitable (Lippel, 2016, p. 24) [11].

Lived experiences at R.G. Kar Medical College present an alarming illustration of how systemic neglect and everyday injustices come together to manifest as not only overt violence, but lethal violence. Persistent patterns of harassment, unsafe working conditions, and institutional apathy are described by first-hand accounts of junior doctors and nursing staff. These narratives mirror the issues identified more broadly in the Towards Equality Report of failure by institutions to create safe and equitable environments for women. For example, many women report that complaints of harassment are either dismissed or inadequately addressed, thus reinforcing a culture of impunity Kumar & Sharma, (2022) [10]. Not only does this underscore that there is an urgent need for reform but also it shows the total inter connectedness of the cultural, the institutional and the systemic failures that have allowed for continued workplace violence.

Finally, the contextual framework of workplace violence is closely intertwined with both the structural and cultural problems described in the Towards Equality Report. This framework emphasizes that addressing workplace violence means going beyond responding to particular case or incident; it needs constant work to dismantle systems which continue to fuel the problem. In this way, this paper will draw attention to the embodiment of injustice in the everyday experiences of women, while demonstrating how cultural norms, institutional neglect, and systemic failure converge to affect women in the workplaces.

Objectives

Building upon the contextual framework, this article defines the objectives of this study in order to understand workplace violence as a peculiar form of everyday injustice in the context of the normalization of harm, its intersectional character and the failure of legal and institutional framework to guarantee everyday safety and security to women. The first objective is to develop an understanding of how workplace violence towards women is embedded within everyday injustice - a normalized and systematic kind of harm. From the subtler forms of everyday injustice - from exclusionary practices to institutional neglect - people's voices are silenced and discriminatory power dynamic reinforced, and thus creating space for overt violence. The second objective of this study is a critical analysis of existing policies and key legislative framework which guarantees works place safety and equality includes the National Policy on Safety, Health & Environment at Work (2009) and the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act (2013). The final objective is to suggest applicable reforms consistent with the vision of the Towards Equality Report. The goal of these reforms is to close the gap between legislative intent and real implementation and to establish inclusive environments that combat discriminatory norms and enable women to report instances of injustice (Lippel 2016, p. 24) [11]. By addressing these objectives, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how everyday injustices perpetuate workplace violence in the prevailing socio-economic, cultural and institutional context which needs to be reformed and replaced by a more equitable framework of justice at the workplace as highlighted in the Towards Equality Report (1974).

Literature Review

Based on the Objectives section, this literature review tries to understand the contribution of systemic neglect, cultural normalization and policy failures to propagate workplace violence. By exploring existing research, the review identifies critical gaps in the existing literature and policy framework in understanding the systemic roots of workplace violence and the normalization of everyday injustices.

Systemic neglect and workplace violence

Systemic injustices give women a disadvantage in the professional spaces and violence is not left behind in workplace. The blueprint was set by the Towards Equality Report 1974 which found that patriarchal norms and socio-economic structures marginalize women and render spaces and structures conducive to discrimination and violence. The studies that follow rely on this basic analysis and focus specifically on how institutional and functional neglect allows harm to persist. For example, of functional neglect, passive injustice as Shklar (1990) [20] proposed, helps explain how inaction by citizens and public officials helps creating and reinforcing of injustice systematically in the

public places. Analysis of gendered power structures in the workplace offers another example of how work environments - beginning without apparent bias - allow women to be vulnerable to harassment and exclusion. Despite the legislative advances; such as the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, (2013) women's safety remains undermined by systemic neglect in India. However, comparative studies show that these limitations are the same in India as they are around the world (Goldscheid & Anderson, 2009) [4], and the institutional responses to gender-based violence are inadequate.

Normalization of everyday injustice

Everyday injustices-such as verbal harassment, exclusion, and unequal workloads-are often normalized through cultural practices and institutional complicity. Young's theory of structural injustice offers a critical lens with which to make sense of how these practices are inscribed in systems of society (Young, 2011) [25]. According to Young, everyday injustices are not the result of individual actions but are perpetuated by structural inequalities that marginalize women (Young, 2011) [25]. Aligning with findings that the Gender Equality and Social Dialog in India report there is acceptance within the culture overall in terms of discriminatory behaviors within the workplace, especially in male dominated industry. The normalization of harm is further compounded by the lack of robust policies to address everyday injustices. For example, the National Policy on Safety, Health & Environment at work (2009) intends to guarantee workplace safety without, however, specifying any of its specific requirements directed at gender-based vulnerabilities (Lippel, 2016) [11]. According to studies, such gaps in policy implementation allow systemic violence to remain out of sight, because cultural norms continue to devalue women's contributions (Mikula, Petri, & Tanzer, 1990) [13].

Policy failures and systemic gaps

Policy frameworks rarely account for the way in which workplace violence is formed at the intersection of cultural, socio economic, and institutional factors. However, while the provisions of the ILO Convention on Workplace Violence cover all forms of violence and harassment, efforts to implementing these principles in national policies do not seem effective (Ahuja, 2020). There is also a gap in the literature regarding the socio-economic dimensions of workplace violence. The dimension of enhancing individuals' capabilities to live in a dignified manner is largely neglected in the policy framework which constitutes the central aspect of the capability approach of Sen (1999). In most instances, these wider dimensions are typically ignored in current policies which seek to address the problem reactively, rather than with proactive strategies for systemic change (Lippel, 2016) [11]. This failure to integrate socio-economic considerations into workplace safety frameworks exacerbates injustice and creates the conditions for gender-based violence in the workplace.

Gaps and implications for this study

Existing literature emphasizes we have a long way to go in understanding and responding to workplace violence. Systematic neglect, cultural normalization and policy failure have been identified in the studies of these issues; however, little research has been done on the intersection and cumulative effects of these problems from the lens of everyday injustice. This article attempts to fill this gap by considering how these factors work together to perpetuate workplace violence. Employing what the women know of their lived experiences as well as a structural and cultural analysis of harm, this research argues for more holistic and actionable insights that can improve the workplace safety and equity of women.

Method

This research addresses those gaps in the literature by exploring the interplay of systemic neglect, cultural normalization, and policy failure that permeates workplace violence. The study explores the structural and cultural aspects of this issue using policy analysis, case study and intersectional analysis. The limitations of some policy frameworks such as the National Policy on Safety, Health, and Environment at Work (2009) and the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act (2013) are critically analyzed.

The R.G. Kar Medical College incident, involving the harassment and death of a junior doctor, serves as a case study to illustrate how cultural normalization, institutional neglect, and policy inadequacies converge to escalate everyday injustices into overt violence. The case study draws on testimonies and media reports to present such a microcosmic vantage point on these systemic failures. Moreover, an integrated analysis shows how the everyday injustices, policy inadequacies, and systemic inequalities multiply vulnerabilities for women at work, owing to additional constraints from socio-economic constrictions and social stigmas. This article unpacks these findings by placing them within broader patterns of systemic neglect and highlights the necessity for inclusive, context sensitive interventions that should tackle systemic and cultural factors synchronously.

Findings: Insights and key observations

Building on the methodology outlined above, this section shows the persistent role of everyday injustices in underpinning workplace violence, critically examines key policy frameworks for their inadequacies, and highlights the intersectional dimensions of structural inequalities. In conclusion, these results demonstrate the necessity of the complete and comprehensive reforms needed to abolish the systemic and cultural conditions responsible for workplace violence (Hui *et al*., 2021) [9].

1. Everyday injustices as foundations of workplace violence

Workplace violence is deeply rooted in everyday injustices-subtle yet pervasive acts that normalize harm and erode fairness and dignity. Verbal harassment, intimidation, threat culture, exclusion or unequal workloads are considered as minor or inconsequential things. But are they really? Everyday injustice operates as an active mechanism for embedding harm into workplace cultures, thriving on repetition and habituation. As time passes, people and organizations become immune to these offences and establish conditions where bigger discharges of violence turn out to be conceivable and furthermore preordained (Montgomery *et al*., 2023, p. 1) [23]. It's important to recognize that everyday injustice often aligns with category-

specific inequalities such as class, caste, or gender. For instance, women who are working in an otherwise male dominated profession often encounter nonsensical acts of exclusion, casual disrespect, intimidation and so forth that diminishes their professional position. But these injustices don't just span one category. Instead, they are demographically boundless, creating shared experience of harm that transacts the boundaries of identity. This intersectional nature of everyday injustice explains why workplace violence, like the tragic death of Dr. Abhaya at R.G. Kar Medical College, cannot be fully understood through a gendered lens alone. (Saxena, n.d., p. 31) [17]. Dr. Abhaya's death underscores compounded vulnerabilities of women on account of systemic inequities, but previous incidents of workplace violence, a pattern in the same institution, suggest that male doctors too may be vulnerable to intimidation, threats including coups and even death. These incidents underscore how everyday injustice, institutional neglect, and corruption harm everyone, regardless of gender. Its institutional pervasiveness led to a power nexus that normalized harm for personal and political gain, leading frequently to violence as the norm, not the exception. (Hui *et al*., 2021, pp. 1-2) [9].

The injustices are the result of systemic inequities embedded through socio-cultural norms and institutional failure as captured in the Towards Equality Report (1974). But in the R.G. Kar case, the issues of corruption and power dynamics within institutions make it more difficult to take on the injustices. Institutional inaction and cultural acceptance of harm sustain this cycle, allowing the same mechanisms of everyday injustice to victimize individuals across categories, even as their experiences may differ in degree or form. (Saxena, 2021., p. 31) [17]. This broader understanding of everyday injustice-while rooted in specific inequalities-demands a more inclusive and comprehensive approach to addressing workplace violence. While this issue can be reduced to a single category risk, it would overlook the shared systems of harm that makes corruption and exploitation possible across the board. Addressing workplace violence requires dismantling these systemic and cultural structures that enable everyday injustice to persist unchecked. (Hui *et al*., 2021, pp. 1-2) [9]. The ultimate fight against workplace violence is much bigger than protecting one group from one tool. What it's really about is changing the culture within a workplace where it becomes important to remain fair, accountable, and equitable towards all. The R.G. Kar tragedy stands as a grim reminder that without this systemic shift, everyday injustice will continue to claim lives, silencing voices across identities and categories (Hui *et al*., 2021, pp. 1-2) [9].

2. Policy review: Fragmented and inadequate frameworks

The pervasiveness of workplace violence is deeply embedded in systemic neglect and cultural normalization and present in India only in absence of adequate policy response mechanisms. But, two main legislations exist in India, namely, National Policy on Safety, Health and Environment at Workplace (2009); and Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act (2013), hence providing a structure for women safety at workplace and equity. But closer inspection shows that these policies have been good but remain fragmented and insufficient to get to the root of the causes of workplace violence.

A. National Policy on Safety, Health, and Environment at Workplace (2009)

The National Policy on Safety, Health & Environment at Workplace is general in approach and is comprehensive as it acknowledges safety at workplace as the right of the worker. And it affirms the need for legislative, preventative measures and channels of implementation. However, it lacks coherence in terms of gendered risks especially in the health sector; the risk factors which include; power relationships as a result of organizational hierarchy are not well examined. The said policy includes clear objectives: social - to minimize the frequency of work-related injuries, increase the degree of community awareness, etc. However, when it comes to giving bite to these provisions for the benefit of the disadvantaged, especially women, it does not. For example, this policy fails comprehensively to confront particular vulnerability issues among female employees in insecure employment positions or those within the informal economy. Also, it does not strong provisions for enforcement and reporting, it is powerless to implement policies for meeting the needs of handling with everyday realities of workplace's violence. Healthcare is an example of such. The R.G. Kar Medical College case shows us how an unsafe environment is created when gender insensitive safeguards are not there, institutional negligence and corruption go hand in hand. Harassment is not just a threat to women on the front lines of healthcare; they are uniquely vulnerable because they don't have equal access to support systems. It is clear that the failure of the National Policy to consider these complexities is an indication of National Policy's inadequacy to deal with the pervasive nature of everyday injustice.

B. Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act (2013)

The awareness of the menace of workplace violence gained momentum with Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, (2013), which was a big stride in genders issues to identify and resolve workplace harassment. It provides a wide definition of sexual harassment and creates procedures to resolve grievances including Internal Complaints Committees (ICCs). Despite these provisions the Act remains woefully lacking, failing to address numerous loopholes and certainly failing to address systemic and cultural factors that perpetuate workplace violence. The most significant flaw of the Act is that it does not consider much beyond the individual occurrence and not the systemic problem. Instead of addressing the larger cultural institutional dynamics that allow for such behavior to take place, sexual harassment is fore closured by its framing as a personal grievance. Further, it has been criticized that the reliance of the Act upon the ICCs for redressal has been placed with the creation of bureaucratic barriers, particularly in the smaller companies or organizations in informal sectors where such committees mostly do not exist or have not been implemented properly. In addition, the Act's narrow definition does not capture many ways of everyday injustice, that disproportionally affect women. Intimidation, exclusion or unequal task allocation - for example - are not dealt with explicitly. The narrow focus of the Act disables it from adequately dealing with the cumulative impact of these injustices which normalize harm and quiet victims over time.

Policy gaps and consequences

Both the Policy and the Act share a fundamental weakness: their fragmented approach is not designed to deal with workplace violence as a systemic issue embedded in everyday injustice. The National Policy emphasizes safety and health standards, but does not address the systemic cultural and structural inequalities that harm at disproportionate rates those who are marginalized. By the same token, the Sexual Harassment Act leaves out the intersections of gender, class and caste that structure the lived experiences of workplace violence. This tragic death of Dr Abhaya at R.G. Kar Medical College is typical of such policy failures. This is while gendered violence is a vital part of the case, what her case makes clear is also the institutional neglect, corruption, and intimidation that affects all employees regardless of gender. It is noted that even male doctors at the institution are facing workplace violence which, further pointing out limits of policy and Act that don't take into account how everyday injustice is intersectional and systemic to produce workplace violence.

3. Case study: R.G. Kar medical college incident

The shocking incidents of junior doctor Dr. Abhaya, who was raped and murdered on duty at R.G. Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata on August 9, 2024, reveal the structural violence in the Indian healthcare system. This episode is a good example of how social injustice manifests itself in people's everyday life, making threats, neglect and corruption foster violence. Dr. Abhaya's murder is not an isolated incident, but only another sign of the institutional mess up that has been going on in the R.G. Kar Medical College for many years.

Threat culture and intimidation

The media reported that R.G. Kar Medical College had a deeply entrenched culture of intimidation and coercion for its staff and students - an unsafe, oppressive place. Many junior doctors gave testimonies about routine threats and harassment, including coercion, mental and physical, sexual misconduct and even extortion. While stating an example, the juniors would be often threatened with failure in examinations, evacuation from the hostels if they did not comply with the demands of certain senior staff members (Yengkhom, 2024) [24]. This toxic atmosphere shut down victims from reporting these abuses because they feared retaliation. There is this normalization of coercive practices, and that really shows institutional complicity in producing that hostile environment. It is the system that fails to make its workplace safe and supportive for the healthcare professionals in question, and the daily fear and trauma that staff and students experience every day.

Institutional neglect

The neglect of this medical college was institutional in its roots and in exacerbating the already unsafe conditions at the R.G. Kar Medical College. After earlier incidents of violence, the administration repeatedly promised to strengthen security measures but these didn't materialize at all. Das (2024) said the hospital only had two male guards to police the entire campus and even doctors and students - particularly girls- were vulnerable to harassment or attacks. In addition, perpetrators were working without impunity due to lack of adequate CCTV surveillance and poor implementation of safety protocols. The causing of this neglect was not simply a decibar in judgement, but rather a failure of process that neglects the wellbeing of the institution's employees and students. These lapses in care for safety measures were the breeding place for even small breaches of action to mutate into simple savage acts like the murder of Dr. Abhaya.

Culture of corruption

R.G. Kar Medical College deepened the evisceration of institutional culture by widespread corruption and favoritism. The college's former principal, Sandip Ghosh, was arrested on charges of financial irregularities, including graft and tampering with evidence in connection with the case of Dr. Abhaya (Reuters, 2024, Yengkhom, 2024) [15, 24]. At every level, this corruption rendered unalloyed administrative integrity and allowed the prevailing culture of impunity. Marginalization of victims occurred in widening circles, including because those in positions of power abused whatever influence they had, either to suppress complaints or to shield the perpetrators. Absent transparent grievance mechanisms, victims had no recourse to address their grievances, allowing everyday injustices to become normalized, and to be perpetuated in cycles of harm. However, this institutional decay was not just unheard of to women but also to male staff members who had once been victimized through such threats and intimidation and even fatal results.

Systemic failures and broader implications

Dr. Abhaya's death is the result of the blend of threat culture, institutional neglect and corruption at R.G. Kar Medical College. But her case is part of a broader pattern of workplace violence that is disproportionately traversing healthcare professionals in India. The outcry following the tragedy became national, with medical professionals on strike to force attention toward systemic reform and accountability (Mansoor, 2024; Sandilya, 2024) [12, 16]. Most importantly, this case shows how workplace violence needs to be interpreted beyond a gendered perspective. Although women are a top target for harassment and violence, male doctors at R.G. Kar Medical College too have suffered systemic injustice-the kind that includes threats, coercion and even death. These incidents are symptomatic of broader institutional failures, or the everyday injustice of corruption and power imbalances that produce an unsafe environment for an entire organization. Healthcare institutions must systematically and culturally address what enables workplace violence. To do so, this entails the practical steps such as establishing effective security measures, ensuring transparent administrative processes as well as a conducive working environment for safe and dignified existence to all staff, regardless of their gender and seniority.

4. Integrated perspective

An integrated lens reveals how the everyday injustices, policy inadequacies, and systemic inequalities that beset women in the workplace are interwoven in such a way as to make them vulnerable to violence. This approach brings to the fore the compounded effect of institutional cultural norms, complicity, neglect, threats and discrimination that take their toll on marginalized groups lie women in a disproportionate way due to fragmented and ineffective policies. The case of Dr. Abhaya at R.G. Kar Medical College highlights how confronted we are at the integration

of this problem and how desperately we need to deal with these compliances to prevent workplace violence.

The R.G. Kar case: A microcosm of integration

The case of Dr. Abhaya fits in the larger picture of how the experience of injustice in a workplace is constructed by the interplay of institutional norms, policy failures, and systemic inequalities. Those working at R.G. Kar Medical College were tired of a culture of intimidation and corruption, in an environment where minimal measures for their safety were taken and women were the worst off. The Case Study highlights how Dr. Abhaya's death marked the end of a chain of systemic failure ranging from the security failure, institutional neglect to deep-rooted corruption (Das, 2024; Reuters, 2024) [3, 5]. An integrated analysis shows that these systemic issues are not limited to gender alone. As male doctors at the institution too have been victims of threats, coercion, and violence. More broadly, this illustrates how concurrent power dynamics and systemic inequalities, based in everyday injustice, form a collective and unequal experience of injury.

Intersecting everyday injustice and policy gaps

Verbal harassment, exclusion, intimidation and unbalanced workloads that many of us experience every day are not isolated experiences but embedded in institutional cultures and systems of neglect. This subtle but constant acts of normalization of violence set the stage for violence to become overt. Available policies do little to steer us from these injustices and serve rather to further normalize them, as evidenced by the gaps in the National Policy on Safety, Health, and Environment at Workplace (2009) and the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act (2013) Although each policy and Act addresses a certain kind of workplace safety and harassment, neither the policy nor the Act, considers the role that different forms of harm and violence have at the intersection of variables. As an example, the gender-neutral framing of the National Policy does not take into account the situation of women working in high-risk jobs such as healthcare where power structures create further risk. Likewise, the Sexual Harassment Act is confined to individual concerns and ignores the pervasive and culture-sustaining aspects of workplace violence. These broken frameworks compound the effect of everyday injustice by not addressing the causes of those injustices themselves; causing women to be disproportionately vulnerable to harm (Hui *et al*., 2021) [9].

Institutional and cultural norms: A barrier to justice

Workplace violence is continued within institutional complicity and norms of culture. According to the Policy Review, the disjointed, poorly enforced policies don't do enough to disrupt systemic and cultural forces that accept harm. The toxic culture that allowed a culture of corruption to exist at R.G. Kar Medical College is directly attributable to the administration's inaction on security issues and inaction in addressing the corruption. Lacking accountability only silences victims, at the same time emboldening the perpetrators to continue perpetuating this vicious cycle of injustices. (Hui *et al*., 2021) [9]. However, these institutional and cultural norms intersect with systemic inequalities faced, being a woman, because of class, caste, and socioeconomic status. In general, women from backgrounds of the sort outlined above suffer not only additional obstacles, but also greater societal stigma, far less access to support systems, and other vulnerabilities. It shows how crucial it is to have workplace policies and interventions go beyond surface-level compliance but also look into the structural and cultural roots of violence. (Montgomery *et al*., 2023) [23].

Concluding remarks: Crafting integrated interventions

To combat workplace violence, therefore, we need an integrated response to the reality of workplace violence in our life, taking care of the everyday injustices, the policy failures and the systemic inequalities. Institutions must actively pull down the cultural practices that perpetuate acceptance of harm and distribution of institutional power. An enabling and supportive work culture where no one is afraid to report injustices will be achieved. In addition to these cultural changes, the policies we have such as the National Policy on Safety (2009) and Sexual Harassment Act (2013), we have to change them to where they systemically encompass holistic actions on the cultural issues. This understanding of compounded vulnerabilities of women is something that the policies need to be inclusive of intersectional views of and assure specific protection and support for. Additionally, institutions need to reform cultural norms and policies while strengthening accountability mechanisms. To restore trust, one needs transparent administrative practices, regular audits, and zero tolerance to violence. Systemic inequalities are, in turn, fed into and supported by cultural norms that enable workplace violence when we look at intersectional training programs for employees and administrators. Instead of simply reacting to these types of behaviors, through creating interventions at these intersections, institutions can guarantee longer solutions that promise dignity, equity, and overall safety for everyone. Central to this effort is striving to reduce the everyday injustice that forms the basis of workplace violence. The R.G. Kar case is in so many ways a cautionary tale that highlights what is at stake and focuses the call for deeper, more integrated reform. (Montgomery *et al*., 2023) [23].

To conclude, workplace violence requires an integrated approach for its prevention and control, an approach that does not shy away from a focus on radical structural adjustments but does not leave aside the question of culture. At the core of transforming norms that marginalize, overpower, and erase victim narratives are questions of culture change. At the same time, there is a need to increase the effectiveness of policy compliance to use the measures effectively and uniformly. Addressing the gap, for example, widening definitions of harassment to also encompass cumulative effects, devising and implementing healthcare sector-safe measures, and creating standalone safety investigator systems must be pursued in order to close the gap seen between policy and practice. Lastly, systems change solutions are needed to close existing policy gaps and establish the myriads of intersections of safety, equity, and systemic harms holistically (Singh *et al*, 2024) [21]. The seemingly uncontrollable urgency to address violence in the workplace must start with fighting everyday injustices and forging policy development and culture changes accordingly. Only if a change of culture is combined with dedicated work on the systems and, not least, intense implementation of policies, workplaces can be safe and empowering spaces free from being a repeat of R.G. Kar

Medical College.

References

1. Ahuja VK. ILO convention on the elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work: A much awaited step. Indian Police J. 2020;67(4):146-158.
2. Committee on the Status of Women in India. Towards equality: Report of the committee on the status of women in India. New Delhi: Government of India, Department of Social Welfare, Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, 1974 [cited 2025 Apr 22]. Available from: https://archive.org/details/dli.ministry.23971
3. Das KN. Before Kolkata doctor rape, an unmet promise to keep physicians safe. Reuters. 2024 Sep 2 [cited 2025 Apr 22]. Available from: https://www.reuters.com/world/india/before-kolkata-doctor-rape-an-unmet-promise-keep-physicians-safe-2024-09-02/
4. Goldscheid J, Anderson M. Gendered violence and work: Reckoning with the boundaries of sex discrimination law. Columbia J Gender Law, 2009 [cited 2025 Apr 22]. Available from: http://ssrn.com/abstract=1140246
5. Government of India. National policy on safety, health and environment at work. New Delhi: Ministry of Labour and Employment, 2009 [cited 2025 Apr 22]. Available from: https://labour.gov.in/sites/default/files/SafetyHealthandEnvironmentatWorkPlace.pdf
6. Government of India. The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013. New Delhi: Ministry of Law and Justice, 2013 [cited 2025 Apr 22]. Available from: http://ncw.nic.in/sites/default/files/SexualHarassmentofWomenatWorkPlaceAct2013_0.pdf
7. Gupta P, Fatima N, Kandikuppa S. Sexual harassment at the workplace act: Providing redress or maintaining status quo? Soc Change. 2020;50(1):1-20.
8. Hicks DA. Gender, discrimination, and capability: Insights from Amartya Sen. J Relig Ethics. 2002;30(1):1-20.
9. Hui A, Rennick-Egglestone S, Franklin D, Walcott R, Llewellyn-Beardsley J, Ng F, *et al*. Institutional injustice: Implications for system transformation emerging from the mental health recovery narratives of people experiencing marginalisation. PLoS One. 2021;16(4):e0250367.
10. Kumar S, Sharma R. A study of sexual harassment of women at workplace environment. J Educ Rev Provision. 2022;2(1):23-30.
11. Lippel K. Addressing occupational violence: An overview of conceptual and policy considerations viewed through a gender lens. Geneva: ILO, 2016 [cited 2025 Apr 22]. (Working Paper No. 5/2016). Available from: https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@gender/documents/publication/wcms_535656.pdf
12. Mansoor S. The rape and murder of a medic leads to nationwide physician strike across India. Time, 2024 Aug 14 [cited 2025 Apr 22]. Available from: https://time.com/7010419/india-rape-murder-medic-physician-strike/
13. Mikula G, Petri B, Tanzer N. What people regard as unjust: Types and structures of everyday experiences of injustice. Eur J Soc Psychol. 1990;20:133-149.
14. Montgomery SA, Blankenship BT, Stewart AJ. When small acts are multiplied: Assessing everyday social justice behaviors. J Soc Polit Psychol. 2023;11(2):640-656.
15. Reuters. Ex-head of Indian college where doctor was raped arrested for suspected graft. Reuters, 2024 Sep 3 [cited 2025 Apr 22]. Available from: https://www.reuters.com/world/india/ex-head-indian-college-where-doctor-was-raped-arrested-suspected-graft-2024-09-03/
16. Sandilya T. RG Kar Medical College tragedy - Urgent call for justice and reform in social laws today. Social Laws Today, 2024 Oct 12 [cited 2025 Apr 22]. Available from: https://sociallawstoday.com/rg-kar-tragedya-call-for-justice-and-reform/
17. Saxena A. Violence against women in India: A closer look at the social and legal system interactions, problems, and solutions [Master's thesis]. Ottawa: University of Ottawa; 2021 [cited 2025 Apr 22]. Available from: https://ruor.uottawa.ca/items/c20b5ba2-7129-41cd-affd-61f1828823ca
18. Sen A. Development as freedom. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
19. Sharma I. Violence against women: Where are the solutions? Indian J Psychiatry. 2020;62(1):14-20.
20. Shklar JN. Injustice and misfortune. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990.
21. Singh SP, Anirvan P. Violence against doctors: A call for justice and systemic reform. J Med Evid. 2024;5(3):186-188.
22. Van De Griend KM, Messias DKH. Expanding the conceptualization of workplace violence: Implications for research, policy, and practice. Sex Roles. 2020;82(1-2):1-12.
23. Verma A, Qureshi H, Yearn J, Student KPD. Exploring the trend of violence against women in India. [cited 2025 Apr 22]. Available from: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3556594
24. Yengkhom S. Doctors, students barred from RG Kar for threats, extortion. Times of India, 2024 Oct 7 [cited 2025 Apr 22]. Available from: https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/doctors-students-barred-from-rg-kar-for-threats-extortion/articleshow/113994173.cms
25. Young IM. Responsibility for justice. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.