



THE KNIFE-CRIME: A STUDY OF STAB-TO-DEATH INCIDENTS IN NEW DELHI

¹Shani Jaiswal, ²Ashutosh Jaiswal

¹Ph.D. Scholar, ²Post Graduate Scholar

¹Centre for the Study of Law and Governance, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India

²D.A.V. Snatkottar Mahavidyalaya, Azamgarh, Uttar Pradesh (Affiliated to) Veer Bahadur Singh Purvanchal University, Jaunpur, Uttar Pradesh, India

Abstract: Government and the Police always persuade the people of India regarding their security across the country. The capital city of a democratic nation is generally considered the safest place for its citizens. New Delhi, the capital of India, is expected for good security of an individual. When we speak about women's safety in India, New Delhi is also expected to have the best safety standard across the country. However, people are disappointed because the actual condition looks different. In May 2023, an incident in India's capital New Delhi spoiled every citizen's mind when a 16-year-old teen school girl was brutally stabbed-to-death by a 22-year-old boy in broad daylight in the presence of people. It tagged a burning question about women's safety in Today's New Delhi. How could a woman feel safe? However, the incidents like stabbing to death in New Delhi are increasing daily in such a way that it has become a common incident for New Delhi. It is stabbing to death in New Delhi, fear that every woman is unsafe despite being guaranteed safety by the Nation, Government, and the Constitution. The accused attackers were fearless before and after the stabbing-to-death of a minor girl. This research article discusses incidents of stab-to-death in different areas of New Delhi.

Keywords: stab-to-death, accused attackers, women's safety, New Delhi etc.

Introduction

Delhi Police always tries to manage tight security arrangements for women's safety but often fails. Stab-to-death incidents keep coming to the fore every year. The entire system of security by Delhi Police comes to the bundle of questions when a teenager is brutally stabbed and dies. The incidents of stab-to-death in New Delhi are also on top in recent years, and New Delhi is gradually becoming the hotspot of such a heinous crime. Today New Delhi, the capital of India, is also called, by its nickname, the crime capital of India. The accused attackers belong to a particular age group, and the motive behind such attacks is also remarkable. A unique feature of such accused attackers is using knives only as a weapon for murder. It is a spontaneous incident in which the accused attacker publicly stabs a knife at a targeted person in broad daylight. Also,

such accused attackers are often captured in CCTV cameras, and they know it too sometimes, but there is no fear of the law and punishment for them. This research article is a step towards presenting an analytical discussion on stab-to-death incidents in the country's capital New Delhi.

Objective and Methodology

This research article aims to discuss the incidents of stab-to-death in the nation's capital New Delhi. This article studies why crime through the knife is becoming usual and popular among such attackers. Why are such accused attackers fearless? What could be the reason behind such incidents? Why have the Police become clueless about controlling such attacks while these have come to the fore daily over a few last years? This article also discusses the backgrounds and maturity levels of accused attackers and the victims. This article suggests possible ways to minimize such incidents.

The presented study is based on an in-depth analysis of around ten incidents of stab-to-death in the country's capital New Delhi. The empirical approach has been followed to study these incidents. Five footage of CCTV has been observed to analyze such incidents.

Stab-to-Death Incidents in New Delhi

In July 2015, a 19-year-old girl was allegedly stabbed to death by two youths in New Delhi in the Anand Parbat area. The Class-11 student was allegedly stabbed by two accused named Jaiprakash and his brother when she went to a market. The girl was allegedly stabbed 35 times by the attackers. When she was beaten, and the attackers were chasing her to stab her, the girl ran to the gallery of neighboring houses and landed there. When she was screaming for help, the neighbors whose house she entered threw her out of their house, saying that they did not want to get involved in the matter. That is why the attackers got to assault her. The attackers entered and stabbed her here too. She was unconscious by then. They used to irritate her a lot. They ran away after that. Anyone of the neighbors there did not help her. She could have been saved if she got help. The girl's mother was also injured while trying to save her. The victim was being eve-teased by these attackers. In 2013, the victim girl filed a molestation complaint against these attackers. The attacker Jaiprakash and his brother had taken revenge for an earlier complaint that she had registered against the attacker brothers (**Firstpost, 2015**).

In September 2016, another shocking crime against a woman in New Delhi, a woman succumbed to her injuries after being stabbed by a stalker in Burari Area. In a shocking and brutal case, a 21-year-old girl was stabbed 28 times by a stalker in the morning. The woman succumbed to her injuries. The stalker had repeatedly stabbed the victim girl. The victim was declared brought dead at a trauma center of nearest hospital. The victim had been stabbed publicly in broad daylight by the accused, Surender Singh, aged-34, who was known to her. The assailant had a shop, and his divorce case was going on. Similarly to earlier stabbing cases, no one rescued her while the stalker was stabbing her continuously. The crime scene was captured on a nearby CCTV camera. It was such a heinous crime that no one could embed the video footage shown by the news channels because of the disturbing visuals.

The investigation by the police revealed that the assailant had been troubling the victim girl for a year or so. The girl's family had complained four-five months before this incident, and both families had reached a compromise. The accused was harassing the lady for a long time. He was staying in Rohini, which is near

the Burari. The Victim lady had registered a complaint, after which he had calmed down till being stabbed. This crime occurred just days after a 32-year-old married woman was stabbed to death by her lover, who then committed suicide in southwest Delhi's Inderpuri area. The woman was stabbed by her 30-year-old lover named Sanjay. The woman knew Sanjay from before her marriage, and the two were in a relationship, and their affair continued even after her marriage. Once a day, Suddenly, the married woman stopped all contact and communication with Sanjay and started avoiding him. It had enraged Sanjay. According to the police investigation, Sanjay confronted the woman a few days ago while she was returning home, and they had a heated argument. In a fit of rage, Sanjay allegedly slit his wrist first, stabbing the woman multiple times, and murdered her (**Firstpost, 2016**).

Again, in March 2017, a 40-year-old woman died after being stabbed more than ten times by a man with whom she argued in southeast Delhi's Jaitpur. Two family members who had tried to save her were injured too. The incident occurred around 2 pm at a J.J. Colony near Arpan Vihar, Delhi, when one Rajesh, aged-42, went to an eatery selling momos. The owner was a woman, Neeraj Chauhan. Rajesh was upset with her as he thought she had shown his house to a J.J. Colony committee member who had been looking for him for stealing Rs 50,000. When Rajesh asked Chauhan for the same, she denied having done that; Rajesh pulled out a knife and stabbed her multiple times in the abdomen, on the face, and back. Hearing her shrieks, her son Shatyam and her cousin Vinod Kumar rushed out, but they, too, were attacked. At this, a few members of the committee members tried to help, but they were beaten up too. However, by then, other locals had gathered at the spot. They soon overpowered him and beat him black and blue. He, however, managed to break loose and flee.

The Police Probe revealed that Rajesh and Chauhan worked at a factory and were quite close to each other. Rajesh had even given Chauhan a house on rent. He had used the committee funds to set up the eating joint for Chauhan and had even made her an office-bearer. However, his act was discovered, and the committee filed a case against him (**India, 2017**).

In July 2017, another stabbed-to-death case came to light when 21-year-old Riya Gautam was brutally stabbed in the Sahadara of east Delhi. The accused was an unemployed man with four vehicle theft cases against him. He had been arrested twice. He allegedly began stalking and harassing Riya. One day she warned him to stay away from her. But the police's probe revealed that Riya was aware of the criminal past of the accused and wanted him to come clean about it. Their relationship was romantic for some parts of it. On an evening, when accused repeatedly stabbed 21-year-old Riya Gautam outside her home in Sahadara of east Delhi, it was not the first time he had wielded a knife. Months earlier, the accused had pulled out a knife to "profess his love" to Riya near a mall in east Delhi. He told Riya that he could even die for her. To prove that, he stabbed himself in his abdomen using a knife he was carrying with him. Riya's response to that act remains unknown, but she had never imagined that Adil would use the knife on her one day (**Sunny, 2017**).

In July 2019, a girl was stabbed in the Bhogal area in south Delhi on Friday evening. Preeti Mathur, 21, was stabbed six times in the middle of a crowded market in the Bhogal area of Jungpura by a man identified as

Mohammad Munsair. The incident happened in the evening when the accused met the girl near the Bhogal bus stand. Following a heated argument, the accused picked up a knife and moved towards the girl to stab her, then she ran for her life and rushed towards a shop, but before she could climb up the shop stairs, the man caught her and stabbed her several times. She kept begging for help and expecting locals to save her, but the man was so brutal during the attack that no one dared to come forward immediately. Mohammad stabbed the girl multiple times. Some passerby people tried to escape that girl, and the accused tried to stab people when they attempted to stop him. People hit him with a plastic stick, but he stabbed the girl. A person tried to remove him with his hands, but the accused attacked him, also. By the time he had stabbed the girl in her neck, she had collapsed on the ground. The accused was caught by the passerby and thrashed. He was later handed over to the police. The accused has been arrested under section 302 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and was produced before a court for judicial custody. Per the Police investigation, the accused, Munasir, was an unemployed man who had worked at Safdarjung Hospital as a sweeper on contract. The victim girl was pursuing B.A. in the first year of correspondence. She has an elder brother who is an autorickshaw driver, and the other three younger brothers work as laborers. The accused and the victim girl used to live in the same locality in Sarai Kale Khan Area and knew each other well. However, their friendship came to an end following a rift. Once when he misbehaved with the girl, he was asked by the landlord to vacate the house. After that, the accused had shifted to a new house in the same locality **(Mishra, 2019)**.

Again, in July 2022, in a shocking incident reported from the national capital, a Class 12 girl student was stabbed and critically wounded by a stalker. The accused was said to be known to the victim. He was just 22 years old. The incident occurred outside the girl's school in the Tilak Nagar area of Delhi. The girl was on her way to school when she argued with the accused, after which he stabbed her with a knife. It is noteworthy that the accused threatened the victim in the past. The victim's family had complained against the accused, but no concrete action was taken against the accused. The police said the accused made empty threats and would not do anything. Here, the role of the police is also under the scanner as the accused had earlier given in writing that he would not follow the victim. After some days, the victim went to her school, and the accused came before her and stabbed her **(Now, 2022)**.

In October 2022, a 22-year-old lady in Delhi's Dwarka area was allegedly stabbed to death by a man whose romantic advances she had turned down on several occasions. The victim was identified as Dolly Gabbar, a resident of Om Vihar in Bindapur, Delhi, who worked as a freelancer for event management firms apart from her father, who is an auto-rickshaw driver; it was Dolly's earnings that helped them run the household. The incident occurred around midnight when Dolly left home after telling her family that she would attend a friend's birthday party. About 500 meters from her residence, Dolly was accosted by three men, who stabbed her multiple times with a knife. Later, at around 2 am, the family was informed about the incident after a delivery agent contacted the police, saying he had found a young lady lying unconscious in a pool of blood. The girl was stabbed six times in the chest, back, neck and hands. Many around the area had heard her screams, but no one turned up to help her. With the analysis of CCTV footage and as per the Delhi

police investigation, three neighbors of the victim, named Ankit Gaba, Manish, and Himanshu, were involved found in stabbing Dolly. As per a Police source, Ankit Gaba had been pursuing her for several years, but she had refused to go out with him. Angered, he probably decided to exact revenge on her (**Chatterjee, 2022**).

In October 2022, a teenager was stabbed to death by two minors in Patel Nagar in Delhi for allegedly protesting while his sister was harassed. The murdered boy was only 17-year-old. The victim was attacked near his house when he was returning from computer class. Two boys came before him and started fighting. One of them with a knife attempted multiple jabs at him. The victim, stabbed from behind, is seen with the knife stuck near his spinal cord. He took his phone out to dial someone for help but collapsed and could not get up again. He was rushed to a hospital but declared brought dead. Both the minor accused booked for committing murder and detained (**Mitra, 2022**).

On 28 May 2023, Sunday, A 16-year-old girl was brutally stabbed and bludgeoned to death in a busy public alleyway in India's capital Delhi, sparking renewed outrage over women's safety in the country and violence perpetrated by men. The incident happened in the Shahbad Dairy neighborhood of the Rohini area of Delhi. Accused Sahil Khan accosted the minor and stabbed her more than 20 times, and then hit her with a concrete slab lying nearby until she died. Multiple people had passed closely the attacker repeatedly struck the victim. However, only one man attempted to intervene, pulling the attacker off the victim before quickly retreating. The police investigation revealed that the attacker was a mechanic and the victim girl had completed class 10 this year. They were in a relationship, and the attack followed an argument. The accused was arrested and booked under a section of a heinous crime (**Suri, 2023**). After four days, another stabbing incident occurred in the Badarpur Area of South Delhi. An 18-year-old boy was assaulted and stabbed in a busy street in broad daylight by two men even as pedestrians walked on as mute spectators. The victim, Sumit Gautam, was later rushed to AIIMS Trauma Centre. The condition of the boy was said to be very critical (**Desk, 2023**).

Discussion

When the stab-to-death incidents come to the fore in Delhi, it becomes reasonable to question that after the Nirbhaya incident, all the arrangements for women's safety in Delhi are still not adequate and effective. A sociologist, Emile Durkheim believes that urban society is a specific society where the circle of relations of an individual is minimal. Most people want to stay limited to themselves, meaning urban people are individualists. Here the nature of the people becomes such that they do not want to get into any unnecessary matters without reason. Almost all incidents of stab-to-death happen in broad daylight and the presence of the public. However, no one even intervenes to save the victim during that time. People keep watching the spectacle openly. The attackers also know this well and fearlessly take advantage of it.

During the stab-to-death incident, the public walks around and keeps watching openly. However, no one even interferes. Because of the hot-headedness of the attacker, some people are afraid that he may also become severely wounded while saving the victim girl. Some people do not intervene to avoid becoming

part of the police action. When the attacker has a knife in his hand and is hot-headed, an average person hesitates to intervene during the crime out of fear.

Why do such attackers use a knife in a stab-to-death? There is a common reason: the knife is a readily available murder weapon. It has very low cost and is easy to carry and hide while moving. The police cannot even trace the network of buying and selling of such weapons or any movement, nor can they get any information as to which person may have a knife and for what purpose he is using it and going to do it. For example, if we talk about weapons, there is a supply network of indigenous guns or desi katta and other weapons, and the police can trace them and control the crime with the help of such weapons, but nothing like this happens in the context of knives. In addition to, disposing a knife after a crime is much easier than a gun, desi katta, and other weapons.

Stab-to-death incidents are mostly found between couples. The ego of the accused boy, a heated argument between the two, the social gap between the victim girls and their parents about sharing information about relationships, and the rigid and orthodox mindset of the girl's parents, unserious policing and fearing eyewitness people of the incidents could be the causal factors of such an incident. The accused attackers and the victims usually belong to the lower and lower-middle classes. The accused attackers have a low level of education and are associated with the unorganized sectors. They are primarily first-time offenders and mentally wholly immature or partially immature, who cannot think about their upcoming future losses and gains. The major determinants of such incidents continue to be socio-demographic and socio-economic factors such as being young, male, and of lower socio-economic status (STUART, 2003).

Suppose such an incident happens in rural societies. During or after the crime, the accused remains at risk of mob lynching. Alternatively, it can also happen that during the attack, someone intervenes, a stocker, and saves the victim. However, when a similar incident happens in an urban society, the chances of saving the victim by mob lynching or intervention are negligible.

The most important thing is that the planning of such a crime is done by the criminal immediately and these attackers do not even have enough money to buy a desi katta. In such a situation, the knife is proved easy, cheap and quickly accessible murder weapon.

After the study, it was found that in such incidents, the age of the victims is around 16 to 25 years, and the age of the accused is around 17 to 25 years. The victim is neither mentally prepared nor able to make presumptions regarding any such attack or incident. At the same time, the criminal is also so mentally immature that he cannot assess the situation after the crime.

Up to a significant extent, our socio-cultural settings also contribute to such types of incidents. In India, girls start making couple relationships in their teenage. They do not share their relationships with their parents or family members. No one in the family knows about the heated argument between the girl of the family and her boyfriend, so the girl's parents or family members cannot prepare and alert her against the situation of such an incident. Most of the girls keep their couple relationships hidden from the family. Moreover, the family is unable to socialize with them regarding the above. Moreover, they are not alert during such incidents or circumstances and become victims.

On the contrary, in Western societies, whether it is a boy or a girl, when they have a couple-relationship in their teenage, both the boy and girl share it with their parents. Their parents cheer it as an event of happiness. Both the boy and the girl get prepared automatically for such situations, or the family members prepare them. Due to this, in Western societies, such incidents or situations rarely occur at first. Even if it happens, both couples are fully prepared for it. It is the characteristics of these societies; somewhere or the other, the liberal nature of the parents, family members, and society plays a vital role in preventing such types of crime in Western countries.

Conclusion

Law and order is a subject of the State in a democratic country. Women's safety is an important issue today in India. The responsibility and power to maintain law and order and to provide security to every individual is vested in the State. An individual has only the right to get them. No one should take the law into his hands, misuse it or violate or suppress the rights of others in order to name it self-protection. According to the principle of common will and social contract, the people have only given this responsibility and power to the State and its government.

However, the continuous stab-to-death incidents in Delhi put this whole system of women's safety in the dock. Because when a stab-to-death incident accidentally happens with a girl, neither the police can provide security at the same time nor the public intervene, who are eyewitnesses of the incident in broad daylight, usually keeps on watching as mute spectators. The attacker is utterly sure that neither the police nor the eyewitnesses of the public will be present to intervene when he commits the stab-to-death crime.

The nature of the people of the urban society is unique. They are individualists. They do not want to get into unnecessary trouble. After the incident, they do not want to get involved in the police proceedings. Because of this, also they shy away from intervening, resulting in the attacker remaining fearless. Most of the attackers are first-time offenders. They cannot even pre-estimate the consequences after committing the stab-to-death crime. Stab-to-death incidents have increased rapidly in Delhi for several years and are becoming common daily. The knife is the cheapest and most easily accessible murder weapon for such attackers, and they get it quickly. It is not associated with any arms supply network. Even the police cannot trace who has it and with what motive they possess and move. After the crime, its disposal is more straightforward than the gun, desi katta, and other murder weapons.

It can be concluded from the analytical study that the socialization of such attackers is very poor. Teenage girls should share their relationships with their parents and other family members so that the parents and other family members can alert them and strengthen their socialization for such situations. The Police should take seriously even the received complaints regarding a 'heated argument between couple' when a girl or her parent reports it and ensure effective policing afterward. Almost every such incident occurred in broad daylight and the presence of the public. It is noteworthy here that the eyewitness public never showed when it intervened and saved the victim despite watching the spectacle openly. Such a trend of the public in urban societies encourages the morale of such attackers that they consistently stab one to death. When such incidents happen in Delhi, the Police are not available, but the public is available. The public could play the role of the Police.

Nevertheless, generally, the public segregates themselves to intervene, save the victim, stop the attackers, or punish them. Sometimes, it may be right or wrong both. The public has some limitations too. Mob lynching and other things could happen while intervening in the incidents and saving the victim; after that public does not want to be part of police action and proceedings. That is the real challenge against the public and the Police too. The attackers know such limitations of the two. These all unsolved challenges assist in encouraging the attackers for such incidents. The Police and government should encourage people to intervene in such incidents and make people aware that they will not be in the hassle of police proceedings after the accused attackers are arrested.

Suggestion

- The Police Administration should conduct awareness programs at the school level for teenage girls to alert them and make them mentally prepare for such incidents.
- Police should identify the stab-to-death-prone areas. Police patrolling in prone areas of stab-to-death should also be done within the colony.
- Every teenage and neo-young worker in the organized sectors should be closely monitored by the local police station and ensure their police verification is mandatory.
- Especially girls' parents need to be aware and alert about the couple's relationship. They should create a liberal mindset regarding the relationships built by their girls and adolescent girls too. So that girls never hesitate to share about the couple's relationship with their parents and other family members. The socio-cultural norms should be like that a girl feels free to share everything about the built her couple relationship.
- The judicial trial of a stab-to-death criminal should be in a fast-track court so that justice delay can be avoided. Punishment should set an example in society that, in the future, any such criminal would think several times before doing so.
- There is a need to establish the fear of Police, law, and punishment among the attackers in a new way.
- While distinguishing between culpable homicide and murder, the punishment for culpable homicide should be made more stringent and at par with cold-blooded murder.
- While sentencing such a criminal, the fast-track criminal court should follow the retributive rather than a reformative approach to punishment.
- Police Administration should drive a regular warning campaign on YouTube and other popular social media about such heinous crimes and the consequences for such criminals.
- With the full assistance of the Police department and education department Government should include audio-visuals based workshops for the male students of classes 9th to 12th about crime, its grave consequences, the destruction of the whole future, and ordinary human life. This workshop should discuss life in jail and harsh punishment for such crimes.
- The knife is commonly used in a stab-to-death crime and is out of the known supply network as other weapons of murder. If possible, the Police should develop a robust and effective mechanism

that is competent to trace the production and selling of all types of knives, even domestic knives. The whole supply network related to knives should be under the watch of the Police.

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