

Justice for Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Victims

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Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is an issue that has scared many people and families in society. According to Davies and True (2015), SGBV refers to acts that have been committed against an individual's will, based on power inequality and gender norms. The offense includes physical, emotional/psychological, and sexual acts of violence. It is a myth that the issue is only observed in children since, in the recent past, there have been adults from both genders complaining about experiencing some level of sexual and gender violence. The government has taken measures towards the mitigation of this issue. Still, their efforts have borne no fruit since justice continues to be elusive to SGBV victims. Wirtz et al. (2018) indicated that 97% of the sexual and gender offense victims do not get justice. The research outlined that only one out of five SGBV cases is presented and addressed in court. In this paper, there will be a presentation of various aspects that illustrate how justice is elusive to SGBV victims.

In the past decade, many SGBV cases have been reported by women. The victims experience trauma and emotional distress stemming from defilement. They frequently complain of the lack of immediate legal actions taken on the perpetrators. According to Decker et al. (2016), justice to SGBV victims is one of the most neglected processes in the judicial systems, not only in the United States but also in other developed nations. For example, a sexually abused woman will see her attacker walk free in the streets. Despite the presentation of medical reports that show a lady was sexually abused, unethical officers may claim there is no tangible evidence; thus, the case is not presented in court. Due to lack of action and strict response on such crooks, SGBV increases, affecting more women and girls in society. Hence, a lack of response by the law enforcers leads to elusive justice to the victims.

Penalties and sentencing policies for SGBV offenses have proven to be ineffective and inefficient. Most criminals are released on bail. Additionally, there have been instances where the sentences passed on to the criminals are not adequate for the offense committed (Rueb & Chokshi, 2019). For example, a crook can be sentenced to five-month imprisonment with one week of community service. A sexual offense is a complete disrespect and a violation of a person's dignity and purity. Thus, a five-month imprisonment term is not enough to serve as a punishment for the offense committed. Completion of the short jail term does not impart the required discipline needed to avert the issue. Hence, the offender incurs little or no punishment, resulting in elusive justice to SGBV victims.

The government should implement measures that will ensure justice for SGBV victims. According to Carpenter et al. (2018), SGBV cases go unanswered due to the lack of adequate judges in the criminal justice system. There are many cases to be heard and ruled in one day, which require a judge's attention. Some cases of murder and manslaughter take more priority over SGBV suits. The insufficient number of judges leads to a lack of handling of the SGBV cases. Thus, the solution to this issue is the government taking measures to increase the number of judges. An increased number of judges will ensure the cases presented in court are not queued (Wilson & Petersilia, 2011). This way, SGBV cases presented in court will be heard promptly.

In conclusion, SGBV has been a major menace in society. The issue continues to impact people, particularly women and girls, as they are the vulnerable population. In most cases, the victims do not get justice since only one out of five SGBV cases is heard. Some law enforcers disregard the cases based on lack of tangible evidence, while some judges pass a short-term sentence or minor punishment to the offenders. This leads to the criminals enduring little or no punishment for their offense, increasing SGBV reoccurrence. An increase in the number of

judges will ensure no case pile-up in the justice system, and thus SGBV cases will be heard on time.

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