The Issue of Sexual Violence against Women in Contemporary India

Author: Sandra Neuman
Tutor: Jonas Ewald
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Abstract
India is often described to be a country with a fast growing economy and progressive indicators of human development. However, over the last decade there has been a growing concern of increased reporting of sexual violence in India which seems to contradict the first description. Therefore this creates a problem on how we can understand and explain this.

The objective of this study is to try to gain a deeper understanding of some of the underlying factors of increased reporting of sexual violence in India, and to understand in what way the ‘modernization’ process possibly could be put in relation to this, something that is analyzed with help from Durkheim’s theory of anomie.

This study draws on a qualitative desk study with a compilation of material from existing research on sexual violence against women, both at home and in public spaces. The findings were analyzed in relation to Durkheim’s theory of anomie and gender theories from two authors.

The results show that some of the underlying factors for increased reports of sexual violence against women in India, like patriarchy, education and employment for women and gendered power inequalities are in a complex interplay. It was further seen as ‘traditional’ norms and values clashed with ‘modernity’ and caused these factors for violence. The outcome of the study showed that the increased reporting of sexual violence can be related to the ‘modernization’ process both in a positive and negative way. Through Durkheim’s theory of anomie it was possible to see that ‘modernization’ could have caused a state of anomie, which has lead to deviant behavior and resulted in increased reporting of sexual violence against women.

Key words: India, women, sexual violence, anomie, ‘modernization’
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List of Abbreviations

GDI Gender Development Index
NAIS Nordic Institute of Asian Studies
NCK Nationellt Centrum för Kvinnofrid
NCRB National Crime Records Bureau
NHFS National Family Health Survey
NGO Non-governmental Organization
UN United Nations
UNDP United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA United Nations Population Fund
WHO World Health Organisation
1. Introduction

1.1 Research Topic and Problem

Many developing countries\(^1\) have the last decades gone through a ‘modernization’ process with transformations involving remarkable economic growth and major changes politically and socially. This process is often said to include: decrease of poverty, more educated people, increased literacy rates; and improved gender equality, as well as industrialization. But there are not only optimistic outcomes to the process. The ‘modernization’ process has also been viewed negatively by causing: increased economic inequality, environmental destruction, differences between urban and rural classes, and continuing human rights violations, among other things (Hettne, 1995; Inglehart, 1997:24; Nederveen Pieterse, 2004:ff20).

Some authors have conducted studies around the world about increased reports of domestic violence as well as sexual violence in public spaces and put it in relation to rapid social changes (Momsen, 2006:93;98; Foley, 2003:139, Maitse, 1998:55). Harris (2013), Sideris (2007:234) and Staudt, (2011) have argued that when women are breaking through and taking up a much larger role in society it increases tensions and creates an imbalance between the genders. The tension can then appear in violence against women as an attempt for men to maintain the traditional gender power structures in transition processes.

On December the 16\(^{th}\) 2012, a brutal gang-rape of a young woman in New Delhi, India caused her death. After that incident, there has been news reporting about increasing violence against women in India, especially sexual violence. Journalists have written about what they say is an increase of rapes in India the last couple of years (BBC, 2013; Harris, 2013; Ohlin, 2006). India is a country that over the last two decades been praised for its fast economic growth and ‘modernizing’ society with improvement in human development indicators and on the road towards becoming a democratic and economic superpower (Mahr et al, 2013; De Votta, 2013:1). Combined, this can be said to give a paradoxical picture of India, and therefore caught my attention and will be the choice of this study.

Although India is not the only country where sexual violence against women has increased according to reports, countries like South Africa, Egypt, Malaysia and Mexico who also are developing have similar problems (Staudt, 2011:195; Foley, 2003:139; Maitse, 1998:55).

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\(^1\) Developing countries is a term that has no exact definition and would be hard to come to a common consensus of which countries this includes. However, in this study developing countries are those which are according to United Nations also called least developed countries that in statistics from 2012 were 132 countries. The criteria for the classification are: gross national income per capita, human assets index and economic vulnerability index, and countries must reach certain thresholds on the criteria to advance (UN, 2012).
According to National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) in India, the number of reported rapes has increased with 700% since 1971 when it started to be recorded. In general, violent crimes went down with 16% from 1971 to 2006 (NCRB, 2007; Gangoli, 2012:101). Though, it is important to highlight from the beginning of this study that we do not know if there has been an increase of real crimes on sexual violence in India or if it is just an increase in reports. It can for instance be a result of changes in the laws that can have contributed to more reported crimes. To argue that it has been an increase of violence is something that would need more investigation on how the conditions in the society were before and how they have changed. This is because we do not know how many crimes were occurring, due to no reporting system and no established justice system. Thus it may not even have been considered to be a crime. In addition, there was no media attention regarding these issues earlier (De Vylder, 2010:108). Nevertheless, it is still a problem.

However, although India is the world’s largest democracy with rapid economic and social changes, the women are in the cross-fire for sexual violence. This can be seen as problematic on how to understand and explain this complexity, with, on the one hand many the progressive statistics of human development while on the other hand, what appears to be an increase of reports of sexual violence against women.

Studies have been conducted during the last decades regarding underlying factors for sexual violence against women in India. Some of these underlying factors are; a culture that approves violence, alcohol, experience of abuse as a child, poverty, and rapid socio-economic changes (Ohlin, 2006; Metha and Simister, 2010:1593; Mareah Peoples, 2008:3).

So far, researchers have mostly focused on making quantitative studies on the topic. A researcher named Hackett (2011:265) observed from her statistical crime study in India that women who challenge the traditional gender roles\(^2\) can become a target for men’s violence. From her study, she suggested that qualitative studies should be done in order to see if this sexual violence against women is related to the development process in India. This lack of understanding gives us an entrance into the debate, to further study the problem of sexual violence and its possible association to ‘modernizing’ India, something that is significant to know in order to find ways to prevent it.

1.2 Objective of the Study
The objective of this study is to try to gain a deeper understanding of some of the underlying factors for increased reporting of sexual violence in India and to understand if the

\(^2\)The traditional gender roles are often said to include household tasks and types of employment socially assigned to women respectively men.
modernization’ process possibly could be put in relation to the increased reporting of sexual violence.

With the objective in mind, I will analyze this from the perspective inspired by Durkheim’s theory of anomie.

1.3 Research Questions
The objective of the study leads to the following research questions:

- What are the main underlying factors behind increased reporting of sexual violence against women in India?
- Can the ‘modernization’ process be seen as causing a state of anomie which has resulted in increased reports of sexual violence against women in India?

The first question is more of a descriptive character and will be answered in the findings part, while the second is of an analytical character and therefore answered in the analysis chapter.

1.4 Relevance of the Study
Sexual violence against women is a serious and prevalent problem worldwide, in all religions and social classes. Studies have shown that sexual violence is more widespread in societies where women’s rights are lacking and are neglected (Koenig et al, 2006:132; Kimua et al, 2012:773). Not only is it a violation against human rights but it also damage physically and psychology the well-being of individuals and families. The physical damage can lead to unwanted pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS; mentally, it can further lead to post-traumatic stress disorder and depression (WHO, 2010:3; Johnsson-Latham, 2010:3).

Furthermore, other effects are, that it can hamper development in societies if either man or woman is kept subordinated and not given the full potential to exercise the capabilities that person has. An example of this is that it constrains women’s participation in development projects carried out by for example NGOs (Sen, 1998:7). Thus, stopping this kind of violence is of outmost importance when working towards poverty reduction and human security, hence it is highly relevant both as a peace and development problem (Eriksson Baaz and Stern, 2010:5).

The research debates on violence against women have in the last decade tended to have a focus upon domestic violence, by partner. Having this focus will tend to overlook the sexual violence conducted by other actors than husband/partner, which lead to that these women are
overlooked and cannot be protected (Wendt, 2010:19). Consequently this study will look at sexual violence both domestically and in public by partners and non-partners.

In addition, as no research has looked at this particular problem (as far as I am aware of) with a theoretical framework composed of gender theories together with Durkheim’s perspective of the theory of *anomie*, the research can hopefully offer new perspectives of this problem. I am also hoping that the perspectives can be relevant to the problem around the world and therefore be addressed to multiple audiences.

After all, to eradicate the crime is realistically not possible, though knowing more about the underlying factors on why it occurs and about the increases in reports in India is significant in order to decrease it.

1.5 Methodological Tools
This study is conducted as a qualitative desk study, where I have used the methods of text interpretation and text analysis. This implies that the material collected for the research requires interpretation to establish the meaning of the collection throughout the process, in that sense it is heuristic (Bryman, 2012:543).

The material is based on secondary sources from mostly books and academic articles, and was searched for at Linnaeus University’s search engine OneSearch.

The choice of having a qualitative approach is based on that it is more suitable when wanting to look deeper into a problem and finding the underlying meaning and understanding of a ‘phenomenon’, in this case to sexual violence India.

1.6 Theoretical Framework
With the aforementioned brief description on the development process in the Indian society including socio-economic changes it has also affected the individuals, and accordingly this is where Emilé Durkheim perspective on the theory of *anomie* enters the study. Although, it will be used a bit different than the conventional way, the concept of *anomie* is of interest because it can help to understand how changing processes in the society can affect individuals. *Anomie* can be described as *normlessness* or chaos in a society where the lack of coordination from different societal organisations leads to a social chaos that can set the stage for violence (Mestrovic and Lorenzo, 2008:179). It will be looked at in relation to the ‘modernization’ process if deviant behavior has arisen through a condition of *anomie* and caused sexual violence against women. It will be elaborated more upon in the theoretical chapter.

The study also uses gender theories from Hirdman (2003) and Connell (2003) who argue that gender is socially and culturally constructed. Their perspectives will help to receive a
theoretical ground to understand gender relations and gender structure in society and what implications they can have. I will then relate their perspectives to understand sexual violence against women in India.

1.7 Limitations and Delimitations
There was a conscious choice made to conduct a desk study with secondary sources since the intention was to compile already existing material. It is important when relying on secondary sources to keep in mind that all research come with its own pre-understanding as well as potential biases, otherwise it can become a limitation if taking everything as the truth.

Another limitation in this study is the literature that writes about increasing sexual violence. Often it is not elaborated more upon over which years this increase has taken place and if it is only a result of better reporting systems in countries rather than rising violence. Therefore it is important to look at original sources for these arguments, such as, if authors are referring to national crime reports then go back and check primary data. On the other side of this issue is that, rape numbers particularly are often higher than reported since there are a large number of unreported cases, due to stigma, fear and humiliation concerning such a crime (Sen, 1998:135; De Vylder, 2010:108). Due to this limitation there is less focus on the numbers and more on understanding the factors for the violence.

The delimitation for the selection of the specific focus on sexual violence against women does not imply that sexual violence against men is insignificant. Instead it has to do with my interest within this particular topic that is written about here.

The choice of focusing on India is because it seemed too difficult to include more countries since it would include countries with for example different cultures, histories, political and economic systems. Factors that would affect the population and the development process in very different ways consequently made it harder to examine a problem and say what has influenced what. However, India itself is very large with a population that exceeds most countries in the world and includes different cultures and religions, still, it is one country and I believe it is reasonable to examine and surmount in this thesis.

1.8 Definitions
In order to understand some of the concepts mentioned in this study regarding sexual violence against women, it is significant to define them.

Ever since the ratification of the United Nations declaration on the Elimination of Violence against women in 1993 and the Platform for Action on the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995; the international attention around this issue has increased.
1993, the UN General Assembly Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against women defined violence against women as:

“any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life”. (UNFPA, 2007; Manderson and Bennett 2000:6).

At the Beijing Platform for Action, violence against women was declared as “an obstacle to the achievement of equality, development and peace” (Momsen, 2006:93). Domestic violence comprises of physical, sexual and/or psychological acts caused by intimate male partners. Sexual violence and rape are often used interchangeably in articles. However sexual violence is a wider notion which incorporates rape, the former can also include enforced prostitution, sexual slavery, forced pregnancy and enforced sterilization (Eriksson, 2010:19). This study looks at sexual violence both domestically, that is in the home and publically, as well as by partner and non-partner. In this study the definition of sexual violence incorporates sexual harassment and rape (sometimes also referred to as sexual assault) that goes beyond penile penetration and includes penetration by any part of the body and objects. The latter definition is now included in the Indian Penal code 375 (Lok Sabha, 2013; Biswas, 2013).

1.9 Disposition

The study is divided into eight chapters. The first chapter the Introduction describes the topic, problem formulation, objective of the study and research questions. It also gives a brief explanation of the methodological tools and the theoretical framework. Finally it discusses the relevance of the study and limitations and delimitations.

Chapter two, Literature Overview aims to give the reader insight on what is said in the literature regarding this topic.

In chapter three, Theoretical Framework, begins with a presentation about the gender theories that are used in this study and, describe Durkheim’s theory of anomie and how it will be applied in this study.

The fourth chapter, Conceptual Framework, outlines the construction of the analytical framework and defines and describes the concepts it consists of, and how this framework will be used in the study.
Chapter five, *Methodological Framework*, describes the methodology and methods. The chapter also outlines the use of sources and critique to them, reliability and validity. Finally, it discusses the methodological and ethical considerations.

In chapter six, *Findings*, the findings are presented from the literature. It ends with a summary and answers one of the research questions.

Chapter seventh, *Analysis*, reflect and analyze the findings in relation to the theories. It answers the last research question and concludes the analysis. It ends with a brief evaluation of the utility of the theories.

The final chapter is chapter eight, *Conclusion*, where the results are put in relation to the research problem and objective. Finally, it ends with suggestions for further research on the topic.
2. Literature Overview
This chapter will present the literature overview on the topic of the study and then explain how I will use it.

The literature reflects upon violence against women that includes both domestic violence and sexual violence against women in the public sphere. Within the debates there is a recognition that sexual violence and domestic violence are connected and overlap. Sexual violence such as rape and other kinds of sexual assaults are usual aspects in domestic violence. When it comes to these crimes committed by a partner and by non-partner(s) often the same underlying factors can be attributed to the crime and can therefore be looked at in the same study (Johnsson-Latham, 2010:5; Manderson and Bennett, 2003:2).

2.1 Previous Research
Most research that has been made on violence against women in India has been conducted either by looking at already existing statistics and surveys or by conducting own surveys. In those studies the aim has been to find out the prevalence of violence, or identify factors for violence against women, or the characteristics of women that place them as targets for violence. Several studies have been guided by the same framework when conducting their studies, using an ecological framework established by Heise (1998) that looks at individual, relationship and household level to detect a possible association between (sexual) violence and factors operating at these levels. But it is also apparent that there is a divide in the debate, between those that focus more at structural inequalities and individual dynamics, and those who look more at patriarchal causes for violence against women. Here follows a review on this debate that is related to the topic.

2.1.1 ‘Modernization’ and Perceptions of Sexual Violence in India
The result of ‘modernization’ process in India has according to some authors meant socio-economic changes in the society. Women now have right to education and waged labour. That has in turn made them more vulnerable according to some authors; because the pace of economic change has outpaced change of the social institutions. Something that entails that social and cultural rules and behaviors are being questioned, because change can bring with new forms of values and norms (Ohlin, 2006; Trivedi, 2010:183). An Indian woman who was interviewed by Ohlin (2006) argued that the increase of sexual violence can be correlated with the pace of the economic growth and how society has changed. Because changing societies often tend to uproot and challenge traditional norms and values in favor for more modern ways that can result in backlash such as, frustration or harassment performed on people.
Studies with examples of this have found that on the one hand, Indian women who now work outside the home have increased their access to economic resources resulting in positive outcomes and become empowered. On the other hand, it has also been found that this challenges the traditional norms and values, and some of these women have become victims for violence such as rape, due to threatening traditional gender roles and male authority (Trivedi, 2010:f199; Krishnan et al. 2010:137).

Empirical evidence on women who “challenge” the gender roles that has lead to violence were found by Metha and Simister (2010:1066), who investigated the prevalence and attitudes towards domestic violence in the Indian society. This study was based on the National Family Health Survey (3) (NFHS, 2007:100) that was carried out in 2005-2006 across households in India with a sample size representing 124,385 women. It showed that 39% of married women between the ages 15-49 years old reported having experienced sexual, emotional or physical violence.

Furthermore, Metha and Simister also analyzed several Indian crime records conducted by the Government and two other household surveys carried out in all states in India both urban and rural households regarding domestic violence between the years 1990-2007. The survey sizes ranged from 80,000-100,000 and were therefore considered as fairly representative. Their findings showed that while women in India are becoming more liberated they also face a worsening situation when it comes to violence against women. According Metha and Simister (2010:1593) the violence may be a response by the men against the modern attitudes and behavior adopted by many Indian women such as starting to work outside the home. It could also be that it increases while in a transition period towards a modern society. However, the authors also point out that an increase in crimes can be the result of other changes in the Indian society. Still, Sen and Drèze argue that violent crime is often thought to be a feature of ‘modern society’ whereas the ‘traditional society’ is seen as peaceful (2002:267).

The results from Metha and Simister’s study showed statistics of increasing prevalence of violence against women concerning the crimes of rape, sexual harassment and cruelty by husband or relatives in India between the years 1995-2007. The data on rape showed figures of an increase of prevalence from 11.7 rapes per million people in 1990 to 18.2 per million in 2007. The other crimes investigated saw double prevalence increase (Metha and Simister, 2010:1600).

However, Trivedi (2010:200) indicates that it is unclear whether statistics reflect an absolute rise in for example the incidence of rape. Though what it does point out is an
increase of willingness to report. If there has been a real increase in incidences of rapes it could then corroborate with Sen and Drèze’s argument above.

Khanna and Varghese (1978) cited by Metha and Simister (2010:1608) stressed that: “the independent outlook fostered by better education, improved status and greater opportunities brings about a change in women, and leads to conflicts with family members”. This argument although relatively old still coincides with what Metha and Simister argued with the increased violence as a response to new opportunities for women. These authors are not the only ones arguing in this line of thought; Hackett (2011:285) conducted a statistical analysis of domestic violence against women across India in which she found that, women who challenge traditional gender roles can result in domestic violence in the family. This was observed in rural relatively more socially developed states and in cities in less socially developed states.

Put in contrast, Koenig et al (2006:132) are scholars that use the ecological framework by Heise (1998). They found that women with secondary education did instead experience less domestic violence and it was interpreted as women with for example more property, dowry, and education received more value and power within their families, hence lead to less violence. This connection has also been found in other studies for example by Sen, (1998:9) who also found that these women either left their violent partner or was left, as well as sought help in local women’s groups, an evidence that education can empower the women.

The conclusion drawn from this literature so far is that according to some authors, violence against women appears to have a correlation to the socio-economic changes like, education and work for women that become a challenge to the traditional gender roles. Another association that was pointed out was that if women had higher education she experienced less violence from her partner. These authors and researchers’ perspectives focus a lot on structural factors and inequalities as well as individual dynamics.

2.1.2 Patriarchy and Power
Bradley Tamsin (2006:170) discusses in his book how NGO’s have failed to understand the complex part violence play in structuring power relations within a rural community of Rajasthan (northwest) India after been speaking to women there. He investigated if all men reflect patriarchy in their identities or if it is just because of pressure to conform. He concluded that, domestic violence is seen a reason for men to sustain inequalities against their women and to reinforce women’s subordination, therefore shows the power inequalities in the Indian society. In this specific case the women had been given development assistance which empowered them, beating their wives were then a way to maintain patriarchal authority over
the women as they had “challenged” patriarchy, and many women accepted this as they considered the violence as a normal thing (Tamsin, 2006:175). Patriarchal norms are stated to be embedded in the Indian culture and many times accepted by the women (Sen and Drèze, 2002:18). Other researchers that focuses on underlying patriarchal causes for sexual violence against women are, Tichy et al, (2009:548) they stress that the patriarchal system allows for abuse in the Indian culture. The patriarchal system follows men and women from birth on how to behave and the stereotypical roles of the woman as submissive and the more the role is embraced by the man the more likely she is to experience violence if not upholding this role.

When it comes to sexual violence by non-partners, Tasmin (2006:177) brings up a case of a woman activist named Bhanweri Devi from a small town in India, who fought against child-marriage and for women rights to land, water and literacy but was met by a lot of resistance within her community and did for years receive threats to stop her work. It ended tragically in with an attack by a gang, while they both were beaten and she was subsequently raped by the gang. She reported it but it only lead to an imprisonment of six months for beating up the husband and manhandling Bhanweri. This is one example showing the violence against women in India in the public sphere and how devalued women’s bodies are in the Indian society, since the sentence mostly paid attention to the physical abuse of the man. Also how women’s participation in development activities can be seen as provocative because it “challenges” existing norms on what women’s role really is.

This section has shown material from authors who focus on patriarchal causes for sexual violence against women.

2.1.3 Viewing Violence against Women from Different Levels
Some researchers have seen a need to look at violence against women from more than one angle as they see the interplay of factors at different levels. This has been presented in the “ecological framework” that can be used as a tool when studying violence against women to understand the interplay of personal, socio-cultural, and situational factors that in combination is stated to be causes for abuse. In the framework violence against women is the result of the interaction of different factors at different levels of the social environment. When several factors at each level are interplaying it increases the likelihood for abuse (Ellsberg and Heise, 2005:24). This framework conceptualizes violence as a multifaceted phenomenon grounded among these factors (Heise, 1998:263).
2.2 Summary of the Literature Overview

Summarizing the literature overview, India is described as a rapidly changing society with increasing opportunities for women since independence. This has also meant changes in social values and place of women in the Indian society. As argued in the beginning of this overview, ‘modernization’ is said to have contributed to education and waged labour for women in India. Although, others viewed it as women is still being subordinate to the men and therefore have no exercise of power over their lives in contemporary India.

The authors who argue that the ‘modernization’ in India have contributed to increased reports of violence against women seem to require more empirical evidence; consequently a comprehensive understanding of underlying factors for sexual violence is needed. In order to supplement and add something new to existing research, this study will look deeper into some of these factors mentioned. The factors seem to consist of concepts and those I will look into are: education and work for women, culture, power and patriarchal norms to understand how the ‘modernization’ can be understood within this problem. It will be done by compiling and interpreting existing research and literature in a qualitative research.

Furthermore, as seen above, previous research has looked at different factors in relation to violence against women however focus has many times been divided between the patriarchal factors and structural factors and inequalities. I will bridge this gap by including both “sides” also to get more width of the research. This part is therefore a significant starting point for this thesis and will be the foundation for developing a conceptual framework which will be presented later on.
3. Theoretical Framework
In this section I outline the theoretical framework based on gender theories and Durkheim’s theory of anomie. Although I will only embrace the most important areas of the theories that are relevant to the study and further show in what way these will be my tools in relation to the material.

3.1 Gender Theories
Gender theories and feminist theories are a lot alike though it is sometimes stated that gender theories focus more on gender relations and gender structure (Hirdman, 2003:5) In addition, gender theories are different in how they view gender and can therefore not be looked at as a unified body.

I will here bring up two gender theorists, Yvonne Hirdman and R.W Connell and their perspectives on gender and its implications. An explanation on how these will be used in the study will follow in the end of the sections.

3.1.1 Gender Structure and Relations
Yvonne Hirdman is a professor writing about gender in her book “Genus – om det stabilas föränderliga former”. She discusses a historical process on how biological differences between man and woman have constructed the views of men and women. She argues that the man has always been the norm that the woman is compared to since the man is the prototype, hence, the ideal (Hirdman, 2003:59). During history the man has always been the point of departure in institutions by having the leading part with power to control and influence. When women’s role has changed during history it has been in relation to the man (Hirdman, 2003:72). She further discusses stereotypes what is “typical” for men and “typical” for women. For the former, Hirdman mentions men to be pictured as strong, working outside of the home, and providing for the women, while women are pictured as weak, and conducting household chores like dishes, laundry, and taking care of the children. The pictures are the complete opposites of each other. This segregation between what is male and female creates the gender order (Hirdman, 2003:63ff). The basic idea of what is perceived as male and female can also be seen from an andocentric perspective in which the man’s role is the dominant one.

Hirdman has established her ideas into what she calls the gender contract that pictures the ideal types in explaining relations between man and women. One example of this is that the woman is the one who receive care from the man and the woman is the one who take care of household chores and the children. According to the contract the woman is not allowed to
disobey from the contract, something that builds on women’s biological and social existence with the obligations to give birth and take care of the household (Hirdman, 2003:55).

However, the male stereotype has changed according to Hirdman and the man as the norm that used to be fixed or determined, is not anymore. This is because the picture of what is male and female has become blurred and taken away the fixed norms. For instance a police officer does not have to be a man and a nurse a woman. Thus the norm has lost its normality (Hirdman, 2003:202).

The second author brought up here is gender scientist R.W Connell, who has written a book called “Gender”. She writes that gender is often defined from a biological point of departure that is strengthened by social and psychological differences between man and woman. She argues in line with Hirdman (2003:59) that our understanding of gender often includes a dichotomy but the reality does not (Connell, 2003:19). Though Connell is more critical towards this view and argues that the focus should not be on looking at the differences and contrasts of what is male and what is female, we should instead put focus on the relations in which individuals and groups act. Gender should be viewed as a social structure and not an expression for biology or a firm dichotomy in people’s lives or personality.

A criticism to the problem of gender is according to Connell (2003:19) the focus on cultural patterns that mirror the differences between male and female bodies and become exaggerated by social practitioners who further focus on our bodies and reproductive differences and how a man or a woman “should” be. This can lead to social consequences when it turns into inequalities in our private life as well as working life. Connell maintains that there is always a hegemonic masculinity that marginalizes others in a gender system, and allows for men’s dominance over women. That thinking leads to the concept of patriarchy and how men can gain power from the patriarchal order (Connell, 2003:21).

Whilst Hirdman (2003) argue that gender is more static and determined, Connell talks more about the gender as a social structure that change. Connell (2003:73) argues that gender relations are created day by day in relations between people and if they are not created they do not exist, thus they are formed by social and cultural structures according to social changes. It means that gender norms of what is masculine and feminine also change according to social changes as new expectations arise.

Furthermore, according to Connell (2003) gender relations are determined by rules in the society, which implies that women and men follow a common set of expectations that are bound to the gender roles, similar to Hirdmans (2003:55) gender contract. The gender roles are often seen as a cultural product of biological gender differences (Connell, 2003:30).
The structure of relations can either create opportunities or consequences. For example, gender relations in a patriarchal structure effect how people act according to the structures. From this reasoning the gender structure is something that is maintained by relations and at the same time control people (Connell, 2003:76). Hirdman (2003:63) argues in the same line but also add that in these structures, men’s power are created and maintained at the expensive of women.

The social constructivist gender perspectives presented above from Connell and Hirdman view that gender is constructed and shaped by cultural and social changes. The authors have similar reasoning’s even though Connell focuses more on gender relations, while Hirdman look more the created divide between what is male and female and how that maintains our differences. Their theories can hopefully bring a deeper understanding how gender roles in India can be understood in relation to sexual violence against women.

3.1.2 Gender and Power
When it comes to gender and power Connell and Hirdman both agree that the structures make the man superior over the woman. There is also an exercise of power relations on an institutional level. Connell (2003:81) for example brings up how a rape case in Australia where prejudices are built in the system and thinking when it comes to sexual violence. In this case a young woman reported a rape done by a politician in the parliament. The judge response was to gather evidence on how the woman had acted during the evening at a party before the reported rape took place.

Lastly, Connell states that the different ways to view power only contribute to our understanding of gender relations and how we view it; none of them exclude the other, since there is both structural power that is organized and institutionalized as well as discursive and diffuse power. The discursive and diffuse power seems to be in line with Lukes (2005) third dimension of power, about the unobservable power. A complete description of gender structured power relations would need a report of how power is challenged and mobilized to defense (Connell, 2003:83). This could fit into this study to see if power has been challenged and because of that lead to violence against women in India. Power is often described to be a factor for violence against women and to understand it in relation to gender could hopefully provide the study with an understanding at a deeper level in the analysis part.

Finally, the inclusion of the gender theories are also relevant for the study in order to understand the meaning and effect gender roles and structures can have in society and then how sexual violence against women can be understood from this view. Sexual violence is
commonly associated with gender inequalities and therefore important to have an understanding how gender can be described. The perspectives from Hirdman and Connell will be used as a theoretical tool when analyzing the material to create an understanding of the results.

Another theoretical tool that will be used in the analysis is Durkheim’s perspective of the theory of anomie that will be used as a tool to see if we possibly can understand if the ‘modernization’ process has contributed to a state of anomie causing increased sexual violence against women. This theory is presented in the coming section.

3.2 Theory of Anomie

The theory of *anomie* is interpreted here mainly from the sociologist Émile Durkheim’s perspectives of *anomie*, usually seen as the founder of the theory. The concept of *anomie* can be explained as “normlessness”, disturbances or chaos in a society or in a group, where the lack of coordination from different societal organisations leads to a social chaos that can set the stage for violence (Mestrovic and Lorenzo, 2008:179).

Durkheim’s brought up the concept first in his work “The Division of Labour in Society” published in 1893. His observation included that, in the traditional mechanical society there was uniformity and individual’s values were based on homogeneity, traditions and social control. He further documented changes around occupational roles and in the modern industrial society of France and England when work became more specialized and individuals had to start to cooperate, which lead to interdependence with a higher “organic” solidarity (Marks, 1974:330). But when solidarity is absent it is described to be “because the relations of the organs are not regulated because they are in a state of anomie” (Durkheim, 1984:304a).

Durkheim was concerned that disruptive tendencies were a fundamental feature of the modern industrial society. The disruptive tendencies were described to disturb the equilibrium in the society. It happened when norms and rules that usually regulate interaction between different segments in society such as, religious institutions, traditional beliefs and status relationship have become unclear or absent. New social relationships allow for individuals to challenge old cultural values, norms and social rules, which lead to a rapid increase of *anomie*. This is likely to occur in a transition process of the society and it can lead to deviant behavior as a result of *anomie*. Before a new equilibrium is established to organize the societal organisations, destabilization in the society is a fact (Durkheim, 1984:304:339a; Bernburg, 2002: 729; Durkheim, 1984:206b).
Marks (1974:333), points out that Durkheim changed focus in his career from looking at a microsociological level to a macrosociological level when studying *anomie*. Thereby he looked at normative boundaries in each strata of the society then explaining that *anomie* become the situation when these boundaries turn awry.

The remedy proposal for *anomie* in Marks’ (1974:ff358) understanding of Durkheim, is with help from different occupational associations in the society especially when it concerns economic activities. Another alternative he came up with was a strategy of having gatekeepers that represented the society, like political representatives who have an impact on people’s lives, on another level there could be teachers who could mediate between society and children. Though he later saw that neither of these remedies was completely adequate solutions, what was needed was a ‘nomos’ by bringing all members in society together by finding a common meeting ground between them. However, Marks (1974:359) argues that Durkheim was aware of, that people can live with a high degree of frustration or suffer without doing anything about it, therefore you can live with a certain amount of *anomie* and it does not have to have consequences and lead to deviant behavior such as violent crimes.

### 3.2.1 Positioning the Theory into this Study

Bernburg (2002:729) writes that, the interest to write about crime and deviant behavior using the perspective of *anomie* has increased the last decade. Using the concept of *anomie* in this study seem to be an appropriate tool to describe the social phenomenon of sexual violence against women in a changing society like India, also because deviant behavior is commonly described to be a factor for rape.

The study will interpret the concept of *anomie* and use it in one of the research questions and, based on that it also becomes a tool in the analysis part to try to understand if the ‘modernization’ process can have contributed to create a state of *anomie* in the society which people react upon; in this case causing increased reporting of sexual violence. *Anomie* can therefore be seen as both a cause and a consequence, as *anomie* and its conditions for it to emerge as a consequence of social development which can cause social norm break down in the society then can affect people negatively and leading to violence. It is used more as an attempt to put the reported sexual violence under that approach to see how far it can shed light on the factors for understanding sexual violence against women.

Considering India’s rapid social and economic change that has incorporated them into the global capitalist economy they still cling onto many of its traditional norms, for instance, women’s subservient position to men both at home and in the labour market (Trivedi,
In relation to the sexual violence against women, looking from the perspective of anomie in which Durkheim highlight the transition face between ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’ as insecure, the use of this theory seems to be a promising thing.

To apply the concept of anomie even though it was created more than a century ago will provide an interesting way on how we can look at a problem that concerns our time as well as contribute to a new way of looking at this specific problem. Durkheim’s description of ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’ in the society will follow into the next chapter the conceptual framework where also other views on these concepts will be brought up.

The gender theories by Connell (2003) and Hirdman (2003) will also follow into the next chapter and it will be described more how these will become tools in the analysis.
4. Conceptual Framework

4.1 Towards Creation of a Conceptual Framework

For the purpose of this study I have developed a conceptual framework seen in the figure below. The framework looks on both societal and household level including individuals. As seen from the literature overview various factors were identified for sexual violence against women, such as patriarchy, power, economic and educational factors, and I will look more into these. However, these are wide concepts and therefore they will be narrowed down into smaller themes or concepts, as will be explained below and then illustrated in the figure of the framework.

The factors and emerging themes and concepts established here will help when gathering material for the findings and then structure the collected material. This means that the study tries to seek a deeper understanding of these existing concepts or themes that are seen as factors for sexual violence.

4.1.1 Framework

In this section I will develop my conceptual framework. The framework will help to keep track of which factors should be investigated in the findings. All together the framework will help to be a heuristic tool when mapping some of the existing material of underlying factors for sexual violence against women.

It is important to emphasize that using this framework is not an attempt to transfer the blame from the perpetrators of the crimes and put it fully on the society, instead wanting to look at the problem and understand it through these glasses. The framework tries to look both at micro and macro system, where micro encompass the household level and macro the societal level. Thus, the household and societal level will be interlinked as they are at interplay and affect each other. The macro system usually operates to influence lower down in the system, hence, the society influence the household.

The framework consists of boxes that constitute the identified factors consisting of concepts/themes from the literature overview, but it also includes some new concepts, an explanation for those is included in the definitions subsequently after the framework. The boxes show what will be investigated more deeply in the findings. The lines represent the link between the larger concepts and the more narrowed down themes or concepts which are explained after the framework.

Later on, the results from this process will be analyzed with help from the theoretical perspectives in the analysis.
Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Societal Level and Household Level

Tradition
  - Culture
  - Patriarchy

Modernity
  - Power
    - Gendered power inequalities
    - Employment for women
    - Education for women
  - Socio-economic Development

Men’s control of women
Women’s power over their bodies according to the laws

Sexual Violence against Women
4.1.2 Definition of the Concepts
The concepts in the developed framework does not have a clear definition and can mean different things depending on the context they are applied to, but also depending on pre-understanding and knowledge. In this case, all concepts will be applied to the Indian context and the study’s topic, sexual violence against women. Below follows the definitions of how I understand and use concepts in this thesis, as well as how the linkage between them can be described. Important to note is that there is no link between the boxes with factors to the box of sexual violence since this study has not established a link between these yet.

Culture exists both in ‘traditional’ societies as well as ‘modern’ which explains the link between those boxes. Culture is a wide concept that can be defined in different ways. Matsumoto (1996:16) as cited in Spencer-Oatey and Franklin (2009:14) argues that culture is the set of attitudes, values, believes and behaviors shared by a group of people, but different for each individual, communicated from one generation to the next. It would be difficult to write about Indian culture as one singular culture because of the diversity of the billions of people with several religions and languages and regional differences. That each has a different set of attitudes, values and behaviors. Yet, it has been argued that it might be possible to locate common features among the Indian people (Kakar and Kakar, 2007:4).

However, this wide concept will be narrowed down to look more specifically at patriarchy since India is known to be a patriarchal society. Patriarchy is here understood as embedded in the culture concept, according to the notion that patriarchy is understood as, “cultural constructs and structural relations that privilege the initiative of males and elders in directing the lives of others” (Hansson and Kinnvall, 2010:79). This creates a system of male dominance which can be seen as granting them power. It further entails a general subordination and disempowerment of women (Kakar and Kakar, 2007:41; Parpart et al, 2000:207). This explains the linkages between the concepts, patriarchy, gendered power inequalities and men’s control over women. The concept of patriarchy is important to look at more closely since it was mentioned in the literature overview and there put in relation to violence against women. In addition looking at patriarchy will fit to the gender theories that ground its understanding a lot on gender hierarchy.

The next concept is power, which is a recognized and contested concept, and wide in its definition. It is a frequent concept within studies about violence against women. According to Lukes (2005:29), power can take different forms and does not always have to be observable. He argues that power is the most effective when least observable. He distinguishes between three dimensions of power in which the concept can be seen as visible, indirect or exercised in
an unobservable way. Here the concept of power will be narrowed down and consist of three boxes. The first box looks at **women’s power over their bodies according to the laws** this includes looking at the laws that prohibit violence against women in India. The second box looks at **men's control of women**, and focus on how gender norms and gender relations look in India according to descriptions from the literature. The third box looks at **gendered power inequalities**, to see what kind of inequalities women face in the Indian society. I have chosen these because they are commonly associated with violence against women and therefore need to be included here as well (Manderson and Bennett, 2003:9).

**Employment for women and education for women** is linked to the theme socio-economic development. This is because according to Sen and Drèze (2002), economic development can influence the status of women through employment and education leading to increased literacy which can lead to social change such as reduced child mortality, decreased fertility rates and in the long run lead to women’s emancipation. These indicators are often put in relation to ‘modernity’ hence, the linkages between the boxes. Based on this definition the links could also be seen as having a causal relation. The concepts of employment and education were also brought up in the literature overview as factors for violence against women and therefore will be investigated more in my findings.

When it comes to the concept of **tradition**, it is often described as backward and a pre-industrial phase and put in contrast to modernity. Rist (2002:102) argues that change can look different and does not have to occur in the same speed or direction. A traditional society does not have to be static for example and societies can involve both tradition and modernity and therefore ethnic traditions and religion are still maintained in some societies (Hettne, 1995:202; Rist, 2002:21:244).

**Modernity** is often viewed as the opposite of tradition, and usually the transition from old to new. It can be described as an industrial society which it has reached both economic and social progress (Hettne, 2009:11). According to Durkheim and his interest in social change, modernization was seen as bringing a division of labour. He saw industrialization and the changes from simplicity and uniformity to specialization and differences (Marks, 1974:330). Furthermore, he investigated the consequences of this process which was elaborated in the previous chapter. Based on this explanation Durkheim can also be seen as fitting into the conceptual framework but his theory will be used in the analysis.

The measures of successful ‘modernization’ are sometimes argued to include gross national income (GNI), higher income levels, employment rates, and education levels (Inglehart, 1997:24). Parpart *et al.* (2000:107) argue that ‘modernization’ usually emphasizes
‘Western’ economic, political and social institutions. In addition, it has also been argued to include ‘Western’ technologies, and values that focus on individualization. Though, these perspectives have been argued to be the ‘Western’ way to view development and criticized as the religion of the ‘West’ (Nederveen Pieterse, 2004:20; Rist, 2002:34).

As stated in the beginning of the study, the ‘modernization’ process has also been pictured negatively and said to cause: increased economic inequality, environmental destruction, differences between urban and rural classes, and continuing human rights violations as well as causing complexities for gender equality (Hettne, 1995; Inglehart, 1997:23; 238). From these negative pictures there was a rejection of modernization theory and alternative theories to development thinking arrived. Consequently, modernization can mean different things to different people; hence we can speak of ‘divergent modernities’ or multiple modernities’.

In this study the concept of ‘modernization’ will be used in a wide sense including changes in economic and socio-cultural fields. What is brought up from those fields are mainly education, urbanization, industrialization, technological development and labour and its effects upon the society and the people. It is a difficult concept to handle since it always comes with different values no matter how you try to define it, still it is necessary to use in this thesis but will be made with awareness for both positive and negative connotation of the concept.

Another concept that several authors use in their work without defining it is social change. According to Rist (2002:12) it is not enough to say that social change is what development comes down to, because social change is something that has been present in people’s lives in all societies since the “dawn of humanity”. Rist (2002:25) goes on arguing that, it is a difficult concept to define because it not only involves economic production, material infrastructure and the political system, it also involves attitudes, relationships with people and perceptions of nature. These themselves are difficult to identify and therefore to know when they appear due to their invisibility.

When I use social change in this study it refers to development that involves economic, social, political and cultural aspects and consider both positive and negative sides of it. This can then of course be correlated to different development theories, but that is something I will not elaborate more upon.

4.1.3 India’s Development
Considering the above definitions and its complexities, placing India within this is therefore also complex. I will here give a brief introduction to some important aspects.
In India the agriculture sector still plays an important part even though its proportion of GDP has gone down the last two decades though, it has been claimed that agriculture did not shrank but other sector grew like the industry and service sector. In terms of the economy a liberalization programme was adopted in 1991 and included a shift in focus from investment in public to private sector in heavy manufacturing, banking, telecommunication, ports and roads. It also included openness towards foreign direct investment. These ‘modern’ changes were argued to be partly attributable to economic growth and poverty reduction among other things (Adams and Kirk, 2011:132; Sen and Drèze, 2002:334). But despite what can be seen as successful measures of ‘modernization’ there are still widespread poverty and people are denied education especially girls. In 2011, reports showed that the male literacy rate was 82.12 % whilst female was 65.46%, due to inequitable access to education for women, however, both genders have seen improvements in this area (Trivedi, 2011:181; Sen and Drèze, 2002:229; UNDP, 2011).

When reading about India’s ‘modernization’ process the information on when it started depends on the author’s point of departure and knowledge. Sen and Drèze, (2002:ff313) argue that after independence in 1947 the state started to plan their first developmental strategies without influence from colonial powers. Along with these strategies the industrialization and urbanization process really started to take place Based on this it can be considered that one ‘modernization’ process started after independence.
5. Methodological Framework
This chapter will present the choice of methods used for this study. It starts with a brief discussion on the methodology then the use of sources and ends with methodological consideration.

5.1 Methodology
This study uses a qualitative approach. The choice of a qualitative approach is based on the objective of the study, which is to try to look for a deeper understanding of some of the underlying factors for sexual violence in India. Creswell (2009:ff18) argues that, a qualitative research approach is best to use on a phenomenon that has not been deeply investigated before and makes room for being innovative when constructing frameworks. It also makes it possible to make deeper investigations. Furthermore, a qualitative approach is suitable if the researcher will gather opinions and give the chance to interpret and analyze texts (Ibid:15). Based on this, it seems suitable to my study.

5.2 Method
There are many different strategies of inquiry to use in a qualitative research and a significant thing since it influences the procedure of the study (Creswell, 2009:173). This study is a desk study. Having a desk study instead of a field study is based on that it is a suitting approach to answer the research questions and suitable to the objective, but also because of the lack of resources to conduct a field study.

The material is based on secondary sources. Aspers (2011:203) means that secondary material can be as relevant as primary material, but rarely as defensible. This is because the material has often been constructed for other purposes and the people whose voices are raised have already been interpreted by the person who originally created the material. It is therefore seen as important for the researcher using secondary material to be critical of the sources he/she uses. To solve this, the researcher can use different strategies to double check the information by for example looking through other data sources to see if the information matches (Creswell, 2009:91).

Furthermore, to establish a meaning of the collected material for the study, I use text interpretation and text analysis as a method (Bryman, 2012:543). Text interpretation is often resembled with a hermeneutic approach. Since this study is process oriented it can be seen as following the hermeneutic circle where understanding is received through a process to seek the "meanings of a text from the perspective of its author". The meaning is only received by looking at the whole context, text or social process (Bryman, 2012:560; Aspers, 2011:41).
a way this study will consist of three levels of interpretation, since I interpret other’s interpretations and then these interpretations will be interpreted in concepts and theories (Bryman, 2012:31). Consequently, the epistemological position can be described as interpretivist, where the focus is on understanding the social reality in where the subject matter is people and its institutions. An issue for the interpretative method is that the researchers’ own perspectives and pre-understandings can influence the selection and interpretation of the material (Grønmo, 2006:189), an aspect that will be elaborated more upon under the next headline reliability and validity.

The aim of using the interpretive method in this study is to understand the outlined factors for sexual violence against women in India from interpreting material written about it.

The text interpretation and analysis started already in the collection process of the material for the literature overview. Themes or concepts from this review were protracted after being identified from the material. These themes or concepts were then narrowed down into and put in boxes in the created conceptual framework after that they were defined in relation to this specific context. The boxes were helpful for the rest of the data collection of the study to know what to look for. The result of this process is presented in the conceptual framework chapter, findings as well as in the analysis.

### 5.3 Reliability and Validity

When carrying out text interpretation and analysis that is based on secondary sources, it is important to be critical of the sources you chose throughout the data collection process, in order to see what is relevant and not for the study, and what is valid and reliable (Grønmo, 2006:191). Reliability concerns the question if a study can be repeated. When it comes to qualitative reliability it is important to document procedures to show the steps taken during certain procedures (Creswell, 2009:190). This has been done by, guiding the reader through the different procedures and outline all the sources used. Though, it is important to remember that this study is of interpretative character and the results and analysis will be a reflection on my own interpretation of others work. Consequently, if other people will conduct the same study they might reach other results depending on his/her interpretation and pre-understanding.

Validity is according to Creswell (2009:191) how accurate the findings are in relation to what was intended to be investigated. This is something that will be showed in the conclusion where the study’s result is tied back together with the objective and research problem.
5.4 Sources and Critical Reflection of Sources

Most articles are from the search engine OneSearch which in turn articles come from different academic journals such as, Muse, Wiley, Journal on family studies or Criminology as well as anthropology. I also searched for material at Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS) and NCK (Nationellt Centrum för Kvinnofrid) which resulted in useful material and tips. The used news articles were mainly searched for in the beginning of the study, to see how media reported regarding this problem. However, that material was not used as an academic source but only to highlight some issues of the problem.

The books were found in university libraries throughout Sweden. The authors behind the academic texts and books are both from India such as Gangoli, Narayana and Sen and from other countries like USA, Sweden, Australia, and Great Britain. Some authors also represent organisations like WHO and UNDP. The aim has been to strive to give as a representative picture of the problem as possible and was done by mixing books, academic articles and newspapers as well as mixing authors from different countries. Furthermore, it is important to highlight that the search engine OneSearch might have affected the material I got hold of. Since the search engine is ‘western’ there is a possibility for receiving mostly ‘western’ journals and ‘western’ opinions. Therefore Indian research and perspectives might not be fully represented in this study.

As the topic is of sensitive character there was a limited amount of articles when searching on ‘sexual violence in India’. But what helped this study to proceed were the concepts identified from the literature overview such as: power, culture, tradition and modernization, and later on also: gender-roles, patriarchy, power relations and violence against women. These concepts then became key words in the new selection of material and used in different combinations, consequently more material that was relevant for this thesis appeared. The disadvantage with this was to end up with a lot of material to look through even though it might not be relevant.

All sources used where thoroughly looked up by doing a source evaluation, meaning looking for titles of the scholars, their connection to universities and the scientific field or authors previously published material, as well as assessing the scientific base and methods. Many studies had done their own research out in the field and therefore based their material on interviews and/or by conducting surveys. Before choosing such studies I looked at their methods to see how the study was conducted and how representative the material was. This process was done in order to try to strengthen the material of the study and enhancing the reliability.
A problem with sources is that they to some extent always are biased no one is never objective, especially when it comes to a topic like sexual violence against women. There is always sympathy for the victim of the crime which through my focus of the study is women. Though, I have tried to search for material that also look from the perspective of men and included those that I have found, that is, Narayana (2012:6) and Koenig et al (2006).

When it comes to research and reports that include statistical data, it should be looked at carefully, for example, who collected the data, from where and how many people were included in the data, as well as methods for collection, compilation and analyses of information. Governmental data with statistics on crime come with their own pre-understanding and can show what they want to show. As a consequence the researcher should be aware of this and not treat any material as objective, something that has been taking into consideration in this study. This study used statistics from governmental sources and these statistics were interpreted and analyzed with caution.

5.5 Methodological Consideration
The identified concepts from the literature overview could be argued to be too wide and to difficult investigate, I have however, broken them down and defined them to this context. These wide concepts also gave me wide spread of the material that also was shown in the findings. Creswell (2009:192) stresses that, when presenting several perspectives for a problem the results become more realistic and richer. Though, the material was at times not as deep in its conclusions and was based on statistical data and statistical surveys. In such cases more material was looked for to strengthen the findings. Although, the lack of depth though only justified that a qualitative study that tries to look deeper was needed.

Even though, quite a lot has been written about sexual violence against women in India especially psychical violence, most of the material has dealt with domestic violence. There were less academic articles that wrote and had conducted research on sexual violence in public spaces in India; instead it turned out to be more book authors who had written about this. Though, this was not seen as a drawback since book authors tend to go deeper into a problem as they have more space to develop their thoughts.

I tried to be as open minded and impartial as possible to new material and to see if it could lead to other paths. Tufte and Johannessen (2003:27) argue that as long as the researcher is aware of his/her selection of data and describe in the study how the results were reached this is not an issue. The researcher is always affected by his/her own pre-understanding it is hard to start a study completely blank. Since this study is of interpretative character the pre-
understanding, previous experience and knowledge can to some extent have affected the interpretation of the material, something that is only natural. But as argued before, this can be tackled by making it the whole process visible for the reader.

5.6 Ethical Considerations
The topic of the study is of sensitive character, however since it will not consist of any interviews with individuals it is not considered to be harmful to anyone and therefore not a problem. Still, the topic is emotionally charged something I am well aware of and will consider when writing and choosing words related to this topic.
6. Findings

The findings are presented based on the concepts and themes from the conceptual framework and tries to receive a deeper understanding of these as underlying factors of sexual violence against women in the Indian. I am aware of what I present here are only some of the factors underlying violence against women, but I have chosen these based on the literature overview and the conceptual framework.

After presenting this thematically according to my conceptual framework, the chapter ends with a summary and answers the first research question. As outlined in the methodology chapter the findings are based on a compilation of sources from existing literature on what is written about sexual violence against women in India. However, one of the sections with focus on prevalence of violence is not included in the framework but is still relevant to the study and the research question and therefore included.

6.1 Socio-economic Development

The coming section looks into employment for women and education for women in India. As stated in the framework these two themes are linked to the major theme socio-economic development. It will look into how employment and education for women can be understood as an underlying factor for increased reporting of violence against women.

6.1.1 Employment for Women and Education for Women

The rapid changes in the Indian society, such as fast economic development have meant new opportunities for women, for instance education and employment outside the home. With these new opportunities the views on the woman and her new place in the Indian society has also changed (Adams and Kirk, 2010:143, Sen and Drèze, 2002:vi).

Traditionally women’s ability to move alone outside the home has been restricted unless going with husband or family members. But, since being allowed to partake in waged labour things had to change (Kakar and Kakar, 2007:66). However, women are not new in the labour force. Urban educated women started to work outside the home after the 1940s, but their work opportunities have changed and more women can take part now. India’s women have for a long time been employed as textile workers in the factories, but after the economic reforms in 1991 more women started to work in the service sector especially the urban English speaking women with college education. Yet, the larger majority of India’s women are still employed in the agricultural sector. In 2010 65% of the working women were employed in that sector, though it is decreasing (World Bank, 2013).
The changes towards more opportunities in education and labour for the women could be seen as a time that has empowered them. According to Rathod (2009:227) education and employment has improved women’s status and made them climb on the social hierarchy. However, Trivedi (2010:199) argues that an income that can create greater autonomy for women may instead threaten the traditional gender roles and the Indian ‘joint’ family. This is because women’s own purchasing power has made them independent of their husbands and now prefers to delay marriage, something that has created conflict and violence between women and men and future in-laws.

The decisions in India are usually made for the good of the family and not made on an individual desire. Women therefore face difficulties to combine work and family because of the social views that women’s roles are as wives and mothers (Tichy et al. 2009:557; Kakar and Kakar, 2009:42).

Within the patriarchal system masculinity is important and economic protection and safeguarding the women is included within. However, with the socio-economic changes in India which have made many women independent, this has become harder to achieve (Mareah Peoples, 2008:17; Tichy et al. 2009:556). Women’s social gains have been stated to lead to frustration among the men. Studies from Egypt, Mexico and South Africa (which also are countries that experience an increase in reported sexual crimes against women) have found that the frustration came from a “crisis in masculinity” that has been linked to violence against women. The violence mostly in the forms of rapes, beatings and sexual harassment that takes place at home or in public, has been a form to regain or confirm masculinity (Sideris, 2007:233; Mareah Peoples, 2008:16; Staudt, 2011:191). But it can also be looked at from the men’s situation. Narayana (2012:6) argues that lack of education, illiteracy, no work, and therefore poverty can lead to powerlessness among the men and possibly create a deviant behavior expressed in violence against women. Narayana describes this violence as an act of frustration and/or an urge to harm and destroy to express a form of power.

Chibber et al. (2012) and Metha and Simister (2010:1593) found in their respective studies from India that some economic contribution from the women to the household increased both physical and sexual violence by their husbands in order to maintain authority. Over time though, Schuler et al. (1996:1737) argued that, a woman’s financial contributions to the

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3 The joint family is one where the brothers stay remain together in the same household after marriage and bring their wives into the parental household. It can also include widowed or abandoned sisters and aunts, or distant male relatives. This is common both in rural and urban parts of India (Kakar and Kakar 2007:8).
household might become accepted when the man recognizes the benefits. He then can accept the new gender roles and feel less need to control the woman with violence.

In terms of education for women it has shown to be mixed result of the outcome. Kimuna \textit{et al} (2012:780) argue that, when women have more education they also are likely to have more resources that they can use in abusive situations compared to women with no education. Kakar and Kakar (2007:51) stress that education for women has gained acceptance in India, urban middle-class parents support higher education for their daughters and see it as necessary to get autonomy. A higher education can also enable her to help with the family income after marriage. In comparison to women in rural traditional families who are said to face more gender-based discrimination. They are told to focus more on domestic chores than education. That implies that there are differences in education opportunities for women depending on where they come from and which class they belong to. Consequently, this means that it is difficult to homogenize the view on the Indian woman.

The education of women has also resulted in increased literacy rates and which in turn has lead to awareness of the law on violence against women with help from women’s movements. This can also be seen as a factor for increased reporting of sexual violence (Trivedi, 2010:203).

Research has also looked from the perspective of men instead of women. Koenig \textit{et al} (2006) gathered data from a health survey conducted in 1995 that included interviews with 6727 married men in the state of Uttar Pradesh. Their results from the data collection showed that men with 7 or more years of schooling showed higher risks to commit sexual violence against their wife. This meant that even with education, men’s attitudes and behavior to force their wife to sex when desired were still prevalent, and do not seem to decrease with more schooling. One should have in mind the year of the conducted study and that things could look different now.

Nevertheless, according to Trivedi (2010:201) women have not been able to fully benefit from the modernization process and the liberalization of the economy after 1991, since they are given low respectability for working outside the home to earn money. In addition, women’s participation in economic activities has only marginally improved women’s capacity to modify traditional social structures. Rathod (2009:229) argues that the reason for this could possibly be due to the rigid traditional norms of patriarchal structure. This could imply that family and economy cannot be seen as separate entities instead interconnected, since the unequal and hierarchal gender roles operate both in family and economy.
This section has shown that education and work outside the home has had mixed results. Some argued that it made women independent and worked as a protective factor against violence but, others said that it instead contributed to violence because it was against traditional norms and patriarchal structures and made men frustrated.

The traditional patriarchal structure will be elaborated more upon in the next section.

6.2 Culture
This coming section looks at patriarchy which was placed in the framework under culture according to its relation and understanding of the concept.

6.2.1 Patriarchy
This box from the framework looks into the patriarchal system in India and what impact it has on women.

The gaps that exist between the genders in India are said to be embedded in the traditional social structure. The head of the family is the man and holds the central position. Society is therefore described as patriarchal, patrilocai and patrilineal, which means superiority, authority, privilege and power for the man. This often results in powerlessness for the women due to this system and the rigid gender roles (Kakar and Kakar, 2007:42).

Women’s subordinate position can be traced back to ancient times when women were supposed to be obedient to the husband, and if a woman did not obey her husband he had right to use physical violence on his errant wife (Ganguly-Scrase, 2000:ff80). These patriarchal norms have continued through history and are also visible in property and divorce laws that favors men but, also in the economic, social and sexual realm within the household (Koenig et al, 2006:137). Thus, it could imply then that gender discrimination is perpetuated by patriarchy and prohibits women to be equal with men.

The traditional norm that women should be faithful to the domestic sphere, taking care of household and children and be obedient to male authority is still pervasive in most parts of India, though it differs to what degree (Kakar and Kakar, 2007:67). Based on this it could be implied that the traditional patriarchal norms have not weakened even though social changes have occurred. Although, Rathod (2009:227) argues that with modernization and the increase of education, gender differences are progressively declining and things have progressed since independence.
However, Mitra and Singh’s study (2007:1227) showed a somewhat different result. They found that even though Kerala has the highest gender development index (GDI)\(^4\) in the country with the highest literacy rates and education levels for women, they have according to Mitra and Singh high suicide rates for women and domestic violence reports that increase every year. Furthermore, they found that women face discrimination at the labour market and high unemployment rates. This implies that Kerala also showed economic, cultural, and societal tendencies that contradicted the progressive statistics. The study was based on household surveys and crime records looking at a ten year old time span between the years 1991-2001.

According to Mitra and Singh (2007:1229) an explanation for the violence against women, the discrimination is because women disobey the traditional dominant norms dictated by the men, through acquiring education and work. Women’s role was still to be subservient to men at home and at the labour market according to social and cultural norms.

This section has shown that patriarchal norms are deeply entrenched in the Indian society. The research illustrated that women who defy the patriarchal norms are according to some authors doing it with a risk of experiencing violence. The following section is power and looks more into difficulties that women face.

6.3 Power

The coming sections that are located under the bigger theme power looks into men’s control of women, and discusses how the gender norms looks in India, then follow gendered power inequalities looking at other forms of violence that women face in India, and finally women’s power over their bodies according to the laws that focus on the laws on domestic violence and the rape law.

6.3.1 Men’s Control of Women

Tasmin (2006:182) argues that when men become more passive providers in the household due to the women’s economic achievement, one way he can retain power is to use and control her body, which also can be understood as a claim of territory. The violence against women either domestic by husband, partner or in public by strangers, is claimed to be reinforced by the unbalanced gender norms. These norms associate masculinity with toughness and dominance while femininity is linked to submissiveness, something both genders are expected to fulfill from birth. Therefore women are taught from young age to both submit and comply

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\(^4\) Gender development index includes: life expectancy at birth, adult literacy rate, combined gross enrollment ratio for primary, secondary and tertiary education as well as estimated earned income (UNDP, 2007).
with the desires of men, and men are taught to dominate from the beginning and guide the women. The guardian behavior continues throughout lifetime either by husband or father (Santhya and Jejeebhoy, 2005:66; Tichy et al. 2009:547).

Tichy et al (2009:549) argue that this is based on a view that women are driven by irrational thoughts and, hence, are in need of guidance by men who are seen as more rational human beings.

These rigid gender roles mean that women can face challenges to receive education and employment outside the home and only contribute to powerlessness among men. The powerlessness can then lead to violence against women (Tichy et al, 2009:547; Rathod, 2009, 220; Kimuna, 2012:777). Heise (1998:263) argues that the violence against women is based on the belief that the man has the right to control the woman. This belief lies in the constructed cultural message about the roles and behavior of men and women, where the women have the power disadvantage mostly because her lack of access to resources. Nevertheless, power and control is usually the most common explanation for sexual violence against women in all societies not only in India (Groth, 1981:45).

6.3.2 Gendered Power Inequalities

To get a deeper understanding of women’s position in India, it is important to look at other aspects of violence against women linked to women’s inequalities within the Indian society.

The violence against women in India stretches even beyond rapes and beatings, commonly debated are eve-teasing, dowry, and female foeticide. The latter has been stated to lead to the skewed male/female sex ratio. These three issues will be elaborated upon some more below.

Eve-teasing as it is called in India equalizes sexual harassment. Sodhi and Verma (2003:119) describes this acceptable by some men because the society do not allow for men and women to interact freely without them being married and so, teasing is the acceptable mean to express interest in a woman. For women though, this is unacceptable and many feel uncomfortable. Sodhi and Verma (2003:120) further argue that women face difficulties rejecting or resisting teasing due to their fear of possibly angering the offender. They also do not want to act in an inappropriate manner and to do anything that can bring shame to their families.

The second issue is dowry. A dowry is something that is paid by the daughter’s parents to the husbands parents. The dowry can be both an economic transaction and/or household goods. Because of this the daughter becomes an economic burden for her family. Today dowry is according to the law a criminal offence, but is still practiced. It is described as
mostly being an issue among the middle- and upper level castes. Poverty is a reason why this is less frequent by the lower castes (Rocca et al. 2009:578, Gunguly-Scarse, 2000:95). It has been argued that the boost of globalization and India’s post-1992 economic liberalization has put pressure to consume more today and therefore amplified the view of women as a burden. Because the daughter’s family needs to pay an even more expensive dowry to the husband’s parents for marriage so they in turn can buy more expensive things (Horner, 2002; Gunguly-Scarse, 2000:94; Sudha et al. 2010:176).

The last issue is the female foeticide through selective abortion for example, which has been said to lead to the imbalance in the male/female sex ratio in India. Even though the female foetus has a biological advantage and life expectancy is higher for females when looking globally, it is different in India. The infant mortality is higher for girls than for boys (Sudha et al. 2010:154).

In Haryana and Punjab for instance there have been problem with ‘missing women’, hinting at female foeticide. In the year of 2002 in a district in Harayna there were 650 women per 1000 men. These are among the wealthier states with rich communities where this practice is more common. This is because these communities have properties which are more common among rich than poor communities. With a property the girl or woman become a burden for the family someone they lose money on instead of looked as a contribution (Mohan, 2011).

Statistics from Census India during the period 2009-2011 showed that for the whole country the sex ratio at birth in India was estimated at 906 female per 1000 male (Census India, 2011:34).

It is important to highlight that the preference for sons is not uniform in India, although it is widespread. The son preference is argued to be an indicator of gender inequality and that women even before they are born are affected by the patriarchal system (Kakar and Kakar, 2007:48). This can also be seen as a form of structural violence.

The next section looks at the laws concerning violence against women.

### 6.3.3 Women’s Power over their Bodies According to Laws

There have been attempts since independence in India to improve the status of women through legal frameworks. For example, equality before law is now a fundamental right and discrimination based on sex is legally prohibited, there is also equal pay for equal work (Article 39.d). In addition, in 2010 a bill was passed that would reserve 33% of the seats for women at the lower house of the Parliament. India was also one of the first countries that had

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5 Census India is an organisation under the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.
a female prime minister (Ghosh and Choudhuri, 2011:320; Trivedi, 2011:182). However, women are still constrained in some aspects when it comes to the legal frameworks.

Traditionally the laws for the protection on violence against women have worked from a patriarchal perspective, for instance the divorce laws give more rights to men than women. Furthermore, the laws are largely shaped by familial ideology, the public and private distinction and sexual division of labour. Authors have stressed that the Indian state through the laws keep subordinate women and in a way reinforce the deeply entrenched gender norms, roles and values (Ghosh and Choudhuri, 2011:ff320; Gangoli, 2007:1).

The Protection of women from domestic violence act PWDVA (2005) was put into force in 2005 after hard work by women activists. The law is a civil rights law meaning that the victim can file a case alone without help from state or police intervention. Overall it is described as a comprehensive criminal law that address all issues women face in the domestic sphere, divided into categories of: physical, sexual, verbal and emotional, and economic violence (Ghosh and Choudhuri, 2011:323).

Ghosh and Choudhuri (2011) state that according to results from their study, toleration of violence from the women themselves is still high even with the new law, thus for such a law to become more useful people’s mindsets would need to change.

Studies have also shown that domestic violence is widespread all around India, no matter class, caste, age, or religion. As shown in the 2010 National Crime Records Bureau report, cruelty by husband or relative accounted for 44% of the crimes against women (NCRB, 2010). According to Ghosh and Choudhuri (2001:332), the rather new protection of women from the domestic violence law act could have contributed to what they call rising incidences of violence, since it addresses more issues and that the victim can file a case alone.

When it comes to rape, the Indian rape law allows sexual abuse of women within marriage by not recognizing marital rape. Marital rape is condoned and legitimized in criminal and civil law, therefore male superiority between husband and wife is legitimized by social norms (Gangoli, 2007:58, Ghosh and Choudhuri, 2011:332). Yet, the domestic violence act considers it as a crime and therefore can provide protection against marital rape. Gangoli (2007:60) argues that the court many times in the past have treated rape cases as “a crime of passion” and due to that looked upon it with leniency. There is also a belief that depending on how the raped victim dressed and her marital and social status, it can give evidence that can prevent a conviction because, this can show that the rape could have been justified in some cases.
Women’s movement in India has since the 1970s worked on strengthening the rape law and organized protests and demonstrations campaigning for justice for women who have been raped. The feminists who focused on bringing about changes in the laws in Indian society realized that the state itself was a patriarchal institution, when their legal claims met resistance. Yet, their efforts resulted in more media attention on specific cases (Gangoli, 2007:83; Ganguly-Scarse, 2000:91).

After the brutal gang-rape on December 16th 2012 in New Delhi and the subsequent protests, the sexual assault legislation was strengthened in March 2013. The law has now expanded the definition of rape and includes that absent psychical struggle does not equal consent. There is also an increase of jail time, and death penalty to repeated rape offences, or that causes coma for the victim (Lok Sabha, 2013; Biswas, 2013).

Gangoli (2007:102) stresses that it is important to have in mind that structural factors such as caste, class and community also decide women’s ability to have access to the criminal justice system. Thus, these factors can be said to either hamper or benefit a woman to report sexual violence.

To sum up, it has been shown from these sections under power that, gender norms are unbalanced and women and men are taught from young age how to behave, for instance a woman should submit and conform to the man. These roles then make them powerless and can lead to violence against them if acting against the roles. It was also shown that women in India also face other forms of violence due to the inequality in the society, such as dowry, against women and with globalization becoming more of a burden that could have contributed to the increase of reported violence against women in general. In addition, it was argued that the changes in the laws during the last decade also can offer an explanation for increased reporting of crimes.

The next section looks at the prevalence of violence in India in order receive a picture of the scope of the problem through numbers.

6.4 Prevalence of Violence

Delhi is the city that stands for the highest percentage of contribution of crimes against women second is Hyderabad and third is Bengal. However this could be due to that Delhi also is the most populous city in India (NCRB, 2010). As stated in the literature overview, the National Family Health Survey (3) from 2005-2006 carried out across households in India, showed that 39% of married women between the ages 15-49 years old reported having experienced sexual, emotional or physical violence. The sample size was 124,385 women
(NFHS, 2007:100). In the report by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) in 2003 it is stated that in 87% of the rape cases the offender were known to the victim, either partner, neighbors, or close relatives.

According to the NCRB report, in the year of 1990 there were 10,068 reported cases and in 2010 it had more than doubled to 22,175 cases (NCRB, 2010). That might not seem as many in comparison to the population of over one billion people in India. But it should be noted that these crimes are under-reported in India. It is estimated that only 10-20% of rape crimes are reported. Even though the stigma is said to have weakened in the case of pre-marital sex, due the changes in society; rape still stigmatize the women and her family. There is also an underreporting of the crime due to an insensitive police force and an intimidating judicial process (Gangoli, 2007:7). Another reason for underreporting has been claimed to be the examination of rape victims. The examination is called by activist as a medieval method as it includes a “two-finger rape test”, which is said to look for evidence of struggles or injuries. Those who do not have these injuries have “consented”. This procedure is argued by activists to be another form of sexual assault and degradation and dehumanizing process (Kashyap, 2013).

Ghosh and Choudhuri (2011:321) found in their study that in the states of Kerala and West Bengal that are as mentioned before known to be better off with higher levels of socio-economic development than other states in India, did also have increased reports of domestic violence. De Vylder (2010:108) argues that when society changes over time so do social norms and factors, which can then affect a victim’s willingness to report a crime especially when it comes to sexual violence. As a consequence, the statistics that compare crimes over time can often be deceptive. It might be that women now participate more in public spaces which can produce more violent responses from men both in public and home by non-partners and partners. Chaudhry (2013:3) adds to this point and state that the urban woman also has changed her lifestyle and nowadays can be found alone or with friends in shopping malls or movie theaters. This is something that was not even considered a few decades ago, but has also produced anger among some of the population because it is considered to be a ‘western’ thing to do and not something Indians do.

Though, if there has been an absolute rise in rape crimes is difficult to answer but what is visible from this section is that there has been an increase of reported crimes against women and that it can be due to many different reasons.
6.5 Summary and Answer to Research Questions

This last section of the chapter will answer the first research question and in order to do so it will summarize some of the main findings.

As regards to the first question; what are the main underlying factors behind increased reporting of sexual violence against women in India?

The short answer to the research question is that we have to look at the concepts that also are factors for violence, in relation to each other to be able to understand and explain the increased reporting of violence. The main underlying factors were shown to be education and employment, patriarchy and power but all seemed be in complex interplay affecting each other. But they were also seen to become factors for increased reporting of violence because of a clash between ‘traditional’ values and norms and ‘modernity’.

Based on the findings all factors overlap several times, therefore no factor alone can explain the increased reporting of sexual violence in India. This will be shown more clearly in the summary that follows.

Women’s position in the Indian society has changed and it was described that it is more common now for women receive education and take part in employment outside the home. This was further described as having empowered the women and made them independent. Some authors argued that women who had more education were also are likely to have more resources which could work as a protective factor in abusive situations (Rathod, 2009:229; Schuler, 1996:1737; Kimuna et al, 2012:780).

Though, others argued that this in some cases has been met with resistance mostly by men but, also from future parents-in-law because education and work are not part of the traditional gender roles (Tichy et al, 2009:557; Trivedi, 2010:199). This was described as a factor leading to violence both at home and outside in order to maintain power and show or regain masculinity and (Chibber et al, 2012; Metha and Simister, 2010:1593). Thus, the more social gain for women the increase in reports of violence against women.

The violence was also explained in relation to the cultural values and patriarchal norms that the woman is supposed to be at home and caring for her children. Women’s position in the Indian society as subordinated the men was also shown to be a strong factor for violence against them.

Patriarchy was also argued to be reflected in the laws that favor men for instance when it comes to divorce. The patriarchy is therefore also linked to power in which the man has control over the woman. The power imbalance between the genders then operates to justify
violence against women (Koenig et al, 2006:137). Yet, the new laws that are more “equal” were seen as a possible contributor to increased reporting of sexual violence.

In conclusion, it seems to be a complex interplay between the factors and no one can be looked at alone without entering at least one of the other factors. There are certainly other factors that are not mentioned here that has affected these as well. As Bennett and Manderson (2003:11) argue that, “at the heart of violence lies the abuse of power in the maintenance or creation of inequality”. This was seen from the findings that women’s empowerment in India has lead to disturbances between some men and women, leading to men in this case use of power in abusive ways to maintain the gender inequalities. In short, it all seemed to come down to power. But from this it can also be stated that it has to do with changes in societies whether it is called ‘modernization’, development or some other term, that disturb prevailing gender structures in society.

Finally, the increased reporting of sexual violence was also found that it could be interpreted as a result due to factors such as women’s increased literacy and awareness of the law with help from women’s movements. On that note, the problem had a more positive association to the increased reporting of sexual violence.

The next chapter is the Analysis, which will reflect and analyze around the findings from this chapter and put them in relation with the theories. It will also answer the last research question.
7. Analysis

Based on the findings, it was recognized that sexual violence in India had to be understood in a complex interplay of factors that work in different levels within the society and influence individual’s actions. Therefore, it is important to understand that sexual violence against women do not exist in a vacuum, but is situated within a larger economic, political, and societal context, which has been shown from the findings.

This chapter will reflect over and analyze the material try to create a deeper understanding and therefore not establish any truths. It starts with an analysis of the results in regards to the research problem and will also be analyzed in relation to the gender theories. Subsequently follows an analysis of the aspect increased reporting of sexual violence that adheres to both research questions and this part leads us to the last research question, in which Durkheim’s theory of *anomie* will be used in order to answer it and trying to create a deeper understanding. The chapter ends with a discussion of the utility of the theories.

7.1 Mixed Results of ‘Modernization’

Mitra’s and Singh’s (2007) result from their study the Kerala paradox and Ghosh and Choudhury’s (2007) study in Kerala and West Bengal showed similar result. That even with what they argued to be a ‘successful modern measure’ with high rates of education for women, they were still exposed to violence. In addition, Kerala’s high gender development index which also can be an indicator of ‘modernization’ did not either seem to have a positive effect in relation to women’s experience of violence. Instead violence was prevalent and increasing, which could point to how deep gender inequalities are entrenched in India. This also shows that no matter how progressive gender development statistics are in a transition period, the reality could show reverse results and can be counterproductive.

It was indicated from several authors that even though women have gained power over the years it has contradicted the patriarchal norms that is embedded in the Indian culture that the women should be at home with the children (Trivedi, 2010, 201; Tasmin, 2006:160; Rathod, 2009:229). Patriarchy is present in all societies but the degree of its presence differs. It is not only in the Indian culture that a woman is “supposed” to stay at home and care for her children, this view is present in Sweden as well.

According to this line of reasoning it would be warranted to describe it as men still have power to decide over women’s bodies in the Indian society. Even with what can be seen as ‘modern’ indicators as aforementioned, women still face constraints due to their subordination and lack of human rights that inhibits them to escape violence. Their lack of rights was shown
from the example that a dowry still is practiced and the divorce laws that favor men (Koenig et al, 2006:137; Rocca et al, 2009:578).

The Kerala paradox illustrates an example of the research problem. For instance, on the one hand, women face high unemployment rates, and discrimination at the labour market as well as the increased reporting of sexual violence against them, while on the other hand, they have high literacy rates, better sex ratio and higher mean age at marriage, in comparison to the rest of the country. This shows the complex and what can be described as a contradictory picture (Mitra and Singh, 2007). Yet, it can point to that there can be a reconstruction of the gender roles since they have a possibility to receive education and waged labour. As Rathod (2009:229) argues, gender differences have declined in accordance with modernization, but it might just take longer time to see a result from it.

The Kerala paradox can further be described to be a result of a clash between women’s traditional subservient roles and their obtainable gender empowerment, which could have instigated the violence. This result as well as the others that showed the same tendency can be put in relation to what Hirdman calls the gender contract (2003:55). Some of the women presented in the literature seemed to not wanting to accept household chores and being a housewife which is part of the ‘contract’ to the same extent as before. Instead research showed that many women wanted to focus on education and work, this point to a difficulty for women to follow the ‘gender contract’, as they want to follow their own aspirations and become independent instead. The response for not obeying the man was violence against the women in some cases (Kakar and Kakar, 2007:66; Rathod, 2009:229).

It is possible though that the stereotypical gender roles are changing and become more equal and perhaps leading to a renegotiated gender contract. In line with Connell’s (2003:76) reasoning, gender relations are something that changes when social changes take place. However, as argued by Sekher and Hatti (2010:2) social and economic development do not have to ensure any substantial changes in the culture ethos in the society. This could mean that the stereotypical gender roles will continue and also to uphold the patriarchal system.

According to Hirdman (2003:63) men and women are from when they are born taught and brought into stereotypical gender roles on what is masculine and what is feminine, something that is maintained by the ‘gender contract’. As stated in the findings, in India women are born into a role and taught from young age to be submissive while the male is taught to be dominant (Tichy et al 2009:549; Santhya and Jejeeboy, 2055:66). However, with the ‘modernization’ process this has changed in India. As stated earlier, the women are becoming more independent through the education and employment. But, this has lead to a dilemma
with difficulties for men achieving masculinity as women now enters new areas and from their independence receive more resources therefore they are less dependent on the man. Authors have also seen this elsewhere when countries develop and call it a “crisis in masculinity” (Sideris, 2007:234; Mareah Peoples, 2008:16; Staudt, 2011:191).

Furthermore, according to the results from the findings, the subordinate status of the women in India seems to be deeply rooted in the traditional gender roles that reflect the mind-sets of the people and their actions. According to Hirdman (2003) and Connell (2003) gender roles are constructed and are affected on a high degree by the culture and as reflected above so it seems to be in India as well.

The subordination of women in the Indian society was by authors such as Kimuna et al (2012:774) and Tichy et al (2009:556) further linked to traditional cultural norms of patriarchy. Though, patriarchy was in turn linked to power, since the view of women as submissive and conform to the desires of the males is an expression of power. This line of reasoning can be put in accordance to Lukes (2005:33) way of thinking, that power is also exercised in invisible forms. This is called the third dimension of power according to Lukes, and is the power to shape people’s priorities called willing compliance, where people follow discourses in the society and may not be aware of it. So, the women in India who take on a submissive and complying role can do it while being unaware it. If then acting outside of this role (becoming independent), the power can become visible in the form of violence, and in that sense the violence can be seen as a form of power to maintain inequalities.

Yet, this is not to say that all women in India are subordinated, they still have agency which has been shown from the literature. For instance those who “challenge” traditional patriarchal norms by getting education and work outside the home, appear to become active agents when getting more independent. Thus, to look at Indian women as only victims of the traditional cultural norms of patriarchy in India therefore seem wrong.

The sexual violence can according to, Choudhuri and Ghosh (2011:330), Kimuna et al, (2012:777) and Tichy et al (2009:556) be regarded exclusively through a patriarchal and culture lens, as violence against women can be found in power inequality under patriarchy. Therefore it would have no relation to the ‘modernization’ process.

However, an advocate of modernization could argue that violence only continues to exist because the ‘modernization’ process has not advanced and reached it ‘full potential’. This could then explain the violence out in rural areas since these are less developed and perhaps those with more intact patriarchal structures. However, as shown in the findings the statistics showed that most violence against women occurred in urban areas and in cities like Delhi and
Hyderabad. Still, this can be explained as these places are more likely to have more educated people, higher literacy rates, and awareness of laws and human rights which is seen as factors to why people also report more crimes (Trivedi, 2010:f200). The indicators can further be attributed to ‘modernization’. Accordingly, the modernization has in a positive way impacted the increase of reports of sexual violence.

Furthermore, Heise (1998:262) argues that explanation models that concentrate exclusively on one factor like patriarchy disregard the individual responsibility and does not see it in a wider spectrum. This was also confirmed by the results of the findings that showed that there are many factors in interplay. Accordingly, ‘modernization’ can again according to this reasoning be put in relation to the increased reporting of violence, though, as seen above it can be interpreted as having both a harmful relation and/or a positive relation.

Before moving on to answer the last research question, I will elaborate upon the results regarding increased reporting of sexual violence since it is important to have analyzed before going into the next research question that involves this aspect as well.

7.1.1 Increased Reporting of Sexual Violence

Women’s movements in India have worked to strengthen their rights, for instance demonstrating for changes in the laws on rape (Gangoli, 2007:83). This could be explained as women or people in general today are more intolerant towards crime as compared to earlier and therefore report more. It can also be seen as women have more courage now due to women’s movement, or basically that the culture has changed, hence, the traditional belief that violence is part of everyday life for women could therefore be seen as it has changed.

Yet, according to the findings it was also shown that women still are reluctant to report violence as they accept it and consider it part of life, because it has become normalized in the Indian society (Ghosh and Choudhuri, 2011:330). It can also be emphasized that the normalization of violence can make it even more difficult to get the exact rates of an increase in violence or not. The acceptation of violence whether it is eve-teasing or more severe forms of violence, it can be viewed as women still see it as a righteous act according to the cultural construction of the gender roles to be subordinate and not stand up against men.

Still, even though numbers show of an increase in reported violence in the statistics it is difficult to identify if it is an increase in actual violence. It should further be noted that India’s population has increased every year which could also correlate with an increase of crimes and would therefore be seen as a normal thing that crimes increase.
In conclusion, it is only possible to argue that it is an increase in reported crimes as seen from statistics not in the actual crimes, considering all other factors brought up that can have an effect on the increase.

These first two parts of the analysis has analyzed the findings of the mixed pictures given in the literature about the ‘modernization’ process and the reported increase of sexual violence against women in India and how that can be interpreted in different ways. It has also worked as a vital backdrop in order to answer the last research question that involves both the ‘modernization’ process and the increased reporting of sexual violence but in relation to Durkheim’s theory of anomie.

7.2 Interpreting Sexual Violence in India through Durkheim’s Theory of Anomie

In this part I will answer the research question; can the modernization process be seen as causing a state of anomie which has resulted in increased reporting of sexual violence against women in India?

Today with individualization growing in the Indian society the women have aspirations to get educated and work. This can be viewed as she has adapted to the new values as she knows she earns the right to be educated and work in other spheres. In the traditional societies the man could have an overview of his wife when he knew she was working in the home or nearby (Kakar and Kakar, 2007:66). This change was argued to have created a distance between the man and woman, in which the man feels that he has lost control and power (Chibber et al, 2012; Tichy, et al, 2009:557). This could be viewed as the new social structures with the division of labour have made men feel powerless, meanwhile women have become empowered which could have contributed to a state of anomie. In short, the society has lost its regulation of norms. On the contrary, Schuler et al. (1996:1737) Kimuna et al (2012:780) and Rathod (2009:229) argued that a woman’s financial contributions could be seen as a contribution to the household economy and appreciated when the man accepted and recognized the benefits. Still, most authors argued for that employment for women was a factor related to sexual violence and against women.

As seen in the findings, women’s subordinate position along with the rigid gender roles in which she is supposed to be obedient to the husband can be traced back to ancient times in India. Before women’s movements started to take place in the 1970s (Ganguly-Scarse, 2000:91) it can be seen as it was some sort of control by the norms and values within what could be argued to be seen as a more ‘traditional’ society. But if looking at the gender roles
after these movements they seem to have changed according to the results of the findings. Based on this it can be argued that the patriarchy and patriarchal norms that so long has uphold the general subordination of women now has weakened.

According to Durkheim, (1984:306;339a) in a transition from rural to urban society a diffusion of new norms and values interrupt the equilibrium of the traditional society and break traditional beliefs and status relationships. In that process social individuals can challenge old cultural values, norms and social rules which can lead to anomie, since this space is vacant before the new societal function has organized itself, usually value orientation come with a time lag. This can be applied to the Indian context when women now “challenge” the old cultural values and norms. One example is the Kerala paradox as aforementioned, where ‘modernization’ could have impacted women to have aspirations to get education and work outside the home, from this they can also have started to question certain cultural rules and behaviors as they have weakened with ‘modernity’. This could be seen as distorting the structural conditions that usually upholds the patriarchy, causing an even more unclear and imbalanced phase and in turn lead to deviant behaviors in the society. The violence against women could here be seen as a result of anomie that has been caused by a social-norm breakdown.

It can further be interpreted as a breakdown of the traditional society’s beliefs and relationships. New norms and values in urban societies that have come along with social change and the ‘modernization’ also disturb the ‘traditional’ norms and values and contribute to anomie. As argued in the literature overview the economic change in India can be seen as it has outpaced change of the social institutions. A breakdown can be explained to occur because perceptions and values by people and social institutions do not change simultaneously to the economic change (Ohlin, 2006; Trivedi, 2010:183; Kynch and Sibbons, 1998:164).

In the findings it was showed that many norms and values are entrenched in the Indian society and would therefore take long to change, if it is something that will change. Perhaps many of the ‘traditional’ values and norms will not disappear instead continue side by side with ‘modern’ economic and societal changes. What seems to be evident from the findings is that some old traditions have now clashed with new modern outlook. Old norms appear to be challenged or rejected by some women and new norms have not been accepted yet, which can be seen as causing anomie if interpreting it as the new norms and values has not organized themselves yet. However, as Rist (2002:21) argues, a pure ‘traditional’ or ‘modern’ society
does not exist anywhere, instead there are a mixes of both. In addition, he argues that social change is a constant process and has always taken place (Ibid, 2002:13).

Furthermore, it is also possible to interpret the results in relation to anomie in another way. It can be seen as the earlier norms and values that women should be at home working has changed in India as aforementioned, but it can be seen as it has lead to even more confusion over these new opportunities since the regulations of protecting women with laws still seem to lag behind. For instance the laws on violence against women are still not offering enough protection because certain violent acts are not considered crimes under some laws, for example marital rape is not considered a crime under the rape law (Gangoli, 2007:58, Ghosh and Choudhuri, 2011:3). Thus, this creates a space for even more confusion on what the right behavior is if not even the laws can follow and change according to the ‘modern’ society it would probably be even more difficult for the traditional norms and values to change. This leaves women even more unprotected and this can be seen as disorganization and chaos between different spheres in the society, hence a form of anomie that can result in sexual violence.

Based on this it could be seen as the violence also derives from inadequate laws. The sexual violence against women can therefore be viewed as having a weak relation to the ‘modernization’ process and instead can be put more in association to the inadequate legal frameworks that should protect women. This can in turn further be explained that it is the Indian state that upholds the difference between the genders through the legal frameworks that benefit men in many cases and subordinate women, as argued by Ghosh and Choudhuri (2011:320). In this way the state also incorporates values and norms that influence individuals which become present in the society and demonstrated in how people act. Even though many changes has been made since independence to change the status of women as described in the findings, for instance equality before law and improvement of the law on domestic violence (Ghosh and Choudhuri, 2011:ff320; Trivedi, 2011:182) the implementation in practice of these laws seem to fall short.

Coming back to Durkheim, it would be too simplistic to view the Indian society as a complete normless society, since there are rules and laws controlling the society. Therefore we can use Durkheim’s anomie theory to some length and not fully. In Marks understanding of Durkheim, a social norm breakdown can occur when abrupt transitions take place, for instance when rapid technological change within trade and industry take place. In India it is difficult to establish when exactly this took place, and it can be seen as a social change has
gone on for a long time and maybe even forever, therefore it cannot be seen as an abrupt transition leading to a complete breakdown in norms.

Regardless of whether or not a complete breakdown of norms have taken place and lead to anomie it can be interpreted as it is disturbances in the society that has lead to anomie (in Marks, 1974:333), which probably suits better to the case of India.

As Marks (1974:359) argued, people can live with frustration and it does not have to lead to deviant behavior, therefore people can live in an anomic society without consequences.

In conclusion, the answer to the research question has from this outline above has shown that the ‘modernization’ process can be seen as causing a state of anomie which has resulted in increased reporting of sexual violence against women. Even though there are counterarguments some of them have been rejected and therefore it is possible to answer yes on the question.

7.3 Summary of the Analysis
As has been stressed in this chapter ‘modernization’ have had some contradictory results for women in India instead of the all the positive results that many advocates of modernization theory stress. On the one hand, women have easier access and opportunities to education and employment and through that achieved independence. The higher literacy rates and awareness of laws and human rights was also seen as positive factors to that people possibly report more crimes now (Trivedi, 2010:203). Accordingly, the ‘modernization’ has in a positive way impacted the increase of reports of sexual violence. On the other hand, women’s greater independence could have created a sense of disempowerment among some of the men which could be seen as a potential contributor to increased violence against women (Tasmin, 2006:182; Kakar and Kakar, 2007:66). This was further linked to the notion of a “crisis in masculinity” as brought up in the findings, that insecurity of men follows the social gains by women.

Furthermore, ‘modernization’ with its new norms and values and the division of labour as a mechanism for this, can be said to put pressure and created tensions in gender relations and have lead to disturbance in the society which has contributed to anomie that leads to deviant behaviors and in this case it was seen as leading to increased reporting of sexual violence against women. As a consequence a more equal society which is part of the notion of ‘modernization’ does not have to mean a decrease in violence.
7.3.1 Utility of the Theories
The use of Durkheim’s theory of Anomie has offered and contributed with another perspective to analyze the phenomenon of sexual violence against women in India than what previous research has done. It has been shown that anomie can be valuable to use when looking at both micro and macro perspectives, though this thesis has focused on macro level most of the research was conducted at micro level. The breadth of the theory makes it applicable to many societal forces. On the one hand, it can be used in its conventional way to look at suicide or changes in division of labour, while on the other hand, it has been shown that it is even possible to use when looking at the phenomena of sexual violence against women.

However, it seemed as if other theories could be needed in addition to Durkheim, since it sometime only could be used to some extent, because certain components in the theory could not be applied fully. The theory might be better applicable if investigating at individual level, meaning that it could be more useful when interviewing people and then see if their answers can be interpreted and analyzed as they are in a state of anomie and how and why it can possibly escalate to commit crimes. Perhaps it could be used in combination with a frustration theory.

The gender theories were useful when interpreting and analyzing gender relations and how women’s subordination can be understood as having gendered implications and how violence can be explained through these glasses.

The next chapter is the final chapter of the thesis the conclusion. In that chapter I will conclude the study and put the results in relation to the research problem and objective of the study.
8. Conclusion
This last chapter will accentuate the results from this study and put them in relation to the research problem and objective. The chapter ends with suggestions for further research of this topic.

8.1 Concluding Discussion
The topic of this study, sexual violence against women, caught my attention after the brutal gang-rape on a woman in India in December 2012. India seemed to display a contradictory picture with on the one hand, a fast growing economy and progressive indicators of development, but on the other hand portrayed as a country with increasing reports on sexual violence against women and problems with gender inequality.

The objective of this study was to try to gain a deeper understanding and reflect upon underlying factors of increased reporting of sexual violence in India, and to understand in what way the modernization process possibly could be put in relation to the increased reporting of sexual violence, something that was analyzed with help from Durkheim’s theory of anomie. This was in line with the research problem of the study that point to the lack of understanding how a country like India with fast economic growth and progressive human development indicators (UN, 2012) still has prevalent problems with sexual violence against women.

The concept of ‘modernization’ can be argued to be a fairly intimidating concept to look closer at in a study, considering its complexity, different values and connotations it brings. However, it was possible to include in the study and look at its relation to increased reporting of sexual violence.

The understanding of the results from this study rests upon the interpretation of the compiled material based on the gathered literature. It appeared to be a complex problem with interrelated factors. Some authors observed an association with the increased reporting of sexual violence in India and the level of education for both women and men with the likelihood of becoming a victim or a perpetrator for sexual violence. However the results were contradictory, and showed that education can be a protective factor towards violence due to empowerment from this (Kimuna et al, 2012:780), while others stressed it to be something that could lead to violence instead both at home and in public both by partner and non-partner. The reasons for the increased reporting of violence was described to be because the women now “challenge” the traditional gender roles and the patriarchal norms that a women is supposed to stay near the household and care for the children (Trivedi, 2010:199; Chibber et
al, 2012; Metha and Simister, 2010:1593), something that could be put in line with Hirdman’s (2003) reasoning of a gender contract.

Similar results yielded for work. Women’s breakthrough in the society through increased participation in the economy did not seem to be supported by the traditional cultural values and norms. Instead, it was argued that it could have a harmful effect and lead to violence that could be a cause of a “crisis in masculinity” among some men, and violence become a response to regain it or to reinforce the prevailing gender roles (Sideris, 2007:233; Chibber et al, 2012; Tichy, et al, 2009:557). This can be argued to have severe consequences for a society’s development if women are hampered to receive education and work because they have to adapt to the ‘traditional’ values and norms that still exist in the Indian society, even though they hypothetically have access to the ‘modern’ life.

This made it seem as it comes down to power and the difficulties to change gender roles. According to Connell (2003:73) gender relations are not static instead created and shift in relation to social changes. The social changes in India are a result of what some scholars would call ‘modernization’. As stressed in the analysis the ‘modernization’ process can put pressure and create tensions in gender relations, which could be seen as leading to state of anomie.

Furthermore, when Durkheim’s theory of anomie was interpreted and applied to this phenomenon it could be interpreted as deviant behavior resulting from anomie could erupt in sexual violence against women. This was seen as deriving from a destabilization of the existing norms and values from the ‘traditional’ society in transition to the ‘modern’, and there between it left a vacant space in which anomie could be created.

It was stressed that the changes that could be seen as causing the destabilization was the underlying factors education and work outside the home for women, in this process they became independent, which was seen as a challenge to the traditional cultural values and norms.

Even though it was showed through statistics and surveys of increasing levels of violence against women in India it was argued that it might just be an increase in reported cases and not an increase in absolute cases. Increase in reports may be due to factors such as changes in victims’ willingness to report (possibly can be linked to more confidence in police and justice system) or it can be changes in the laws. But it can also adhere to ‘modernizing’ indicators such as, increased awareness of legal rights, improved human rights and more educated people.
However, violence has always been present in the Indian society as in other countries as well, but our attention to it now is probably because our societies have developed and human rights and equality have come up on the agenda. Therefore, we also see an increase of reports. It is also possible to say that new forms of violence have arrived as well as new factors for why violence occurs, something that was indicated in the findings.

Nevertheless, increased reporting of sexual violence against women might not have any relation with ‘modernization’. Instead it can be argued as some authors have done, that power can alone be associated with sexual violence against women. That it deals with power to create or to maintain inequality as stressed by Bennett and Manderson (2003:11).

The objective was partly to see if the ‘modernization’ process could be put in relation to the increased reporting of sexual violence and this study showed that it is possible to see a relation. Though, this view also deals with a person’s point of departure.

According this study it can be seen as the ‘modernization’ process has had a positive effect for the increased reporting of sexual violence against women in India as well as it could be seen as having a negative effect. For the former, through more educated people which has lead to increased literacy and awareness of human rights and laws and could have lead to more reports, for the latter it can be seen as ‘modernization’ has contributed to create a dissonance among the people regarding norms and values that were prevalent in the more ‘traditional’ society and therefore could have lead to sexual violence. In this line of reasoning it can be seen as a clash between ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’.

Furthermore, the results from this study demonstrated that this problem is also affected and impacted by background factors, intermediate factors and affects from these, that one need to have in mind. Therefore, it is impossible and too simplistic to only focus on one of the presented factors for increased reporting of sexual violence against women in India.

The study finishes with a look on what further can be studied within this topic.

### 8.2 Further Research

In such a large and diverse country as India it is difficult to make generalizations, though from the gathered material in this thesis it is possible to see similarities even between different parts of the country. It is therefore also possible to find similar underlying factors for sexual violence against women in other countries that are developing.

However, for further research on the topic a suggestion would be to conduct an in-depth ethnographic research in India interviewing both women and men. In order to study the questions of how and why the crime of were committed. What can perpetrators and victims
tell us about sexual violence? Such a research would then look at the individual level and it would be interesting to compare those answers with the result from this thesis to see if it corresponds.
9. List of References

9.1 Printed Published Sources


9.2 Online Sources

9.2.1 Electronic Journal Articles


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9.2.2 Other Online Sources


for Population Studies. [Online] Available from:


UN (United Nations)., (2012) LDC Data Retrieval. [Online] Available from:


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9.2.3 E-books (Electronic Books)


9.2.4 Government Publications


Appendix 1.
Map of India showing cities, states and union territories (Maps of India, 2013).