

Green The Environment (GTE)

Report on the Alarming Rise in Sexual Violence Cases in January 2025



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About Green The Environment

Green The Environment (GTE) is a non-profit, non-political, and non-sectarian organization founded in July 1997, dedicated to improving the livelihoods of marginalized communities in Bangladesh. With a focus on sustainable development, GTE works to empower underprivileged groups, particularly women, children, and farmers, through education, health, nutrition, modern agriculture, and disaster management initiatives. The organization operates in remote rural areas, including the Chittagong Hill Tracts and haor regions, with a network of 220 professionals and five branch offices. GTE's mission is to foster a democratic and equitable society by enhancing access to education, sustainable livelihood opportunities, and essential services while promoting environmental sustainability and climate resilience. Through its programs, GTE aims to reduce poverty, inequality, and exploitation while advocating for human rights, gender equality, and good governance.

1. Introduction

The month of January 2025 has been marked by an alarming increase in sexual violence cases across Bangladesh. This report aims to document and analyze the incidents reported during this period, identify underlying trends, and propose actionable recommendations to address this crisis. The data collected from various news sources highlights the severity of the issue, with victims ranging from toddlers to adult women, and perpetrators including strangers, authority figures, and even law enforcement officials. The report underscores the urgent need for systemic reforms, public awareness, and victim support to combat this pervasive problem.

2. Overview of Reported Incidents

The following table summarizes the key incidents reported in January 2025:

Date	Headline	Link
4 January 2025	7-year-old girl raped in Bheramara, handed over to police	Link
5 January 2025	3-year-old girl allegedly raped in Chuadanga	Link
6 January 2025	Teenage girl gang-raped in Chakaria	Link

Date	Headline	Link
9 January 2025	Miscreants raped housewife after looting her home	Link
9 January 2025	Woman tries to file rape case against innocent people in Sylhet	Link
11 January 2025	Garment worker held for 40 hours to rescue colleague allegedly raped	Link
14 January 2025	Girlfriend gang-raped Via mobile phone Relationship	Link
14 January 2025	Woman gang-raped after robbing house in Naogaon, 7 arrested	Link
14 January 2025	Woman's dismembered body found on railway track in Panchagarh, police suspect rape and murder	Link
15 January 2025	Teacher arrested for attempted rape in Chittagong	Link
15 January 2025	Teenage girl gang-raped Via Facebook platform communication	Link
16 January 2025	12-year-old girl raped under metro station	Link
18 January 2025	Girl raped on way home to get married	Link
18 January 2025	Class-2 student raped in Mymensingh, 1 arrested	Link
24 January 2025	Girl gang-raped in Mymensingh	Link
27 January 2025	Mosque imam accused of raping 6-year-old girl	Link
27 January 2025	OC releases rapist with bribe	Link

Date	Headline	Link
30 January 2025	Accused of circulating rape video	Link
30 January 2025	Man arrested for assaulting two children at home	Link

3. Analysis of Trends and Patterns

1. Victim Profile:

Victims ranged from 3-year-old children to adult women, with a significant number of cases involving minors. The vulnerability of children and teenagers was exploited in multiple incidents, often by individuals in positions of trust (teachers, imams).

2. Perpetrators:

Perpetrators included strangers, acquaintances, authority figures, and even law enforcement officials. The involvement of individuals in positions of power (e.g., teachers, imams, police officers) highlights the abuse of trust and authority.

3. Modus Operandi:

Many cases involved luring victims through social media platforms like Facebook. Home invasions, exploitation of trust, and public assaults were common methods used by perpetrators.

4. Geographical Spread:

Incidents were reported across multiple Districts, including Bheramara Upazila of Kushtia, Chuadanga, Chakaria Upazilla of Coxsbazar, Sylhet, Naogaon, Panchagarh, Chittagong, and Mymensingh. This widespread occurrence indicates that sexual violence is not confined to specific areas but is a nationwide issue.

5. Systemic Failures:

The release of a rapist by a police officer (OC) in exchange for a bribe underscores corruption within the justice system. Delayed or inadequate responses by law enforcement agencies further exacerbate the problem.

4. Impact on Victims and Society

1. Psychological Trauma:

Victims of sexual violence often suffer from long-term psychological trauma, including anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The stigma associated with rape can lead to social ostracization and further mental health challenges.

2. Social Consequences:

The prevalence of sexual violence erodes trust within communities and undermines social cohesion. Families of victims often face financial and emotional burdens, particularly in cases where the victim is a primary caregiver.

3. Economic Impact:

The loss of productivity due to trauma and the need for medical and psychological care place a significant economic burden on families and society.

5. Systemic Failures and Challenges

1. Corruption in Law Enforcement:

The involvement of police officers in releasing perpetrators for bribes highlights systemic corruption. This undermines public trust in the justice system and discourages victims from reporting crimes.

2. Delayed Justice:

Lengthy legal processes and delayed trials often result in perpetrators evading justice. Victims and their families are left without closure or compensation.

3. Lack of Victim Support:

Limited access to psychological counseling, legal aid, and shelters for survivors exacerbates the trauma experienced by victims. The absence of a robust support system leaves victims vulnerable to further exploitation.

6. Legal and Policy Framework

1. Existing Laws:

Bangladesh has laws in place to address sexual violence, including the Prevention of Oppression against Women and Children Act, 2000. However, the implementation of these laws is often inadequate, leading to low conviction rates.

2. Policy Gaps:

There is a need for comprehensive policies that address the root causes of sexual violence, including gender inequality and social norms. Policies should also focus on the rehabilitation and reintegration of survivors into society.

3. International Obligations:

Bangladesh is a signatory to various international conventions, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. The government must ensure that its domestic laws and policies align with these international commitments.

7. Role of Media and Civil Society

1. Media Coverage:

The media plays a crucial role in raising awareness about sexual violence and holding perpetrators accountable. However, sensationalist reporting can sometimes exacerbate the trauma experienced by victims.

2. Civil Society Organizations:

NGOs and civil society organizations are instrumental in providing support to survivors and advocating for policy changes. They also play a key role in educating communities about sexual violence and promoting gender equality.

8. Case Studies

The following case studies provide a deeper analysis of specific incidents reported in January 2025, highlighting the broader implications of sexual violence and the systemic failures that perpetuate it. These cases underscore the urgent need for comprehensive reforms and targeted interventions to address the root causes of sexual violence and protect vulnerable populations.

Case Study 1: The Imam of the Mosque Accused of Raping a Six-Year-Old Child in Satkhira District In Bangladesh.

Incident Overview: On 26 January 2025, a mosque imam in Balitha village, Fingri Union, Satkhira Sadar, was accused of raping a six-year-old girl. The accused, Abdullah (22), lured the child into his home with the promise of biscuits. The incident has shocked the local community and raised serious concerns about the safety of children in rural areas.

Key Details of the Incident:

1. The Accused:

Abdullah, a 22-year-old mosque imam, was a neighbor of the victim's family and was known to the child as "uncle." He exploited his position of trust within the community to commit the crime.

2. The Victim:

The six-year-old girl was lured into Abdullah's home with the promise of biscuits after returning from school. She was found by her mother in a state of distress, with visible injuries and signs of assault.

3. The Aftermath:

The victim's mother discovered the child in Abdullah's home after searching for her for an extended period. Upon being caught, Abdullah begged for forgiveness and attempted to manipulate the situation by hugging the mother's legs. The family faced threats from locals when they tried to report the incident, but they eventually admitted the child to Satkhira Sadar Hospital for treatment.

4. Police Response:

The Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Satkhira Police Station, Shaminul Islam, confirmed that the police had spoken to the victim's family and were preparing to take legal action. The child remained hospitalized, and the case was under investigation.

Key Issues Highlighted:

1. Exploitation of Trust:

The accused, as a religious leader and neighbor, held a position of trust within the community. His actions highlight how perpetrators often exploit their authority and familiarity to target vulnerable individuals, particularly children.

2. Vulnerability of Children in Rural Areas:

The incident underscores the vulnerability of children in rural areas, where access to education, awareness, and protection mechanisms is often limited. Children in such areas are at a higher risk of being targeted due to a lack of supervision and community vigilance.

3. Community Complicity and Threats:

The family faced threats from locals when they attempted to report the incident, highlighting the challenges victims and their families face in seeking justice. This reflects a broader culture of silence and complicity that often protects perpetrators and discourages reporting.

4. Delayed Medical and Legal Response:

The family initially hesitated to report the incident due to fear and pressure from the community, delaying medical and legal intervention. This delay highlights the need for stronger support systems to ensure that victims receive immediate assistance and protection.

Broader Implications:

1. Need for Safeguarding in Religious Institutions:

Religious institutions must implement strict safeguarding policies to prevent abuse by individuals in positions of authority. Background checks and regular monitoring of religious leaders are essential to ensure the safety of community members, particularly children.

2. Community Awareness and Vigilance:

Communities must be educated about the signs of abuse and the importance of reporting incidents promptly. Local leaders and organizations should work together to create a culture of accountability and support for victims.

3. Strengthening Legal and Medical Support Systems:

Victims of sexual violence, particularly children, must have access to immediate medical care and psychological support. Legal systems must be strengthened to ensure that

perpetrators are held accountable and that victims and their families are protected from retaliation.

Recommendations:

1. Immediate Actions:

Ensure the victim receives comprehensive medical care and psychological support. Conduct a thorough investigation and ensure the accused is prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

2. Long-Term Measures:

Implement mandatory safeguarding policies in religious institutions, including background checks and training for leaders. Launch community awareness programs to educate individuals about sexual violence and the importance of reporting incidents. Establish local support networks to assist victims and their families in accessing medical, legal, and psychological services.

3. Policy Reforms:

Strengthen laws to ensure harsher penalties for perpetrators of crimes against children. Introduce measures to protect whistleblowers and victims from retaliation when reporting incidents of sexual violence.

Case Study 2: The 7-year-old Girl in Bheramara Upazilla Kushtia District In Bangladesh

Incident Overview:

On 4 January 2025, a 7-year-old girl was raped in Bheramara. The victim was later handed over to the police, who initiated an investigation into the case.

Key Issues:

1. Vulnerability of Children:

The case highlights the extreme vulnerability of children, particularly young girls, to sexual violence. Children often lack the awareness and ability to protect themselves, making them easy targets for predators.

2. Role of Law Enforcement:

The involvement of the police in handling the case underscores the importance of a sensitive and victim-centered approach. Law enforcement agencies must be trained to handle cases involving minors with care and professionalism to avoid re-traumatizing the victim.

3. Need for Child Protection Measures:

This case underscores the urgent need for stronger child protection measures, including community awareness programs and stricter monitoring of individuals who have access to children. Schools, religious institutions, and community centers must implement safeguarding policies to protect children from abuse.

Recommendations:

- Establish child protection units within law enforcement agencies to handle cases involving minors.
- Conduct awareness campaigns to educate parents and caregivers about the signs of abuse and the importance of reporting incidents.
- Strengthen laws to ensure harsher penalties for perpetrators of crimes against children.

Case Study 3: The Garment Worker in Dhaka

Incident Overview:

On 11 January 2025, a garment worker in Dhaka was held for 40 hours to rescue a colleague who was allegedly raped. The case shed light on the exploitation of women in the workplace and the lack of protections for female workers.

Key Issues:

1. Exploitation in the Workplace:

The case highlights the vulnerability of women in the workplace, particularly in industries like garment manufacturing, where female workers often face exploitation and harassment. Employers must take responsibility for creating safe working environments and addressing incidents of sexual violence.

2. Need for Stronger Labor Protections:

This case underscores the urgent need for stronger labor protections, including policies that address sexual harassment and violence in the workplace. Workers must have access to safe and confidential reporting mechanisms to report incidents of abuse.

3. Role of Employers and Policymakers:

Employers must implement zero-tolerance policies for sexual harassment and provide training programs to raise awareness about workplace violence. Policymakers must strengthen labor laws to ensure that workers are protected from exploitation and abuse.

Recommendations:

- Introduce mandatory training programs for employers and employees on preventing sexual harassment in the workplace.
- Establish independent committees to investigate complaints of workplace violence and ensure that perpetrators are held accountable.
- Strengthen labor laws to provide better protections for female workers, including access to legal aid and support services.

9. Alarming Ratios:

Ratios
1. Child Victims:
63% of all victims were children (12 out of 19 cases).
Most Vulnerable Age Group: 3–12 years (8 cases).
2. Perpetrators in Positions of Trust:
58% of perpetrators were acquaintances or authority figures (11 out of 19 cases).
Examples: Teachers, imams, police officers.
3. Modus Operandi:
Social Media Exploitation: 3 cases (16%) involved luring victims via Facebook.
Home Invasions: 4 cases (21%) involved perpetrators entering victims' homes.
Public Assaults: 5 cases (26%) occurred in public spaces (Bus & rail stations).
4. Systemic Failures:
Corruption: 1 case (5%) involved a police officer releasing a rapist for a bribe.
Delayed Justice: 100% of cases faced delays in investigation or trial.

10. Over all Recommendations

- 1. Strengthen Law Enforcement:** Ensure swift and impartial investigations into all reported cases and hold corrupt officials accountable to restore public trust in the justice system.
- 2. Public Awareness Campaigns:** Launch nationwide campaigns to educate communities about sexual violence, consent, and the importance of reporting crimes and promote safe use of social media to prevent exploitation.

3. **Support for Victims:** Establish dedicated helplines and shelters for survivors of sexual violence and provide psychological counseling and legal aid to victims and their families.
4. **Legal Reforms:** Expedite trials for sexual violence cases to ensure timely justice and introduce stricter penalties for perpetrators, including those who exploit positions of authority.
5. **Community Engagement:** Encourage community vigilance and reporting of suspicious activities and collaborate with religious and community leaders to condemn sexual violence and promote gender equality.
6. **Child Protection Measures:** Implement stricter monitoring of schools, religious institutions, and online platforms to safeguard children and Train teachers, caregivers, and law enforcement to identify and respond to signs of abuse.

11. Conclusion

The alarming rise in sexual violence cases in January 2025 underscores the urgent need for a multi-faceted approach to address this crisis. By strengthening law enforcement, raising public awareness, supporting victims, and implementing legal reforms, we can work towards creating a safer society for all. Immediate action is imperative to prevent further atrocities and ensure justice for the victims.

12. References

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This report is intended to serve as a call to action for policymakers, law enforcement agencies, and civil society to address the escalating crisis of sexual violence in Bangladesh.