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Q5(a)

What are the reason for the escalation of violence against women in the public domain ?

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2017 · Sociology GS 2 · 10 marks · Challenges of Social Transformation

Challenges of Social Transformation: Crisis of development: displacement, environmental problems and sustainability; Poverty, deprivation and inequalities; Violence against women; Caste conflicts; Ethnic conflicts, communalism, religious revivalism; Illiteracy and disparities in education.

Core demand of the question

- What are the reasons for the escalation of violence against women in the public domain?
- Keep the note to a 10-mark length

Revision summary

More women in education and work enter streets that patriarchy still claims.

Seed-and-Earth honour treats public women as trespassers.

Urban mixing and weak enforcement cheapen assault.

Media raises both reporting and spectacle.

Escalation is a disharmonic clash of equality and ranked masculinity.

Introduction

Violence against women in streets, campuses, buses, and workplaces has become more visible, and in some settings more frequent, as women enter public space without a matching change in male honour. Escalation is social, not a sudden moral collapse of 'Indian culture'.

Body

Why public space is contested

- Education and jobs put more women in buses, night shifts, and colleges. Leela Dube's **Seed and Earth** ideology still treats the moving woman as an unguarded field.
- **Andre Beteille's disharmony names the clash:** constitutional equality versus ranked masculinity.
- Mixed urban crowds strip old village controls without installing safety or equal civic manners.

Immediate drivers

- Sexual harassment as a way to police who 'belongs' in a campus or office.
- Alcohol, informal work, and weak lighting in slums and peri-urban roads.
- Digital circulation of images that turns assault into spectacle and threat.
- Slow police and court response, which cheapens the offence.

What 'escalation' also means

- Reporting and media, after cases such as the **2012 Delhi bus assault**, make counts rise even when some of the rise is visibility.
- Both real increase in public mixing and better naming of harm are true together.

Flow diagram

Women in public work school -> Contested street

Seed Earth honour -> Public violence

Contested street -> Public violence

Weak police courts -> Public violence

Conclusion

Public violence escalates where women's mobility outruns patriarchal consent. The reasons are honour ideology, mixed urban work, weak enforcement, and a politics that still treats the street as male. Law and lighting help; they do not replace a change in who owns public space.

Facts & figures

2012 Delhi bus assault

A public crime that forced street safety onto the national agenda.

Seed and Earth

Dube's kinship ideology that justifies guarding and punishing women's movement.

Workplace harassment law

A legal naming of public-domain harm that still depends on committees that may not exist.

Night-shift labour

Informal and service work that puts women in transit without civic protection.

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