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The issue of institutional violence, addressing it

(The Hindu, 06-08-24)

642 million voters participated in India's democratic process, with over half being female. Despite high rates of gender-based violence, few candidates had women's safety on their electoral agenda. Neither political parties nor voters seemed to prioritize this issue.

What is institutional violence against survivors of gender-based violence?

- Policing and administrative system
 - Starts before the reporting process, influencing decisions to not file a formal complaint. (39% of police officers believe complaints of gender-based violence are usually baseless.)
 - Backlogs and delays in Judicial Process (India has a backlog of 40 million court cases, impacting survivors' access to justice.)
 - In rural areas, male and upper-caste dominated panchayats create additional barriers.
 - Strong domestic violence laws exist, but implementation is poor due to inept officials and archaic processes.
- Healthcare
 - Inadequate facilities for forensic examination and evidence collection
 - Stigma and discrimination faced by survivors seeking medical care
- Workplaces
 - Ineffective or non-existent sexual harassment committees at workplaces.
 - Lack of support for survivors who report abuse (77% of women remain silent about the violence they endure.)
 - Retaliation or career setbacks for those who speak up
- Media:
 - Sensationalization of gender-based violence cases
 - Invasion of survivors' privacy
- Poor Social welfare institutions:
 - Underfunded and poorly managed shelters for survivors
 - Lack of long-term rehabilitation and reintegration programs
 - Insufficient psychological support services
- Religious institutions:
 - Cover-ups of abuse within religious organizations
 - Perpetuation of patriarchal norms that justify violence
 - Pressure on survivors to reconcile with abusers for the sake of family honor

What solutions does the article propose to address these issues?

- Create survivor-centric institutions with trauma-informed approaches.
- Adopt learnings from social impact organizations at a national level.
- Involve survivors, especially from marginalized communities, in designing just systems.
- Improve data collection and public sharing of stories.
- Implement gender-sensitive training and monitoring measures for officials.
- Voters should demand their rights and prioritize these issues in elections.

Can you answer the following question?

Discuss the challenges faced by survivors of gender-based violence in India's justice system. Suggest measures to create a more survivor-centric institutional framework for addressing this issue

QUAD Foreign Minister's Meet 2024

(The Hindu, 06-08-24)

Recently, the Quad Foreign Ministers met in Tokyo to reaffirm their commitment to the international order and enhance stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific.

What is QUAD?

- The Quad is a strategic diplomatic partnership among four countries: **India, United States, Australia and Japan.**
- The Quad is not a military alliance, but it does engage in joint military exercises and information sharing to enhance interoperability and coordination among its member countries.
- It also collaborates with other regional and global partners to promote peace, stability, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific.

Key Objectives of QUAD are:

- **Free and open Indo-Pacific:** Ensuring freedom of navigation and overflight, promoting peaceful resolution of disputes, and opposing any unilateral actions that seek to change the status quo.
- **Rule of law:** Upholding international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and supporting a rules-based international order.
- **Economic prosperity:** Promoting trade and investment, enhancing connectivity and infrastructure development, and supporting sustainable economic growth.
- **Security cooperation:** Addressing shared security challenges, including maritime security, terrorism, cybersecurity, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.
- **People-to-people ties:** Strengthening cultural and educational exchanges, promoting tourism, and fostering mutual understanding.

What are the challenges with QUAD grouping?

- India is considered the weak link in Quad. The primary reason for this is that Australia, Japan, and the United States are treaty allies, whereas India is not.
- Other reasons attributed are that India has continental boundary issues with China that hinder it from being fully committed to the Quad, that India has declined to be part of the freedom of navigation operations in the South China Sea, and that it does not have the capacity to invest in resources.

What were the outcomes of recent Foreign minister's meeting?

- **Gaza ceasefire** – They **welcomed UNSC Resolution S/RES/2735** (2024), and strongly urge all parties concerned to work immediately and steadily toward the release of all hostages and an immediate ceasefire.
- **Supporting ASEAN's role** - They reaffirmed their strong support for ASEAN leadership in seeking a resolution to the Myanmar crisis, including through the implementation of The Five-Point Consensus
- They also affirmed the expansion of **Quad Infrastructure Fellowships** to more than 2,200 for project developers and managers in the Indo-Pacific.
- They continued collaboration under the **Quad Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Package (Q-CHAMP)** to support clean energy initiatives and climate resilience efforts in the Indo-Pacific.
- **Health Security**: Committed to training public health specialists from Southeast Asia to bolster regional capacity for responding to health emergencies.
- It reaffirmed commitment to the UN Charter, a free and open Indo-Pacific, and sustainable development goals.
- They reaffirmed to protect the information environment by supporting media freedom as well as addressing foreign information manipulation and interference.
- They reaffirmed their commitment to improving the region's connectivity through the development of resilient infrastructure like **Quad Partnership for Cable Connectivity and Resilience**.

