

PREVENTION OF FEMICIDE
A REPORT BY THE ASMT HINDU COMMUNITY
APRIL 2021



Introduction

1. The human rights situation for women and children in India¹ is abysmal². Despite tremendous public outcry³ against crimes against women and children such as rape, sexual violence, gender-based harassment, and female infanticide happen unabated in India. The State of the Republic of India has been either unwilling or unable to curtail these crimes. India is the most dangerous country for sexual violence against women, according to the Thomson Reuters Foundation 2018 survey.⁴ According to the National Crimes Records Bureau, the rape of minor girls increased by 82% in the year 2016 compared with the previous year.⁵
2. Sexual violence and brutal rape have been weaponized against minority women and children by extremist militant elements at the highest levels of governance. This weaponization of sexual violence targeting women and children is part of a more pervasive and systematic campaign targeting certain indigenous spiritual traditions, minority communities, and their leaders,⁶ especially those from linguistic and religious minority groups, and of dark-skinned people of indigenous spiritual traditions, and of ethnic native-Hindu tribes that have existed in India for millennia.⁷ One such indigenous spiritual tradition currently targeted for extermination by the Neo-Hindutva⁸ extremist militants is the Hindu Adi Shaiva Minority Tradition (“ASMT”) in India. The women, children, and young girls of the ASMT community were the most vulnerable target of the Neo-Hindutva extremism.
3. The ASMT explicitly rejects extremism of all types. The extremist militant elements are opposed⁹ to ASMT’s stance when it comes to the rights of women¹⁰, including otherwise marginalized Dalit women, and the rights of members of the LGBTQ+ and transgendered communities¹¹. The neo-Hindutva terrorists despise Hindu women in monastic and priestly roles¹². The spiritual head of ASMT has publicly declared himself to be transcendental gender¹³ and possessing multiple gender components. The neo-Hindutva extremists see LGBTQ+ rights as immoral.¹⁴ The ASMT freely ordains women into Sannyasa (the monastic order), recognizes 11 genders, and performs specific temple rituals for gay marriage, as per more than 5000-year-old indigenous spiritual

¹ <https://www.cnn.com/2018/06/25/health/india-dangerous-country-women-survey-intl/index.html>

² <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/01/18/india-unchecked-attacks-religious-minorities>

³ www.ndtv.com/cities/2-cops-in-uttar-pradeshs-gorakhpur-suspended-for-alleged-inaction-in-gang-rape-case-2383376
<https://theprint.in/opinion/the-kathua-rape-case-has-brought-up-disturbing-memories-of-jammus-history/53039/>

⁴ <http://poll2018.trust.org/>

⁵ <http://ncrb.gov.in/>

⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/nov/12/india-hindu-taliban-narendra-modi>

⁷ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/asia-and-the-pacific/india/report-india/>

⁸ <https://southasia.ucla.edu/social-life/various-articles/hinduism-versus-hindutva/>

⁹ “Being gay is against Hindutva, it needs a cure,” [BJP MP Subramanian Swamy \(10 June 2018\)](#); Homosexuality not a crime, but against nature: [RSS - militant wing of neo-Hindutva extremists \(SEPTEMBER 06, 2018\)](#)

¹⁰ <https://www.nithyananda.org/photo-gallery/nithyananda-diary-30th-november-2018-nithyananda-peetham-bengaluru-aadheenam-uttamatam> pictures from daily rituals of ASMT temples showing ASMT nuns performing temple rituals which are ordained for all genders as per Hindu scriptures but [prohibited for women by the Hindutva extremists](#)

¹¹ <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/madurai/transgenders-extend-support-to-nithyananda/articleshow/13159083.cms>

¹² <https://www.newsclick.in/Hindutva-War-Women-gendered-face-saffron-fascism>

¹³ (i) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PwSYdVulzq0>; (ii) Saakshi, 30 April 2010, Page : 11, Title : I am not a man ; (iii) Times of India, 30 April 2010, I’m not a man

¹⁴ (i) Being gay is against Hindutva, it needs a cure,” [BJP MP Subramanian Swamy \(10 June 2018\)](#) (ii) Homosexuality not a crime, but against nature: [RSS - militant wing of neo-Hindutva extremists \(SEPTEMBER 06, 2018\)](#)

scriptures. The ASMT represents one of the most progressive ideologies and is a target of persecution by the neo-Hindutva extremists.

Persecution by the politically owned Media

4. In the last decade, especially in India, there has been an alarming trend in the mainstream media and social media¹⁵ of sensational screening and manufacture of misinformation and hate speech that is marginalizing minority communities¹⁶, especially targeting women¹⁷ with the use of image morphing¹⁸ and deep-fake¹⁹ videos²⁰. In 2010 a fabricated video of an ASMT actress, Ranjitha²¹ was repeatedly and sensationally broadcasted²² by Sun TV and various media channels to defame her character, and to delegitimize her Guru the Supreme Pontiff of Hinduism (SPH), Jagatguru Mahasannidhanam (JGM), His Divine Holiness (HDH) Bhagavan Sri Nithyananda Paramashivam.
5. The neo-Hindutva affiliated media published articles with pictures of ASMT female monks with captions such as, "sodomized disciples". The media targeted ASMT minor girls by publishing their pictures in the national newspapers with vulgar captions. The media published fake interviews of ASMT actress Ranjitha for defaming her. Nakkheeran Gopal and other media heads pressured Ranjitha to commit suicide and circulated false news of the same in media as a rumor²³.
6. This smear campaign is not just limited to ASMT women, ASMT female monks, but the most vulnerable target of this persecution, are the ASMT girls and female children, especially those minor girls who pursue religious studies to become nuns. In 2009, a twelve-year-old ASMT girl was kidnapped and molested by a Neo-Hindutva extremist. The US courts sentenced the child rapist to 57 months imprisonment²⁴. This did not remedy the damage. The child rapist filed several vexatious litigations in India and the US. In the US, these false allegations by the child rapist, such as calling the child a "liar", and her parents and community part of a "brainwashing", "cult" etc., were all rejected by the court²⁵ with a penalty for defamation with cost.²⁶

¹⁵ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/03/1087412>

¹⁶ theprint.in/world/uks-communications-regulator-imposes-20000-fine-on-republic-bharat-for-hate-speech/572131/

¹⁷ <https://www.thequint.com/news/webqoof/explained-why-fake-news-misinformation-around-women-more-than-men>

¹⁸ scroll.in/latest/877007/network-of-women-in-media-demands-immediate-end-to-online-vilification-of-journalist-rana-ayyub

¹⁹ Kietzmann, J.; Lee, L. W.; McCarthy, I. P.; Kietzmann, T. C. (2020). "Deepfakes: Trick or treat?". *Business Horizons*. 63 (2): 135–146. doi:10.1016/j.bushor.2019.11.006

²⁰ <https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2013/sep/03/Channel-ordered-to-apologise-to-Ranjitha-512987.html> ; <https://www.deccanherald.com/content/355108/bccc-tells-channel-apologise-airing.html>

²¹ <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm1043431/>

²² WP 7767/2010 <http://judgmenthck.kar.nic.in/judgments/bitstream/123456789/427478/1/WP7767-10-12-08-2010.pdf>

²³ <https://www.mangaloretoday.com/titbits/It-rsquo-s-my-offering-to-Swamiji-Ranjitha.html>

²⁴ State of Washington v. Vinay Keshavan Bharadwaj (Case No.10-1-10009-8 SEA)

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1OnFmhM1bacqa1JB8HcMzVrl352shNXwf/view>

²⁵ State v. Bharadwaj, Nos.74013-0-I (December 27, 2016), <https://law.justia.com/cases/washington/court-of-appeals-division-i/2016/74013-0.html>

²⁶ Superior Court Of the State California, County of San Bernardino, Vinay v. Nithyananda Foundation CIVRS 1013793, 4 April 2013, nithyananda.org/sites/default/files/news/vinay%20bharadwaj%20order%20for%20attorney%20fees.pdf

Violent sexual objectification of ASMT Hindu nuns and girls by neo-Hindutva media

7. In India however, the Neo-Hindutva media ran 14,000 hours²⁷ of hateful programs marginalizing the ASMT child-rape-victim, ASMT actress Ranjitha, ASMT nuns, ASMT women, and girls. The media publicly addressed them as “brainwashed”, “sodomized disciples”²⁸, “witches”²⁹, “prostitutes”³⁰, “cult worshippers”, (child) “sex slaves”³¹, and also published violence-inciting prejudicial narratives such as “Hang the Sin Swamis (Hindu monks and nuns)”³² etc. Several media houses continue to publish such defamatory articles, causing marginalization of the ASMT women and girls dangerously inciting mob violence and rape against them.

No Legal Recourse Available in India

8. In India, court orders are not upheld by the government.³³ The Indian government³⁴ and Indian State departments are perceived as one of the most corrupt in the world.³⁵ The mainstream Indian media and social media³⁶ influencers exercise a massive influence on the masses and even the Court judges. The media is easily able to sway public opinion and even sway the opinion of judges³⁷. In a court proceeding directly involving the ASMT, the court explicitly mentioned how the court was prone to prejudice by this negative media propaganda.³⁸ Though media can influence the judiciary in India, the court judgments are toothless in curbing the media hate propaganda. Neo-Hindutva media wilfully dishonors court orders without any consequence.
9. The ASMT actress, Ranjitha, the victim of celebrity deep-fake³⁹, petitioned in the Karnataka High Court and all available forums for several years. Although the courts ordered in her favor

²⁷ https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Opin5NMenD_f2WYQZ_M74dL96tN3PpU0uC2QuNTFba4/edit

²⁸ <https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/karnataka/2010/dec/10/nithyananda-sodomised-his-disciples-209732.html>

²⁹ Worship of divine feminine consciousness during Chandi Homa maligned as witch craft

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M6T8GwNo8SM>

³⁰ “They are continuously harassed in public for no fault of theirs’, said Nithyananda. According to Nithyananda, sarees of at least ‘17 women devotees were pulled’ in public, at seven places his Brahmacharis were thrashed and the Ashram call centre received about 300 phone calls for prostitution.” <https://www.deccanherald.com/content/152493/cid-report-stolen-says-nithyananda.html>

³¹ (i) CC 25289/12, 21 Dec 2012, CMM Court Bangalore, ASMT Dalit Nun Ma Nithya Supriya Swami v. Charu (Kumudam Reporter) (ii) <https://www.vikatan.com/news/coverstory/114380-the-psychology-behind-the-cults-worshippers.html> Date: 24/Jan/2018

³² 5 March 2010 - Headlines Today - 8:20PM – Hang the Sin Swamis (Hindu monks)
docs.google.com/document/d/1f7CEsZDNw5Tl8wJX3fckhmEGqOyESHgy7GgXJiai8vo

³³ <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/no-govt-mechanism-to-implement-court-orders/article33235504.ece>

³⁴ <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-07-24/india-has-been-accused-of-overstating-its-growth-statistics>

³⁵ *India most corrupt country in Asia’ | The Express Tribune.* <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2273544/india-most-corrupt-country-in-asia> (Accessed: 25 April 2021).

³⁶ (i) <https://www.dnaindia.com/india/photo-gallery-contemporary-media-trials-on-social-media-has-an-influence-how-a-judge-decides-a-case-justice-sikri-2718374> (ii) <https://thewire.in/communalism/delhi-riots-misinformation-radicalisation-social-media>

³⁷ (i) 1997 (8) SCC 386, State of Maharashtra vs. Rajendra Jawanmal Gandhi, Supreme Court observation. (ii) M.P. Lohia v. State of West Bengal, AIR 2005 SC 790 (iii) In Dm v. MA Hamid Ali Gardish, AIR 1940 Oudh 137, (Para 137C2) (iv) Saibal Kumar Gupta and Ors. v. B.K. Sen and Anr, AIR 1961 SC 633, (v) Y.V. Hanumantha Rao v. K.R. Pattabhiram and Anr, AIR1975 AP 30 (vi) November 3, 2006, former chief justice of India Y K Sabharwal expressed concern over trial by media.

³⁸ HC Karnataka order to CrI. P. 2328/2010, dated 11 June 2010, point number 13 (page number 12)

<http://judgmenthck.kar.nic.in/judgments/bitstream/123456789/388329/1/CRLP2328-10-11-06-2010.pdf>

³⁹ https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-3-319-59531-3_60-1

restraining the misinformation⁴⁰ and telecast of fabricated deep-fake videos, the neo-Hindutva media kept pushing the implementation of the order to various quasi-legal institutions⁴¹ (self-regulatory bodies run by the media itself). Finally, the media self-regulatory quasi-legal body, the NBSA ordered its member channels to remove fabricated defamatory videos from their websites.⁴² None of the media houses complied with the order and kept reuploading⁴³, re-telecasting the same footage, and continue the misinformation propaganda to date. Any complaint on media in the High Court is redirected to NBSA, BCCC, or other such bodies which do not even have a website⁴⁴ listing their policies to self-regulate. The NBSA as a self-regulatory body is toothless and is known to disregard its own guidelines and orders even when the member channels ridicule and shame dead celebrities.⁴⁵ The NHRC (National Human Rights Commission) has maintained silence on the subject and pushed the responsibility on the State executive.⁴⁶ A politically owned neo-Hindutva media channel aired a media report where it accused the ASMT leader SPH Nithyananda Paramashivam of raping His own biological mother (a Hindu nun) on the occasion of His father's sad demise. The channel went on to justify their sadist sexual objectification of Hindu nuns terming it as "unbiased reporting".⁴⁷ Indian Courts are unwilling or unable in protecting ASMT women, especially nuns and children.

Legal Recourse Outside India

10. The Indian media kept marginalizing the ASMT nuns and girls with defamatory sexualized allegations. In 2017, a US Court penalized a neo-Hindutva media to the tune of \$USD 5 Million⁴⁸ for civil conspiracy and defamation targeting the ASMT community.⁴⁹ This is the largest penalty against any Indian media. This did not remedy the damage as other media channels and journalists continued the smear campaign.

Persecution of ASMT Hindu nuns by State

11. 2 March 2010, the sensational and repeated screening of a fabricated deep fake video purporting to show the SPH with Ranjitha – a well-known Indian film actress - spread and was

⁴⁰ W.P. 8619/2011, WP 7767/2010, 14/527/10-11-PCI, 2 Sept 2013 BCCC Order, NBSA #32/2014, etc.

⁴¹ http://www.nbanewdelhi.com/assets/uploads/pdf/Fourth_Annual_Report_2010-11.pdf Item#4

http://www.nbanewdelhi.com/assets/uploads/pdf/Fifth_Annual_Report_2011-12.pdf Page 35

http://www.nbanewdelhi.com/assets/uploads/pdf/Annual_Report_2012-13.pdf Page 32

http://www.nbanewdelhi.com/assets/uploads/pdf/Seventh_Annual_Report_2013-14.pdf Page 84

⁴² News Broadcasting Standards Authority Order No. 32 (2014) dated 27 Aug 2014, found Zee TV and Aaj Tak in contempt of court, and were ordered to apologize and also delete all similar videos from their websites also (refer point - 6 of the same order). http://www.nbanewdelhi.com/assets/uploads/pdf/2014_12_ORDER_NO_32_DT_27_8_14.pdf

⁴³ <https://youtu.be/OaWpcjimbvo> (from 0:13 to 0:22 and 2:00 to 2:06), <http://youtu.be/zuFe8apSDBg> (0:06 to 0:16, 0:43 to 1:05), <http://youtu.be/LeNyiSpTBQw> (0:31 to 0:37, 0:42 to 1:17), <http://youtu.be/bfKBwFTxjvg> (0:18 to 0:54, 1:39 to 1:51), https://youtu.be/_wJS6AH0hwA (0:00 to 0:07, 0:23 to 0:30), <http://youtu.be/LJEoh8dHJtE> (full video by Nakkheeran / recently restrained by Google for some geographies), etc.

⁴⁴ <https://thewire.in/media/what-happens-when-you-complain-to-a-standards-authority-about-republic-tv>

⁴⁵ <https://thewire.in/media/sushant-singh-rajput-death-aaj-tak-zee-news-abp-nhrc>

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ ZMCL to Lakshmi Malladi dated 25 Oct 2017, <drive.google.com/file/d/1loqzwnyv674XYVWqkX9EReCnKt7ygvIH/view>, in reply to NBSA complaint to Guru Ghantaal Zee News - <http://youtu.be/AmDr3wb7FPk>

⁴⁸ <https://supremoamicus.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/A27vol14.pdf>

⁴⁹ Life Bliss Foundation v Samaya TV, RSM Broadcasters Private Limited & Others (CIVRS 1401615)

<https://nithyanandruth.org/2017/12/10/5-million-judgement-against-samaya-tv-by-usa-court-for-defamation-of-his-divine-holiness-nithyananda/>

followed by a series of sexual assaults on the Hindu ASMT nuns by State police⁵⁰, atheistic militants of the State, and neo-Hindutva terrorists.

12. **7 Jun 2012**, Bengaluru, neo-Hindutva militants attacked an ASMT monastery, several ASMT nuns were raped.⁵¹ The **Chief Minister of Karnataka State** - D V Sadananda Gowda, was in direct complicity and had publicly declared his Government's stand to persecute the ASMT leader and community⁵².
13. **17 Sep 2013**, the Karnataka State Department of Women and Children forcibly, cruelly, and illegally interrogate children in the ASMT school (Gurukul). The interrogation was done without the consent of the parents, with no video recording of the examiners, late-night beyond⁵³ the time permissible by law⁵⁴. The State interrogators shamed and ridiculed the children, particularly girls for their dress, pressured them to quit their spiritual-religious lifestyle, and forced children to eat unhealthy substances avoided in the ASMT lifestyle. The lawyer of the school was sued by the State for intervening in the violation of the rights of children and parents.⁵⁵ Several such raids were done by the State and many vexatious legal proceedings and orders were executed by the State to forcibly shut down the school.
14. **28 Oct 2015**, an ASMT female monk was molested and escaped an attempted rape by a neo-Hindutva militant.⁵⁶
15. **18 Jan 2018**, young female nun Ma Nithyananditha received death threats over the phone for voicing out against defamatory sexualization of Hindu female saint Aandal by politically owned media. Several obscene morphed videos depicting Ma Nithyananditha and ASMT children were uploaded on social media by unknown groups.
16. **In November 2019**, the Gujarat State government (CWC) Child Welfare Commission officials raided the female monastery and molested the children studying there. The CWC officials were pulled up by the parents of these children in the High Court.⁵⁷ The police complaint against the State authorities was closed without investigation and the petition to the Court was forced to be withdrawn by the Court. Instead, a false case was charged against the women monk heads, and

⁵⁰ (i) 8 March 2010 - Dina Malar, Chennai - Page 2 - "Nithyananda Ashramathil Irunda", Police forcibly evicted all the people who stayed in the ashrams owned by Swami Nithyananda (நித்யானந்தாவுக்கு சொந்தமாக மாநிலம் முழுவதும் உள்ள ஆசிரமங்களில் தங்கியிருந்தவர்களை, போலீசார் அதிரடியாக வெளியேற்றியுள்ளனர்), full translation - docs.google.com/document/d/1f7CEsZDNw5Tl8wJX3fckhmEGqOyESHgy7GgXjiaI8vo (ii) 4 March 2010 Dinakaran - Page 4,15

⁵¹ (i) FIR 300/2012, Bidadi PS, Ramanagara, Karnataka, https://shrikailasa.github.io/persecution_evidences/CC233-2020-FIR300-2012-MajnanatmaSwami.pdf (ii) FIR 294/2012, Bidadi PS, https://shrikailasa.github.io/persecution_evidences/CC442-2020-FIR294-2012-MaAchalaSwami.pdf

⁵² The Chief Minister of the state of Karnataka came on television saying he would - 'arrest The SPH Nithyananda Paramashivam in 2 days, close the monastery, teach The SPH a lesson'. <https://www.indiatoday.in/india/north/story/govt-orders-probe-against-swami-nithyananda-in-ranjitha-case-105299-2012-06-11>

⁵³ http://shrikailasa.github.io/persecution_evidences/gurukul/CWC_Representatives_17-Sep-2013.png - Letter from CWC representative Radhka. K acknowledging with a signed letter that she came to see gurukul with police beyond legally permissible time ([click here to see video evidence](#))

⁵⁴ http://shrikailasa.github.io/persecution_evidences/gurukul/Letter_CWC_Representative_Radhka_K_17-Sep-2013.png

⁵⁵ FIR 340/13 Bidadi PS dated 19-Sept-2013 u/s IPC 186 against Ragasudha (lawyer of the ASMT school and parents)

⁵⁶ FIR 587/15, Tiruvarur Town PS, 27/Oct/2015 https://shrikailasa.github.io/persecution_evidences/CC37-2015_FIR587-2015_MalyotikaSwami.pdf

⁵⁷ In High Court of Gujarat, R/SCR.A/26/2020, <https://indiankanoon.org/doc/74023602/>

they were kept under custody for almost 3 months. The only women monastery and Hindu University was demolished. The false case is still not closed.

17. Such targeted persecution of Hindu nuns and female religious leaders is not limited to the ASMT but aimed at destroying the rights of indigenous female spiritual leaders. Vexatious litigations have been used to persecute female Hindu spiritual leaders on absurd allegations of indecent dressing booking it under anti-superstition laws.⁵⁸

Recommendation

18. While the use of information and communications technology has contributed to the empowerment of women and girls, its use has also generated new forms of violence against women and girls⁵⁹. The use of media (both conventional and social) for negative stereotyping and persecution of women and girls, especially from marginalized communities should be studied, added to the scope of Women Observatories, and brought to check.
19. Women nuns who lead indigenous minority religious communities like the ASMT have been deprived of their human rights in their home country. The international community, and member states of the United Nations, need to support them by providing a safe place protecting their basic human rights, where they can practice their religion, and revive their arts and traditions peacefully.
20. There were close to 10000 indigenous tribes and spiritual traditions in the Indian sub-continent that were mother worshippers⁶⁰ and lead by women. The ASMT is one of them. Colonization and invasions in ancient times and religious intolerance and caste-based violence⁶¹ and extremism in contemporary times have made them extinct. These women have been marginalized and labeled as witches and persecuted since time immemorial. Now is the time, that the world needs to protect these traditions by internationally declaring them endangered.
21. The victims of this new form of persecution, which involves deep-fake and sophisticated smear campaigns should be supported by condemnation of the violence and propaganda waged against them.
22. The use of deep-fake videos for targeting women should be brought to check and condemned internationally.
23. Tribal and indigenous girls should be protected from detribalization and persecution by the State as highlighted in this report. This persecution is often difficult to understand as it waged in the guise of women empowerment and child protection, which is essentially a new form of the civilizing mission.⁶²

⁵⁸ <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-others/new-complaint-lodged-against-godwoman-radhe-maa/>

⁵⁹ <https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/38/47A/HRC/38/47>

⁶⁰ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Shaktism>

⁶¹ <https://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/india/India994-04.htm>

⁶² <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095614878>