

Crime Against Women : An Indian Scenario

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Abstract

The scenario of being portrayed as a Devi or Goddess is being broken by the modern Indian woman. She wants to be seen as an ordinary human being. The condition of women in the modern Indian society is a matter of grave concern. Our constitution provides many fundamental rights for women but still, the crime against women is increasing day by day. Men always give second footing to women but the cruelty and betrayal in the form of violence, molestation, and rape cannot be borne by anyone. It is the influence of the patriarchal mindset.

This paper studies about the factors of crime and the existing crime trends against women in India.

Keywords: *Women, Crime, Law, Violence*

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Introduction

Swami Vivekananda had said, “That country and that nation that does not respect women have never become great, nor ever be in future”. Only those countries are empowered where the women are empowered. The beauty of the world can’t be imagined without women. Indian society pays greetings to the goddesses but it is not mentally ready to give equal power to women and always makes them feel humiliated in different manners. There are two sides to a coin, on the one hand, the government runs so many social and political schemes to uplift the status of women and on another hand, women are suffering from various forms of discrimination, domination, humiliation, exploitation etc. Therefore, crimes against women have become a part of our society. Crimes against women are growing worryingly at local, regional, national, and worldwide levels, especially during the lockdown period. Regardless of current crime shadowing machineries and access to information and networking, assuring the safety and security of women has become a stern challenge for all.

The United Nations defines violence against women as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.” As per World Health Organization (WHO) findings, about 1 in 3 (35%) women worldwide have experienced either physical or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime. Violence can negatively affect women’s physical, mental, sexual, and reproductive health, and may increase the risk of acquiring HIV in some settings. Even after this condition, we celebrate International Women’s Day on 8th March. In order to uplift the honor and respect for women all over the world, gender equality is proclaimed as a fundamental right by the United Nations’ Charter of 1945.

The main aim of this paper is to study about the crimes happening against women in the Indian society. It also attempts to discover the main causes of crime and to analyze the present crime trend against women in India.

Research Objectives

1. To analyze the data of crime against women.
2. To explore the main causes and factors of crime against women.

Methodology

Most of the data for this paper was collected from the publications of NCRB (National Crime Record Bureau of India) published in different years and also have been obtained from sources such as the review papers, journal publishing, and books

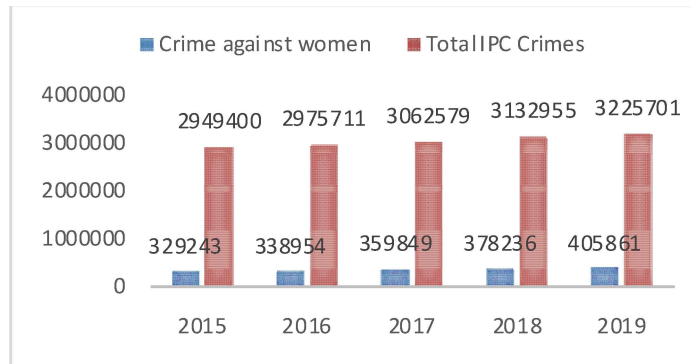
by famous authors on crime against women and other links through an internet search.

Literature review

There are many international and national reports which focus that there are different types, causes, and effects on the society. Each and every report shows patriarchal thinking against women and focuses that scenario will change by education and employment for women. Radhika Coomaraswamy identifies different kinds, causes, and consequences of Violence Against Women in the United Nation’s special report in 1995. Dr.Saraswati Mishra (2002) focused that the root cause of this phenomenon lies in the complete subordination and dependence of women on men in the male-dominated society. Ram Ahuja (2014) points out that women in the Indian society have been victims of humiliation, torture, and exploitation for as long as we have written records of social organization and family life.

Crime Against Women

There are multiple reasons for discrimination and crime against women in our Indian Society, in spite of fundamental rights to equality given in the Indian constitution. 4,05,861 cases of crime against women were registered during 2019, showing an increase of 7.3% over 2018 (3,78,236 cases). The majority of cases under crime against women under IPC were registered under Cruelty by Husband or His Relatives (30.9%) followed by Assault on Women with Intent to Outrage her Modesty (21.8%), Kidnapping & Abduction of Women (17.9%), and Rape (7.9%). The crime rate registered per lakh women population is 62.4 in 2019 in comparison to 58.8 in 2018. It is also true that more than 30 percent of adolescent girls who suffered physical or sexual abuse had not disclosed it due to shame, guilt, and fear of the society. The cases reported to the police and published in the newspaper are equivalent to the surface of the iceberg which is above water, most of the cases remain underwater and are never reported.



Source: Report of NCRB

Categories of Crime Against women

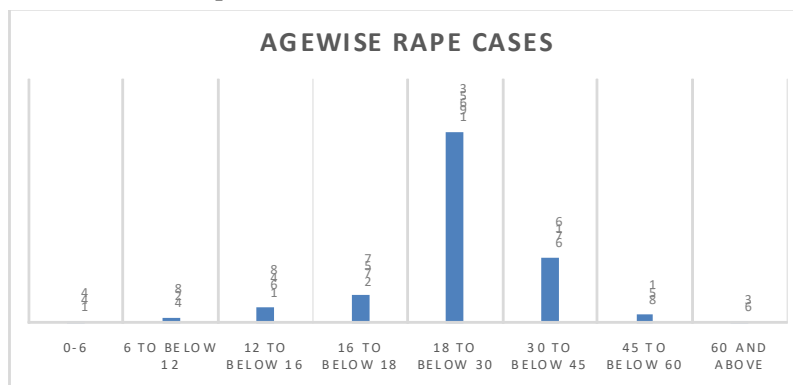
The following are categories of crimes against women in India:

Rape

It is the fastest growing crime in India compared to murder, robbery, and kidnapping. According to the report of the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), every 60 minutes, two women are raped in this country. An increasing trend in the incident of rape has been observed during the periods 2017 to 2019. 32260 rape cases have been reported in the year 2019 and murder with rape cases have been reported as 286 in 2019. Rajasthan has the highest position with 6051 cases, Uttar Pradesh with 3131 cases, and Madhya Pradesh got the third position with 2490 reported cases of rape in 2019. Delhi UT has reported the highest crime rate of 13.5 as compared to the national average of 4.9.

Agewise Rape cases

32260 rape cases have been reported in the year 2019. In 94.2 percent of rape cases, the accused were the known and relatives. The victims in two-thirds cases of the total belonged to the age group of 18 to 30. The second age group is from 30 to 45 years and the third is 16 to 18 years. The filthy mindset of men in India compels them to rape even infants and kids (0 to 6 years) and account for up to 144 reported cases. These are just the cases that were reported, the unreported cases would be manifolds compared to them.



Source: Report of NCRB

Kidnapping and Abduction

According to the UN, the illicit and clandestine movements of persons across national borders, largely from developing countries and some countries economically in transition, with the end goal of forcing women and girl children into sexually or

economically oppressive and exploited situations for profit of recruiters, traffickers, and crime syndicates, as well as other legal activity related to trafficking such as forced domestic labor, false marriage clandestine employment and false adoption. Cases of kidnapping and abduction of women have reported an increase of 29.6% from 2017 to 2019 in India. Uttar Pradesh with 11745 cases has accounted for 15.9% of the total cases at the national level. Delhi UT has reported the highest crime rate at 39.5 as compared to the national average of 8.8.

Categories of Crime	2017	2018	2019
Murder with rape/gang rape	227	296	286
Dowry death (Sec. 304B IPC)	7838	7277	7162
Abetment to suicide (Sec. 305/306 IPC)	5467	5266	5088
Acid Attack (Sec. 326A IPC)	148	136	156
Attempt to acid attack (Sec. 326B IPC)	35	41	45
Cruelty by husband or relatives (Sec. 498A IPC)	107458	104165	126575
Kidnapping & abduction (Sec. 336, 363A, 364, 364A, 365, 366, 366A, 366B, 367, 368, 369)	68735	75333	73844
Human trafficking (Sec. 370, 370A IPC)	1090	1640	1991
Selling of minor girls (Sec. 372 IPC)	90	52	26
Rape (Sec. 376 IPC)	33658	33977	32260
Attempt to commit rape (Sec. 376/511 IPC)	4372	4157	4038
Assault on women (Sec. 354 IPC)	87924	90039	89292
Insult to the modesty of women (Sec. 509 IPC)	7652	7035	7169
Total IPC crimes against women	324966	329638	348162
Cyber Crimes/Information Technology Act (Women Centric Crimes only)	612	1268	1645
Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (Girl Child Victims only)	32254	39741	46682

Source: Report of NCRB

Dowry Deaths

The Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961 marks the first attempt by the Government of India to recognize dowry as a social evil and to curb its practice. However, it is ridiculous to know that even among highly educated sections, the articles of dowry are proudly exhibited in the marriage as a status symbol. Dowry abuse is increasing in India. Dowry is one of those social evils that no educated woman will own up with pride, still many are adhering to it. In India, the cases of dowry deaths have decreased by 8.6% from the year 2017 to 2019. 28.9% of the total such cases reported in the country were reported from Uttar Pradesh (2,424 cases) alone followed by Bihar (1,127 cases). The highest rate of crime (2.43) was reported from Bihar followed by Uttar Pradesh (2.2) as compared to the national average of 1.9.

Cruelty by the husband

Most of these cases were reported from Uttar Pradesh (18,617 cases) followed by Rajasthan (15,453 cases) and West Bengal (17,150). The highest crime rate of 70.7 was reported from Assam as compared to the national rate at 19.3.

Molestation: Another form of violence against women is molestation, or what is commonly known as ‘sexual abuse’ or ‘sexual assault’. It is the forcing of sexual behavior by a man over a woman. Molestation is the sexual exploitation of a child or a woman by an adult or a male person for sexual gratification. Incidents of assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty in the country have increased from 2017 to 2019. Uttar Pradesh has reported the highest incidents followed by Maharashtra. Delhi UT has reported the highest crime rate (25.3) as compared to the national average of 13.6.

Causes

Violence in any form affects not only the physical, mental, sexual, and reproductive health of women but also adversely affects their self-esteem, ability to work and make decisions about fertility. Crimes against women are not considered from only a physical point of view but from a sociological aspect also. There are records of women raped, beaten, abducted, and given humiliating treatment. Women have been subjected to socioeconomic and cultural deprivations for such a long time that there is a general indifference and lack of awareness of crimes against them. Gender discrimination, low education, no fear of the law, easy access to pornography, intoxication, personality traits, exposure to domestic violence against their mothers, harmful use of alcohol, etc are the main causes that more likely to perpetrate violence, and a sense of entitlement over women. Situations of conflict, post-conflict, and displacement may exacerbate existing violence, such as by intimate partners, as well as non-partner sexual violence, and may also lead to new forms of violence against women. Gender disparity is one of the deep-rooted causes of crime against women that put women at risk of several forms of violence. Discriminatory gender norms and gender stereotypes result in structural inequality. An insensitive, inefficient, corrupt, and unaccountable judicial system and law enforcement machinery fail to deter against various forms of crimes.

Suggestions

- It is important to enact and enforce legislation and develop and implement policies that promote gender equality by ending discrimination against women in marriage, divorce and custody laws, inheritance laws, and ownership of assets.
- Financial independence by improving women’s access to paid employment.
- Developing and resourcing national plans and policies to address violence against women.
- Improving system of collecting crime surveillance data on violence against

women.

- Capacity building and training to service providers and law enforcement officers to handle cases of violence against women.
- Ensuring male involvement in devising a program for abusers.
- Preventing recurrence of violence through early identification of women and children who are experiencing violence and providing appropriate referral and support.
- Promoting egalitarian gender norms as part of life skills and comprehensive sexuality education curricula taught to young people.

Conclusion

There is a dire need to break the silence and ensure that crimes against women are not just a woman's issue but primarily a political, social, economic, and cultural issue that concerns men as well. While men represent the majority of perpetrators of violence against women, they have an important role to play in preventing and combating crimes against women. Because of their role as fathers, husbands, brothers, and sons, men and young boys should be a part of the solution and thus be involved in eliminating crimes against women. If men will feel involved, they will be able to help promote changes in attitudes among other men. But women have to initiate and become united to be bolder and braver to end discrimination against themselves. It is not women or men working alone to end gender-based violence that yields the best results. It is the partnership between them that has the greatest impact and reach.

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