



INTERNATIONAL LAW
JOURNAL

**WHITE BLACK
LEGAL LAW
JOURNAL
ISSN: 2581-
8503**

Peer - Reviewed & Refereed Journal

The Law Journal strives to provide a platform for discussion of International as well as National Developments in the Field of Law.

WWW.WHITEBLACKLEGAL.CO.IN

DISCLAIMER

No part of this publication may be reproduced or copied in any form by any means without prior written permission of Editor-in-chief of White Black Legal – The Law Journal. The Editorial Team of White Black Legal holds the copyright to all articles contributed to this publication. The views expressed in this publication are purely personal opinions of the authors and do not reflect the views of the Editorial Team of White Black Legal. Though all efforts are made to ensure the accuracy and correctness of the information published, White Black Legal shall not be responsible for any errors caused due to oversight or otherwise.

WHITE BLACK
LEGAL

EDITORIAL TEAM

Raju Narayana Swamy (IAS) Indian Administrative Service officer



Dr. Raju Narayana Swamy popularly known as Kerala's Anti-Corruption Crusader is the All India Topper of the 1991 batch of the IAS and is currently posted as Principal Secretary to the Government of Kerala. He has earned many accolades as he hit against the political-bureaucrat corruption nexus in India. Dr Swamy holds a B.Tech in Computer Science and Engineering from the IIT Madras and a Ph. D. in Cyber Law from Gujarat National Law University. He also has an LLM (Pro) (with specialization in IPR) as well as three PG Diplomas from the National Law University, Delhi- one in Urban Environmental Management and Law, another in Environmental Law and Policy and a third one in Tourism and Environmental Law. He also holds a post-graduate diploma in IPR from the National Law School, Bengaluru and

a professional diploma in Public Procurement from the World Bank.

Dr. R. K. Upadhyay

Dr. R. K. Upadhyay is Registrar, University of Kota (Raj.), Dr Upadhyay obtained LLB, LLM degrees from Banaras Hindu University & PHD from university of Kota. He has successfully completed UGC sponsored M.R.P for the work in the Ares of the various prisoners reforms in the state of the Rajasthan.



Senior Editor

Dr. Neha Mishra



Dr. Neha Mishra is Associate Professor & Associate Dean (Scholarships) in Jindal Global Law School, OP Jindal Global University. She was awarded both her PhD degree and Associate Professor & Associate Dean M.A.; LL.B. (University of Delhi); LL.M.; PH.D. (NLSIU, Bangalore) LLM from National Law School of India University, Bengaluru; she did her LL.B. from Faculty of Law, Delhi University as well as M.A. and B.A. from Hindu College and DCAC from DU respectively. Neha has been a Visiting Fellow, School of Social Work, Michigan State University, 2016 and invited speaker Panelist at Global Conference, Whitney R. Harris World Law Institute, Washington University in St. Louis, 2015.

Ms. Sumiti Ahuja

Ms. Sumiti Ahuja, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Law, University of Delhi,

Ms. Sumiti Ahuja completed her LL.M. from the Indian Law Institute with specialization in Criminal Law and Corporate Law, and has over nine years of teaching experience. She has done her LL.B. from the Faculty of Law, University of Delhi. She is currently pursuing PH.D. in the area of Forensics and Law. Prior to joining the teaching profession, she has worked as Research Assistant for projects funded by different agencies of Govt. of India. She has developed various audio-video teaching modules under UGC e-PG Pathshala programme in the area of Criminology, under the aegis of an MHRD Project. Her areas of interest are Criminal Law, Law of Evidence, Interpretation of Statutes, and Clinical Legal Education.



Dr. Navtika Singh Nautiyal

Dr. Navtika Singh Nautiyal presently working as an Assistant Professor in School of law, Forensic Justice and Policy studies at National Forensic Sciences University, Gandhinagar, Gujarat. She has 9 years of Teaching and Research Experience. She has completed her Philosophy of Doctorate in 'Inter-country adoption laws from Uttarakhand University, Dehradun' and LLM from Indian Law Institute, New Delhi.

Dr. Rinu Saraswat



Associate Professor at School of Law, Apex University, Jaipur, M.A, LL.M, PH.D,

Dr. Rinu have 5 yrs of teaching experience in renowned institutions like Jagannath University and Apex University. Participated in more than 20 national and international seminars and conferences and 5 workshops and training programmes.

Dr. Nitesh Saraswat

E.MBA, LL.M, PH.D, PGDSAPM

Currently working as Assistant Professor at Law Centre II, Faculty of Law, University of Delhi. Dr. Nitesh have 14 years of Teaching, Administrative and research experience in Renowned Institutions like Amity University, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Jai Narain Vyas University Jodhpur, Jagannath University and Nirma University. More than 25 Publications in renowned National and International Journals and has authored a Text book on CR.P.C and Juvenile Delinquency law.



Subhrajit Chanda



BBA. LL.B. (Hons.) (Amity University, Rajasthan); LL. M. (UPES, Dehradun) (Nottingham Trent University, UK); PH.D. Candidate (G.D. Goenka University)

Subhrajit did his LL.M. in Sports Law, from Nottingham Trent University of United Kingdoms, with international scholarship provided by university; he has also completed another LL.M. in Energy Law from University of Petroleum and Energy Studies, India. He did his B.B.A.LL.B. (Hons.) focussing on International Trade Law.

ABOUT US

WHITE BLACK LEGAL is an open access, peer-reviewed and refereed journal provide dedicated to express views on topical legal issues, thereby generating a cross current of ideas on emerging matters. This platform shall also ignite the initiative and desire of young law students to contribute in the field of law. The erudite response of legal luminaries shall be solicited to enable readers to explore challenges that lie before law makers, lawyers and the society at large, in the event of the ever changing social, economic and technological scenario.

With this thought, we hereby present to you

VICTIMIZATION OF WOMEN IN INDIA

AUTHORED BY - MANSI* & DR. RAJ KUMAR**

Abstract

This research paper explores the victimization of women in India through various theoretical perspectives. It investigates structural, cultural, psychological, and feminist theories to understand the root causes and the perpetuation of gender-based violence. This analysis incorporates historical context, socio-economic factors, and contemporary issues to provide a holistic understanding of the plight of Indian women. In order to understand the relevance of various theories put forth to explain women's victimization we need to know how often, and under what circumstances, women are victimized. Simply put, these data allow us to assess whether there are specific contexts in which our extant theories of victimization do, or do not, apply to women?

Keywords: Victimization, Women, India, Feminist Theory, Structural Theory, Cultural Theory, Gender-based Violence.

INTRODUCTION

Domestic violence is an extremely difficult and vicious form of abuse, which is committed within the four walls of the house, within the family, which in most cases is not recognised as a crime. There is no particular definition of domestic violence. It differs from person to person, place to place, based on the situation. The impact of domestic violence depends upon its severity, harm caused to the victim may be from a small scar to death. According to the Domestic Violence Act¹ violence against women has been clearly mentioned. The definition of domestic violence is given under Chapter III of the Act which states domestic violence² means "any act or omission or commission or conduct of the respondent shall constitute domestic violence." The section also provides that domestic violence includes physical abuse, sexual abuse, verbal abuse, emotional abuse, and economic abuse¹.

* LL.M., School of Law, IEC University, Solan, Himachal Pradesh.

** Assistant Professor, School of Law, IEC University, Solan, Himachal Pradesh.

¹<https://www.sceonline.com/blog/post/2022/11/30/victimological-perspective-of-domestic-violence-against-women-in-the-city-of-hyderabad-during-covid-19/>

Explanations for the violent victimization of women have been dominated by work on the gender structure of society (women's status relative to that of men's) and, by association, patriarchy.⁶ On the one hand, the "ameliorative" hypothesis suggests that gender inequalities and violence against women are accepted in patriarchal societies (Whaley & Messner 2002); as such, while gender inequality fosters violence, reductions in gender inequality (or increases in the relative status of women) should reduce their rates of victimization. On the other hand, the "backlash" hypothesis suggests that as inequality is reduced, violence against women will increase as men feel threatened by the relative gains women are making. Xie, Heimer, and Lauritsen (2012) reviewed much of this research and found no conclusive results supporting either of these hypotheses. As a result, they drew attention to the import of examining (i) the inequality-violence relationship in the context of the victim-offender relationship and, (ii) both absolute and relative changes in inequality over time. Focusing on non-lethal victimizations in forty U.S. metropolitan areas over the period 1980-2004, they found that women's absolute economic and political gains reduced intimate partner victimization. Some support appeared for the backlash hypothesis as women's relative increases in the labor force increased their intimate partner victimization; but the effects of their absolute gains in reducing violence were as large or larger than their relative gains². The only strong support found for women's labor force participation increasing their rates of victimization occurred in the context of violence involving strangers and acquaintances (consistent with the routine activities perspective)³

Other scholars interested in how women's relative status relates to their risks of violent victimization have focused on particular types of intimate partner violence. The findings, for studies conducted in the U.S. indicate that gender inequality is positively related all types of intimate partner violence for women and adolescent dating violence for women but not adolescent dating violence for men (Gessard, Swahn, & Tharp, 2015; Willie & Kershaw, 2019). Similar results have been shown in cross-national studies that examine both intimate partner sexual violence and partner violence (Heise & Kotsadam, 2015; LeSuer, 2019; Yodanis, 2004). If we turn to studies of lethal violence, an important early work under scores these more recent IPV findings. Bailey and Peterson (1995) studied the effects of gender inequality on different types of homicides in 130 U.S. cities. Estimating separate models by victim-offender relationship, they found significant positive relationships between the rate of women being

²https://www.researchgate.net/publication/349441601_Theoretical_Perspectives_on_the_Victimization_of_Women

³ Id

killed by their husbands and the rate of women killed by acquaintances and various measures of gender inequality. Taken together, these studies clearly support the ameliorative hypothesis but subsequent studies of female homicide victimization that do not address the victim-offender relationship find support for the backlash hypothesis particularly among white females and in southern regions of the U.S. (Pridemore & Freilich, 2005; Vieraitis & Williams, 2002; Whaley & Messner, 2002). By including stranger homicides in their analyses and measuring gender equality with employment and earnings, they may well be tapping into lifestyle changes that increase women's risk of victimization.

DEFINITION AND SCOPE OF VICTIMIZATION

It refers to the process of being harmed or made to suffer due to criminal acts, systemic abuse, or social injustices. In the context of women in India, victimization encompasses a wide range of experiences including physical violence, sexual assault, psychological abuse, economic deprivation, and institutional discrimination. This term goes beyond isolated criminal acts to include the chronic and structural disadvantages faced by women due to entrenched patriarchy, cultural norms, and socio-economic inequalities. The scope of victimization is broad and intersects with various dimensions of a woman's life — from private spheres like the home to public arenas such as the workplace, educational institutions, and digital spaces. Victimization can be overt, as seen in cases of rape and domestic violence, or covert, manifesting through subtle forms of exclusion, stereotyping, or neglect. This paper aims to explore these dimensions through a multi-theoretical lens to better understand the nature, causes, and consequences of the victimization of women in Indian society⁴.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF WOMEN'S STATUS IN INDIA

Ancient Period In ancient Indian society, particularly during the Vedic period, women were generally respected and held significant positions within the family and community. They participated in religious rituals, received education, and some even contributed as philosophers and scholars. Female deities were revered, and scriptures like the Rigveda mention women sages such as Gargi and Maitreyi. **Medieval Period** The status of women began to decline during the medieval period with the advent of foreign invasions and the increasing rigidity of social customs. Practices such as child marriage, purdah (veil), sati (self-immolation of widows), and the marginalization of women in education and public life became widespread.

⁴ <https://openai.com/index/chatgpt/>

Patriarchal norms became deeply entrenched, restricting women's autonomy and reinforcing their dependency on male guardians. Colonial Period British colonial rule brought both repression and reform. On the one hand, colonial policies often reinforced patriarchal structures by codifying personal laws that favored male dominance. On the other hand, the period also witnessed social reform movements led by figures like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, and others who campaigned against sati, child marriage, and for women's education and widow remarriage. The emergence of the Indian women's movement began during this time, advocating for legal and social changes. After India gained independence in 1947, the Constitution guaranteed equality to all citizens regardless of gender. Legislative reforms were introduced to protect women's rights and promote gender justice. However, despite legal protections, traditional gender roles and societal biases continued to hinder women's progress. Women actively participated in nation-building and increasingly joined the workforce, education system, and political arena, but systemic discrimination and violence persisted. This historical overview demonstrates that women's status in India has been shaped by a complex interplay of cultural, religious, and socio-political forces. Understanding this evolution is critical for contextualizing contemporary patterns of victimization. Government of India has been advising State Governments to take appropriate action for prevention of crime against women, adopt gender sensitization of the police personnel, adopting appropriate measures for swift and salutary punishment to public servants found guilty of custodial violence against women, minimizing delays in investigations of murder, rape and torture of women and improving its quality, setting up a 'crime against women cell' in districts where they do not exist, providing adequate counselling centres and shelter homes for women who have been victimized, setting up of special women courts, and improving the effectiveness of schemes developed for the welfare and rehabilitation of women who are victimized with greater emphasis on income generation to make the women more independent and self-reliant⁵.

Gender equality and women's safety are foundational to the social, economic and cultural well-being of any society. However, despite global commitments like the Sustainable Development Goals, which emphasize gender equality as a cornerstone of progress, violence against women persists as a pervasive challenge. This issue not only violates fundamental human rights but also hinders societal advancement, undermining efforts to achieve sustainable development and inclusive growth worldwide. The issue of violence against women and girls is a global one

⁵ <https://www.mha.gov.in/en/commoncontent/crime-against-women-0>

transcending national and cultural boundaries. Equal rights for women and men are fundamental. Due to their gender, millions of women around the world experience prejudice and violence (Balasubramaniam, 2020). Inequality, unequal power dynamics and patriarchal ideology all contribute to the heightened vulnerability of women in situations of gender-based violence (Mariano *et al.*, 2020). According to NCRB's recent reports crime against women in India rose by 15.3 percent in 2021. This is the registered data count but there are many cases which are neither registered nor noticed and it is primarily due to socio-cultural factors. The dowry system, femicide, domestic abuse, the male 'eye', sexual harassment are some of the forms of violence emerging from social and cultural stigmas. Moreover, acid attack, pornography, online abuse etc. are becoming common forms of violence against women. According to estimates, 27 percent of women between the ages of 15 and 49 reported being physically and sexually harassed by their intimate partners (WHO, 2021). Violence against women is normalized by society and culture. In many cases, violence has been fostered because of social and cultural norms. Violence against women and girls imposes significant social and economic costs on individuals, communities, and nations. It disrupts women's participation in education, employment, and civic life, hindering their potential and obstructing poverty alleviation efforts. This results in lost productivity, limited career opportunities, and economic setbacks. The consequences extend across sectors, straining social services, justice systems, healthcare providers, and employers with the financial and operational burdens of addressing violence, including medical care, legal proceedings, and rehabilitation. These demands divert resources from broader developmental priorities (UN Women, 2016). Violence against women is a structural barrier to sustainable development, perpetuating gender inequality and social exclusion while undermining inclusive growth. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes its elimination as vital to achieving global development goals, highlighting the need for urgent action to build equitable and resilient communities. India ranks 128th out of 177 countries in the Women, Peace, and Security Index (2023) with an index value of 0.595, placing it in the fourth quantile alongside countries such as Namibia, Bangladesh, Ukraine, and Iran. The report highlights India's challenges in addressing violence against women, particularly political violence. In 2022, India was among the top 10 worst-performing countries for political violence targeting women, ranking 7th globally with 125 recorded events per 100,000 individuals. This is significantly higher than the global average of 16 such events. Comparatively, Mexico leads this list with 537 events, followed by Brazil with 327. At the opposite end of the spectrum, Denmark and Switzerland occupy the top spots, recognized as the safest countries for women, while Afghanistan is ranked the worst (Singh,

2024). Additionally, Denmark and Switzerland are also top performers in the Gender Inequality Index, reflecting their commitment to gender equality. In contrast, the SIGI 2023 Global Report (Social Institutions and Gender Index) places India in the category of “high discrimination,” along with countries like Bangladesh, Tanzania, and Senegal. This is in stark contrast to countries such as Denmark, Estonia, and Finland, which fall under the “very low discrimination” category. The SIGI evaluates discrimination against women across four dimensions that is discrimination within household dynamics, restrictions and threats to women’s safety and bodily autonomy, barriers to financial independence and participation and limitations on women’s agency and representation in public and political spheres (OECD, 2023). These rankings emphasize the stark disparities between India and high-performing countries, underscoring the need for India to address systemic discrimination, improve safety, and enhance women’s participation and empowerment in public and private domains. Underreporting of crimes against women in India is a multifaceted issue exacerbated by both systemic and societal factors. One significant reason is the delayed inclusion of crimes such as gang rape, stalking, and acid attacks in official statistics, which only began after amendments to the law in February 2013. Moreover, the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) adopts the “Principal Offence Rule,” which records only the most severe crime in a reported incident, overlooking other associated offenses. This practice leads to an underestimation of the actual number of gender-based crimes, particularly in cases involving domestic violence, where only the gravest offense is documented (Rina, 2016). The justice system also plays a role in the underestimation of gender-based crimes. Low conviction rates, coupled with procedural inefficiencies, discourage victims from seeking justice. Political apathy in creating and enforcing gender-sensitive policies and the absence of clear protocols, such as standardized care for rape survivors, further undermine trust in the system. Victims often face judgmental attitudes, a lack of privacy in government healthcare facilities, and inadequate support, compounding their trauma and discouraging reporting (Bhattacharya and Kundu, 2018). Additionally, societal factors such as stigma, shame, and a lack of social support prevent many women from coming forward. Distrust in law enforcement, coupled with practices like delaying or denying the registration of First Information Reports (FIRs), hinders access to justice from the outset. In cases of domestic violence, victims may refrain from reporting due to fear of social backlash and lack of institutional support, further skewing the statistics. Addressing these challenges requires systemic reforms, greater social awareness, and robust support mechanisms to ensure justice for victims and accurate reporting of crimes. Therefore, the present study attempts to analyse the spatial and temporal scenario of crime against women

in different States and Union Territories of India spanning over a time of 10 years, that is from 2012 to 2021. Additionally, it also attempts to analyse the shifts in patterns of various types of crime committed against women over a period of time in different States and Union Territories of India. Further, the study also aims to give arguments and counterarguments to understand the existing patterns⁶.

The regional trends in crimes against women in India reflect significant spatial disparities across different States and Union Territories. Assam reported a 26.91% increase in overall crime intensity, driven by significant rises in domestic crimes, which constitute over 50% of cases. While Delhi experienced a decline in total crime intensity, sexual offenses remain a major concern. Odisha and Rajasthan saw sharp increases in sexual crimes, rising by 68.89% and 58%, respectively, while Gujarat and Goa achieved notable reductions, with Goa recording a 27% decline in overall crimes. Domestic crimes dominate in Assam and West Bengal, whereas other crimes, including kidnapping and trafficking, increased in Odisha and Assam. The North-Eastern States, notably Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur, and Meghalaya, consistently recorded the lowest crime intensities, reflecting their relatively safer environments for women. These findings highlight the urgency of addressing sexual and domestic crimes, reducing regional disparities, and ensuring comprehensive safety measures for women across India. The regional trends in crimes against women in India reflect significant spatial disparities across different States and Union Territories. Assam presents significant challenges, marked by a notable increase in crime intensity across various categories, particularly in domestic crimes. One of the reasons for such a high crime rate against women may be attributed to the fact that Assam contains several areas with high crime intensity, including the districts of Nagaon, Barpeta and Dhubri. These localities are under heavy pressure from illegal immigration from Bangladesh, which makes up a sizeable portion of the population. Immigration has generally worsened social life by increasing the prevalence of antisocial activities, causing congestion and unemployment (Borah, 2018). It has been found in various studies that if all other factors were equal, the crime rate would be greater in regions with higher immigration (Piehl and Butcher, 1998). The increasing tendency of violence against women has also been recorded in the NFHS statistics. The percentage of wives in Assam who reported experiencing violence rose from 24.5 percent to 32.5 percent between NFHS 4 (2015-16) and NFHS 5 (2019-20) (Chattopadhyay, 2021). The prevalence of cruelty by husbands and family

⁶ <https://journals.openedition.org/belgeo/75083?lang=en>

members, which is regarded as a crime committed behind closed doors for a variety of reasons, including deteriorating family ties, misunderstandings, etc. Gender-related crime thrives on antisocial behaviours such as gambling, drinking and a lack of awareness and knowledge of the law. Nearly one-third of Assamese women (31.8 percent) were married before 18 years of age as per NFHS 5 statistics. For underage brides, the police must formally report a kidnapping, and in many circumstances, the parents of the victim report a rape to authorities. Further, according to Census 2011, Assam's literacy rate is lower than the national average of 72.98 percent. The literacy gap between men and women is nearly 11 percent. This shows discrimination, as illiterate women are more vulnerable to crimes because they readily embrace patriarchal gender stereotypes (Martin *et al.*, 2002). When it comes to crimes against women, the North-Eastern States except Assam have performed better. The least violent States for women are Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur and Meghalaya. More than 80 percent of women in all of these States are literate, which guarantees greater awareness and status. Due to the lack of many societal ills like dowry, female infanticide, honour killings, etc., women from the North-Eastern region, particularly tribal women, tend to enjoy greater status and more autonomy in terms of decision-making at the family level (Khonglah, 2008). Moreover, the States are performing better than other States in terms of overall literacy and female literacy which leads to reduction in crimes against women. However, despite enjoying a greater level of freedom the tribal society in North-East face issues like poverty, armed conflict, superstitions and opposition to use of modern family planning and healthcare techniques which often reduces women's agency (Kumari and Siotra, 2023).

Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi represent the Northern region of India where crimes against women are notably high, influenced by various socio-economic and cultural factors. Haryana has the lowest sex ratio in India, exacerbating the vulnerability of women and contributing to increased violence. Studies indicate a significant link between the State's cultural preference for male children and the rising incidents of violence against women. The presence of Khap Panchayats, which perpetuate patriarchal norms, has been directly correlated with higher crime rates against women (Parihar *et al.*, 2015). The low female labor force participation (7.34%) and high unemployment rates among both genders (21.75% for men and 71.37% for women) further indicate the economic vulnerabilities that amplify gender-based violence. But female unemployment and male unemployment cannot be dealt in the same way. Though females engage in lot of unpaid work, however, when they lack financial independence, their agency is reduced further leading to discrimination and crime.

Additionally, the State's youth have become increasingly involved in drug-related activities, heightening risks of violence and crime within communities. The rise in crime against women in Haryana can be attributed to a number of factors. When it comes to the sex and child sex ratio, Haryana comes at last. In their 2008 study, Sangwan and Sangwan concentrated on the declining child sex ratio and its effects on the socio-cultural context of society. Due to the low status of women and the strong preference for sons in rural Haryana, there is a high rate of violence against women and the buying of brides from neighbouring States. Haryana also records a very high unemployment rate both among men (21.75 percent) and women (71.37 percent). The female labour force participation rate is 7.34 percent which is quite low. It has been found in studies that women's engagement in the labour force is linked to decreased discrimination against girls leading to their empowerment (Gaur, 2005). It has been found that the presence of Khap Panchayats in Haryana has a direct relation to increase in crime committed against women. The khap panchayat is a conservative, male dominated organisation (Parihar *et al.*, 2015). Another fact which is a cause of concern is the State's youth being drawn into the drug trade, as seen by the 2,587 NDPS cases and 86 drug-related deaths that were reported in 2018. Haryana leads all of North India in terms of the number of cases, even surpassing the border State of Punjab. As a result of the rising severity of the agrarian crisis and the scary joblessness rate, a generation of disgruntled youth is being formed, who are especially vulnerable to drug addiction and turning to various sorts of criminality. Haryana's uneven number of men and women make things worse. Children who grow up in a patriarchal and chauvinistic culture are more likely to be drawn to violent and perverse forms of instant gratification (Sangwan, 2018). Also, some forms of sexual assault are acceptable in the name of culture. In some parts of rural India, men marry and have sexual encounters with girls who are underage. In some parts of North India, Khap Panchayats give permission for these kinds of weddings and set personal rules. Further, the situation in Delhi involves a complex combination of elements fostering crimes against women. This includes substantial factors like the city's high population density, a significant migrant population, the proliferation of slums, a low sex ratio, and its proximity to neighbouring States like Punjab and Haryana which also record high crime rate. Specifically, Delhi's population density stands among the highest in India, with around 11,320 people per square kilometers. Additionally, the sex ratio in Delhi is imbalanced, with 868 females per 1000 males, further exacerbating vulnerabilities. The rapid growth of slums within the city creates environments prone to crime, contributing to the challenges faced by women in Delhi's socio-economic landscape. The Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir recorded a marginal rise in sexual crimes, with conflict-related instability

exacerbating risks for women.

Women's status in Rajasthan lying in North-Western part of India is entwined in a web of patriarchal norms and gender disparities that reinforce one another. In Rajasthan, women are typically seen as a financial liability in the house of birth and a burden in the marital house (Mathur, 2004). The unemployment rate in the State is relatively high for both men (22.56 percent) and women (77.95 percent). Also, the fact that only 64.7 percent of women can read and write makes them vulnerable to various forms of crimes. There is a statistically significant link between violence and things like age, caste, family structure, husband's job, women's level of education, and husband's drinking (Prakash, 2011). Further, majority of the crimes against women in the State of Rajasthan are domestic in nature. Many writers have also said that a person's tendency to act violently can change depending on whether or not their spouse has a job (Krishna *et al.*, 2010). Women whose husbands have steady jobs are less likely to be abused at home than women whose husbands don't have jobs. Many studies have shown that when men can't pay for their families, they become dependent on alcohol. This leads to anger, marital problems, and domestic violence (Krishnan, 2005). In Rajasthan, women's status is very regressive, as evidenced by statistics and cultural conventions including early marriage, strong preference for male offspring and rigid gender roles.

The Western States of India, Maharashtra and Gujarat present mixed trends in terms of crimes against women. While these States have urban centers with higher literacy rates, they also experience significant domestic violence and sexual crimes. While instances of domestic crimes remain notably low in Goa, the State exhibits concerning inadequacies in addressing sexual offenses, which constitute the predominant category of crimes against women in both comparative periods. More than 60 percent of the crimes against women in Goa, when analysed as a whole, are sexual in nature in both the time periods. With 387 occurrences registered in the State since 2016, rape incidents have been the most common crime against women during the last six years in Goa. Since 2016, Goa has reported at least 60 rape cases annually. Another widespread crime in this State is coercing women into commercial sexual acts (*Times of India*, 2021). Goa appears to have a stronger track record than other States in terms of female literacy (92 percent) and the percentage of urban residents (62 percent). The State's high pace of urbanisation had a favourable effect on loosening gender norms and raising standards of living, which in turn reduced crime against women, especially domestic crime which shows a decline of 65 percent between the given time- periods. The State's high proportion of female literacy

and its distinctive marriage structure, which provides women with a high level of security, may be held responsible for this situation.

The State of West Bengal lying in the eastern part of India records a low sex ratio of 934 females per thousand males. It has been found that sex ratio of women is inversely associated with female victimisation (South and Messner, 1987). Moreover, the State records a low level of female literacy of 72.9 percent thus reducing the agency of women. The female labour force participation is only 11.86 percent and the females married before the age of 18 years are about 41.6 per cent. Some of the important factors leading to domestic violence against women are child marriage, lack of financial independence among women and the strict gender norms (Bhattacharyya, 2015). West Bengal has a porous border with Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal where numerous reports of females being trafficked from there to others states have been reported (Nandi *et al.*, 2014). These trafficking incidents take place for a variety of purposes, including forced prostitution, creation of pornographic material, sex tourism, forced marriages, etc. (Das, 2021). Further, the scenario of Bihar is quite interesting as it does not perform very well in the socio-economic indicators affecting crime against women, still shows satisfactory performance. The State performs poorly in terms of overall literacy (76 percent) and female literacy (55 percent). Moreover, the State has about 40 percent of females aged between 20-24 who were married before 18 years of age as mentioned in NFHS 5 data. This might lead to lesser reporting as illiterate females are unaware of their rights and unaccustomed to the legal procedures. Further, females under 18 years are highly vulnerable and are unable to report any sort of abuse. The recent NFHS 5 data revealed that about 40 percent females in Bihar faced physical violence from their husbands. Moreover, the State is also known for the rigid practice of dowry. All this leads to crime against women; however, the reporting might not take place. Most of the Southern States like Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh recorded comparatively lower crime rate against women. However, the State of Kerala, despite having a remarkable trend in indicators of female empowerment such as female literacy of 97 percent and sex ratio of 1058 females per 1000 males, records a relatively higher crime intensity in terms of sexual crimes. The Kerala model of development has drawn media and academic interest and helped shape the view of Kerala women as less oppressed by patriarchy; nonetheless, a “gender paradox” exists (Mitra and Singh, 2006). Increased literacy, improved access to healthcare, and a cultural shift toward smaller families and fewer constraints on women’s education and work have not considerably expanded Kerala women’s life possibilities (Devika, 2006). Women in Kerala may have higher levels of literacy and marry

later in life, but violence against women and suicide rates are rising, and research suggests that a sizable portion of family violence may be linked to dowry-related payments, academic performance, unintended pregnancies, and wife beatings (Misra and Misra, 2007; 2017). Even in literate communities, women are expected to be silent and submissive. Women's major domestic function keeps them at home, and this obligation frequently conceals their distinct identities (Geogre, 2011).

CONCLUSION

Despite constitutional and legal protections, gender-based violence remains pervasive in India, spanning a spectrum from female foeticide to cybercrimes, indicating a worrisome trend. Our research underscores that Assam's high rates of violence against women stem partly from its significant immigrant population characterized by low wages and prevalent antisocial behaviours like drinking and gambling. Incidents reported under false pretences of elopement¹ also contribute to this prevalence. States like Haryana, Odisha, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh showcase cultural challenges such as early marriages, male child preference, dowry systems, honour killings, the influence of khap panchayats and entrenched gender norms that perpetuate women's lower status and amplify crime against them. Tribal States like Nagaland, Meghalaya, Manipur and Mizoram stand out due to their isolation from mainstream societal issues. These regions exhibit greater gender equality and provide more freedom to women, a characteristic inherent in tribal societies. Our study indicates that while socioeconomic factors such as literacy rates, urbanization, sex ratios and unemployment play a role in shaping crime against women, they serve more as secondary determinants when compared to societal behaviours, attitudes and perceptions concerning gender relations, which are the primary driving forces. In traditional societies, despite imposed restrictions, women often find protection from various forms of crimes. Conversely, highly developed societies with more relaxed gender norms tend to demonstrate a better track record in terms of women's safety. However, India is currently navigating a transitional phase where women's education and employment are gaining acceptance, yet societal expectations of their primary roles as homemakers and child bearers persist. This transition reflects the complexities and evolving dynamics within Indian society.

References

- KHTAR C. (2013), “Eve teasing as a form of violence against women: A case study of District Srinagar, Kashmir”, *An International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, 5, 5, pp. 168-178.
- ARORA A. (2021), “In a first, India’s fertility rate falls below replacement level: What it means”, *IndiaToday*.
- BALASUBRAMANIAN T. (2020), “Violence against Women in India”, *Journal of Shanghai Jiaotong University (Science)*, 17, pp. 876-892.
- BANERJEE K. (1999), “Gender stratification and the contemporary marriage market in India”, *Journal of Family Issues*, 20, pp. 648-676, <https://doi.org/10.1177/019251399020005005>
DOI : [10.1177/019251399020005005](https://doi.org/10.1177/019251399020005005)
- BHATTACHARYA P. and TADIT K. (2018), “99% Cases of Sexual Assaults Go Unreported, Govt Data Shows: Instances of Sexual Violence in India Seem to Be on a Decline Even Though Only a Fraction of Them Is Actually Reported to the Police”, *Livemint*, <https://www.livemint.com/Politics/AV3sIKoEBAGZozALMX8THK/99-cases-of-sexual-assaults-go-unreported-govt-data-shows.html>
- BHATTACHARYYA R. (2015), “Understanding the spatialities of sexual assault against Indian women in India”, *Gender, Place and Culture*, 22, 9, pp. 1340-1356, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2014.969684>
DOI : [10.1080/0966369X.2014.969684](https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2014.969684)
- BILAL S. and GUL A. (2015), “Women and Violence: A case of women’s Empowerment and Its Challenges in Jammu and Kashmir”, *Reviews of Literature*, 2, 7.
- BORAH L. and DAS M. (2018), “Spatialities of crime against women in Assam”, *Geographical Review of India*, 80, 1, pp. 43-62.
- BUONGPUI R.L. (2013), “Gender Relations and the web of Traditions in Northeast India”, *NEHU Journal*, 9, 2, pp. 73-81.
- BUTCHER K.F. and PIEHL A. M. (1999), “Cross- city evidence on the relationship between immigration and crime”, *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 17, 3, pp. 457-493, [https://doi.org/10.1002/\(SICD\)1520-6688\(199822\)17:3<457::AID-PAM4>3.0.CO;2-F](https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICD)1520-6688(199822)17:3<457::AID-PAM4>3.0.CO;2-F)
DOI : [10.1002/\(SICD\)1520-6688\(199822\)17:3<457::AID-PAM4>3.0.CO;2-F](https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICD)1520-6688(199822)17:3<457::AID-PAM4>3.0.CO;2-F)

CHAKRABORTY C., AFREEN A. and PAL D. (2021), “Crime against Women in India: A State Level Analysis”, *Journal of International Women and Studies*, 22, 5, pp. 1-18, <https://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol22/iss5/1>

CHANDRAN R. (2016), “Much Crime Unreported in Indian Cities, Sexual Harassment Complaints Ignored: Survey”, *Reuters*, <https://www.reuters.com/article/world/much-crime-unreported-in-indian-cities-sexual-harassment-complaints-ignored-su-idUSKCN0XP2CK/>

CHATTOPADHYAY S. (2021), *Assam - Worst State for Violence against Women, Gets A Women's Poll Manifest*, 10.13140/RG.2.2.28673.79202
DOI : [10.13140/RG.2.2.28673.79202](https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.28673.79202)

CHAUHAN R. and BARAIK V. K. (2016), “Mapping crime against women in India: Spatio-temporal analysis, 2001-2012”, *International Journal of Law and Political Sciences*, 10, 6, pp. 1984–1990, World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology.

DAS S. (2021), “Critical Analysis on Crime against Women in West Bengal based Upon Socio-Political Transformation”, *International Journal of Engineering Research and Technology*, 10, 11, <http://www.ijert.org>, ISSN: 2278-0181/IJERTV10IS110067

DATTA A. (2016), “Another rape? The persistence of public/private divides in sexual violence debates in India”, *Dialogues in Human Geography*, 6, 2, pp. 173-177, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2043820616653321>
DOI : [10.1177/2043820616653321](https://doi.org/10.1177/2043820616653321)

DEVIKA J. (2006), “Negotiating women’s social space: Public debates on gender in early modern Kerala”, *India. Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 7, pp. 43-61.
DOI : [10.1080/14649370500463125](https://doi.org/10.1080/14649370500463125)

DLAMIN J. (2020), “Gender-Based Violence, Twin Pandemic to COVID-19”, *Critical Sociology*, pp. 1-8, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920520975465>
DOI : [10.1177/0896920520975465](https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920520975465)

DREZE J. and KHERA R. (2000), “Crime, gender, and society in India: insights from homicide data”, *Population Development Review*, 26, 2, pp 335-352, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/172520>

GAUR K. (2005), *Occupational Structure in Rural Haryana*, Unpublished M.Phil Dissertation, Department of Geography, M. D. University, Rohtak.

GHOSH R. (2021), “Crimes against Women in India: How Do Socio-economic Factors Influence Reports?”, *IOSR Journal of Economics and Finance*, 12, 5, <https://doi.org/10.9790/5933-1205053037>

GILANI A. A. (2021), “Crime against women in India: An analysis”, *Journal of Society in Kashmir*, 11, 1, pp. 112-135, http://sociology.uok.edu.in/Files/c2d3b27_8-4cf7-49a5-9525-af5e352f2900/Journal/4ac356b8-8e4f-4cf9-a85b-307b6dca5890.pdf

GOLDFARB S. F. (2000), “Violence against women and the persistence of privacy”, *Ohio State Law Journal*, 61, 1, pp 1-87, <http://hdl.handle.net/1811/70397>

JAYASINGHE K. N. and PERERA M. P. L. (2021), “Impact of Crime Reporting System to Enhance Effectiveness of Police Service”, *International Journal of Computer Trends and Technology*, 69, pp. 51–55. <https://doi.org/10.14445/22312803/IJCTT-V69I5P101>.
DOI : [10.14445/22312803/IJCTT-V69I5P101](https://doi.org/10.14445/22312803/IJCTT-V69I5P101)

KABIRAJ P. (2023), “Crime in India: A spatio-temporal analysis”, *Geojournal*, 88, 2, pp. 1283-1304.

DOI : [10.1007/s10708-022-10684-7](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10708-022-10684-7)

KHONGLAH C. (2008), “*Women in North – east India: An Annotated Bibliography*”, Akanksha Publishing House.

KRISHNAN S. (2005), “Gender, caste and economic inequalities and marital violence in rural South India”, *Health Care for Women International*, 26, 1, pp. 87-99.
DOI : [10.1080/07399330490493368](https://doi.org/10.1080/07399330490493368)

KUMAR C. (2021), “India has 17.7% of world population, gave 15% of global jobs: China, EU, US all fare better”, *The Times of India*.

KUMAR J. L. (1998), *Women and crime*, New Delhi, Anmol Publications.

KUMARI S. and SIOTRA V. (2023), “Indian females in the twenty-first century: how they have fared? An analysis using geospatial techniques”, *GeoJournal*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10708-023-10865-y>
DOI : [10.1007/s10708-023-10865-y](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10708-023-10865-y)

MARIANO E., MANUAL B.A.F., MAUNGUE H. and DUARTE P. (2020), “Violence against women and girls in public spaces in Maputo: An Exploratory Study”, *Black Sea Journal of Public and Social Science*, 3, 1.

MARTIN S.L., TSUI A.O., MAITRA K. and MARINSHAW R. (1999), “Domestic violence in Northern India”, *Am. J. Epidemiol.*, 150, pp. 417-426.
DOI : [10.1093/oxfordjournals.aje.a010021](https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordjournals.aje.a010021)

MISRA L., MISRA S. and MISHRA S. (2017), “A survey on women’s education and their economic condition in Odisha”, *The Clarion- International Multidisciplinary Journal*, 6, 113, 10.5958/2277-937X.2017.00038.7

MATHUR K. (2004), *Countering gender violence*, New Delhi, Sage Publication.

MITRA A. and SINGH P. (2007), "Human capital attainment and gender empowerment: The Kerala paradox", *Social Science Quarterly*, 88, pp. 1227-1242.

DOI : [10.1111/j.1540-6237.2007.00500.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6237.2007.00500.x)

MUKHERJEE D. (2022), *Rajasthan records 11.01% increase in registration of crime in 2021, women atrocities cases rise by 17.03%*, <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/jaipur/rajasthan-crime-in-2021-women-atrocities-cases-7716112/>

MURMU P. (2023), "Crime against women in India: A geographical appraisal", *International Journal of Science and Research Archive*, 8, <https://doi.org/10.30574/ijsra.2023.8.1.0078>

DOI : [10.30574/ijsra.2023.8.1.0078](https://doi.org/10.30574/ijsra.2023.8.1.0078)

NANDI J.K., BURMAN S.K., DAS D., SAHA D.P and PAL S. (2014), "Socio-cultural factors influencing teenage pregnancy in Rural West Bengal", *Journal of Pharmaceutical and Biomedical Sciences*, 4, 8, pp. 670-673.

OECD (2023), *Social Institutions and Gender Index*, OECD International Development Statistics (database), <https://doi.org/10.1787/33beb96e-en>

DOI : [10.1787/33beb96e-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/33beb96e-en)

PARIHAR A., DEVI N., KAUR A. and SHARMA S.R. (2015), "Crime against Women in Haryana: An Analysis", *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, 4, 11, pp. 16-24.

POOJA B. S., GUDDATTU V. and RAO K.A. (2024), "Crime Against Women in India: District-Level Risk Estimation Using the Small Area Estimation Approach", *Frontiers in Public Health*, 12, p. 1362406. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2024.1362406>

DOI : [10.3389/fpubh.2024.1362406](https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2024.1362406)

POWELL J. and WAHIDIN A. (2007), "Old age and victims: A critical exegesis and an agenda for change", *Internet Journal of Criminology*, pp. 1-14.

PRAKASH N. (2011), "Domestic Violence against Women in Rural Rajasthan, India: A Sociological Analysis", *Research in Political Sociology*, pp. 89-102, doi: 10.1108/s0895-9935(2011)0000019010

RAO V. (1997), "Wife-beating in rural South India: A qualitative and econometric analysis", *Social Science and Medicine*, 44, 8, pp. 1169-1180, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-9536\(96\)00252-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-9536(96)00252-3)

DOI : [10.1016/S0277-9536\(96\)00252-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0277-9536(96)00252-3)

RITU (2023), "Domestic Violence Against Women in India: A Comparative Analysis of NFHS-4 and 5", *International Journal of Research in Social Sciences*, 13, 3.

SANGWAN J. (2018), “Haryana, No Country for Women, Old or Young”, *The Wire* (thewire.in).

SINGH S. (2024), “Women Security Index: Indian Women Financially More Secure but Feel less Safe”, *India Today*, March 8, <https://www.indiatoday.in/diu/story/women-safety-index-diu-indian-women-financially-secure-2512452-2024-03-08>

SOUTH S.J. and MESSNER S.F (1987), “The Sex Ratio And Women’s Involvement In Crime: A Cross-National Analysis”, *Sociological Quarterly*, 28, pp. 171-188.

THE WORLD BANK (2019), *Gender-Based Violence (Violence against Women and Girls)*, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/socialsustainability/brief/violence-against-women-and-girls>, *Gender-Based Violence, Twin Pandemic to COVID-19*, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/347871243_Gender-Based_Violence_Twin_Pandemic_to_COVID-19 [accessed Dec 21 2023].

TRADING ECONOMICS (2022), *India Female Population (% of Total)*, <https://tradingeconomics.com/india/population-female-percent-of-total-wb-data.html>

UN WOMEN (2016), *The Economic Costs of Violence against Women*, Speech by Lakshmi Puri, September 21, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2016/9/speech-by-lakshmi-puri-on-economic-costs-of-violence-against-women>

WHO (2021), *Violence against Women Prevalence Estimates for intimate partner violence against women*.

