

Women Crime in India - An Analytical Framework

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Abstract: *The global campaign for elimination of violence against women, in the recent years indicates the enormity as well as the seriousness of the atrocities committed against women that are being witnessed the world over. Development along with its progressive changes in personal life style, living standards varied economic growth caused by urbanisation and changes in social ethos contributes to a violent attitude and tendencies towards women which has resulted in an increase in crimes against women. Such incidents are a matter of serious concern and its containment is a necessity so that the Women of India attain their rightful share and live in dignity, freedom, peace and free from crimes and aspersions. The battle against crime against women has to be waged by the various sections of society through campaigns and various programmes with social support along with legal protection, safeguards and reforms in the Criminal Justice System. Despite all these safeguards, the women in our country continue to suffer, due to lack of awareness of their rights, illiteracy and oppressive practices & customs. The resultant consequences are many viz. a constant fall in the sex ratio, high infant mortality rate, low literacy rate, high dropout rate of girls from education, low wage rates etc.*

Keywords: Introduction, Objectives, status of crimes in India, Data Analysis, Conclusion.

1. Introduction

In the ancient Indian women held a high place of respect in the society as mentioned in Rigveda and other scriptures. Volumes can be written about the status of our women and their heroic deeds from the vedic period to the modern times. But later on, because of social, political and economic changes, women lost their status and were relegated to the background. Many evil customs and traditions stepped in which enslaved the women and tied them to the boundaries of the house.

The official statistics showed a declining sex -ratio, health status, literacy rate, work participation rate and political participation among women. While on the other hand the *spread of social evils like dowry deaths, child marriage, domestic violence, rape, sexual harassment, exploitation of women workers are rampant in different parts of India.* Humiliation, rape, kidnapping, molestation, dowry death, torture, wife beating etc. have grown up over the years The recent spate of crimes against women has also triggered a sharper analysis of historical data, particularly in the public domain. And the numbers, reported as they are, continue to surprise.

Data released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) this week shows a 69% decadal (over the decade) jump in crimes against women. The number of kidnappings and abductions of women and girls have jumped a whopping 163.8% since 2002.

Violent crimes or crimes that fall under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) have jumped about 34% over the last 10 years, from about 1.7 million in 2002 to 2.4 million in 2012. On an annual basis, violent crimes rose 3% from the previous year's 2.3 million.

The only comfort perhaps lies in the annual data, particularly over the last two years which suggests a 3% overall drop in total number of crimes between 2011 and 2012. But on the other hand, crimes against women registered a 6.3% increase since 2011.

Of all the categories under IPC crimes, crimes against women recorded the highest decadal jump of 69%, from 109,784 in 2002 to 186,033 in 2012. The largest component of this category was cruelty by husbands and relatives, where 49,237 cases were recorded in 2002 and 106,527 cases were reported in 2012.

The incidence of rapes increased by about 52.2%, where 16,373 cases were reported in 2002 and 24,923 cases were reported in 2012. Kidnapping and abduction of women and girls incidentally saw a 163.8% increase from 14,506 cases in 2002 to 38,262 cases in 2012.

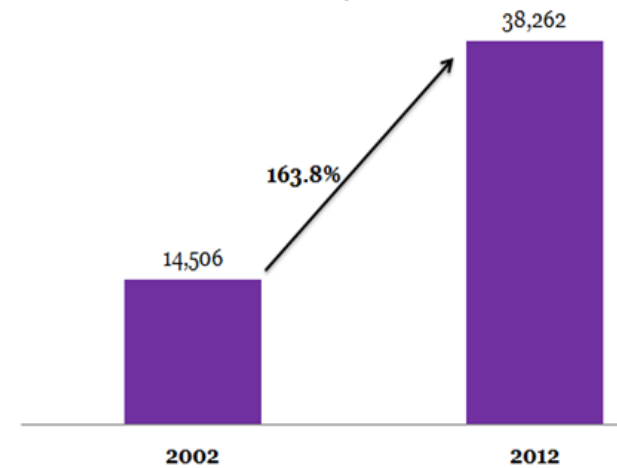
2. Objectives of the Study

- To know the status of women and crime in India.
- To analyze the various types of women and Crime in India.
- To assess the awareness of women and crime in India.

3. Analytical Framework of the Data

From the Graphs below gives us a better idea of the increase in crimes from 2002 to 2012.

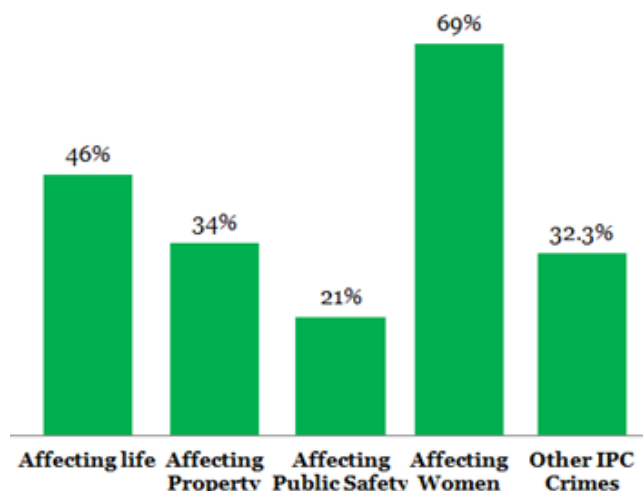
Decadal Difference In Kidnapping Of Women & Girls; 2002 To 2012



Source: National Crime Records Bureau
Graph-1

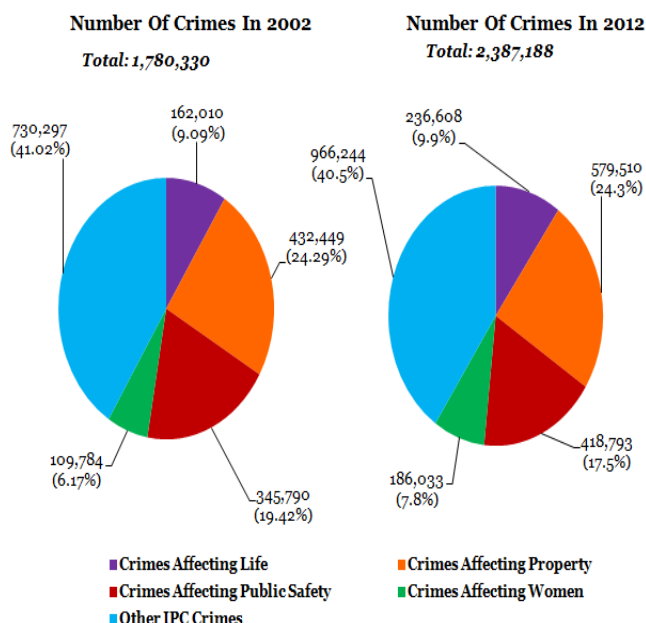
As you can see from above, there were about 236,608 crimes affecting life that were recorded in 2012. This is an increase of 2% from 2011. Out of these, murder accounted for 34,434 of the cases.

Decadal Increase In IPC Crimes, 2002 To 2012



Source: National Crime Records Bureau
Graph-3

Break-Up Of Cognizable IPC Crimes, 2002 & 2012



Graph-2

Total Number of Crimes [IPC+SLL]

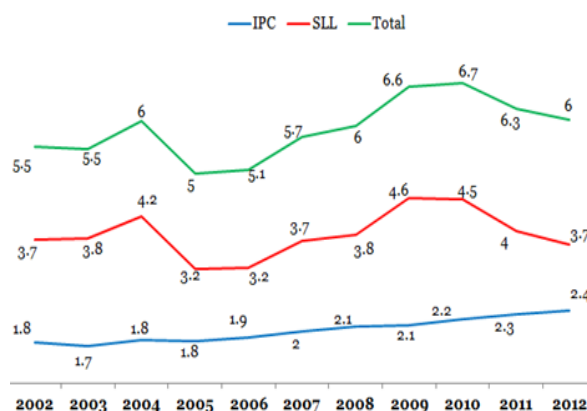
The total number of crimes in the country has increased almost 23% over the last decade. However, data released by the NCRB shows that there has been an overall drop in the total number of crimes in 2012 by about 3% from 2011. There were a little over 6 million crimes reported in 2012. About 2.3 million or 39.5% of the total crimes fell under the IPC (Indian Penal Code). The IPC cases mostly deal with violent crimes like murder, rape, kidnapping and theft. A little over 3.5 million crimes came under the SLL (Special & Local Laws) category which constituted about 60% of the total crimes. SLL cases mostly deal with narcotics, arms, gambling, and dowry & sati prevention to mention a few.

If one were to look solely at the year 2012, crimes against property took up the largest share in the IPC pie, recording about 579,510 cases or 24.3% of the total IPC crimes. This is just about per cent higher than the 572,604 reported in 2011.

Theft accounted for the highest number of cases under this category with 337,407 cases being recorded. Out of these, 154,351 cases were auto-related.

Crimes affecting public safety; which include arson, riots etc., had the second largest share in the IPC crimes, recording about 418,793 cases which constituted 17.5% of the IPC crimes. This is a 10% jump from the 380,411 cases reported in 2011.

Break-Up Of Total Cognizable Crimes In India; 2002-2012



Source: National Crime Records Bureau

Graph-4

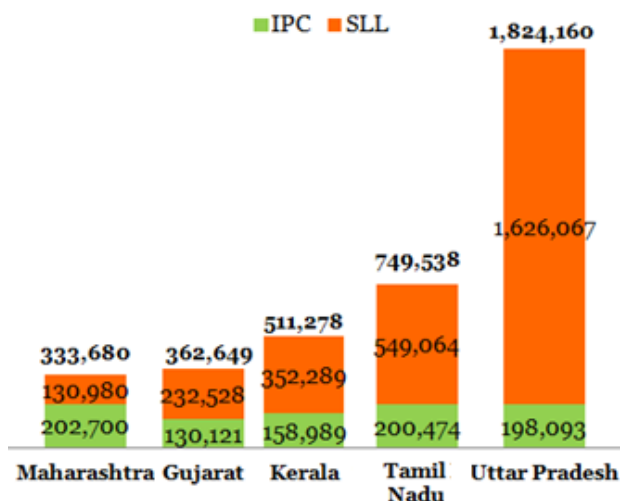
The figure below shows the breakup of the total cognizable crimes in India 2002 to 2012.

As you can see from above, in 2012 a little over 6 million serious crimes were committed, about 3 % less than the 6.2 million crimes recorded the previous year, 2011. However if one were to look at the figures for the past decade, it can be seen that there is an increase of 9.2% from the 5.5 million crimes recorded in 2002. The SLL crimes recorded a decadal decrease of 2.5%, while they showed an almost 7% fall from the previous year.

Most Dangerous States

The report revealed that Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Gujarat and Maharashtra are the most crime-prone states, which include both IPC and SLL. The north-eastern states of Sikkim, Nagaland, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya were among those with the lowest number of crimes reported. The figure below gives us a break-up of the types of crimes in the Top 5 and Bottom 5 states.

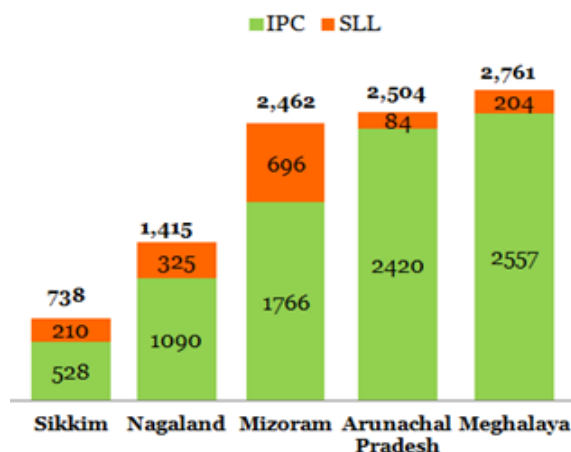
Top 5 States In Terms Of Total Number Crimes During 2012



Source: National Crime Records Bureau

Graph-5

Bottom 5 States In Terms Of Total Number Crimes During 2012



Source: National Crime Records Bureau

Graph-6

Another interesting point to note is that, while it wasn't in the Top 5 states, Madhya Pradesh recorded the highest number of IPC crimes at 220,335. While the data does show that there has been an increase in the number of crimes, it must also be kept in mind that it is possible that the reporting of crimes has increased over the past decade.

4. Conclusions

The foregoing analysis reveals not only widespread prevalence of domestic violence (21 percent, since age 15) in India but also the acceptance of majority of ever-married women (57 percent) to at least one reason for justifying a husband beating his wife. There are again large-scale interstate differences in the prevalence as well as acceptance of violence among women. In addition to this, it is noteworthy to mention that a lot of variables like age, education of women, age at first marriage, ethnic and religious categories, women's autonomy, exposure to mass media, work status of women and standard of living besides place of residence contribute significantly to the prevalence of domestic violence. Nevertheless, it is the husbands who are reportedly the perpetrators of violence showing one reason or another.

The experience of violence undermines the empowerment women and certainly is a barrier to the socio-economic and demographic development of the country. In view of the prevalence of the problem, it is suggested to have programmes that take into account involvement of the community and especially the males for effective as well as fruitful amelioration of the issue. It can again be suggested that education of the girls should be encouraged, which will undoubtedly work as deterrent to domestic violence. Again, though the present findings are silent about the legal side of the issue, stringent laws against the perpetrators of the violence, laws giving more rights to the women will always be beneficial to curb the issue. As it is found to be deep rooted in the socio cultural practices and both the perpetrators as well as victim take it granted, there is need of major transformation in the socio cultural milieu. In order to address the problem, social norms and values towards gender roles should be transformed to facilitate the implementation of appropriate and meaningful responses to domestic violence and ultimately to prevent it from happening altogether.

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