

Women and Violence: A Decadal Review of Crimes, Reforms and Realities in India

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Abstract

This research paper looks at the complex nature of crimes against women in India. It focuses on the causes, structural factors, and the weaknesses of current prevention methods. Despite years of social progress and increasing discussions about gender equality, Indian women still face violence and oppression that threaten their safety, dignity, and equal standing in society. The study takes a three-part approach: comparing India's challenges to those of other countries, analysing regional differences and socio-political variations, and evaluating legal measures, reforms, and government initiatives aimed at reducing violence against women. It also points out ongoing issues in policy design, enforcement, and public awareness that weaken the effectiveness of these efforts. Beyond describing the situation, this paper offers practical policy recommendations that tackle systemic problems and call for long-term changes. The research aims to raise awareness about the alarming increase in crimes against women and show how deeply these crimes are rooted in socio-economic, cultural, political, and legal systems that need urgent attention.

Keywords: Crimes against women, gender inequality, violence against women, domestic violence, rape, harassment, acid attacks, human trafficking, criminal justice system, women's empowerment.

1. Introduction

Women have historically played a vital role in the cultural, economic, and social growth of India. However, despite their essential contributions, they still face ongoing oppression, especially regarding safety and rights. In the past decade, there has been a worrying rise in crimes against women, including rape, gang rape, acid attacks, domestic violence, dowry-related harassment, trafficking, and murder. These reflect the ongoing influence of patriarchal structures that normalize discrimination and violence. These crimes cause personal trauma and undermine the promise of equality guaranteed by the Indian Constitution. Since the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) took power in 2014, several initiatives, including Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao, Mahila Shakti Kendra, and reforms targeting sexual violence, have been introduced to protect women's rights and promote empowerment. While these initiatives mark important steps forward, the gap between policy promises and actual conditions remains concerning. Data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) shows that reported cases of crimes against women are still very high, and in many cases, these crimes have become more violent. This disconnect highlights the limited effectiveness of top-down measures when they are not supported by grassroots social changes, proper enforcement, and the dismantling of persistent gender norms. The ongoing violence against women in India cannot be viewed in isolation; it results from a complex mix of cultural traditions, socio-economic inequalities, and structural obstacles. Deep-rooted gender stereotypes, such as perceiving women as lesser than men or as mere guardians of family honour, encourage silence and shame among victims. Economic dependence on male family members also limits women's ability to report abuse or seek justice. As a result, many women become trapped in cycles of silence, stigma, and vulnerability, which obstruct both personal freedom and broader social progress. This paper therefore aims to examine the socio-political and legal aspects of women's oppression in India from 2012 to 2022. It uses statistical data, comparative analysis, and case studies to illustrate both the extent and human impact of these crimes. By placing India's situation within a global and inter-state context, the study highlights differences in the prevalence of violence and the effectiveness of responses. Ultimately, this research seeks to advocate for broad reforms that move beyond isolated actions, ensuring women's rights and safety are not just ideals but realities.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Role of Socioeconomic and Cultural Factors in Crime Against Women

Bhatia and Rao (2021) look into how social and economic factors relate to the rate of crimes against women in various states of India. Their research points out that states like Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, which report high levels of gender-based violence, are shaped by strict patriarchal systems. In these areas, women often cannot make independent decisions. These patterns of behaviour are closely tied to factors like dependence and education. The paper also notes that the development of certain laws and issues within the judicial system help sustain crime in some settings. In these states, many crimes go unreported due to social stigma and the fear of retaliation, particularly in rural regions. Therefore, simply introducing new laws is not enough; there needs to be a social change that promotes better education and economic independence for women.

2.2. State-Specific Social Structures and Crime Reduction

Banerjee (2022) describes the diversity of social factors that affect crime against women in Indian states. For example, states like Mizoram, Nagaland, and Arunachal Pradesh have lower crime rates because they are matrilineal societies that prioritize women. In these cases, women have a significant impact on community and family decisions. Additionally, Banerjee's research shows that women in these states receive more community support, leading to fewer incidents of gender-based violence. These regions also benefit from improved public education and efficient law enforcement, which work together to create a safer environment for women. The main point of the investigation is that these combined efforts create a barrier against violence, highlighting that women's safety is a public policy issue that requires oversight and cultural approaches.

2.3. Gender, Law Enforcement, and Access to Justice: Evidence from All-Women Police Stations in India

The review discusses the establishment of all-female police stations in India, which aim to improve women's access to justice. This initiative presents a complicated situation. These gender-specific facilities were designed to provide a safe space for women who have experienced gender-based violence to report crimes and seek justice. They also create opportunities for women in law enforcement. However, research based on police reports from Haryana reveals unintended consequences that challenge the effectiveness of these stations. Instead of improving access to justice, these stations seem to divert gender-based cases from regular police departments, resulting in lower reported crime rates. This separation makes it more expensive for victims to access help, especially in rural areas with fewer police stations. Additionally, these stations often promote a practice of "counselling," pressuring victims to reconcile with their abusers instead of pursuing legal action. This undermines the seriousness of gender-based violence cases and limits justice. Female police officers in these facilities may not be truly empowered, as their roles are minimized, reinforcing gender divisions in law enforcement. This study emphasizes the need for comprehensive reforms in law enforcement to ensure fair access to justice for women.

2.4. Sexual Harassment at Workplace

The Preamble of the Constitution of India highlights "fairness of status and opportunity" for all people, supported by Article 14, which guarantees equality under the law. In accordance with this commitment, the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013 was brought in to protect women and promote equality at work. The Act aims to create safe workplaces that respect women's rights, supporting their participation in the workforce and boosting economic empowerment. Effective enforcement of this law is crucial to ensure women's rights to a safe workplace, in line with Articles 14, 15, and 21 of the Indian Constitution, which protect equal treatment and a life free from discrimination. Workplace harassment fuels gender inequality, reduces productivity, and harms women's lives and careers. Longstanding social norms often place blame on victims, reinforcing gender hierarchies and worsening workplace inequality. By tackling these issues, the Act advances women's economic empowerment, promotes inclusive growth, and encourages greater workforce involvement.

2.5. The Role of Public Policy in Enhancing Women's Safety in India

In this context, the Indian government has acknowledged the need to prioritize women's safety through grassroots movements and policy changes over the past 20 years. A landmark achievement was the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act of 2005, which for the first time recognized domestic violence as a legal offense and provided a way for victims to seek redress. However, literature indicates

that while there has been some recognition of gender-based violence, gaps in implementation and access remain largely unaddressed.

Agnes (2017) critically examines how laws related to women's safety are enforced. She argues that systemic issues like the patriarchal nature of law enforcement agencies and society as a whole hinder effective application of women's laws. Kapur (2018) points out the underuse of existing helplines and support services, as well as the underreporting of crimes due to concerns over social stigma. Chakraborty (2019) highlights the need for stricter digital safety laws, noting that cybercrimes against women are rapidly increasing, while current laws struggle to deal with these new threats.

Recent literature has shifted focus to the economic and infrastructure aspects of women's safety. Sen and Kumar discuss urban planning initiatives like street lighting and safer public spaces, as well as transportation policies tailored to meet women's needs. Their analysis concludes that while cities like New Delhi have seen improvements in public transport safety due to various measures, such as women-only compartments and buses, these benefits do not reach women from lower socio-economic backgrounds adequately.

Overall, although legislative measures have improved women's safety in India, the literature calls for more holistic policies that address socio-cultural and economic factors. Additionally, it emphasizes the need to incorporate modern technology and urban planning into approaches for creating a safer environment.

2.6. Technology and Community-Based Interventions for Women's Safety

The literature on women's safety in India is moving toward emphasizing technology and community-based solutions as key areas for change. There is a growing focus on technological tools like mobile safety apps, wearable GPS-tracking devices, and emergency response systems that address gaps in traditional safety measures. Mishra and Patel (2021) argue that these digital tools can provide immediate help, but access remains a challenge for women in rural and low-income areas. They also point to a significant barrier in digital literacy, as many resources are not accessible to women.

Singh and Verma (2019) evaluate government-backed safety applications like "Himmat" and private initiatives such as "SafetiPin," which rely on crowdsourced reports of unsafe areas. Their study finds these tools perform well in cities but have limited reach and influence in rural regions. A key takeaway from this research is the need for widespread digital education and tailoring application development to better meet the needs of women from various socio-economic backgrounds in India.

Community-based efforts also contribute to safety enhancement. Rao explored the impact of women-led neighbourhood watches, finding that such initiatives foster a sense of shared responsibility and trust within communities, significantly reducing incidents like harassment and theft. Rao's study highlights the dual benefit of empowering women through grassroots measures, which improve immediate safety and promote long-term social cohesion.

Desai and Banerjee (2022) discuss the safety audits conducted by women in high-risk areas, such as slums and transport hubs, in the study. These audits not only identify unsafe locations but also serve as effective advocacy tools, allowing policymakers to address specific vulnerabilities in urban design and infrastructure. Their findings underscore the importance of women's involvement in safety planning, which leads to better policy formulation and implementation.

This body of literature emphasizes the value of integrating technological advancements with community awareness to bring about lasting improvements in female safety and security. Empowering women with digital skills can enhance their participation in essential initiatives, making policies more representative and relevant for various groups within the broader population of women in India.

2.7. A Study on Protection of Rights of Women under Specific Criminal Laws

Singhal and Shrivastava (2024) address the gap between legal ideals and actual protection of women's rights in India. The Indian Constitution promotes equality for women, yet discrimination and violence

remain widespread. The judiciary plays a vital role in enforcing laws meant to protect women, particularly through amendments following the Nirbhaya case. However, the effectiveness of law enforcement and judicial systems often suffers from slow implementation, lack of awareness, and societal norms. The document comments on the judicial system's response to crimes against women, highlighting issues where victim testimony may be disregarded or where crimes like marital rape lack legal recognition. Furthermore, legal processes involving violations of women's rights are often slow, leading to delays in justice that undermine the system's credibility. In summary, while India's legal framework offers substantial rights for women, the judiciary's ability to enforce these laws requires enhancement. Strengthening enforcement mechanisms and ensuring timely justice are essential to bridging the gap between law and reality.

2.8. Crime against Women: A Qualitative Analysis

Janaki and Manikanta (2014) examine the rising rate of crimes against women in India. They focus on trends, root causes, and legal frameworks. The study shows a steady increase in gender-based violence, despite laws and constitutional provisions designed to protect women. Between 2009 and 2013, reported crimes such as rape, abduction, and cruelty by husbands rose significantly. The analysis criticizes law enforcement and judicial systems for their inability to control these crimes. Over 70% of cases remain unresolved, which highlights the overwhelming number of cases each judge handles and the lack of adequate legal infrastructure. The inefficiency of the judiciary is further highlighted by the gap between reported crimes and the actual resolution of cases. This situation stems from systemic issues like insufficient evidence, delayed legal processes, and the difference between cases filed and judicial capacity. Additionally, societal factors such as deep-rooted gender biases and a lack of awareness worsen the issue. The study calls for preventive measures, including improved education, awareness campaigns, and better training for law enforcement to more effectively tackle gender-based violence.

2.9. Attitudes toward Violence against Women: Cross-Nation Study

This paper offers a cross-cultural look at attitudes toward violence against women among undergraduate students from India, Japan, Kuwait, and the United States. It reveals key differences in how men and women from these countries perceive issues like sexual assault and spousal physical violence. Gender differences in attitudes are clear, as women generally show less tolerance for such violence. However, the study found that sociocultural factors have a greater influence on these views. Cultural norms, religious beliefs, political situations, and economic conditions in each country shape how both men and women respond to violence against women. The study surveyed undergraduate students from India, Japan, Kuwait, and the United States about their attitudes toward violence against women, particularly focusing on sexual assault and spousal physical violence. Both male and female students participated to evaluate gender differences in views. The researchers used a questionnaire to collect data, which they compared across the countries. The study took a cross-cultural approach to analyze how political, historical, religious, and economic factors influenced responses. This analysis provided insights into gender-based differences and the wider sociocultural context that shapes attitudes toward violence against women. Notably, attitudes toward sexual assault differed significantly among the four countries, indicating that cultural context often affects perceptions more than gender alone. To understand and address violence against women effectively, it is essential to consider the wider sociocultural background in which these attitudes emerge. The study highlights the need for prevention strategies that take into account these sociocultural influences, rather than focusing only on gender-based solutions. The findings suggest that successful strategies should be tailored to each country's political, historical, and religious contexts, addressing not just gender roles but also the larger societal values that shape these attitudes.

3. Research Problem And Objective

3.1 Research Problem

This research seeks to examine the rising number of crimes against women in India. It looks at the structural, socio-economic, and legal issues that continue to threaten women's safety and social fairness, even with various government programs and legal protections in place. The study sheds light on ongoing crimes like rape, domestic violence, human trafficking, and acid attacks. It questions how well institutional mechanisms and judicial systems are addressing these problems. This research aims to assess whether the legal frameworks and state efforts are being effectively applied or if deep-rooted cultural barriers still block women's access to justice and safety.

3.2 Research Objectives

The broad objective of the research paper is to explore the issue of violence against women across Indian states through a decadal review of crimes, reforms and realities. In the light of the above broad objective the specific other objectives are:

First, to undertake a comparative study of crimes against women in different countries, identifying global best practices and how they differ from the situation in India.

Second, to examine the differences in crime rates against women across Indian states and investigate how socio-cultural and economic conditions affect these variations.

Third, to assess the efficiency and responsiveness of India's judicial and law enforcement systems in handling crimes against women. This includes evaluating whether the current legal protections and institutional measures provide adequate safety and support to victims.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Research Design

This study uses a descriptive and analytical research design to look at the trends, patterns, and systemic factors affecting crimes against women in India. It mainly relies on secondary data and combines cross-sectional and longitudinal analysis techniques. The study uses quantitative crime statistics from trustworthy institutional sources, along with qualitative literature from academic articles, policy documents, and government reports. This design allows for comparisons of women's safety indicators both between countries and within states, and it also evaluates the judicial and legal frameworks addressing these crimes.

4.2 Data

The paper is based on the secondary data sources which are National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) Reports (2012–2022); Women, Peace and Security Index Reports (latest available);

This study utilizes secondary data obtained from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). The analysis draws on three specific NCRB tables: Table 3A.5 was used to examine case load trends through metrics on reported cases, pending cases, and pendency percentage; Table 3A.7 provided data on judicial efficiency, including conviction rates, pending trials, and disposals without trial; and Table 3A.9 supplied figures on the number of individuals arrested, categorized by crime type.

4.3 Variable selection

The data focuses on six key categories of crimes against women:

- Murder with rape/gang rape
- Acid attacks
- Cruelty by husband or relatives
- Procurement of minor girls
- Human trafficking
- Rape

The inter-state analysis looks at incident reports from 2020 to 2022, while the cross-country comparison uses the highest and lowest ranked countries from the Women, Peace, and Security Index. This provides a way to assess India's position on global safety standards.

4.4 Sampling Plan

Sample Size: Data covers over 10 years (2012–2022) across 29+ Indian states and selected countries for international comparison.

4.5 Data Analysis

The analysis uses descriptive statistical tools, such as trend analysis, frequency distributions, percentage comparisons, and visual charts to examine:

- Temporal patterns in crime reporting and convictions
- State-wise variations in crime rates
- Gaps in arrest, trial, and conviction statistics
- Cross-national comparisons on safety and legal effectiveness

Microsoft Excel was the main tool for data coding, organization, and visualization. The legal and policy data was evaluated qualitatively to pinpoint systemic implementation challenges and suggest reforms.

This methodology seeks to explore the ongoing issue of crimes against women in India by combining statistical data with policy reviews and international comparisons. Analyzing ten years of NCRB data helps capture long-term trends, while secondary sources add depth to the numerical findings. This approach allows the study to look not only at the frequency and types of crimes but also at the legal, judicial, and cultural factors that influence their occurrence and resolution. By using this multidimensional perspective, the research aims to contribute valuable insights to both academic discussions and policy reform efforts regarding women's safety in India.

5. Findings

5.1 Cross country analysis -

India has faced numerous challenges related to gender-based crimes like rape, gang-rape, acid attacks, murder, domestic violence, human trafficking, and underage prostitution. Despite numerous legal reforms, government initiatives and campaigns aimed at reducing gender-based violence these issues still persist. Below we have examined these issues from an Indian point of view with a cross-country analysis perspective.

5.1.1 Rape, Gang rape, and Murder with Rape/Gang Rape-

The number of reported rapes in India remains dangerously high. In 2021, more than 31,000 rape cases were reported across the country. Gang rapes and violent killings following sexual assault, such as the Nirbhaya case in 2012, have horrified the nation and sparked public anger and legal reforms. However, underreporting and cultural stigma remain major issues.

- Between 2019 and 2022, the number of reported cases fluctuated. For instance, in 2022, 248 cases were reported, while in 2021, there were 284 cases. In 2020, 219 cases were reported, slightly down from 283 cases in 2019.
- The pendency of investigation also varied, with 38.8% of cases pending in 2022 (215 cases), up from 45.9% in 2021 (184 cases) and 48.8% in 2020 (160 cases).
- Convictions and Pending Trials: In 2022, 43 cases saw convictions, yet a staggering 1093 cases were still pending trial. In contrast, in 2020, there were fewer convictions- 17, but the backlog of pending cases was also significant, with 761 cases.
- Arrests: Arrests have varied as well, with 430 arrests made in 2022, down from 458 in 2021 but higher than the 333 arrests in 2020.

Cross-Country Comparison:

- Denmark: Although Denmark is regarded as one of the safest countries for women, sexual violence occurs there as well. Denmark has seen an increase in recorded occurrences of sexual violence, including rape, despite great gender equality still there is underreporting.
- Iraq: Due to decades of strife, Iraq's rule of law has eroded, resulting in underreporting of sexual crimes. Sexual violence is frequently used as a weapon in conflict zones, notably in ISIS-controlled territory where minority groups such as the Yazidis experience systematic abuse.

Reasons:

- India: In India, cultural views, patriarchal norms, and inadequate law enforcement often hinder justice. Victims experience societal stigma and retribution.
- Denmark: In Denmark, cultural attitudes and victim-blaming continue to contribute to underreporting, notwithstanding progress in gender equality.
- Iraq: In Iraq, victims have challenges in accessing justice due to violence, lack of legal framework, and religious conservatism.

Solutions: As follows the common remedies of these countries are providing a strong legal apparatus, awareness building among public, training police officials in a gender- sensitive manner and enabling the judicial process.

5.1.2 Acid Attacks-

India: Acid attacks, which are frequently motivated by revenge or rejection, continue to be a highly distressing trend. Despite the Supreme Court's prohibition on the unregulated selling of acid, such events continue. Compensation for victims is required, but the rehabilitation process is often lengthy and difficult.

Cross-Country Comparison:

- Denmark: Acid attacks are extremely rare due to strict regulations on corrosive substances and strong legal deterrents.
- Iraq: Acid attacks are not as widely reported, but violence against women, especially in tribal or conflict zones, remains a serious issue.

Reasons:

- India: Gender-based violence, rejection of romantic proposals, and domestic disputes are common triggers. Weak enforcement of acid sale regulations contributes to the ongoing problem.
- Denmark and Iraq: Strong legal deterrents and lower social acceptance of violent acts result in fewer acid attacks.

Solutions: Key methods include enforcing stringent corrosive substance regulations, training law enforcement, and providing rehabilitative assistance to survivors.

5.1.3 Cruelty by Husband or Relatives (Domestic Violence)-

India: Domestic abuse is common, with more than 110,000 cases reported in 2021 under Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code. However, due to societal stigma, many occurrences remain undetected.

Cross-Country Comparison:

- Denmark: Domestic violence exists, though it is relatively low by global standards. Denmark has strong legal protections, crisis centres, and survivor support services.
- Iraq: Domestic violence is common, especially in rural or conservative communities where legal protections for women are limited.

Reasons:

- India: Deeply entrenched patriarchal values, a lack of financial independence for women, and societal norms contribute to the high rates of domestic violence.
- Denmark: Despite strong protections, underreporting occurs due to societal stigma.
- Iraq: Political instability and conservative cultural practices result in limited protections for women.

Solutions: Empowering women financially and socially, enacting strict legislation, and extending support services such as shelters and legal help are all critical measures towards combating domestic violence.

5.1.4 Human Trafficking-

India: India remains a major centre for human trafficking, notably sexual exploitation and forced work. Women and children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds are the most vulnerable. In 2021, over 2,000 cases of human trafficking were registered.

Human Trafficking Data:

- The number of reported cases has fluctuated significantly, with 781 cases in 2022, down from 914 cases in 2021, but higher than the 646 cases in 2020. In 2019, 966 cases were reported.
- The pendency of investigations has remained high, with 42.2% of cases still pending in 2022 (726 cases), compared to 46.1% in 2021 (660 cases).
- Convictions and Pending Trials: In 2022, 44 cases resulted in convictions, but over 3,410 cases were still pending trial. In 2021, 40 convictions were recorded, with a similar number of pending cases (3,411).
- Arrests: Arrests have varied over the years, with 1,851 arrests made in 2022, compared to 2,154 in 2021.

Cross-Country Comparison:

- Denmark: Human trafficking exists in Denmark, but on a smaller scale. Victims are frequently recruited from Eastern Europe, Africa, and Asia and used for sexual or forced labour.
- Iraq: The crisis in Iraq has led to an increase in human trafficking, especially among women and children from minority communities who are transported for forced labour or sexual exploitation.

Reasons:

- Reasons for human trafficking in India include poverty, a lack of education, gender inequity, and insufficient law enforcement.

- In Denmark, traffickers use legal and societal vulnerabilities to target vulnerable migrants.
- Iraq's ongoing violence and lack of law enforcement create an ideal environment for trafficking networks.

Solutions: Strengthening anti-trafficking laws, providing rehabilitation for survivors, and fostering international cooperation are essential.

5.1.5 Underage Prostitution-

Cross-Country Comparison:

- India: In India, the trafficking of teenage girls for prostitution is a major concern. Many youngsters are duped into believing they can have a job or get married. NCRB data show a worrying trend of increased exploitation of juveniles.
- Denmark: has strict rules that prevent minors from being procured for prostitution. However, there are trafficking networks that target minors for sexual exploitation.
- Iraq: Minors in crisis zones in Iraq are more vulnerable to prostitution due to inadequate law enforcement.

Reasons:

- India: In India, poverty, illiteracy, and the prevalence of trafficking networks contribute to the problem.
- Denmark: Denmark's high vigilance and legal deterrents help reduce the situation.
- Iraq: Conflict and a weakened legal framework make minors vulnerable to exploitation.

Solutions: Include legal reform, improved education access, raising awareness, and addressing core factors such as poverty and illiteracy.

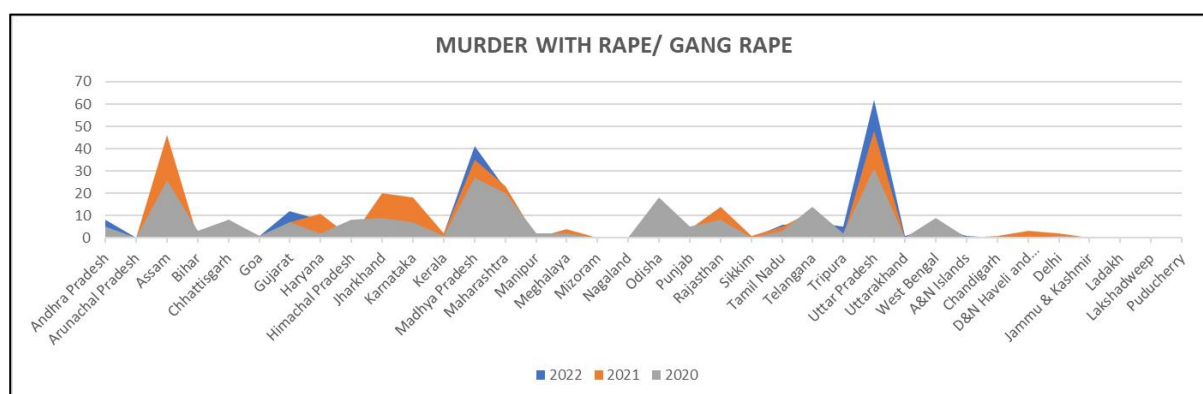
Key Findings-

- Delay: Over 40% of murder with rape/gang rape and human trafficking cases remain unresolved, indicating a growing trend in investigations.
- Judiciary delays are highlighted by low conviction rates in comparison to the number of trials pending.
- While arrests have increased, the high number of ongoing trials indicates inefficiencies in the judicial system.
- These findings point to systemic issues in combating gender-based violence and human trafficking in India, notably in terms of investigation delays and judicial bottlenecks.

5.2 State wise analysis-

India consists of 28 states and 8 union territories, and in each, women's experiences differ greatly due to variations in culture, social structures, and economic development. By analysing these states in the past 3 years (2022,2021,2020) on the basis of 6 crimes, the performance of all the states showed a similar trend across mentioned crimes and years. This is mainly because of the low political representation of women, inconsistent legal framework and enforcement, patriarchal values across various states, socioeconomic disparities, and limited access to education and resources in some parts of the country. It is also important to consider that in many of these states, due to lack of education and due to the social stigma surrounding victims, there are multiple cases of underreporting of crimes. Following is a crime- wise state performance based on incidents reported in a span of 3 years taken from the crime stats report of the National crimes records bureau of India.

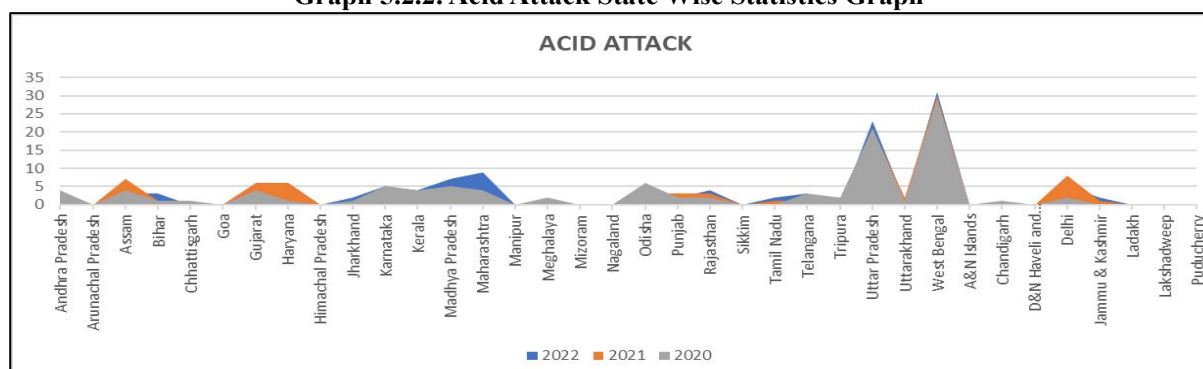
Graph 5.2.1. Murder with Rape State Wise Statistics Graph



Source: Authors compilation based on the data collected from NCRB crime reports

With 62 cases in 2022—up from 48 in 2021 and 31 in 2020—Uttar Pradesh stands out as the state with the highest number of reported cases, pointing to a concerning trend in gender-based violence. Uttar Pradesh is one of among the most unsafe states in India for women, according to this data. Madhya Pradesh, which recorded 41 cases in 2022, Maharashtra, which recorded 22 incidents, and Assam, which experienced a significant rise to 14 cases in 2022 following a peak of 46 cases in 2021, are among the other states that performed poorly. Concerning statistics are also shown by Jharkhand (7 cases) and Haryana (8 cases). However, a number of states, including Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, and Nagaland, recorded no cases of murder with rape/ gang rape during this time.

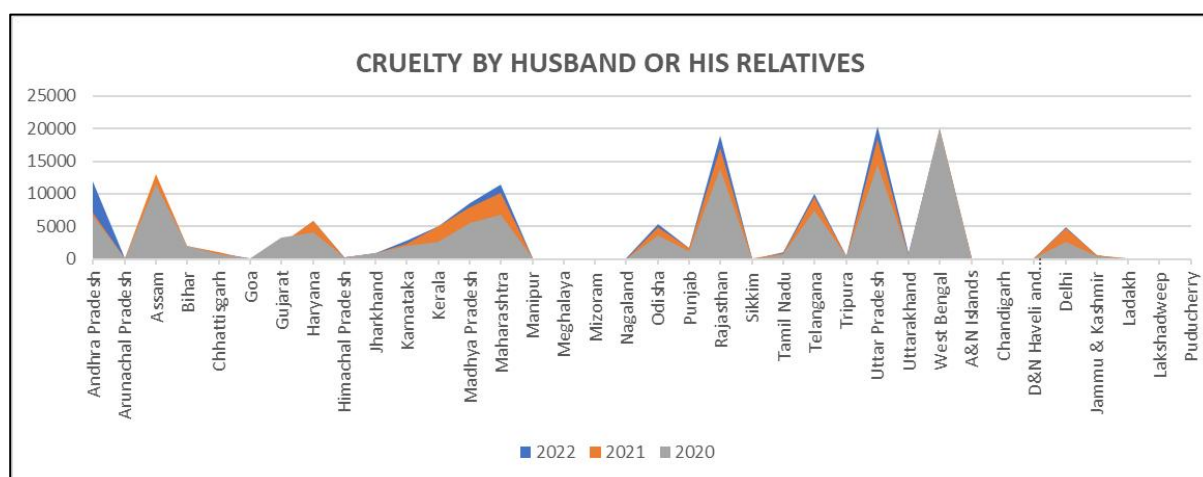
Graph 5.2.2. Acid Attack State Wise Statistics Graph



Source: Authors compilation based on the data collected from NCRB crime reports

The state with the most instances is West Bengal, which reported 31 cases in 2022—a little increase from 30 cases in 2021 and 29 cases in 2020. Following closely after with 23 incidences in 2022 (compared to 21 cases in the two years prior), Uttar Pradesh is a concerning figure. Other states with low performance figures are Madhya Pradesh, which had seven incidents, Haryana with six cases, and Maharashtra, which reported nine cases in 2022. Karnataka and Gujarat each recorded five incidents in addition. The overall number of acid attack occurrences in all states rose from 105 in 2021 to 124 in 2022.

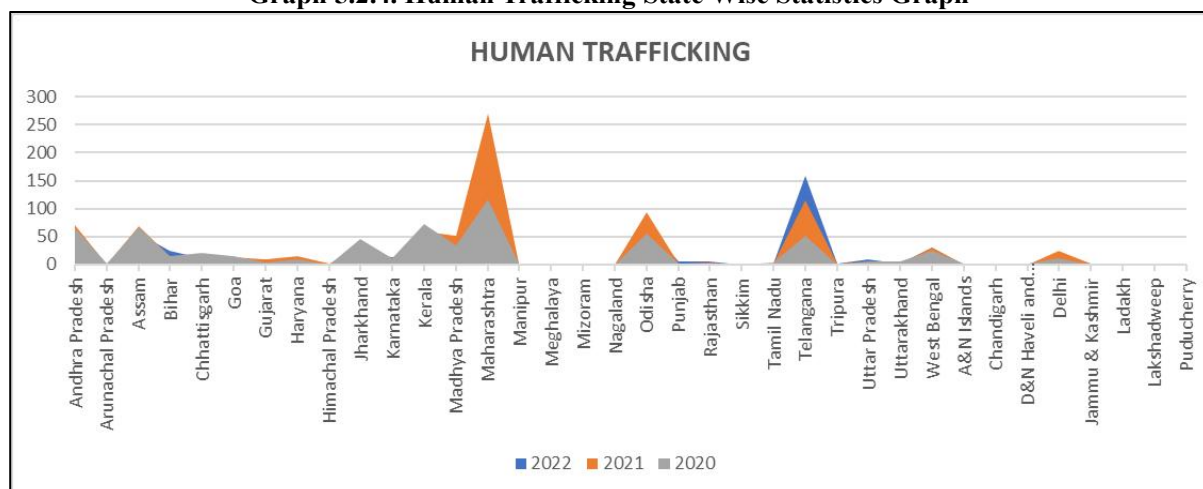
Graph 5.2.3. Cruelty by Husband or His Relatives State Wise Statistics Graph



Source: Authors compilation based on the data collected from NCRB crime reports

The state with the most incidents was Uttar Pradesh, which recorded 20,371 incidents in 2022, up from 18,375 in 2021 and 14,454 in 2020. Closely behind with equally concerning numbers is Rajasthan, which saw a rise from 16,949 cases in 2021 to 18,847 cases in 2022. Maharashtra (11,367 instances), Andhra Pradesh (11,964 cases), and Haryana (5,883 cases) are among the other states with high figures. Assam had a significant decline to 4,704 cases in 2022 from a high of 12,950 cases the year before. In 2022, the overall number of cruelty cases in all states came to a startling 134,506, demonstrating the ongoing problem of abuse and domestic violence directed towards women.

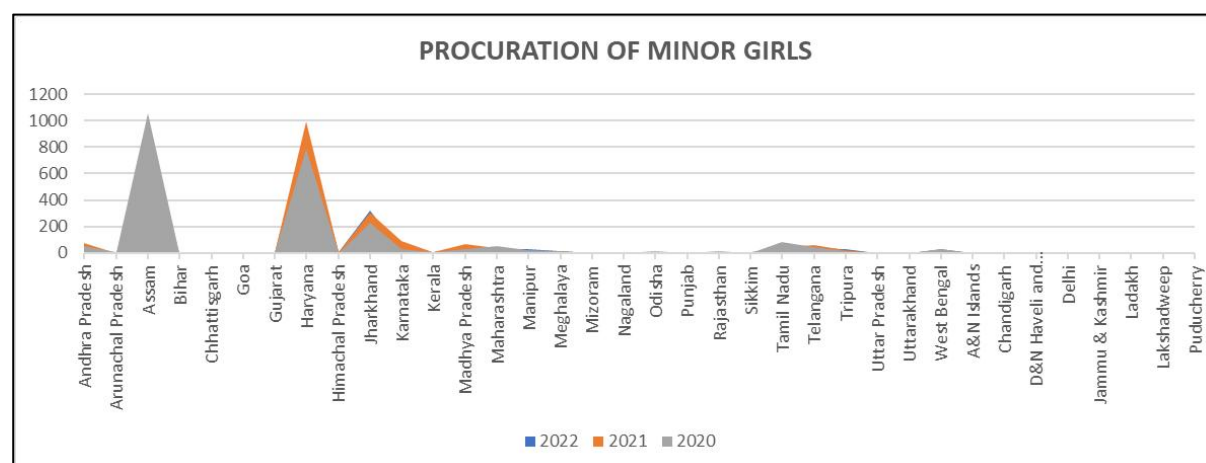
Graph 5.2.4. Human Trafficking State Wise Statistics Graph



Source: Authors compilation based on the data collected from NCRB crime reports

With a significant 218 incidences in 2022 and a fall from the 270 cases in 2021, Maharashtra reported the largest number of cases. Telangana comes next, with 159 cases in 2022—up from 115 the year before. Assam (55 cases), Madhya Pradesh (42 cases), and Odisha (70 cases) are some other states with high numbers of cases. In all of India's states, there were 781 cases of human trafficking in 2022, compared to 914 in 2021. This decrease shows that, even with the apparent drop in cases reported, there are still difficulties in effectively fighting human trafficking. Low conviction rates for traffickers and insufficient responses from law enforcement are two factors that contribute to this problem.

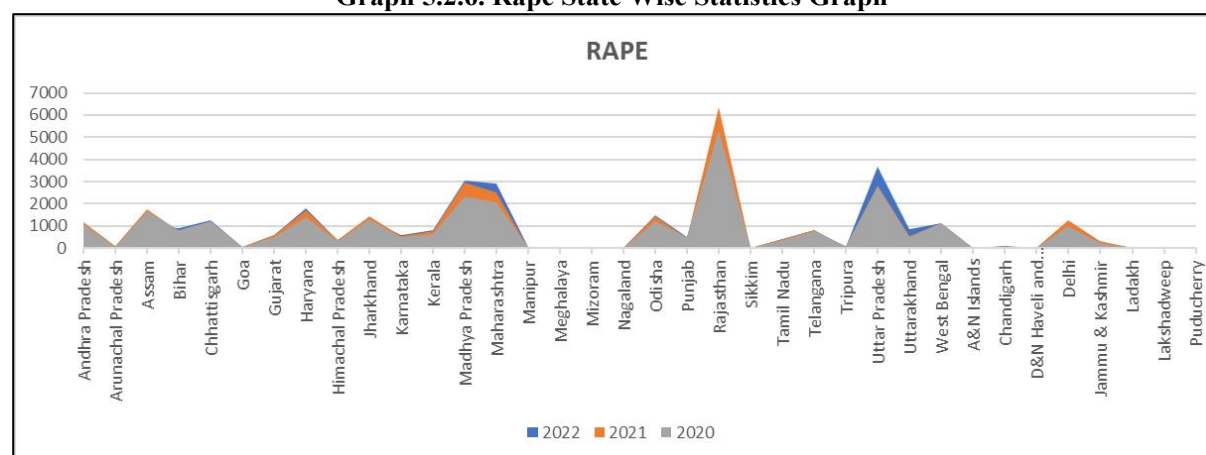
Graph 5.2.5. Procurement Of Minor Girls State Wise Statistics Graph



Source: Authors compilation based on the data collected from NCRB crime reports

With 918 incidences in 2022, which is a slight decrease from the year before when the number was 992 cases, Haryana was the state with the peak number. Assam is on the second place with 285 occurrences in 2022 and it was a sudden shift from 854 the year before. Jharkhand was next with 321 cases, followed by Andhra Pradesh (55 cases) and Madhya Pradesh (25 cases), among others, with some significant numbers. In 2022, total cases reported were 1829 in all states, compared to 2637 in 2021. Despite the great huge numbers as a symptom of the grave exploitation and trafficking of young girls, a downward trend might be an indication of some improvement in this area. Even though IPC Section 366A provides for a legal framework that is intended to shield children from such exploitation, it's effective enforcement remains difficult.

Graph 5.2.6. Rape State Wise Statistics Graph



Source: Authors compilation based on the data collected from NCRB crime reports

The state with the most occurrences, Madhya Pradesh, recorded an astounding 3,029 incidents in 2022—a modest increase from 2,947 in 2021. Maharashtra is next in line, reporting 2,904 cases in 2022 compared to 2,496 the year before. Not to be outdone, Uttar Pradesh had an increase in cases from 2,845 in 2021 to 3,690 in 2022. Although it is less than the 6,337 instances reported in 2021, Rajasthan remains a major problem with 5,399 cases reported in 2022. Haryana (1,787 cases), Odisha (1,464 cases), and Jharkhand (1,298 cases) are some other states with high numbers. In 2022, there were 31,516 recorded rape incidents in all states, a little decrease from 31,677 the year before.

A complex structure of cultural, social, and systemic factors that frequently go unnoticed is revealed by the differences in crime rates against women across Indian states, especially between states like Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Assam compared to Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, and Mizoram.

Political representation is also one of the main indicators as to how women's rights legislation takes shape. In most of the country's states which have higher levels of crime, there is a noticeable lack of female presence within the legislative bodies. For instance, in Uttar Pradesh, throughout its history, women have held fewer seats with political influence; in 2022, for example, women held approximately just 8% of the state's seats within the legislative assembly. These types of problems not only hinder the policymaking and their executions but also do not let have effective laws for the protection of women from maltreatment. Uttar Pradesh state has a significant number of crime instances as the number of cases it registered in 2022 was 65,743. The deeply rooted patriarch standards of the state, which pressures families through dowries, makes violence against women quite normal.

Even though there is a very high and encouraging rate of conviction at 70.8%, the problems largely lie within the institutions; this mainly places the responsibility on the intimidating and social disapproval that comes their way, thereby discouraging them from coming forward. Similar problem cases for violence in Rajasthan prevail, where the family honour-based cultural customs can raise the momentum to take drastic steps against those who do not fit into the well-set order. The rising acid attacks are often incited by revenge or a sense of being insulted, and the state is witnessing a disturbing rise in acid attacks along with an unsettling rise in domestic violence due to the societal restrictions that dissuade many women from reporting the incident and economic dependency. The judicial system fails to deliver expeditious justice as well as the much-needed care to the victims. Madhya Pradesh shares similar issues particularly regarding the percentage of abuse from spouses or extended family members.

Unemployment pressures-high levels of unemployment-aggravate domestic violence, as societal myths regarding women's status place them below that of men. Illiteracy and ignorance about their rights conspires among women and the lack of education feed the cycle of violence. Although the state of Maharashtra gives a more progressive picture in its main cities like Mumbai, the state still has grave issues related to sexual violation and human trafficking. The existence of vastly different opinions among the diversely populated state brings much difference of opinion about women's rights, and there are as many as 45,331 cases documented in 2022. In the rural areas, deep-rooted beliefs would lead to discrimination and vulnerability for most women. These issues are made worse by economic inequality that leaves more minor girls of lower socio-economic groups more vulnerable to trafficking networks. The more serious threat that Assam faces is the abduction of young girls. Cultural and other social compulsions toward early marriage have contributed to the victimization of young girls in the state. The situation contributes to their vulnerability to exploitation as well as violence because of prolonged ethnic conflicts and political instability in the State. Efforts are often frustrated by insufficient legal protection for the victims, coupled with a lack of resources in supporting them.

Social structures in states such as Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, and Mizoram are based on the principles of matrilineal traditions, which further enhances the deterrence of crimes against women.

Assam is one of those cases where acute problems in procurement of minor girls exist. Societal pressures in early marriages and cultural practices in the context of early marriages victimize young girls within the state. Ongoing ethnic conflicts and political instability heighten the risks for women, moving them more into the control of vigilante justice, exploitation, or violence. Weak legal protections and a scarcity of resources to assist the victims curtail efforts to root out such imperfections. In contrast, states like Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, and Mizoram have fewer crimes against women due to more egalitarian social structures that are still operated by matrilineal traditions. Women play very important roles in their families and communities and thus enhance their social status. While high literacy and easy access to education empower effective challenges to restrictive conventions, robust community support networks work towards advancing gender equality and preventing violence against women.

5.3 Efficiency of law and judiciary systems

1. Law & Order:

Different laws guide people in a country in order to provide law and order: It is true that a hierarchy of laws, which are based on the Constitution of India, governs India. Which is governed in India by the Ministry of Law & Justice. In the hearing of criminal cases in India we have the Indian Penal Code 1860: The definition of offences and punishment in respect to different crimes such as theft, murder, and even

cybercrime is covered in IPC. Criminal Procedure Code, 1973: This code states the steps that are supposed to and are followed in the commission of trial, investigation and sentencing of offences in India. Indian Evidence Act 1872: The act pertains to the evidence that is presented in court.

2. Judiciary System:

Judiciary has to take a respective as well as an active position with regard to the enforcement of the rule of law and protecting human rights: India has a multi-tiered judiciary. This body is represented hierarchically by the Supreme Court of India which is the final appellate tribunal and is aimed at constitutional interpretation and resolution of conflicts. The High Courts have jurisdiction over two to three states or can comprise the entire Superior court in respect to one state. Subordinate Courts, particularly District and Sessions Courts are closer to the citizens and are below the district level in the hierarchy. Indian Judicial System also embeds Specialized (pro-bono) services within the ambit of various schemes and the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 to promote free legal services to targeted population groups. With the rise of technology and modernization of ideas, the courts are adjusting to the new needs through the implementation of the(out-of-court) modes of dispute resolution.

5.3.3 Laws for Crime Against Women:

Table 5.3.1. Crimes Reported Against Women In 2022

Nature of Crime	Incidents Reported
Cruelty by Husband	1440019
Rape	31516
Procuration of Minor Girls	1857
Human Trafficking	781
Murder	248
Acid Attack	124

Source: Authors compilation based on the data collected from NCRB crime reports

Rape: Under Section 375 and 376 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), defines rape and provides punishment for the offence. The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013 increased penalties for rape and introduced provisions for more severe punishment for gang rape and custodial rape.

Murder: Under Section 302 of the IPC, deals with the punishment for murder. Additionally murder related to dowry demands, is treated as dowry death under Section 304B of the IPC, carrying a minimum of seven years to life imprisonment.

Acid Attack: Under Section 326A and 326B of the IPC, Specifically deals with acid attacks, with imprisonment for 10 years to life imprisonment, and a fine to meet medical expenses for the victim's treatment. Section 326B criminalizes the attempt to throw acid.

Procuration of Minor Girls: Under Section 366A of the IPC, Prohibits the act of procuring a minor girl (under 18 years) for illicit purposes, with punishment extending up to 10 years of imprisonment and a fine.

Cruelty by Husband or In-Laws: Under Section 498A of the IPC, criminalizes cruelty by a husband or his relatives towards a woman. Cruelty may include physical or mental harm and harassment for dowry demands.

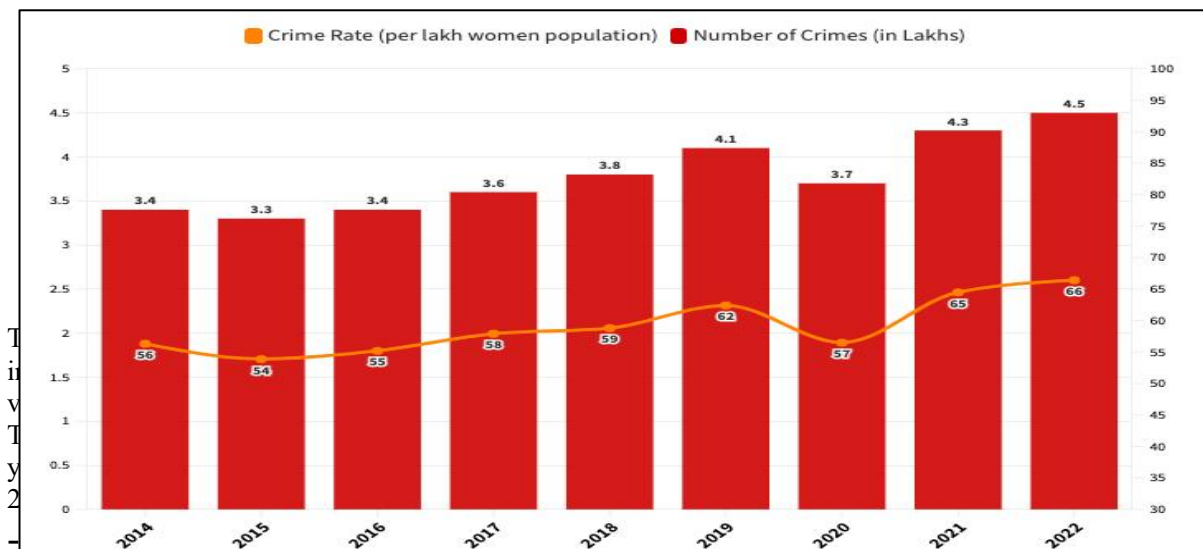
Human Trafficking: Under Section 370 of the IPC & Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act (ITPA), 1956, Section 370 of the IPC defines human trafficking and prescribes penalties depending on the severity and nature of the offence. The ITPA is a comprehensive law dealing with the prevention of trafficking for sexual exploitation, providing stringent punishments for traffickers and ensuring the rescue and rehabilitation of victims.

These laws, along with special provisions like The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 and The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013, aim to ensure that women in India have access to legal remedies and protection against various forms of violence and exploitation.

3. Judicial Data

The NCRB records crimes committed against women under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Special and Local Laws (SLL). As per this data, the total number of crimes against women was 3,37,922 in 2014. By 2022, this figure had risen to 4,45,526, reflecting a significant increase of over 31% in less than a decade. Even when compared to the total number of crimes per lakh women population, the crimes against women increased from 56.3 in 2014 to 66.4 by 2022.

Graph 5.3.1. Cases Registered For Crimes Against Women



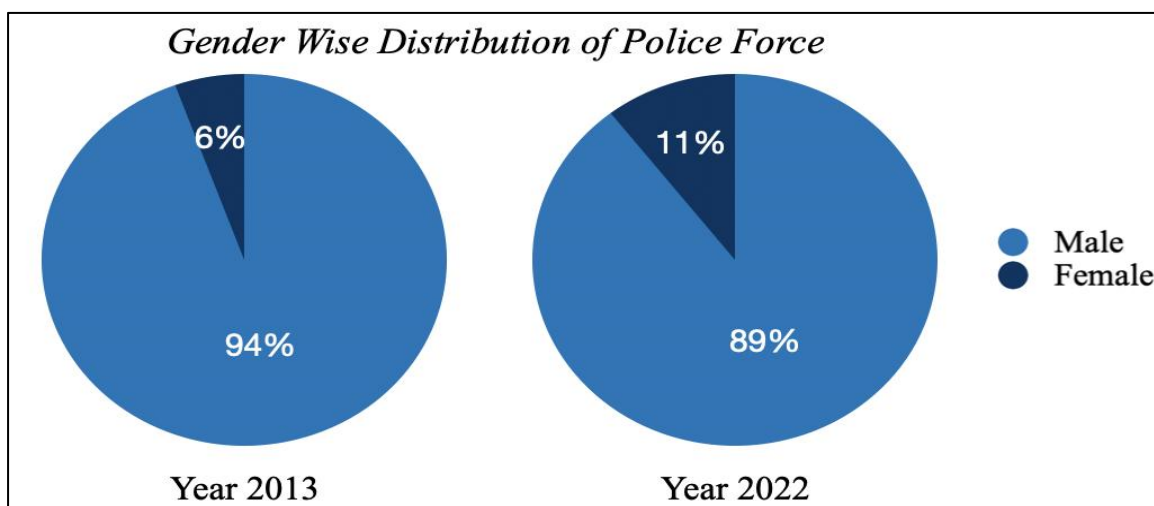
In the over 36 lakh cases filed by women that are pending in district and subordinate courts across the country since 2014, as on December 15, 2022, the three states with the highest number are Uttar Pradesh with 7,80,578 pending cases, Maharashtra with 3,83,463 pending cases and Bihar with 3,77,885 cases. The high number of pending cases is despite various fast-track courts set up by the government. As on October 31, 2022, a total of 838 fast track courts were functional for heinous crimes, crimes against women, and children etc, as per the ministry's reply. The number of pending cases filed by women is a cause of grave concern amid rising crimes against women, which rose 15.3% in 2021, according to the National Crime Records Bureau. (Newsclick, 2022)

Causes for Increase in Case Dependency:

In India, reasons for the rising case dependency ratio are systemic factors such as overworked courts, lengthy legal proceedings, and poor judicial facilities. There has been a creation of special trial courts, but, particularly in states like Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Bihar, the number of cases has driven the court system into a near collapse. Moreover, there has been an upsurge in the reporting of crime owing to better reporting tools and increased awareness on what constitutes a crime. Still, the courts have not been able to deal with the new cases fast enough, and this caused further case overcrowding. Apart from that, the shortage of time in conducting investigations, lack of judges and the legal system itself further adds to the problem of time in arriving at a verdict.

Women Representation in the Police Force:

Graph 5.3.2 Gender Wise Distribution of Police Force



The percentage of women in the police force of India has seen a steady growth over the last 10 years, rising from 5.87% (0.97 lakh) in 2013 to 11.75% (2.46 lakh) in 2022. However, it still falls short of the standard target set by Union Home Ministry of India of 33%. States with the highest number of women police personnel are Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Delhi & Rajasthan.

As of January 2022, there are over 2.46 lakh women police personnel out of which majority serve as constables also meaning that there is only one woman police personnel for every 2800 females in India. Women police stations (comprising an all-women staff) rose to 745 on 01.01.2022 from 518 on 01.01.2014. of the 745 such police stations, 202 are located in Tamil Nadu, 77 in UP, 52 in Madhya Pradesh and 48 in West Bengal.

Essentially, the home ministry has issued advisors to increase the representation of women in the police force & create more women police stations. The aim of the ministry is that each police station should have at least three women Sub-Inspectors and 10 women constables, so that a women's help desk is manned around the clock.

4. **Recent Changes In The Judicial System:**

4.1 **Bharatiya Nyaya Sannita (BNS) & Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS):**

In 2023, India reformed its colonial-era criminal legislation and passed a complete legislative reform of the criminal justice system. The Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS, 2023) was introduced in place of the Indian Penal Code (IPC, 1860), it has now become the official criminal code of the country since July 1, 2024. The Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS, 2023) sets the procedure for administering substantive criminal law, substituting the Criminal Procedure Code of 1973.

(A) Provisions that Prioritize Women's Safety:

The punishment for rape went from seven years to ten years by the BNS, 2023, which corresponds to Section 376 of IPC, 1860. Statement of rape victims is compulsory and will be recorded by a woman police officer in presence of her guardian or relative and medical reports have to come within seven days.

The provision for the death penalty for gang rape of women below 18 years of age under section 70 of BNS. Section 72 of BNS, 2023, now actively protects the identities of sexual assault victims.

All offences against women below the age of 18 are now uniformly aligned with The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (POCSO, 2018), simplifying the procedure.

A new provision under Section 69 has been introduced that governs sexual intercourse by employing deceitful means.

Pursuing these substantive provisions, the *Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023* introduces streamlined judicial procedures for sensitive crimes. Changes include submitting a mandatory medical examination report to the police station and court within 7 days. Free first aid or medical treatment to victims of crimes against women and children at all hospitals. The magistrate must take cognizance within 14 days, and the accused's request for acquittal must be made within 60 days.

(B) Streamlined Procedures and Leveraging Technology:

A strong digital infrastructure is currently used to support and enhance legal procedures. It demonstrates the government's dedication to modernizing and digitizing the criminal justice system. The Inter-Operable Criminal Justice System is the umbrella organization for this digital infrastructure (ICJS). The five pillars that make up this infrastructure are e-FIR, e-forensics, e-prosecution, e-courts, and e-prisons. This integrated system facilitates improved coordination amongst the many players in the criminal justice system by speeding up and guaranteeing the correctness of legal proceedings.

Women can file complaints via electronic FIR, and they will receive a response in two days. To narrow the frame scope, a new clause now requires video recording of evidence, search, and seizure. In situations involving sexual offences, statements will be taken by female judicial magistrates. The ICJS's digital infrastructure facilitates seamless data recording, integration, reporting and searching capabilities, enhancing the ability to track criminal activities across state boundaries. It mainly supports the implementation of procedures outlined in the BNSS, prioritizing citizen safety.

(C) Databases created by the National Crimes Records Bureau (NCRB):

The government has established specialized databases under the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems (CCTNS) umbrella in response to the urgent need for effective and timely investigation. Some of the data bases from the National Crimes Records Bureau (NCRB) specific to women's safety include:

- Investigations Tracking System for Sexual Offences (ITSSO): Allows the state to undertake real-time monitoring and management of cases of rape and POCSO to be able to complete the investigation in two months.
- National Database on Sexual Offenders (NDSO): This is a searchable registry of offenders for various sexual offences like rape, gang rape, eve teasing, stalking, child abuse, etc. It includes the offender's name, address, photograph and fingerprint details.
- The Cyber Crime Prevention Against Women and Children Scheme (CCPWC): The portal caters to citizens, State/UT Police and other Law Enforcement Agencies. The NCRB recently signed an MOU with the National Centre for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) USA to share the Cyber Tip-line reports related to child sexual abuse material.
- The National Database of Human Traffickers (NDHT): A one-stop database for all information related to offenders involved in cases related to the Human Trafficking of Children and Women.

4.2 Essential General Changes:

(A) Judgments, Arrests, and Official Procedure

According to the new laws, judgment in criminal cases has to come within 45 days of completion of trial and charges must be framed within 60 days of first hearing. Summonses can now be served electronically, expediting legal processes, reducing paperwork and ensuring efficient communication among all parties involved. Courts can grant a maximum of two adjournments to avoid unnecessary delays in case hearings, ensuring timely justice delivery. Video recording of all searches and seizures have been made mandatory. Both the accused and the victim are entitled to receive copies of the FIR, police report, charge sheet, statements, confessions, and other documents within 14 days.

(B) Zero FIR

According to the new directive, Zero FIR facilitates registering first information report prior to the jurisdiction of the police station. This removes the waiting period for the filing of a complaint as well different offenders are reported immediately. Person is not required to go to a police station in order to report an incident. It can be done using communication for example, phone or instigation through email. This makes it easier for incidents to be reported and thus enabling the police to act quickly.

4.3 Political Impact on Law & Order (BJP):

Before 2014: Before the BJP came to power, issues of crimes against women in India with respect to the law and the judiciary faced many obstacles. Although new bills were enacted after the mass protest following the 2012 Nirbhaya gang rape case such as the Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill 2013, the results always were not so triumphant. Delays in court hearings and judgments, unprepared and poorly trained police work, and ignorance of gender issues led to women victims of assault not coming forward to report their abuse or being discouraged from doing so. It was one of the reactive provisions, whereas, at that time, the political climate, though being a bit in favour of women being socially empowered, did not permit cognizant functional reforms to be instituted at a broader spectrum quickly.

Post 2014: Ever since the Indian government has been in the hands of the BJP in office, there are remarkable changes in law development for the crimes against women. The 2018 death penalty for the child rapists and the 2019 amendments to the POSH Act are just some of the measures taken to create a more responsible jurisprudence concerning gender based violence. Programs such as the 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' campaign also point out the concern of the BJP administration to the safety and empowerment of women. Nevertheless, concerns remain about the slowness of the judicial process and the efficacy of law enforcement. Even with the better legal structures in place, still the distance between laws and their performance remains

Efficiency and Political Influence: The judicial system's efficiency in addressing crimes against women has seen incremental improvements under the BJP's tenure, but it still struggles with delays and poor implementation. While legislation has become more robust, the political environment in India continues to reflect deep-rooted societal issues such as patriarchy and caste dynamics, which sometimes dilute the impact of legal reforms. Although the BJP's initiatives have brought attention to women's rights, the overall efficiency of the judicial system depends heavily on improving law enforcement, reducing judicial delays, and fostering a culture where women's safety is genuinely prioritized beyond political rhetoric.

5. Challenges for the Ministry of law and justice:

Socio-Cultural Barriers: Gender discrimination is still prevalent because of the negative attitudes and stereotypes entrenched in society's patriarchal ideologies, making it taboo to talk about violence against women. In many occasions, victims are reluctant to report a crime due to fear of being stigmatized or being blamed as the cause of their family's shame. This cultural context also discourages law enforcement from being exercised in a meaningful way and instils a degree of boldness to offenders.

Lack of Legal Awareness: An Indian context finds that many women especially in rural India do not have an adequate appreciation and understanding of the law in regard to their civil rights. There are laws like the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act and the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act which are more than effective remedies but the problem is that most people are not educated or have a poor education outreach. Violent crimes and incidents have remained unreported for an extended period of time since women fail to utilize the laws available for them.

Inadequate Law Enforcement and Delays in the Judicial Process: Laws that constitute provisions for the protection of women have been put in place; but so many practical problems like unqualified police officers, especially in domestic violence cases and busy courts come into play. Oversights are rampant, especially with the prosecution of the women defence, unreasonable delays in the justice system make victims think twice about seeking those very remedies.

Legislative Loopholes and Insufficient Punishments: There are still gaps in existing laws that allow perpetrators to escape justice. For instance, marital rape is not criminalised in India, leaving many women vulnerable within their own homes. Additionally, while strict laws like the Nirbhaya Act have been passed, critics argue that the punishments are not always deterrent enough.

Inadequate Rehabilitation and Support Mechanisms: Beyond legal justice, the government faces the challenge of providing adequate support and rehabilitation for survivors of gender-based violence. Shelter homes, mental health services, and vocational training are often underfunded and poorly managed, leaving survivors without the necessary tools for recovery. Without comprehensive rehabilitation, women continue to face marginalization, which complicates the government's efforts to fully address the issue of crime against women.

6.4 Government initiatives

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 centers 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-reliant.

The government has hence, started a number of initiatives since 2019.

1. Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2018 (Implemented into 2019):

The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2018, was a pivotal reform aimed at strengthening laws related to sexual offenses, particularly against women and children. Although it was enacted in late 2018, its implications were felt strongly in 2019 and beyond.

The main features of this act included,

- The act introduced the death penalty for rapists of children under 12 years of age, reflecting a zero-tolerance policy toward heinous crimes against minors.
- Mandated completion of police investigations within two months and trial completion within two months for rape cases, to expedite justice delivery.
- Increased the minimum sentence for rape from 7 years to 10 years and allowed for life imprisonment in severe cases.

The government initiated awareness campaigns and monitored compliance through regular reviews of the implementation of these laws across states.

The implementation of this has seen varying levels of success depending on the region :-

Imperative cities like Delhi claim to be one among the highest in registered cases coping with assaults on women, as well as molestation and rape. Introduction of fast-track courts and harsher punishments have gone a long way in expediting the process of justice. Still, enforcement has made progress but societal attitudes even if some stigma fades away and few criminals are held accountable.

Opera in Metros like Chennai, the southern state of Tamil Nadu is easily using the preventive provision for women and putting them to great use. The training of the police has been highlighted, and women's safety cells have been established in police stations.

Uttar Pradesh: UP has struggled to implement the Act effectively because of a large number of cases and resource constraints. But gradually awareness is on the rise and fast-track courts in places like Lucknow, Varanasi among others reduced time for rape cases. In addition to causing psychological pressures, physical violence and logistical hurdles continue to hamper the efficacy of POCSO implementation — although fast-track courts exist in some states.

2. Women Help Desks in Police Stations (2019):

With a view to make police accessible and friendly for women, there is transformational step being taken by government across India that from now on Women Help Desks will be made available round the clock at all necessary place with mandatory woman force (of course special looking into space concern). Some of the features of this act were

- Gender-Sensitive Personnel: Each desk is staffed with female officers trained to handle women's complaints with empathy and understanding.
- Support Services: The desks offer guidance on legal rights, assistance in filing FIRs (First Information Reports), and connect victims to other support services.

And so, for effective implementation, The Ministry of Home Affairs issued guidelines for the establishment of these desks and monitored their functioning through periodic reviews and feedback mechanisms. Training programmes were also implemented.

This was designed to improve the accessibility of police stations for women and led to a flood in complaints regarding domestic violence & sexual abuse. They also acted as first responders for women in distress, increasing their access to justice.

With an objective of making police stations more women-friendly and approachable for citizens these are being set up as front desks staffed by Women at major Police Stations.

West Bengal: West Bengal has registered a relatively high count of women seeking help from the desks. These desks have been instrumental in applicant women reporting cases of sexual harassment and violence within the domestic fold; notably Kolkata has seen a large rise in percentage applicants for whom it would be first application at a police station

Rajasthan: The state has shown improvement in the process of recruitment for women constables, and setting up a women help desk at police stations, which led to increase in registration. But access, awareness still an issue in rural areas

3. One Stop Centres (OSC) Scheme:

The One Stop Centres (OSC) scheme provides services to women who have experienced violence, consolidating various support systems all under one roof.

Its main features included

Integrated Services: These centres provide medical assistance, psychological counselling, legal aid, police assistance, and temporary shelter.

24/7 Availability: Many centres operate round the clock; ensuring help is accessible at all times.

For better implementation of the same, the government expanded the network of One Stop Centres, mainly in rural areas, while focusing on reaching marginalized women. Training for staff at these centres emphasized a compassionate approach while dealing with survivors of violence.

The OSCs have been instrumental in providing immediate and comprehensive support to survivors. They help navigate the legal and healthcare systems. Women have reported feeling safer and more supported when accessing these services, indicating a positive shift in how they perceive institutional support.

For instance

Andhra Pradesh has set up several One Stop Centres in both urban and rural areas. These centres have been very effective in providing victims with immediate support.

Uttarakhand has expanded its OSCs to districts such as Dehradun and Nainital. UP also runs regular awareness programs about these centres, making them accessible for women in distress.

4. Nirbhaya Fund Initiative:

Nirbhaya Fund, instituted to ensure women safety in the wake of increased crime against them had given countless projects for security and empowerment of women throughout India but there was no significant change.

Its main features were

Emergency Response System: Women were allowed to reach the emergency service through (112) on a single number with quick help, CAS system providing GPS tracking

Safe City Projects: Project was designed to target improved infrastructure the urban areas, including; CCTVs with surveillance at difficult points of cities across states and UTs, Improvement in Street Lighting, Women-only Transport services etc.

The Nirbhaya Fund supported convergence between the central and state governments to enforce safety measures and review progress. The campaign also had an awareness component to inform women about the services available from this fund.

This has resulted in a substantial reduction in reported crimes within the same vicinity due to strengthened surveillance and emergency response systems implemented for public safety. It has definitely created a sense of accountability in public spaces too, which makes women feel safer.

For instance

The installation of CCTVs has especially been on the rise in public spaces and within transport systems, further aiding cities such as Mumbai (one of India's biggest metros) benefit from greater investment being diverted into security infrastructure.

Chhattisgarh: Under Nirbhaya Fund schemes, the state has supported awareness programs and expansion of women's helpline services in Chhattisgarh. Surveillance in public spaces was a long pending demand especially for urban areas like Raipur where it has been used not just only as surveillance but also preventive effect.

Additionally, some significant policies range from the Fast-Track Courts for Rape Cases to the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act and Workplace Harassment Protections

Initiatives under Nirbhaya Fund and Fast-Track Courts for Rape Cases have been a vital factor in enhancing women's safety aspects as well reducing the time taken to deliver justice. Urban safety projects (e.g., LED street lights, CCTV cameras and Panic button) have also been facilitated from Nirbhaya Fund that set up in the aftermath of Delhi Horse Incident. The general presence of surveillance in areas are such missions to reduce crime. Rape cases have been fast-tacked by special courts, and the result has been that more people are being convicted for rape resulting in a growing public confidence in the judicial system.

This includes stronger workplace safety policies and maternal benefits for women such as the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, Workplace Harassment Protections. This will protect the women's pride and at the same time, encourage female workforce participation by allowing them for a longer duration of maternity leave with safety. A parallel scheme called Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao has specifically targeted the removal of gender biases in society and helped improve girls' access to education through increased school enrolment/retention rates for girls particularly in rural areas.

The government also created the National Database on Sexual Offenders (NDSO) and established mandatory death penalty for some sex offenses against Women had been a deterrent to hooligans. The NDSO has facilitated greater vigilance on repeat offenders by the law enforcement, and the death penalty continues to be a hallmark in punishment for more grotesque crimes signalling regard towards gender-based violence. These policies are intended to make women feel safe and secure by ensuring stricter punishment in crimes against them, beside enhancing surveillance.

7.2 Policy Recommendations For Safety Of Women In India

Despite many legal developments that try to protect women, gender-based violence and discrimination continue to spread, defeating the goal of their freedom. Here are some policy suggestions to consider improving women's safety through innovative intervention strategies that involve communities, use technology, improve education and strengthen legal frameworks.

1. Social security concept

Community participation: Community participation makes society safer for women. Communities can take their security from the bottom up only by allowing more community participation.

Formation of Local Safety Committees: Local communities should establish safety committees with members comprising residents, women's groups at the local levels, and representatives from local law enforcement agencies. Such committees can periodically review safety within their neighbourhoods and enumerate some points of potential risk and subsequently formulate strategies to mitigate those risks.

Awareness Campaigns: Regular workshop and seminar awareness campaigns can make the community aware of the importance of recognition and prevention of gender-based violence. The programs also train unwilling bystanders on how to intervene as bystanders in a harassed or even full-on assaulted situation.

Co-operation with the Local NGOs: The success of community programs may further contribute towards a better result if local non-government organizations are involved. It is recognized that NGOs have more training and resources to organize training sessions and awareness programs to keep the community alert and up to date.

2. Smart surveillance system

Incorporating public safety technology will greatly improve the surveillance system in public areas and speed up the response in case of violent incidents.

Artificial intelligence-based surveillance: The integration of an overhead camera system with artificial intelligence will help identify suspicious activity and report it to authorities. It informs the authorities in real time without violating the privacy rights of individuals.

Integration with emergency services: A monitoring system linked to local police stations saves time because the same services can respond in the event of an accident. With this integration, the police can respond quickly and efficiently, increasing the chances of avoiding violence.

Community feedback development method: the community should support transparency and accountability by the community through feedback on the effectiveness of the activities. Therefore, this method increases the scrutiny of the strategies of the authorities, thereby increasing the degree of public confidence in the security plans.

Make the public aware of surveillance programs: This will help clear up some confusion about privacy violations. This information can be combined with seminars, public meetings and information programs to inform the public about the benefits and potential limitations of such technologies.

3. Safe travel arrangements

Special services for women: Transportation is a major concern for women in general and their safety. Safe travel arrangements help people travel without risk.

Women-only transport: Running special women-only buses and car rentals during peak hours makes women's transport safe and secure. These services need to be accompanied by public awareness to increase their use.

Safety Features in Ridesharing Applications: Adding more safety features by ridesharing companies is a must. It should include GPS tracking, driver verification processes and emergency call options that make cycling more convenient.

Discount schemes: Subsidizing various types of safe vehicles can not only promote their use, but also make the services affordable. The government can work with private providers for these projects.

Driver training: Long-term training, including respectful behavior and interaction with women who use transport services and work in dangerous conditions, can be provided to improve more transport services for women.

4. Digital awareness programs

Education through technology: This should be used to promote these programs beyond education, which may have an impact beyond society's attitudes to gender violence.

Social Media Campaigns: Creating awareness campaigns on social media is an effective way to raise public awareness of acceptance issues, respect and available advocacy opportunities. The ability to work with influencers and community leaders will expand the reach and impact of those programs.

Communication is key in online forums, including legal and self-defence procedures. Workshops can focus on different skills, such as bystander intervention techniques, to help participants work to prevent crime. These will be available across a wide range of populations to encourage wider participation.

Mobile safety applications: Encourage them to use mobile applications that allow them to report harassment or dangerous situations. These programs should connect users with local support services, emergency calls and safety improvements.

Integration of learning: Game elements can be integrated into safe and engaging educational programs. Interactive games and quizzes can help users understand their rights and why people should be respectful and humorous.

5. Empowerment through education

Safety education as part of the curriculum: Education plays an important role in socializing and shaping social attitudes towards gender. Safety education in the form of educational curricula can create a culture of respect from the beginning.

Personal Training: Personal training and personal safety training are part of the school curriculum for boys and girls to develop self-awareness and self-expression. In this regard, schools advise martial arts instructors and local organizations to initiate these programs.

Educational workshops for parents and teachers In educational workshops for parents or teachers, interested people can learn to understand and better deal with gender issues. Such understanding leads to a more supportive environment for children that encourages open discussion of questions about safety and respect.

Cooperation with NGOs: Cooperation with NGOs could be useful when carrying out education programs, particularly because NGOs can provide input and resources for any specialized programs that may be developed to reach the youth better in terms of giving deeper insight into the issue of gender and prevention of violence.

Peer Mentorship Programs. The introduction of peer mentorship programs in schools will, therefore, help the students develop skills to handle their safety challenges. This provides the older students with the capability to mentor the younger peers and thereby enhances community and mutual sharing.

6. Guidelines for safety in the workplace

Guidelines for the structure: Safety in the workplace can be created for women, and this is one of the ways to increase equality and ensuring a safe workplace for women.

All organizations should develop and implement workplace safety policies that outline specific actions to be taken when harassment or bullying occurs. These instructions must be communicated to all employees.

Regular employee training: Regular employee training ensures workplace respect and responsibility for preventing and dealing with workplace harassment. Therefore, appropriate training for them should include educational advice on the legal framework and assistance available to victims.

Anonymous transmission methods: Anonymous transmission methods are structures that allow files to be sent without being received. Women should have free access to these jobs.

Periodic workplace culture surveys Organizations should conduct surveys to confirm or deny the presence of bullying and harassment problems in the workplace. Anonymous research should play an important role in these studies to help shape future policy.

7. Legal Reforms

Simplification of Court Procedures: The legal framework should focus on corrective measures to improve women's safety. Simplifying procedures and access to justice is one of the main goals.

Establishment of fast-track courts for cases of gender-based violence: Special fast-track courts, especially to speed up the prosecution of gender-based violence, should be considered for speedy justice for victims has died. These courts are staffed by experienced judges and other legal support personnel who are familiar with the facts of these cases.

Maintenance Support Services: Maintenance Support Services is another important area. Providing legal aid, psychological counselling and rehabilitation programs to victims is essential to their recovery.

Public education on legal rights: Awareness of women's legal rights and mobilization of information and legal resources. Offering workshops and seminars that empower women to learn how to navigate the legal system to their advantage.

Strengthening the legal framework: existing laws and policies related to gender-based violence should be reviewed to identify gaps and weaknesses, to be comprehensive and effective in protection women's rights. In short, policy measures to improve women's security in India require a comprehensive approach that includes social participation, technological innovations, educational reforms and development. With these specific policy ideas for improvement, the Indian government should create a safer environment for women by empowering women and helping them strengthen their lives in society. Making this change is a long-term process that requires the commitment of many stakeholders around the world. The reality of cultural change can only happen when women move fearlessly in public spaces.

8. Limitations Of The Study

1. Objective Limitation- The study focuses on six specific categories of crimes against women: murder with rape or gang rape, acid attacks, cruelty by husbands or relatives, procurement of minor girls, human trafficking, and rape. It does not cover broader categories or unreported crimes.
2. Time Limitation- The findings are based on data from 2012 to 2022 and may not represent future crime trends or recent policy changes after this period.
3. Data Source Limitation- The study depends on secondary data from NCRB reports and may face issues like underreporting, inconsistencies in data collection, or misclassification of cases in official records.
4. Comparative Limitation. The cross-country analysis uses data from the Women, Peace, and Security Index, which may apply different data definitions or collection methods than NCRB. This could affect the comparability of the data.
5. Judicial and Policy Review Limitation- The policy evaluation in the research relies on publicly available documents and does not include insights from primary stakeholders such as law enforcement, the judiciary, or survivors.

9. Scope For Future Research

A micro-level study comparing urban and rural trends in crimes against women to identify local socio-cultural influences and enforcement gaps.

In-depth qualitative research involving survivor interviews and judicial case reviews to gain a better understanding of victims' experiences and the delays in justice.

A state-wise audit of policy implementation for women's protection schemes to assess their effectiveness on the ground.

Comparative research between India and other developing nations to examine how legal systems, societal norms, and reporting methods affect crime rates.

Investigating the role of education, media awareness, and digital safety tools in reducing crimes against women and empowering them to seek justice.

10. Conclusion

The frightening statistics about the unsolved murders, rapes, and cases of human trafficking in India tell an even deeper tale of defect within the criminal justice system. With more than 40% of such cases remaining unsolved, it's clear that systemic inefficiencies run rampant- and this is especially so during investigation and judicial processes. Low conviction rates compared to pending trials clearly shows the genuine bottlenecks and delays within the judiciary. As much as the statistics of arrests have increased, the simple fact of persisting trials reflects a phenomenal disconnection between law enforcement and effective prosecution.

In conclusion, the investigation finds that cultural values, socio-economic conditions, and systemic failures in law enforcement together compose the public landscape of violence against women across India. Strategies to redress these ills, incorporating local customs, would be most effective in working towards gender equality and women's empowerment. Through education and community engagement programs. It is only through the understanding of these underlying factors that policies on the reduction of violence against women can be developed to meet the challenges that feature within the entire country. Efficiency in India's legal and judicial systems is an important element for guaranteeing justice in crimes related to women. Such initiatives in reforms have included the introduction of stricter laws, such as harsher punishments for sexual offences as well as the employment of technology in law enforcement. These challenges continue to persist in the form of social barriers, lack of legal awareness, and slow court procedures. To make the country safe for women, law and order needs to be strong, judicial processes should be accelerated, and the support system for survivors should be made more effective and robust. Such a change can only be brought about through sustained multi-dimensional action from government and society. This is what the Indian government has been doing since 2019. Ensure women's safety and deliver justice. The main steps include the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, which brought improved punishment for sex-related crimes, and the Women Help Desks at the police stations for ease of police station assistance. One Stop Centres promise integrated support to a victim and added the feature Nirbhaya Fund that enhanced public safety through projects like the establishment of CCTVs and emergency response systems.

Together, it moves toward a safer environment, for the sake of victims, and delivering swift justice to the victims affected by gender-based violence. Ensuring the safety of women in India demands a holistic approach that incorporates community involvement, technological advancement, education, and stronger legal measures. It involves creating awareness on gender issues, making use of technology for safety, and making the courts or legal procedure speedy. After all these efforts, real change will this transformation will take time, for it will be seen only when women are secure in public spaces. It will come hand in hand with strong efforts and commitment towards gender equality, and then this will pave the way for a peaceful society, allowing everyone to exist together.

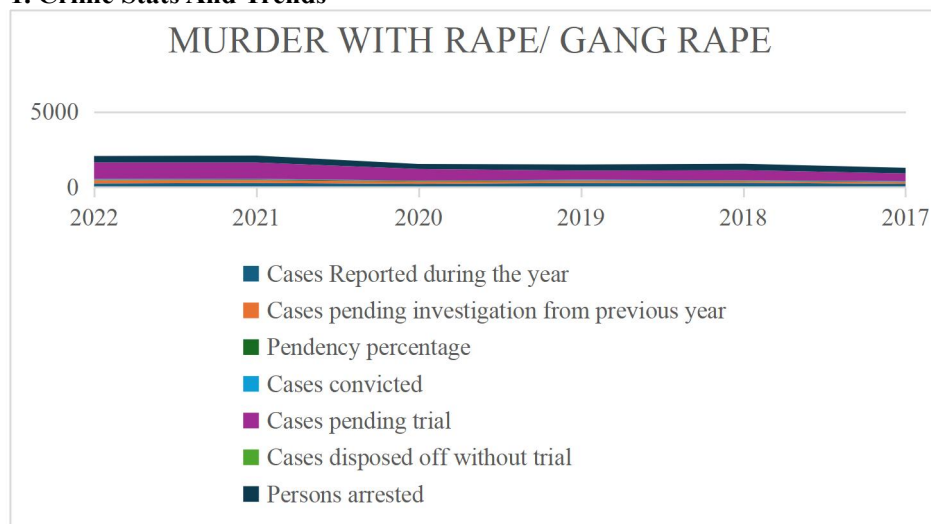
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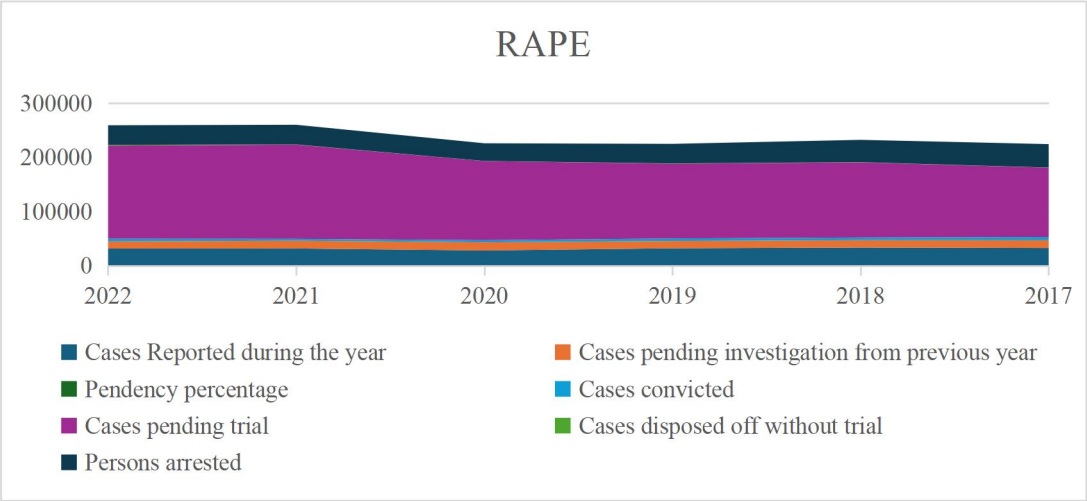
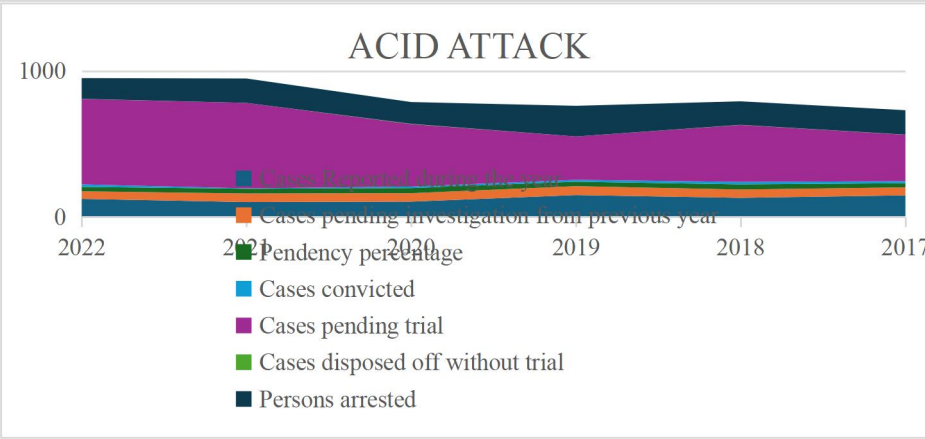
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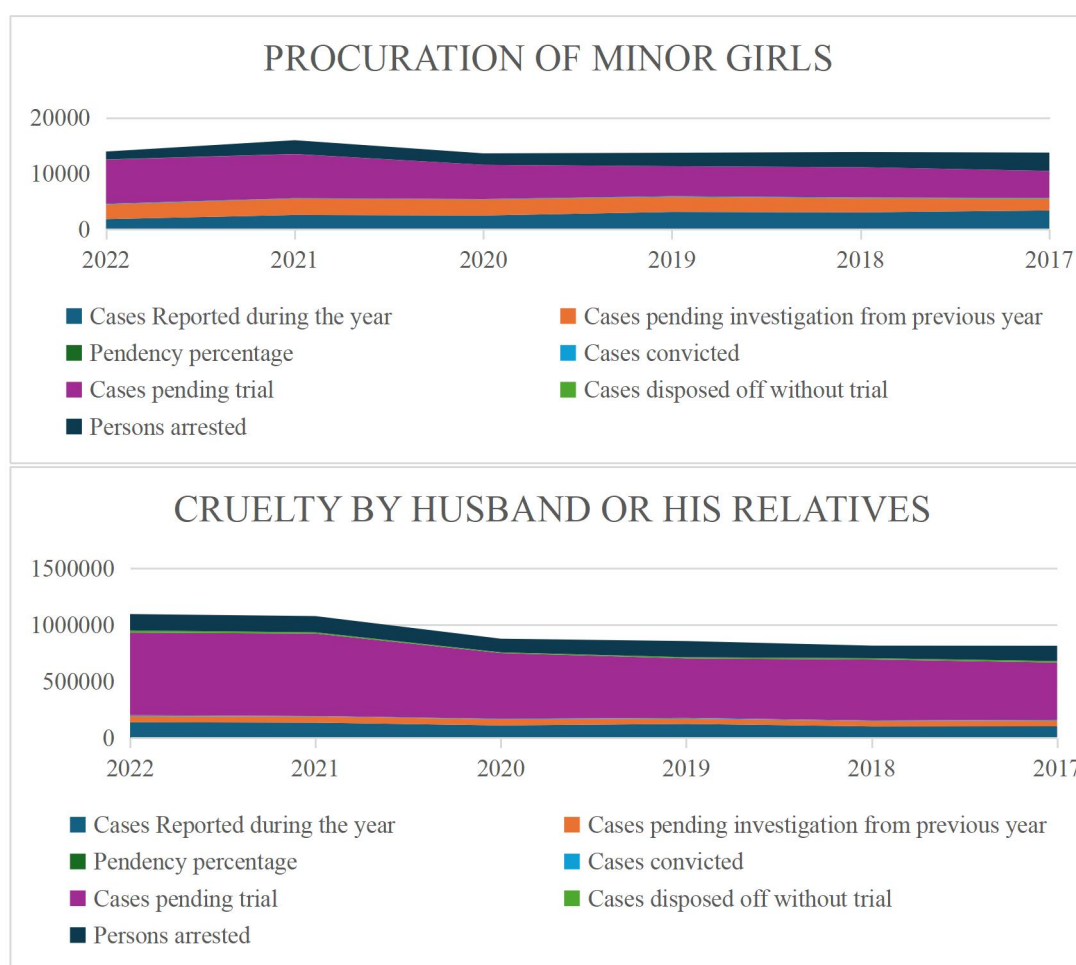
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Appendix

1. Crime Stats And Trends







2. State-wise Crime Statistics Against Women During The Years 2020-2022

MURDER WITH RAPE / GANG RAPE				
STATES:	2022	2021	2020	
Andhra Pradesh	8	2	5	
Arunachal Pradesh	0	0	0	
Assam	14	46	26	
Bihar	0	0	3	
Chhattisgarh	7	8	8	
Goa	1	0	1	
Gujarat	12	7	7	
Haryana	8	11	2	
Himachal Pradesh	2	0	8	
Jharkhand	7	20	9	
Karnataka	8	18	7	
Kerala	2	2	1	
Madhya Pradesh	41	35	27	
Maharashtra	22	23	20	
Manipur	0	0	2	
Meghalaya	1	4	2	

Mizoram	0	0	0
Nagaland	0	0	0
Odisha	14	12	18
Punjab	3	4	5
Rajasthan	9	14	8
Sikkim	0	1	0
Tamil Nadu	6	5	3
Telangana	7	12	14
Tripura	5	1	2
Uttar Pradesh	62	48	31
Uttarakhand	1	0	0
West Bengal	5	5	9
TOTAL STATE(S)	245	278	218
UNION TERRITORIES: 11			
A&N Islands	1	0	0
Chandigarh	0	1	0
D&N Haveli and Daman & Diu	2	3	0
Delhi	0	2	1
Jammu & Kashmir	0	0	0
Ladakh	0	0	0
Lakshadweep	0	0	0
Puducherry	0	0	0
TOTAL UT(S)	3	6	1
TOTAL ALL INDIA	248	284	219

ACID ATTACK			
STATES:	2022	2021	2020
Andhra Pradesh	3	2	4
Arunachal Pradesh	0	0	0
Assam	3	7	4
Bihar	3	1	1
Chhattisgarh	0	0	1
Goa	0	0	0
Gujarat	5	6	4
Haryana	6	6	1
Himachal Pradesh	0	0	0
Jharkhand	2	0	1
Karnataka	5	1	5
Kerala	4	1	4
Madhya Pradesh	7	5	5
Maharashtra	9	3	4
Manipur	0	0	0
Meghalaya	0	0	2
Mizoram	0	0	0
Nagaland	0	0	0

Odisha	4	3	6
Punjab	2	3	2
Rajasthan	4	3	2
Sikkim	0	0	0
Tamil Nadu	2	1	0
Telangana	3	1	3
Tripura	0	0	2
Uttar Pradesh	23	21	21
Uttarakhand	1	2	1
West Bengal	31	30	29
TOTAL STATE(S)	117	96	102
UNION TERRITORIES: 11			
A&N Islands	0	0	0
Chandigarh	0	0	1
D&N Haveli and Daman & Diu	0	0	0
Delhi	5	8	2
Jammu & Kashmir	2	1	0
Ladakh	0	0	0
Lakshadweep	0	0	0
Puducherry	0	0	0
TOTAL UT(S)	7	9	3
TOTAL ALL INDIA	124	105	105

CRUELTY BY HUSBAND OR HIS RELATIVES			
STATES:	2022	2021	2020
Andhra Pradesh	11964	7092	6546
Arunachal Pradesh	74	112	69
Assam	4704	12950	11408
Bihar	1850	2069	1935
Chhattisgarh	942	963	641
Goa	6	1	8
Gujarat	2166	2271	3345
Haryana	5883	5755	4119
Himachal Pradesh	196	221	259
Jharkhand	850	931	857
Karnataka	2812	2336	2055
Kerala	4998	4997	2707
Madhya Pradesh	8486	7929	5540
Maharashtra	11367	10095	6729
Manipur	10	18	7
Meghalaya	28	21	17
Mizoram	4	11	7
Nagaland	3	2	2
Odisha	5322	4889	3659
Punjab	1640	1714	1271
Rajasthan	18847	16949	13765
Sikkim	2	3	1
Tamil Nadu	1043	875	689
Telangana	9996	9468	7453
Tripura	338	355	356
Uttar Pradesh	20371	18375	14454
Uttarakhand	954	519	668
West Bengal	19650	19952	19962
TOTAL STATE(S)	134506	130873	108529
UNION TERRITORIES: 11			
A&N Islands	5	4	2
Chandigarh	83	95	96
D&N Haveli and Daman & Diu	10	6	4
Delhi	4901	4731	2557
Jammu & Kashmir	500	501	349
Ladakh	2	9	3
Lakshadweep	3	3	0
Puducherry	9	12	9
TOTAL UT(S)	5513	5361	3020
TOTAL ALL INDIA	140019	136234	111549

HUMAN TRAFFICKING			
STATES:	2022	2021	2020
Andhra Pradesh	32	71	64
Arunachal Pradesh	1	0	1
Assam	55	68	66
Bihar	25	15	15
Chhattisgarh	12	14	21
Goa	10	14	16
Gujarat	5	10	4
Haryana	10	15	9
Himachal Pradesh	0	1	0
Jharkhand	23	35	46
Karnataka	13	8	12
Kerala	25	60	72
Madhya Pradesh	42	52	34
Maharashtra	218	270	116
Manipur	0	1	2
Meghalaya	2	1	0
Mizoram	0	0	0
Nagaland	0	0	0
Odisha	70	93	56
Punjab	6	2	2
Rajasthan	5	3	2
Sikkim	0	0	0
Tamil Nadu	2	1	4
Telangana	159	115	52
Tripura	1	1	0
Uttar Pradesh	10	6	6
Uttarakhand	2	1	5
West Bengal	31	30	25
TOTAL STATE(S)	759	887	630
UNION TERRITORIES: 11			
A&N Islands	0	0	1
Chandigarh	0	1	2
D&N Haveli and Daman & Diu	0	0	1
Delhi	20	24	12
Jammu & Kashmir	2	2	0
Ladakh	0	0	0
Lakshadweep	0	0	0
Puducherry	0	0	0
TOTAL UT(S)	22	27	16
TOTAL ALL INDIA	781	914	646

PROCURATION OF MINOR GIRLS			
STATES:	2022	2021	2020
Andhra Pradesh	55	75	53
Arunachal Pradesh	0	1	2
Assam	285	854	1052
Bihar	0	1	0
Chhattisgarh	0	2	0
Goa	0	0	0
Gujarat	1	0	0
Haryana	918	992	787
Himachal Pradesh	4	7	1
Jharkhand	321	308	231
Karnataka	12	90	26
Kerala	7	2	5
Madhya Pradesh	25	64	32
Maharashtra	30	36	48
Manipur	26	17	23
Meghalaya	13	17	15
Mizoram	0	0	0
Nagaland	0	0	0
Odisha	0	7	10
Punjab	0	7	0
Rajasthan	1	6	11
Sikkim	2	0	0
Tamil Nadu	35	47	81
Telangana	40	59	46
Tripura	27	24	17
Uttar Pradesh	0	0	1
Uttarakhand	0	0	0
West Bengal	26	20	30
TOTAL STATE(S)	1828	2636	2471
UNION TERRITORIES: 11			
A&N Islands	0	0	0
Chandigarh	0	0	0
D&N Haveli and Daman & Diu	0	0	0
Delhi	0	1	0
Jammu & Kashmir	1	0	0
Ladakh	0	0	0
Lakshadweep	0	0	0
Puducherry	0	0	0
TOTAL UT(S)	1	1	0
TOTAL ALL INDIA	1829	2637	2471

RAPE			
STATES:	2022	2021	2020
Andhra Pradesh	621	1188	1095
Arunachal Pradesh	74	83	60
Assam	1113	1733	1657
Bihar	881	786	806
Chhattisgarh	1246	1093	1210
Goa	73	72	60
Gujarat	610	589	486
Haryana	1787	1716	1373
Himachal Pradesh	359	358	331
Jharkhand	1298	1425	1321
Karnataka	595	555	504
Kerala	814	771	637
Madhya Pradesh	3029	2947	2339
Maharashtra	2904	2496	2061
Manipur	42	26	32
Meghalaya	75	75	67
Mizoram	14	26	33
Nagaland	7	4	4
Odisha	1464	1456	1211
Punjab	517	464	502
Rajasthan	5399	6337	5310
Sikkim	13	8	12
Tamil Nadu	421	422	389
Telangana	814	823	764
Tripura	62	61	79
Uttar Pradesh	3690	2845	2769
Uttarakhand	867	534	487
West Bengal	1111	1123	1128
TOTAL STATE(S)	29900	30016	26727
UNION TERRITORIES: 11			
A&N Islands	12	15	2
Chandigarh	78	74	60
D&N Haveli and Daman & Diu	9	3	4
Delhi	1212	1250	997
Jammu & Kashmir	287	315	243
Ladakh	5	2	2
Lakshadweep	4	0	3
Puducherry	9	2	8
TOTAL UT(S)	1616	1661	1319
TOTAL ALL INDIA	31516	31677	28046