

RGICS

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RGICS BRIEF

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Crime against Women: Beyond Numbers

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Part-I Background

1.1 Introduction:

The Union Home Minister Mr. Rajnath Singh released the crime data compiled by the National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) for the year 2016 on 30th November 2017. The release of the data received a lot of media attention focusing on increase in incidents of crime, especially on the increasing crimes against women. In their haste to make headlines, the media declared certain states or cities most insecure or secure for women, based on reporting of the crime. For example, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh have been declared as most insecure for women as Delhi has reported highest rate of crime against women and Uttar Pradesh shares highest number of criminal incidents. Uttar Pradesh has always been on top of the list as it records nearly 14% of total crime against women. However, the rate of reported crime against women in the state is very low. In 2016, it has reported 47 cases per one lakh female population which is far less than crime rate of states like Delhi, Assam, Odisha and Telangana. Yes, there has been steady growth in reporting of crime in almost all states. In some states, the growth of reporting of crime has substantially increased in the last ten years, while in other states the growth of reporting is marginal. Due to various reasons, a large number of incidents of crime remain unreported in India. The NCRB report on crime is a mere compilation of incidents reported by Central and State level law enforcement agencies. Therefore, it is very clear that the NCRB data reveals increase or decrease in reporting of crime. It does not claim increase or decrease in actual incidents of crime. Therefore, tagging any city or state as most secure or insecure place based on NCRB data does not have any basis.

The issue of women security is not just a law and order issue, it goes much beyond and finds its roots in social and cultural practices and norms. More than half of crime against women occurs within family, where family member themselves criminally abuse and assault women. For example, cases pertaining to *Dowry Death*, and *Dowry and Cruelty by Husband or his Relative* together represented 45.3% of total crimes against women from 2007 to 2016. If we also track down offenders of remaining offences against women, then the numbers will be higher. Therefore, both the nature of crime and reporting of crime are very complex. While the NCRB report on crime is valuable documentation, we need to work a lot on these numbers to understand crime and nature of crime. This paper is an attempt to highlight some of the complexities that must be understood while analysing crime against women.

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1.2 Is Crime against Women on the rise?

Successive NCRB reports over the last ten years have shown an increase in reporting of crime against women. The number of incidents of crime reported has increased from 185,312 in 2007 to 338,954 cases in 2016. The table below (Table-1) shows a growth of nearly 83% in last ten years.

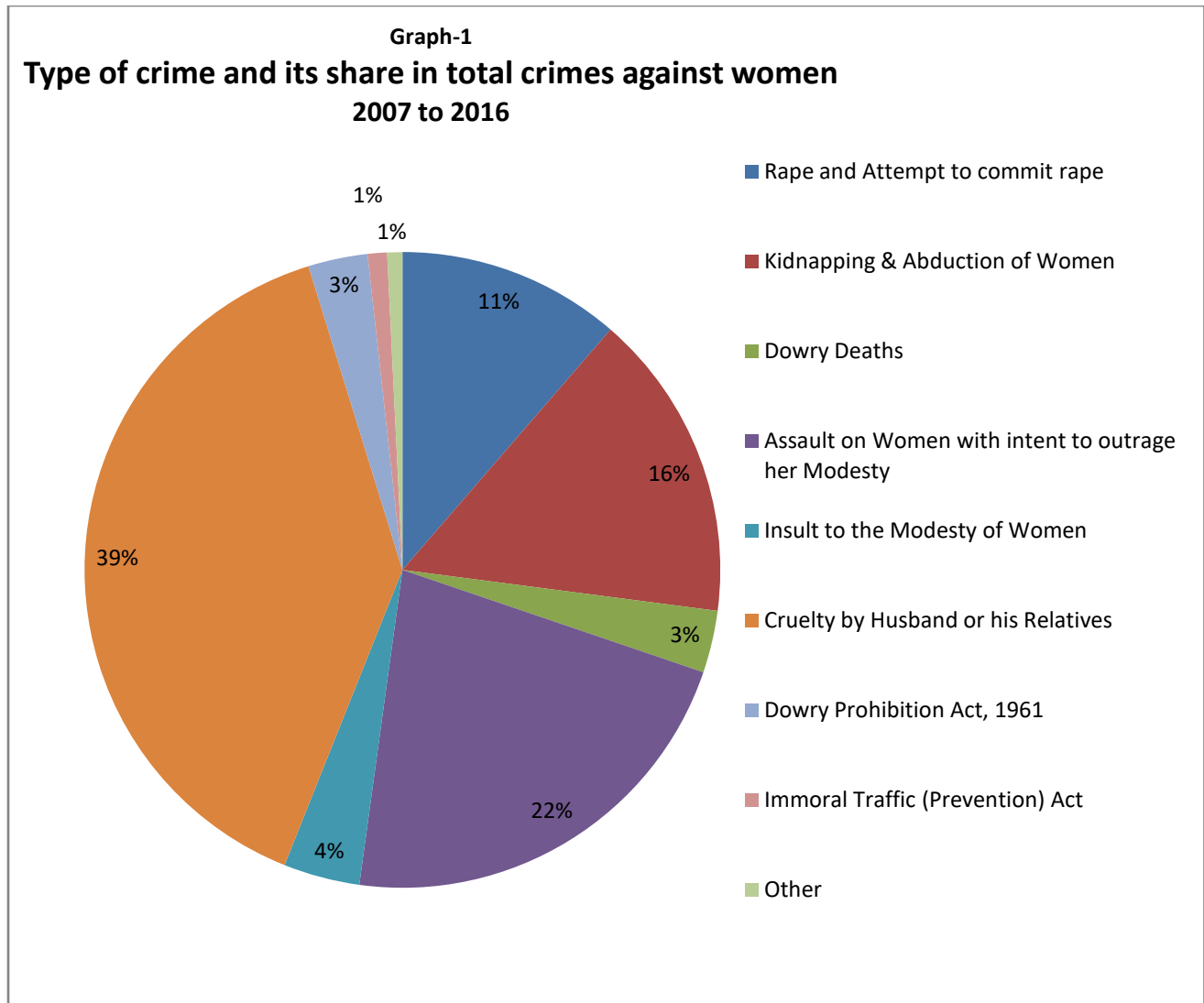
Table-1
Cases registered under various categories of Crime Against Women (2001-2016)

Crime Head	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Rape and Attempt to commit rape	20737	21467	21397	22172	24206	24923	33707	40969	39088	44676
Kidnapping & Abduction of Women	20416	22939	25741	29795	35565	38262	51881	57311	59277	64519
Dowry Deaths	8093	8172	8383	8391	8618	8233	8083	8455	7634	7621
Assault on Women with intent to outrage her Modesty	38734	40413	38711	40613	42968	45351	70739	82235	82422	84746
Insult to the Modesty of Women	10950	12214	11009	9961	8570	9173	12589	9735	8685	7305
Cruelty by Husband or his Relatives	75930	81344	89546	94041	99135	106527	118866	122877	113403	110378
Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961	5623	5555	5650	5182	6619	9038	10709	10050	9894	9683
Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act	3568	2660	2474	2499	2436	2563	2579	2070	2424	2214
Other	1261	1093	893	931	533	200	393	4220	4567	5796
Total Crimes against Women	185312	195857	203804	213585	228650	244270	309546	337922	327394	338954

Source: NCRB

Highest increase in last 10 years has been recorded in reporting of cases related to Kidnapping & Abduction (216%), Assault on Women (118%) and Rape & Attempt to Rape (115%). A significant decline in reporting of cases has been recorded relating to 'Insult to the Modesty of Women' (-33%) and Immoral Trafficking (Prevention) Act (-38%).

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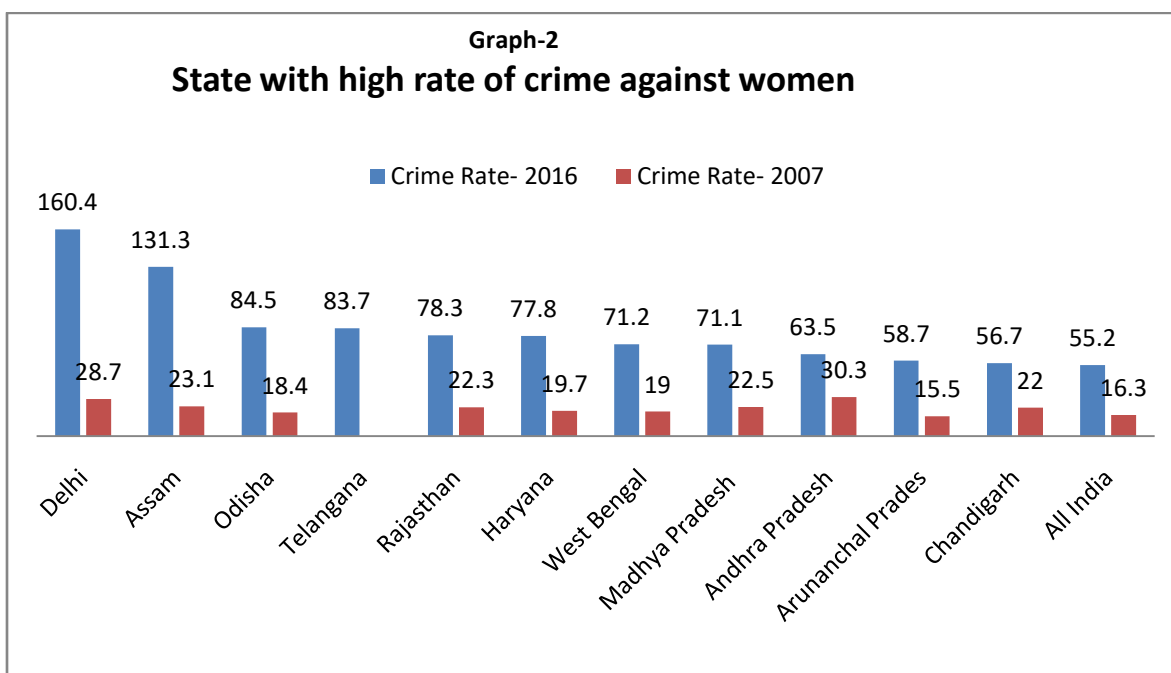
Source: NCRB

- In the last ten years, the maximum cases on crime against women were registered under the head ‘*Cruelty by Husband or his Relatives*’. On an average, it represented one third of total crime reported against women.
- On an average, in the last ten years top three most recorded crimes against women were namely ‘*Cruelty by Husband or his Relatives*’, ‘*Assault on Women with intent to Outrage her Modesty*’ and ‘*Kidnapping and Abduction*’. The statistics of all three put together accounted for 76.7% of total crime against women (see graph-1).

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1.3 Rate of Crime:

The ‘Crime Rate’ is also used to analyze crime. It is measured as average incident of crime per one lakh female population. According to the NCRB data the rate of crime against women has also sharply increased from 16.3 in 2007 to 55.2 in 2016.

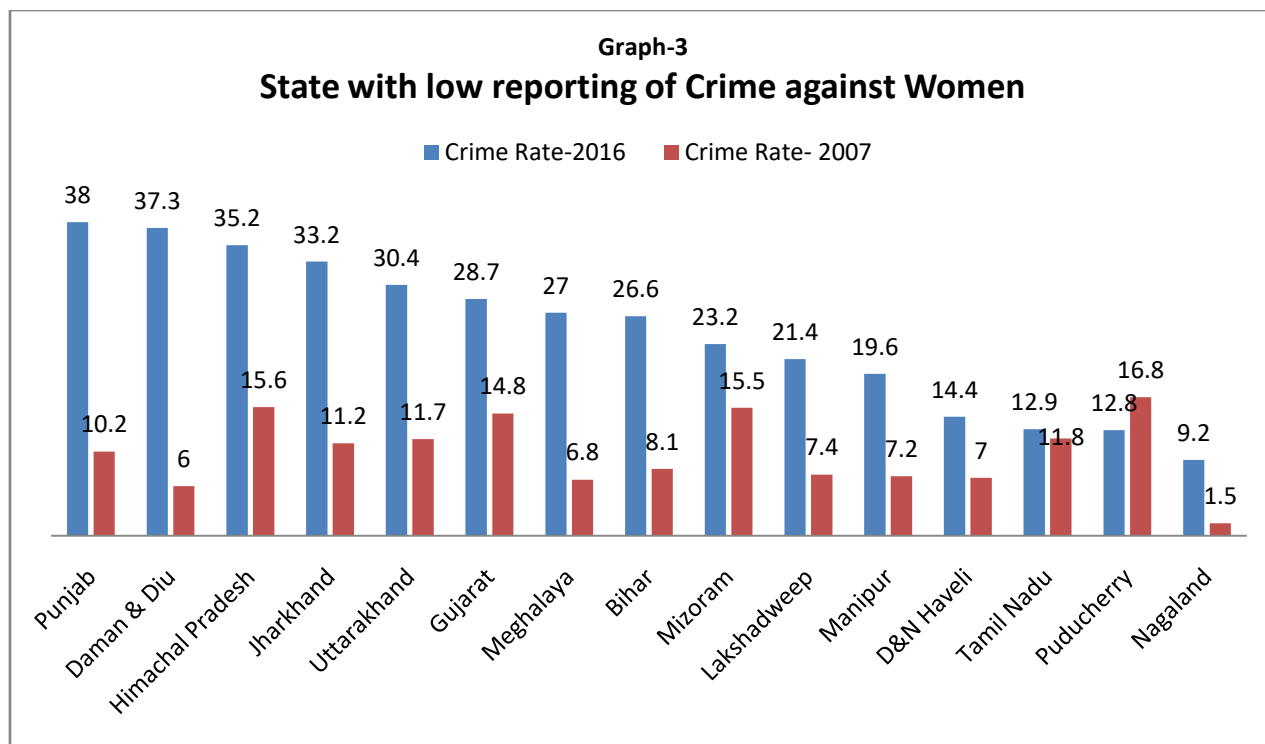


Source: NCRB

Delhi has recorded the highest rate of crime against women over the last few years. In 2016, 160.4 incidents of crime against women per one lakh female population were reported. Assam, Odisha, Telangana and Rajasthan follow Delhi. NCRB data for the last four years shows that most of the states mentioned in the graph above have constantly been reporting high rates of crime against women.

In Northern India, states like Delhi, Rajasthan, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Chandigarh have been reporting high rates of crime. In the southern region, Telangana and Andhra have recorded high rates of crime. Similarly, Odisha and West Bengal in the eastern part of country and Assam and Arunachal Pradesh in North-eastern part of country have been reporting high rates of crime against women.

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Source: NCRB

Some of the states with the lowest rates of crime against women like Punjab, Jharkhand, Bihar, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu are geographically large and highly populated. Expectedly, smaller states which are less populated also report a low crime rate. While the reporting of national rate of crime against women has increased substantially from 16% in 2007 to 55.5% in 2016, states like Punjab, Jharkhand, Bihar, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu have not recorded any substantial growth in reporting of crime against women.

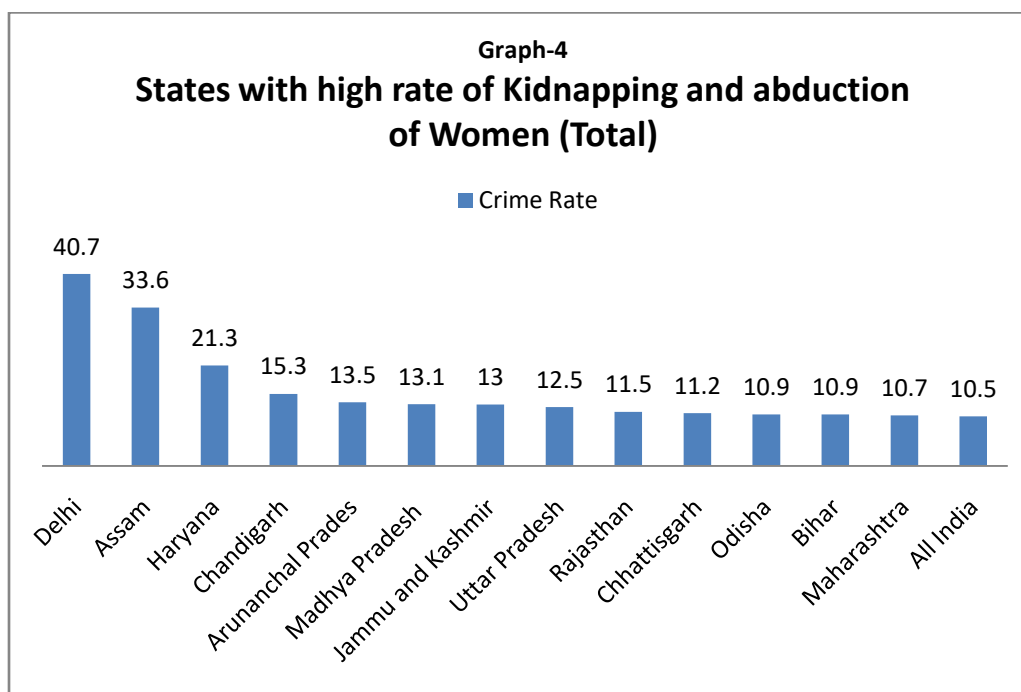
States with high rate of crime against women in 2016 have seen huge growth in reporting of crime in the last ten years. On the other hand, some states with low crime rate have not improved enough in terms reporting of the crime. According a report published in India Spend, women’s rights activist and lawyer Flavia Agnes said, “More than the increase in crime rate, it is increase in reporting. I feel that due to media pressure on certain brutally violent incidents, there is greater awareness, and women are coming forward to report crime¹.” It is difficult to analyse the difference between actual crime and reported crime, but certainly there is gap between these two. The increase in reporting in crime in some states must be analysed further, as it may have given more avenue and better opportunity to women to report crime.

¹ <http://www.indiaspend.com/cover-story/crime-against-women-up-83-conviction-rate-hits-decadal-low-18239>

Part-II Crime against Women

2.1 Kidnapping and Abduction:

The reporting of *Kidnapping and Abduction of Women* has sharply increased over the last ten years. The number of incidents reported increased from 20,416 incidents in 2007 to 64,519 incidents in 2016 (an increase of 216%).



Source: NCRB

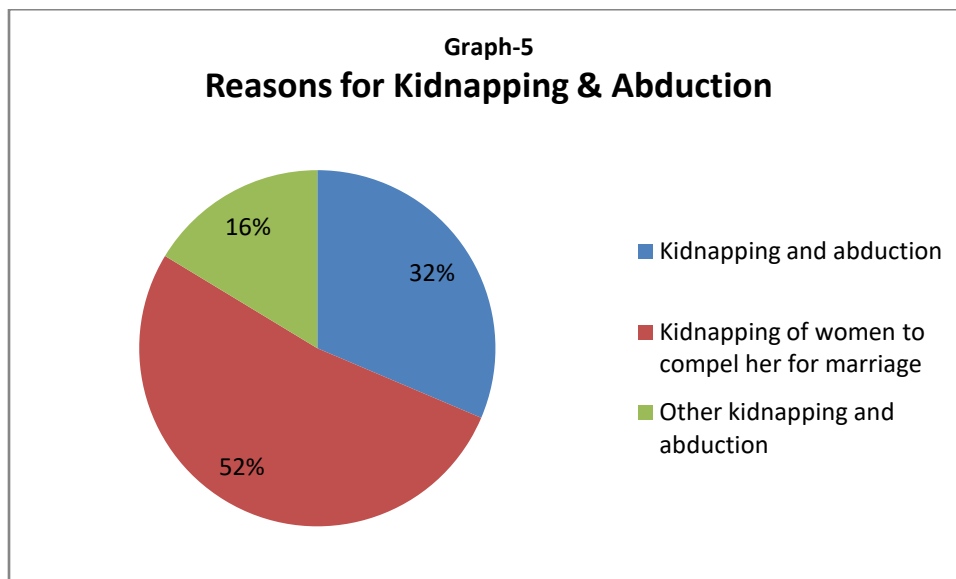
This steady growth in reporting of kidnapping and abduction observed, despite a high pendency of cases in police. According to the latest NCRB data nearly 40% cases of kidnapping and abduction available for investigation remained un-investigated.

Reasons behind the increase in Kidnapping and Abduction:

The NCRB data compiles disaggregated data of 'Kidnapping and Abduction of Women' to understand the various reasons behind this crime. It segregates data under this crime across five sub heads. 1) Kidnapping and Abduction; 2) Kidnapping and Abduction in order to Murder; 3) Kidnapping for Ransom; 4) Kidnapping and

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Abduction of Women to Compel her for Marriage and 5) Kidnapping and Abduction of Women for other Purposes. In 2016, the share of Kidnapping and Abduction of women for Murder and Ransom is negligible compared as compared to the other three reasons, as seen in Graph- 5 below.



Source: NCRB

Of the total cases of kidnapping and abduction, more than half of them were to compel women for marriage. In 2016, a total of 33,732 cases of such crimes were reported across the country. Data reveals that Assam has the highest rate of kidnapping and abduction to compel women for marriage followed by Uttar Pradesh and Bihar (see table below- Table 2).

**Table-2
States with high rate of Kidnapping and Abduction to compel women for marriage**

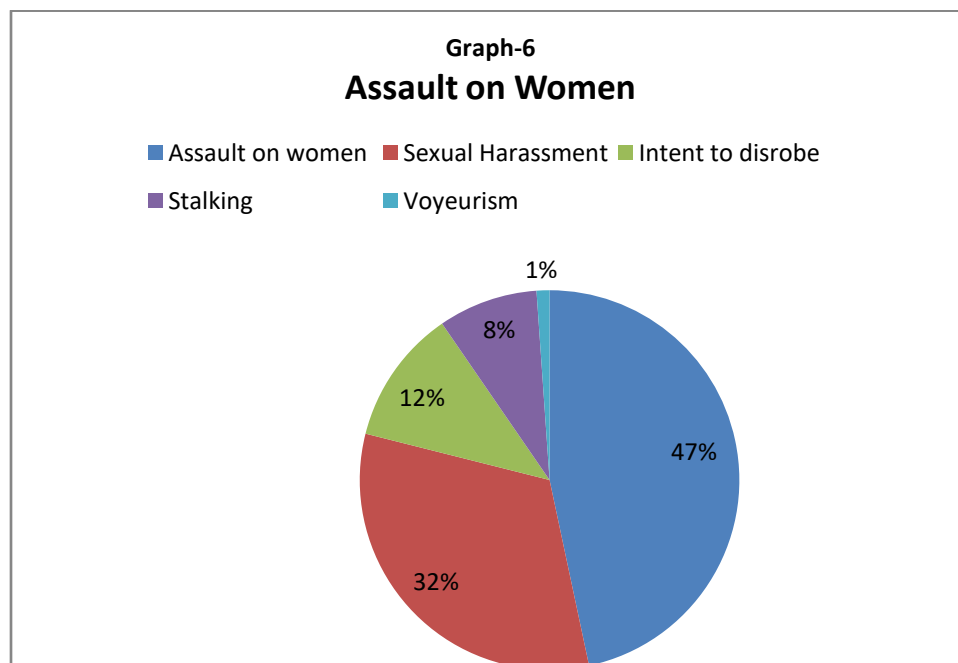
State	Crime Rate	Child Sex Ratio 2011
Assam	29.6	962
Uttar Pradesh	11.6	902
Bihar	8.6	953
Chandigarh	7.5	880
Punjab	7.1	846
Haryana	6.5	834
Manipur	5.8	936
Rajasthan	5.7	888
All India	5.5	919

Source: NCRB

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The top eight states with high rates of crime to kidnap and abduct of women for marriage are of two categories. The first category of states comprises of Assam, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Manipur which have comparatively better sex ratio. The second category states includes Chandigarh, Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan which have very poor gender balance population. Poor sex ratio in the second category states has lead to á ‘shortage of brides’. This data perhaps provides evidence to support the argument that states with low sex ratio are facing shortage of brides and they have been sourcing brides from other states through various means including kidnapping and abduction.

2.2 Assault on Women to Outrage her Modesty:



Source: NCRB

Assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty has also seen a consistent growth in its reporting. Reported cases under this crime head have seen an increase from 38,734 in 2007 to 84,746 in 2016 (an increase of 118%). This crime head comprises of five different kinds of assault on women including 1) Assault on Women; 2) Sexual Harassment; 3) Assault on women with intent to disrobe; 4) Voyeurism and 5) Stalking. Proportion of reported cases related to assault on women comprises 47% of total cases reported under this crime head followed by Sexual Harassment (32%). Together Assault on Women and Sexual Harassment comprises nearly 80% of total crime related to assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty.

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Table-3
State with high rate of Assault on Women with intent to outrage her modesty

State	Crime Rate	State	Crime Rate
Delhi	43.6	Andhra Pradesh	18.7
Odisha	39.1	Arunachal Pradesh	17.4
Madhya Pradesh	23.3	A & N Islands	17.1
Kerala	22.1	Karnataka	17.0
Assam	21.3	Goa	15.6
Jammu and Kashmir	20.7	Haryana	14.7
Telangana	20.5	All India	13.8
Maharashtra	19.8		

Source: NCRB

Assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty is the second largest crime against women. According to the NCRB data average 14 incidents of assault on women were reported per one lakh female population in India in 2016. Amongst the 14 states which have a crime rate higher than the national average, Delhi recorded the highest rate of assault on women. In Delhi an average 43 incidents of assault on women were reported per one lakh female population.

2.3 Cruelty by Husband or his Relatives:

Cruelty by Husband or his Relatives is the most reported crime against women. It comprises nearly one third of total crimes against women and has seen a steady growth in reporting from 75,930 cases in 2007 to 110,378 cases in 2016. Assam has reported the highest rate of crime related to 'cruelty by husband or his relatives' followed by states like West Bengal, Delhi Rajasthan and Telangana (see table below- Table-5)

Table-5
State with high rate of Cruelty by Husband or his relatives

State	Crime Rate
Assam	58.7
West Bengal	42.3
Delhi	40.6
Rajasthan	39.4
Telangana	39.2
Haryana	26.2
Andhra Pradesh	25.1
Tripura	22.9
Kerala	18.9
All India	18.0

Source: NCRB

Table-6
State with high per cent of married women who have ever experienced spousal violence (%)

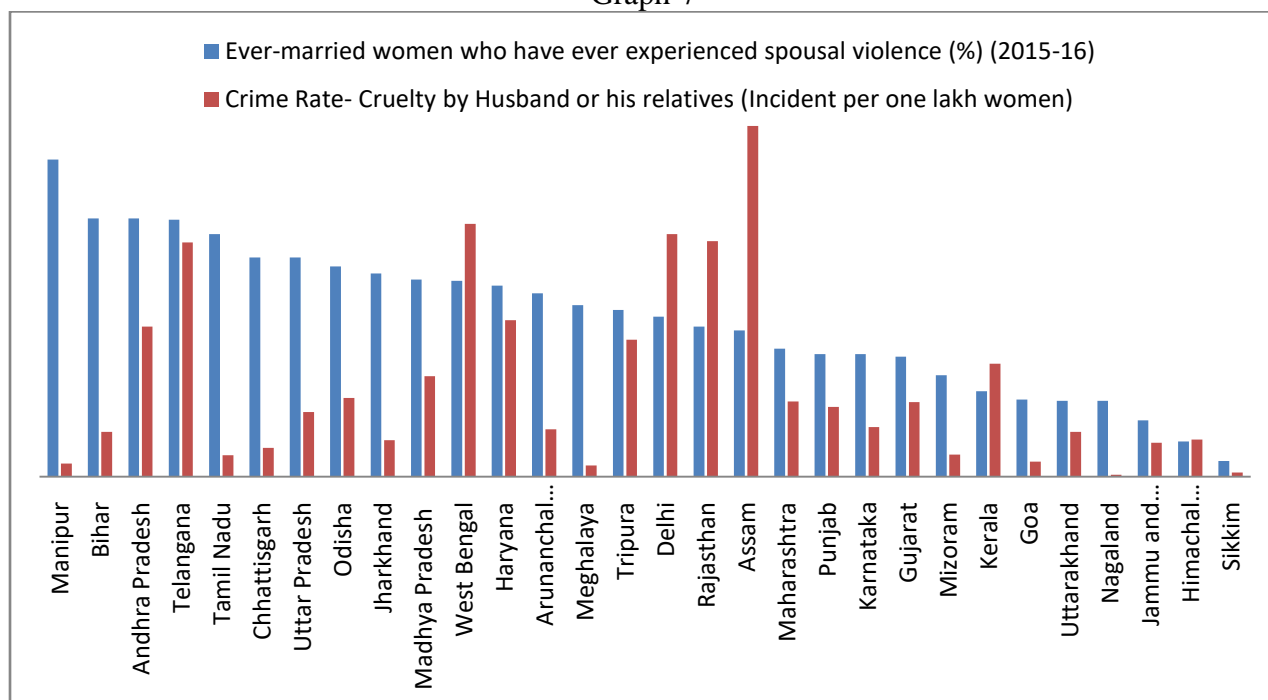
State	% of Women
Manipur	53.1
Andhra Pradesh	43.2
Bihar	43.2
Telangana	43.0
Tamil Nadu	40.6
Chhattisgarh	36.7
Uttar Pradesh	36.7
Odisha	35.2
Jharkhand	34.0
All India	28.8

Source: NFHS-4

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Cruelty by Husband or his Relatives largely covers issues of domestic violence where many women are victims of the patriarchal setup of the society. Despite criminalizing all such crimes through The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 reporting of such crimes remains very low. For example according to NFHS-4 (2015-16) 28.8% ‘ever married women had experienced spousal violence. Whereas the NCRB data shows that only 18 cases of cruelty by husband or his relatives were registered per one lakh female population in 2016. Similarly, at the state level huge variations have been observed in actual prevalence of domestic violence and amount of registered cases. Table-6 above reveals that states where there is a high prevalence of domestic violence, they are not among top state with high rate of reporting such crimes.

Graph-7



Source: NCRB

State level differences between incidents of domestic violence and their reporting is shown in the graph above Graph-7. It reveals that only states like West Bengal, Delhi, Rajasthan, Assam, Kerala and Himachal Pradesh have better reporting of *Cruelty by Husband or his Relatives* compared to prevalence of domestic violence in these states. Perhaps that is why most of these states feature in the list of states with very high rate of crime. On the other hand, states like Manipur, Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Goa have very low rate of *Cruelty by Husband or his Relatives* but it does not mean that domestic violence is less prevalent in these states. More than 40% of women in Manipur, Bihar and Tamil Nadu face domestic violence. Therefore, these data indicates that reporting of crime against women is not correlated with actual incidents of crime.

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2.4 Rape and Attempt to Rape:

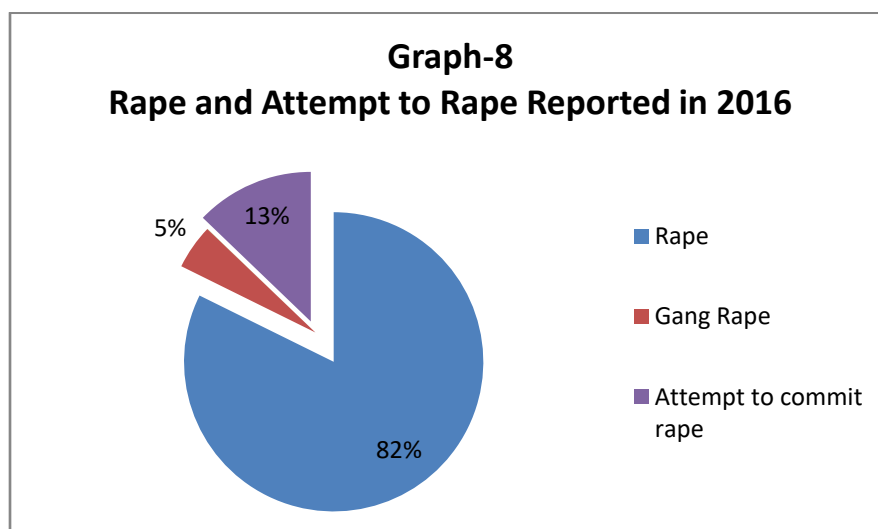
Rape unfortunately has seen more than 100 per cent increase in its reporting in last ten years. The registered cases of rape and attempt to rape have increased from 20,737 in 2007 to 44,674 in 2016. However, a large number of cases have not seen any head way as far as investigations are concerned. According to last three NCRB reports nearly 30% of cases registered under these crime heads remained un-investigated.

Table-7
State with high rates of rape

State	Crime Rate	State	Crime Rate
Sikkim	30.3	Odisha	9.4
Delhi	22.6	Haryana	9.4
Arunachal Prades	14.7	Chandigarh	9.3
Meghalaya	13.8	Kerala	9.1
Madhya Pradesh	13.1	Himachal Pradesh	7.3
Chhattisgarh	12.6	Maharashtra	7.3
Lakshadweep	11.9	D&N Haveli	7.2
Assam	11.2	Telangana	6.9
A & N Islands	11.2	Jharkhand	6.8
Tripura	11.0	Goa	6.7
Daman & Diu	10.9	Uttarakhand	6.4
Rajasthan	10.4	All India	6.3

Source: NCRB

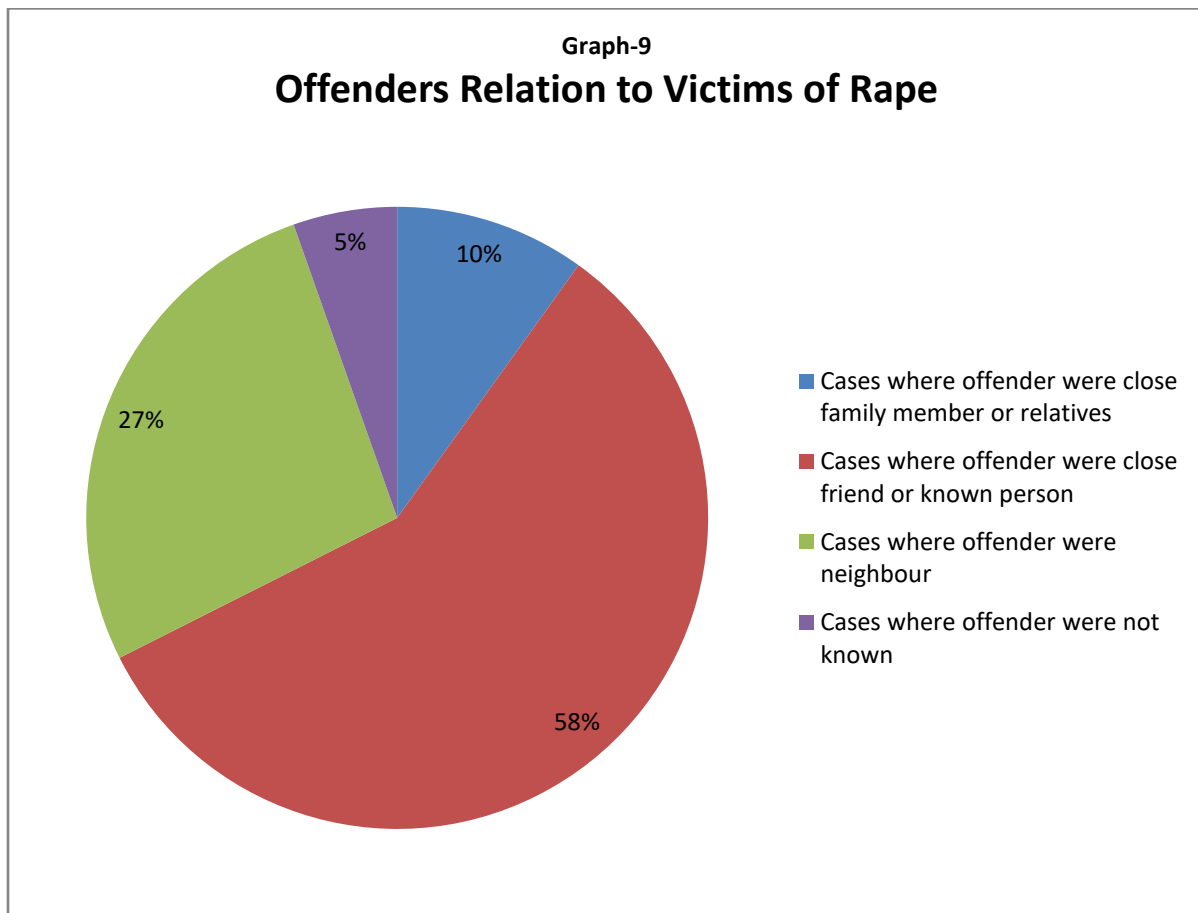
Sikkim recorded the highest rate of rape in 2016 followed with Delhi, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Madhya Pradesh.



Source: NCRB

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Cases of gang rape constituted 5% of total number of rapes reported in 2016. This year, a total of 2167 cases of gang rape were reported. Highest reporting of gang rape is from Uttar Pradesh (682 incidents) followed by Rajasthan (366 incidents), Madhya Pradesh (226 incidents) and Haryana (191 incidents). The crime rate of gang rape is highest in Haryana followed by Rajasthan. In 2016, an average of 1.5 cases of gang rape per one lakh women population were reported in Haryana. Rajasthan reported one case of gang rape per one lakh women population.



Source: NCRB

In nearly 95% of the cases the victim knew the perpetrator. According to the latest NCRB data, the highest proportion of offenders comprises of close friends, co-workers, employer and live-in-partners. More than one fourth (27%) of rape offenders were neighbors and 10% of offenders were close family members and relatives.

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2.5 Disposal of Cases of Crime against Women:

While the reporting of crime has observed substantial growth in the last ten years, the disposal of cases by police and court remain abysmal. In 2016, one-third (33%) of cases of crimes against women for police investigation remain un-investigated. The pendency of cases has increased from 26.8% in 2007 to 33% in 2016. By the end of the 2016 there were 164,181 cases pending for police investigation across the country.

Table-8
Cases of Crime against Women Pending for Police Investigation

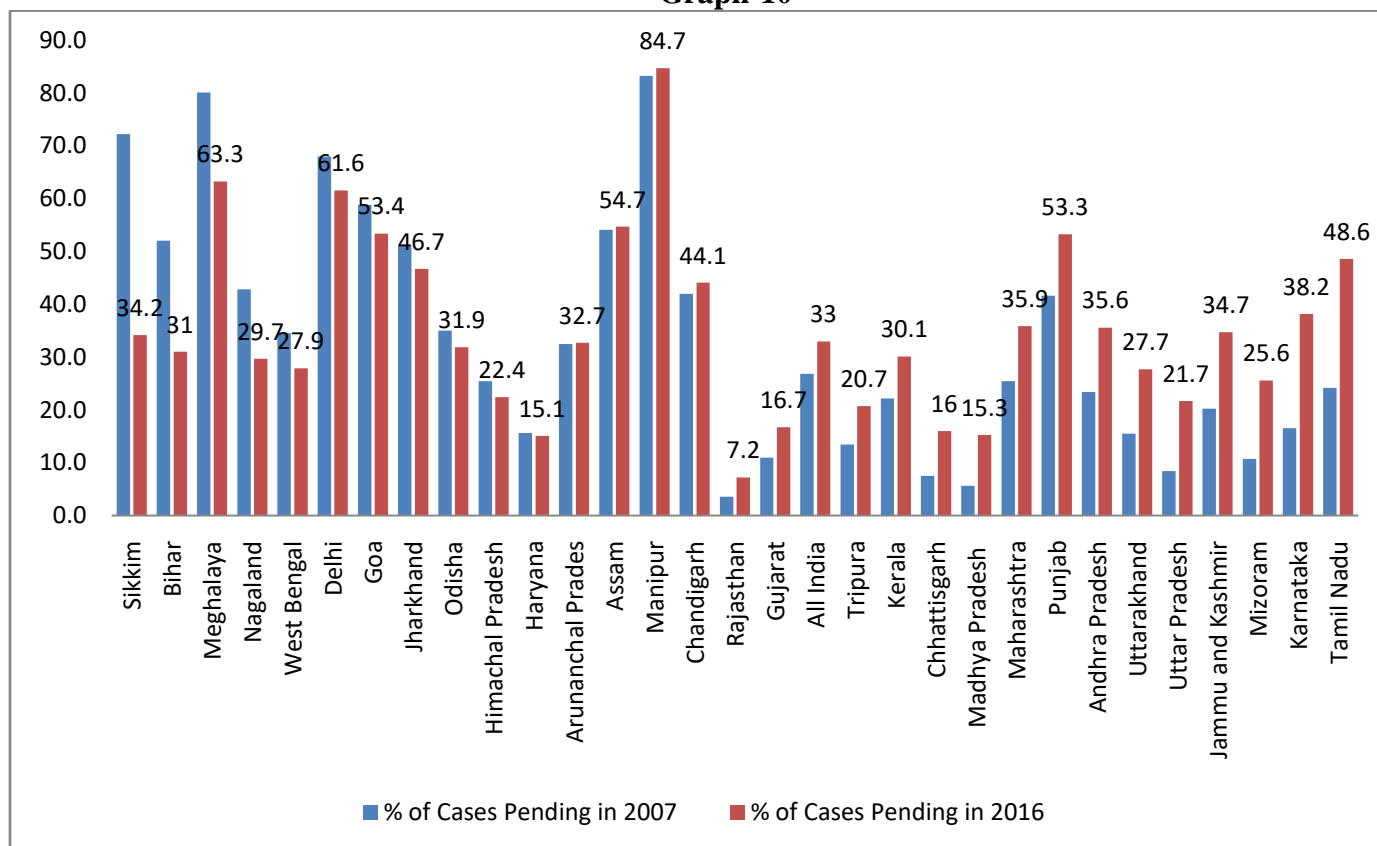
Selected Crime Against Women	Number of Cases Pending for Investigation at the End of the Year (2016)	Pendency Percentage (2016)
Dowry Deaths	3,874	32.7
Abetment of Suicide of women	2,494	37.3
Cruelty by Husband or his relatives	51,931	32.0
Kidnapping and Abduction	13,870	43.1
Kidnapping and Abduction of women to compel her for Marriage	20,877	38.5
Human Trafficking	429	39.3
Rape	16,678	30.3
Attempt to commit Rape	2,042	27.1
Assault on women	17,031	30.0
Sexual Harassment	8,382	24.1
Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961	5,557	35.2
Total Crime Against Women	1,64,181	33.0

Source: NCRB

Fair and speedy investigation of reported crime encourages victims of crime to report these crimes to the police. However, NCRB data shows that a large number of reported cases remained un-investigated. Pendency rate remained very high in states such as Manipur (84.7%), Meghalaya (63.3%), Delhi (61.6%), Assam (54.7%), Punjab (53.3%) and Tamil Nadu (48.6%). Lowest pendency rate in 2016 was recorded in Rajasthan (7.2%) followed by Haryana (15.1%), Gujarat (16.7%), Madhya Pradesh (15.3%) and Chhattisgarh (16%).

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Graph-10



Source: NCRB

In the last ten years (from 2007 to 2016) the pendency rate of crime against women has decreased in few states such as Sikkim, Bihar, Meghalaya, Nagaland, West Bengal, Delhi, Goa, Jharkhand, Odisha, Himachal Pradesh and Haryana. However, other states have observed an increase in the pendency rate. Highest increase in pendency rate has been recorded in Tamil Nadu followed by Karnataka, Mizoram, Jammu and Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand (See Graph above, Graph 10).

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Part-III

Conclusion and Way Forward

The NCRB's annual report on crime indicates important trends related to crime in India. It also help us to monitor stages of crime after its reporting, such as registration of crime, processing and investigation by police, trials in court and conviction. Unfortunately, every year, with the release of NCRB data, all these important information gets overshadowed by a dominant message which only talks about increase or decrease of crime rate. Largely the reporting of crime has been increasing, so there is increase in crime rate as well. This message in isolation creates fear among people. There is a need to be careful about while analysing these numbers and complexities of each crime heads. Such lopsided presentations of crime data through media and other medium may adversely affect sensitive issues such as women's security. For example, news-headlines tagging 'Delhi as most unsafe city for women' for its high reporting of crime against women a day after release of NCRB data is completely mis-leading. It not only creates panic but could also discourage the state police force from registering every case it receives. A worrying case of unintended consequence of a surface level analysis of data

While there are a number of social, economic, cultural and other factors that lead to crimes, the reporting of the crime also depends on range of issues such as social, economic and cultural hindrances to victims and efficacy of institutions. Various experts working on issues of crime have been arguing that with the increase in public awareness and relatively more accessible police and judicial system, the reporting of the crime has increased. However, a large number of crimes against women still goes un-reported. For example, the NFHS in its fourth survey in 2015-16 found that 28.8% married women in India faces domestic violence. However, the reporting of such crimes as per the latest NCRB report is abysmally 1. The latest report has recorded an average of 18 incidents of cruelty by husbands or his relatives per one lakh married women. This simple example indicates a large volume of un-reported crimes against women in the country. Furthermore, there is no co-relation between actual crime and its reporting. Again, in the case of domestic violence, states with higher rate of domestic violence as per the NFHS data do not have correspondingly higher rate of reporting of such crime. While the under-reporting of domestic violence is common across the country, it varies from state to state.. States and cities that report high crime rates do not always mean they are unsafe compared to others.

The above analysis of the NCRB data supports arguments by women's rights activists that more than increase in crime there is increase in reporting of crime in some states. However, factors responsible for the increase in reporting are not clear. We also don't know why there is such a huge difference in crime incidents and their reporting at state level. To answer these questions, in our analysis of the NCRB data, we tried to map trends between increasing crime rate and several other reported factors. For example, we ran statistical correlation tests between increasing crime rate and factors such as rate of disposing of cases by police and court, women literacy and education of women and rate of domestic violence and sex ratio. We did not find any strong correlation

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(both negative and positive) to explain rapid increase in crime rate in some state and nominal increase in crime rate in other states. Therefore, the annual release of number on crime against women is not enough to take this valuable documentation further to plan and implement effective policies. To understand disparities in reporting of crime across the country we need to strengthen our documentation on crime. To understand institutional factors the system must record data related to strength and efficiency of police and judicial system. Data on accessibility of these institutions would also help to understand connect between population and the system of justice. As the crime against women is a manifestation of range of social and cultural practices and norms, socio-economic profiling of both victim and perpetrator of crime would also help to understand prevalence of crime and hindrance in its reporting. Such disaggregated data related to the system, victim and crime perpetrator would help to give meaning to the statistics on crime against women, which further can be used to create better systems and policy responses.