

# CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN IN INDIA: A CORRELATION BETWEEN FEMALE LITERACY RATE AND CRIME RATE

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## Abstract

Violence against women is a serious problem. During last two decades it has emerged as the most burning issue not only in India but throughout the world. Women are targets to extreme forms of violence such as incest, rape, gang rape, dowry deaths, trafficking etc. The secondary status of women combined with socio cultural norms that are inclined towards patriarchy and masculinity can be considered as an important factor determining the violence against women. In spite of many legal provisions and efforts of the government, the problem of crimes against women has not been solved in India. Crimes against women in India is a matter of great concern as the figures of reported cases are increasing year after year. A total of 338954 incidents of crime against women were reported in the country during the year 2016 as compared to 1,85,312 incidences in the year 2007. The correlation coefficient between female literacy rate and the percentage of crimes committed against women is found to be -0.42857. This negative correlation shows that there is an inverse relationship between female literacy rate and rate of crimes against women. This analysis proves that, illiteracy among women is a major factor responsible for crimes against women. . By educating the women, the crimes against them may be reduced to a large extent. Female Education is the best antidote to violence against women. Educated women are more aware about their constitutional rights and privileges. Besides education to women, some other suggestions for checking crimes against women are more participation of women in politics, economic and moral support to organizations which are committed to more economic and political equality to women and judicial reforms etc.

## Introduction

Violence against women is a serious problem and it proves the violation of human rights. In last two decades violence against women has emerged as the most burning issue not only in India but throughout the world. Women are targets to extreme forms of violence such as incest, rape, gang rape, dowry deaths, trafficking etc. Violence against women refers to any act of gender-based violence which result in physical, sexual harassment, trafficking, sexual abuse in the workplace, rape, psychological and sexual abuse by intimate male partners and relatives, forced pregnancies, sexual abuse in the workplace, abuse of widows including property grabbing, allegation of witchcraft, physical and psychological violence by younger family members, differential access to food and medical care. Violence against women is partly a result of gender relations that assumes men to be superior to women. It is always the women is subjected to unfairness and looked down as an inferior sex. Since from the birth, a female is under the control of a male either that is father or husband or the son. The secondary status of women combined with socio cultural norms that are inclined towards patriarchy and masculinity can be considered as an important factor determining the violence against women.

Domestic violence is the most common form of crimes against women in India. Any act of physical, sexual, or psychological abuse, or the threat of such abuse, inflicted against a woman by a person intimately connected to her through marriage or family relation is domestic violence. It is universal and has its root in the socio-cultural set up of the society. Due to the secondary status of women in society, the gender violence is considered normal and socially acceptable.

In spite of many legal provisions and efforts of the government, the problem of crimes against women has not been solved in India. There are certain rights guaranteed to women under Article 14, 15 and 21 of the Indian Constitution. Domestic violence was recognized as a criminal offence in India in 1983. The offence is chargeable under section 498-A of the Indian Penal Code. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005 was brought into force by from October 26, 2006.

## Forms of Violence against Women

There are so many forms of crimes against women in India but most prevalent are given as under:

## Rape and Sexual Abuse

It is a vicious form of violence. Even the married women are not safe in their own family and it would be a hell and very difficult for the woman to escape. Using abusive words by family members causes mental illness among women.

### Domestic Violence

It refers to physical, psychological violence of women by husband or his relatives. Actually it is breach of trust and abuse of power in relationship.

### Demand for Dowry

The demand of dowry is surely the most common sources of domestic violence in India, where the husband along with his parents and relative tortures his wife for money and other valuable things.

### Torture during Pregnancy

It is one of the in benevolent tortures ever. Whereas during pregnancy a woman needs special care and attention along with nutritious food, she is victimized. It leads the chances of miscarriage, infection, pre mature birth and sometimes death of the baby. Denying the facilities during pregnancy is nothing but a stress for the women to continue to exist to deliver the baby.

### Forced Prostitution

Forced prostitution and commercial exploitation by husband or parents is another kind of violence against women. Women are forced by their husbands and relatives for prostitution to earn money. Even the practice exists in India where young women and girls are donated to serve a temple but sorry to say their lives end up being prostituted.

## Crimes against Women in India

Crimes against women in India are a matter of great concern as the figures of reported cases are increasing year after year. Table 1 shows total cases of reported incidents of crime against women from 2007 to 2011 and the growth rate of these incidents over the previous years.

**Table 1: Reported Incidents of Crimes against Women from 2007 to 2016**

Year	Cases	Growth Rate over the previous year (In Percentage)
2007	1,85,312	----
2008	1,95,856	5.68
2009	2,03,804	4.05
2010	2,13,585	4.79
2011	2,28,650	7.05
2012	244270	6.83
2013	309546	26.72
2014	339457	9.66
2015	329243	-3.00
2016	338954	2.95

Source: National Crime Records Bureau

A total of 338954 incidents of crime against women were reported in the country during the year 2016 as compared to 1,85,312 incidences in the year 2007. The growth rate over the previous year is highest (26.72 per cent) in 2013. During the study period it is negative (-3.00 per cent) in 2015. But again it becomes positive (2.95 per cent) in 2016.

## Reasons for Crimes against Women

### Cultural

- Male dominant society
- Cultural definitions of appropriate sex roles
- Belief in the inherent superiority of males
- Values that give men proprietary rights over women and girls
- Notion of the family as the private sphere and under male control
- Customs of marriage (bride price/dowry)

### Economic

- Economic dependence of women on men
- Limited access women to cash and credit
- Lack of proper implementation of laws regarding inheritance and property rights
- Limited access of women to employment in formal and informal sectors
- Limited access of women to education and training

### Legal

- Lesser legal status of women either by practice
- Discriminating Laws regarding divorce, child custody, maintenance and inheritance
- Rigid definition of rape and domestic abuse
- Low levels of legal literacy among women
- Insensitive treatment to women and girls by police and administration

### Political

- Under-representation of women in power, politics and media
- Domestic violence not taken seriously
- Lack of strong political will to abolish domestic violence
- Limited organizations of women

## Correlation Between Female Literacy Rate and the Percentage of Crimes Committed against Women in India

Women illiteracy is a major factor responsible for the crimes committed against women. Illiterate women are not capable to understand their constitutional rights and their privilege in the society. Illiteracy among women is a main hurdle to obtain social, economic and legal justice to them.

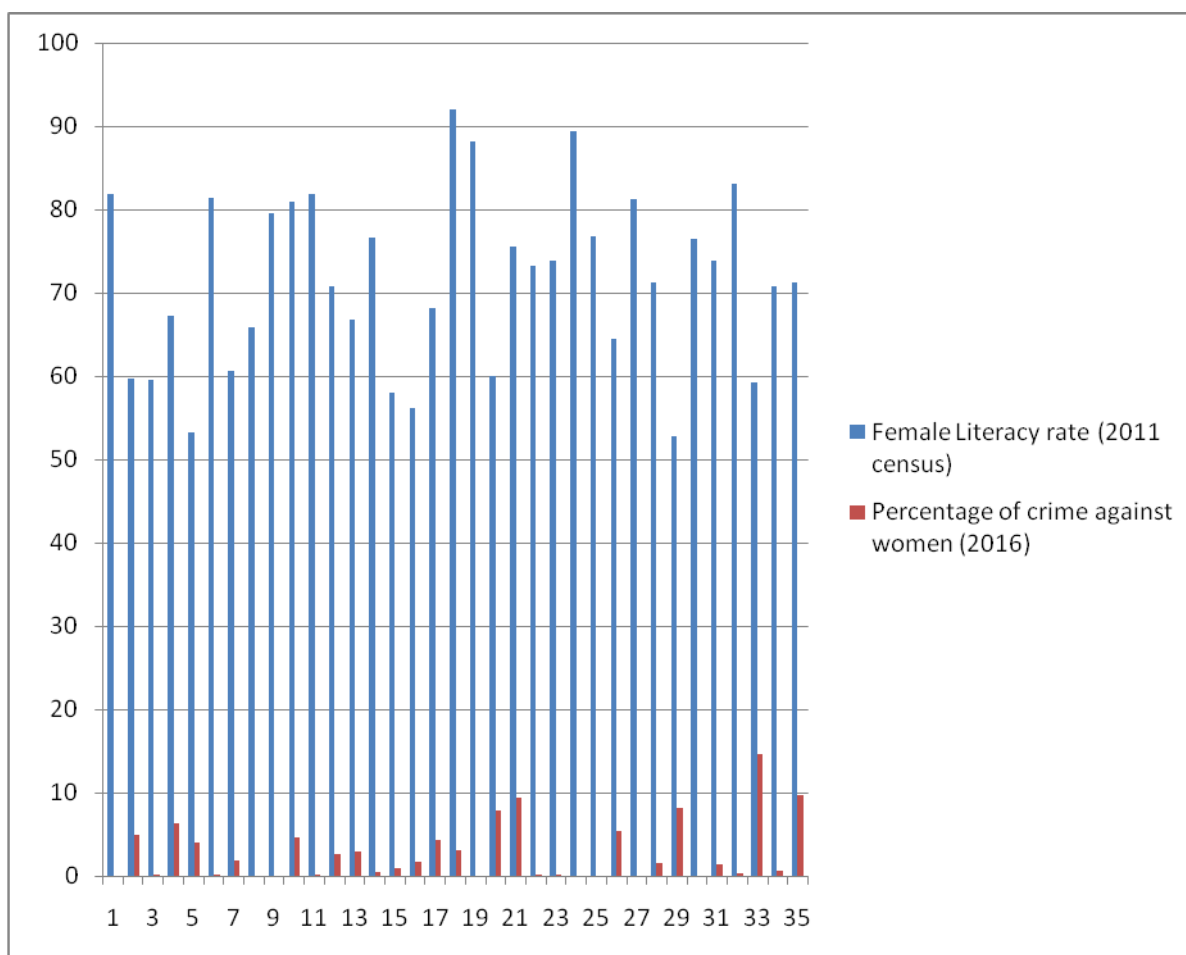
Table 2 shows the Female Literacy Rate (2011 Census) and the Percentage of crimes committed against women in States and Union Territories (U.T.s) during 2016.

**Table 2: Percentage of Crimes against Women and Female Literacy Rates**

S.No.	States/UT	Percentage of Crime against Women (2016)	Female Literacy rate (2011 census)	Rank Based on Incidence /Percentage Share (2016)
1	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	0	81.8	30
2	Andhra Pradesh	4.8	59.7	8
3	Arunachal Pradesh	0.1	59.6	26
4	Assam	6.2	67.3	6
5	Bihar	4.0	53.3	11
6	Chandigarh	0.1	81.4	23
7	Chhattisgarh	1.8	60.6	15
8	Dadra and Nagar Haveli	0	65.9	34
9	Daman and Diu	0	79.6	35
10	Delhi	4.5	80.9	9
11	Goa	0.1	81.8	25
12	Gujarat	2.5	70.7	14
13	Haryana	2.9	66.8	13
14	Himachal Pradesh	0.4	76.6	21
15	Jammu and Kashmir	0.8	58.0	19
16	Jharkhand	1.6	56.2	16
17	Karnataka	4.2	68.1	10

18	Kerala	3.0	92.0	12
19	Lakshadweep	0	88.2	35
20	Madhya Pradesh	7.8	60.0	5
21	Maharashtra	9.3	75.5	3
22	Manipur	0.1	73.2	27
23	Meghalaya	0.1	73.8	26
24	Mizoram	0	89.4	29
25	Nagaland	0	76.7	31
26	Orissa	5.3	64.4	7
27	Pondicherry	0	81.2	32
28	Punjab	1.5	71.3	17
29	Rajasthan	8.1	52.7	4
30	Sikkim	0	76.4	28
31	Tamil Nadu	1.3	73.9	18
32	Tripura	0.3	83.1	22
33	Uttar Pradesh	14.5	59.3	1
34	Uttarakhand	0.5	70.7	20
35	West Bengal	9.6	71.2	2

Source: National Crime Records Bureau & Census 2011



The table shows that the States and UT’s having high female literacy rate have lower crime rates against women. The correlation coefficient between female literacy rate and the percentage of crimes committed against women is found to be -0.42857. This negative correlation shows that there is an inverse relationship between female literacy rate and rate of crimes against women. It means the states and union territories having high female literacy rate have low rate of crimes against women and on the other hand the states and union territories having low female literacy rate have high rate of crimes against women. From this analysis, it can be concluded that the crimes against women can be reduced by increasing the female literacy rate. This analysis proves that, illiteracy among women is a major factor responsible for crimes against women.

## Suggestions

Gender equality is a crucial factor for a healthy society and a strong nation. For gender equality education particularly female education is a pre-condition. By educating the women, the crimes against them may be reduced to a large extent. Female Education is the best antidote to violence against women. Educated women are more aware about their constitutional rights and privileges. Educated women can get gainful employment which strengthens their economic condition in the society. Through proper training and with the provision of finance, educated women can easily be provided self employment.

Besides education to women, some other suggestions for checking crimes against women are given as under:

1. There should be more participation of women in politics. Legislative reforms should be there to make a balance in the society which will be helpful to make the political environment more gender sensitive.
2. Economic and moral support should be extended to the organizations which are committed to the full social, economic and political equality to women.
3. It is true that justice delayed is justice denied. Court cases in India often last for ten, twenty or more years. The decision on the cases, regarding crimes against women should be taken on the priority bases in the courts. Special court for women should be there.
4. Serious efforts should be there in the society to change the attitude and behaviour of men towards women.
5. Don't purchase any magazine, rent any video or buy any music that portrays women in a sexually degrading or violent manner.
6. Teach males that strong men respect women and that violence against women is unacceptable.
7. Support candidates for political office who are committed to the full social, economic and political equality of women.
8. Advocate the notion in youth and men's groups, that violence against women is a crime that must be eliminated.

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