

A Study on Spatial Pattern of Rape in Assam

Dr. BEEJATA DAS

Assistant Professor in Geography

Swahid Peoli Phukan College, Namti, Sivasagar, Assam, India

Abstract: Since ages women have been subject to humiliation, violence and sexual exploitation. In the present century too, they have been victims of male dominance, brutality and ego and have been the suppressed members of the society. Compared to other parts of India though, women of Assam have been enjoying much freedom and respect yet now- a- days, the state is also coming under the grey area of crimes such as rape, murder and assault. As per the records of Assam Police, crime against women in the state has increased from 5923 incidence in 2005 to 19,688 incidence in 2016. As per the news published in Times of India in 2012, there has been a sharp rise in crimes against women. Besides incidents of domestic violence and molestation, the number of rape cases registered in Assam has been increasing every year. This reflects the pathetic condition of women in Assam. Thus, this paper makes a humble attempt to study the incidence, victims & rate of crimes committed against women particularly rape in Assam. The study is based on secondary sources. The methodology adopted for this paper is both descriptive and analytical.

Keywords: humiliation, suppressed, crime, assault, rape, victims.

Date of Submission: 28-03-2019

Date of acceptance: 13-04-2019

I. INTRODUCTION

Women are an important element and also the base of any society as they are the one to make the future of any country not only being the first teacher of the generation and ground support for the household but also contribute in economic development¹. As in other parts of India, in Assam too, we observe in our day to day life how women become victimized of various crimes such as dowry deaths, kidnapping and abduction of females, assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty, sexual harassment, insult to the modesty of women, abetment of suicide of women, immoral traffic, eve-teasing, rape, cruelty by husbands and relatives. Such cases may be reported or not reported. The increasing violence against women is yet another manifestation of their low and unequal status which act as an obstacle to their development.

II. OBJECTIVES

1. To study the incidence, victims & rate of crimes committed against women particularly rape in Assam.
2. To know the age- group of the rape victims and identify the relationship of the rape victims and the accused.

III. DATA SOURCE AND METHODOLOGY

Secondary data is used for the study which is collected from books, journals, reports and internet. Descriptive and analytical methods are used for analysis. Several statistical techniques are used for analysis:

CSC Rates= No. of victims/ Total population x 100

CSC Ratios= No. of victims/ Total victims x 100

Location Quotient (LQ) method is used to study concentration of rape incidents in Assam.

$LQ = X/Y$ where $X =$ No. of rape incidents in a district/ Total incidents of crime in the district

and $Y =$ Total rape incidents in the state/ Total incidents of crime in the state.

IV. DISCUSSION

Traditionally, women of Assam have been enjoying much freedom and respect yet now- a- days, the state is also coming under the grey area of crimes such as rape, murder and assault. As per the news published in The Times of India, February 19, 2018, there were 29,223 incidents of violence against women reported from various parts of the state in the past two years. A total of 17,106 cases of physical assault, 3,009 rape cases and 9,108 incidents of kidnapping were registered by the police during 2016- January, 2018.

Table no 1: Incidence and rate of crime against women, 2014

States	Incidence	Percentage	Mid- year projected female population (in lakhs)	Rate of total cognizable crimes
Arunachal Pradesh	351	1.6	6.1	57.4
Assam	19139	86.1	155.1	123.4
Manipur	337	1.5	12.6	26.7
Meghalaya	388	1.7	13.5	28.8
Mizoram	258	1.2	5.1	51.0
Nagaland	67	0.3	11.1	6.0
Sikkim	110	0.5	3.0	36.9
Tripura	1615	7.3	18.4	88.0

Source: Crime in India- 2013, National Crime Records Bureau.

A perusal of the above Table revealed that out of the total North- East states, Assam recorded the highest percentage of 86.1 incidents of crime against women. Moreover the rate of total cognizable crimes in Assam is highest (123.4) followed by Tripura (88.0).

Table no 2: Incidence, Victims & Rate of Crimes Committed against Women in Assam, 2014

Crime heads	Incidence	Victims	Rate
Rape	1980	2047	12.8
Gang Rape	23	23	0.1
Other Rape	1957	2024	12.6
Kidnapping and Abduction of Female	-	-	-
Dowry Deaths	188	189	1.2
Assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty	3099	3100	20.0
Insult to the modesty of women	1	1	0.0
Cruelty by husband and relatives	9626	9626	62.1
Importation of girls from foreign country upto 21 years	1	1	0.0
Immoral traffic	29	29	0.2
Total crime against women	19139	19208	123.4

Source: Crime in India- 2013, National Crime Records Bureau.

The total incidence of crime against women in North- East India in 2014 was 22265. Among the eight states of North- East India, the highest incidence of crime against women was recorded in Assam (19139), followed by Tripura (1615), Meghalaya (388) and Arunachal Pradesh (351) respectively. Moreover, in the year 2014 Assam recorded the highest incidents of rape cases of 1980, followed by Tripura (239), Mizoram (120) and Meghalaya (118) cases respectively. The lowest rape case was recorded in Nagaland (30 cases).

Rape in Assam:

Assam has been witnessing a very high rate of rape incidence in recent years. The newspapers are often flooded with the news of woman being raped in the state. It is the most serious and damaging offence against the dignity of women and the entire society. In the book "Social Problems in India", Ram Ahuja pointed out that it is not only the poor girls who become rape victims but even the employees belonging to the middle class are sexually humiliated by their employers. Women inmates in jails are raped by their superintendents, women patients by hospital personnel, maid- servants by their masters and women daily wage- earners by contractors and middle- men. The pathetic part is that even the deaf and dumb, lunatic and blind and women beggars are not spared. Women who come from the lower- middle class and who are the main bread winners of their families bear sexual abuse quietly and without protest. The victims face social stigma and disgrace and suffer serious guilt- pangs and personality disorders if they register protest².

Table no 3: Victims of Rape on Women in Assam, 2005- upto April, 2018.

Year	No. of Victims
2001	817
2002	970
2003	1095

2004	1171
2005	1238
2006	1244
2007	1437
2008	1438
2009	1631
2010	1721
2011	1700
2012	1716
2013	1937
2014	2047
2015	1852
2016	1723
2017	1708
Upto April, 2018	534

Source: www.assampolice.gov.in

The above Table shows that during the period, the rape victims were highest in the year 2014 (9.33 percent).

Table no 4: Age- group wise victims of Rape in Assam, 2014

Age- group	No. of victims	Percentage (%)
Below 6 years	0	0
6 – 12 years	14	0.7
12- 16 years	32	1.6
16- 18 years	79	3.9
18- 30 years	1210	59.11
30- 45 years	646	31.2
45- 60 years	66	3.22
60 years and Above	0	0
Total	2047	100

Source: Crime in India- 2013, National Crime Records Bureau.

It is revealed from the above Table that 59.11 percent of the rape victims belonged to the age- group of 18- 30 years which indicates that young women are usually found to be more at the risk of rape than older women. The victims who were below 16 years of age were 46 (2.3 %). In a study by Rongpharpi & Mazumder revealed that increased incidence of rape among the young person is due to the fact that, female between 18- 25 years of age are most easily intimated, accusable and moreover they are quickly flattened by attention and easily deceived. Moreover, most of the cases were actually consented acts of intercourse and later the complaint was lodged when there was refusal to marry by the male partner³.

An analysis is made in Table 1.5 to interpret the cause specific measures and to understand the relative contribution of different causes to the rape crime rates in the population of Assam. They are the Cause Specific Crime Rates (CSC Rates) and Cause Specific Crime Ratios (CSC Ratios).

Table no 5: District- wise incidents of rape cases under IPC in Assam, 2014

District	Total crimes		No. of rape incident		CSC Rates		CSC Ratios	
	2003	2014	2003	2014	2003	2014	2003	2014
Kokrajhar	737	1419	22	36	0.03	0.04	3.1	2.5
Dhubri	1920	7117	68	201	0.04	0.10	3.5	2.8
Goalpara	1128	2757	65	108	0.08	0.11	5.8	3.9
Barpeta	1644	9138	61	160	0.04	0.09	3.7	1.8
Morigaon	871	2554	35	94	0.05	0.1	4.0	3.7
Nagaon	3539	8500	105	208	0.05	0.07	3.1	2.4
Sonitpur	2323	3912	64	108	0.04	0.06	2.8	2.8
Lakhimpur	1651	2775	76	53	0.08	0.05	4.6	1.9
Dhemaji	762	1090	43	54	0.08	0.08	5.6	4.9
Tinsukia	1122	3675	32	64	0.03	0.05	2.9	1.7

Dibrugarh	1901	3185	38	25	0.03	0.02	2.1	0.8
Sivasagar	1636	3661	38	39	0.04	0.03	2.3	1.1
Jorhat	1148	3940	40	48	0.04	0.04	3.5	1.2
Golaghat	1459	2951	67	74	0.07	0.07	4.6	2.5
Karbi Anglong	619	902	16	31	0.02	0.03	2.6	3.4
Dima Hasao	212	220	NA	4	NA	0.02	NA	1.8
Cachar	3463	5618	70	81	0.05	0.05	2.0	1.4
Karimganj	938	2804	29	76	0.03	0.06	3.1	2.7
Hailakandi	793	1916	27	77	0.05	0.12	3.4	4.0
Bongaigaon	785	1869	27	57	0.04	0.08	3.4	3.0
Chirang	-	856	-	27	-	0.06	-	3.2
Kamrup	6920	4010	86	77	0.03	0.05	1.2	1.9
Kamrup (M)	-	12417	-	99	-	0.08	-	0.8
Nalbari	1222	1976	33	41	-	0.05	2.7	2.1
Baksa	-	1018	-	32	-	0.03	-	3.1
Darrang	1402	3877	53	111	0.07	0.12	3.8	2.9
Udalguri	-	1094	-	31	-	0.04	-	2.8

Note: The districts namely Chirang, Kamrup (M), Baksa, Udalguri were created after 2003

Source: Statistical Handbook, 2015.

A perusal of the above Table reveals that the CSC Rates of Morigaon, Lakhimpur, Dibrugarh and Sivasagar districts declined in 2014 compared to 2003 whereas for Dhemaji, Jorhat, Cachar and Golaghat, districts the CSC Rates remained balanced within the period 2003- 2014. For CSC Ratios, except Hailakandi and Kamrup all the districts ratio declined in 2014 as compared to 2003.

Table no 6: Spatial Concentration of Rape Incidents in Assam

Category	2003	2014
Below 1.0 (Dispersed)	Sonitpur, Dibrugarh, Sivasagar, Karbi Anglong, Cachar, Kamrup, Nalbari	Dibrugarh, Sivasagar, Jorhat, Barpeta, Tinsukia, Cachar, Kamrup (M), Dima Hasao
1.1-1.9 (Balanced)	Kokrajhar, Dhubri, Barpeta, Morigaon, Hailakandi, Nagaon, Tinsukia, Jorhat, Karimganj, Darrang, Bongaigaon, Golaghat, Goalpara, Lakhimpur, Dhemaji	Sonitpur, Nalbari, Kokrajhar, Dhubri, Nagaon, Karimganj, Darrang, Lakhimpur, Golaghat, Kamrup, Udalguri, Karbi Anglong, Morigaon, Bongaigaon, Chirang, Baksa
Above 2.0 (High Concentration)	-	Hailakandi, Dhemaji, Goalpara

Source: Computed by the author.

The above Table reveals the variation of spatial concentration of rape incidents in Assam. It revealed that a higher concentration of rape incidents in 2014, occurred in three districts namely Hailakandi, Dhemaji and Goalpara whereas in 2003 there was no higher concentration of rape incidents. The saddest part is that the true picture of the incident of rape cases is still vague. It was found in a study “Acquaintance Rape- Victims of Violence” that for both stranger and acquaintance rape, many victims are reluctant to report the incident to Police. Under- reporting in acquaintance rape is especially prevalent, as many victims are confused and feel violated but are not exactly sure if a crime has been committed. Other reasons for under- reporting include fear of being believed, re- victimization by the justice system, police interrogations and publicity.

Offenders relationship with the rape victim:

S. Aneja in her work “Sexual Violence Against Women with special reference to Rape: Victimization and Judicial Approach in India” classified the offenders relationship with the rape victim into four types and out of these only two are related to acquaintance rape. They are-

- i. Acquainted but not well known: In this case the victim is more responsible for the situation and moreover she provides the attacker with what he considers to be encouragement and an opportunity in terms of privacy.
- ii. Acquainted and well known: Research shows that approximately two- thirds of sexual assaults are committed by known offenders. (Ullman, et.al, 2006). Known offenders are parents, close family members, relatives, neighbours friends, other known persons⁴.

Acquaintance rape:

It is seen that rape is most likely to occur with someone you know and trust. According to the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 55 percent of sexually assaulted women know their attacker and in such a situation impact of sexual assault change dramatically as the victims may be less likely to come forward believing that rape only involves strangers. Table 1.6 reveals offenders relation and proximity to rape victims in Assam.

Table no 7: Incidents of Acquaintance Rape in Assam, 2003- 2014.

Relationship	2003		2014	
	Incidents	Percentage	Incidents	Percentage
Parents/ Close family members	19	1.7	22	1.5
Relatives	75	6.8	31	2.1
Neighbours	458	41.8	343	23.4
Other known persons	543	50	1065	72.7
Total	1095	100	1461	100

Source: Crime in India- 2013, National Crime Records Bureau.

In India, Assam ranked third position in cases of acquaintance rape in 2003 while in 2014, she ranked sixth position. It is revealed from the Table and Fig. 1.1 that the share of acquaintance rape cases in Assam is 73.8 percent whereas only in 26.2 percent rape cases the accused was unknown to the victims. Moreover, the relationship where the accused belonged to other known persons (male friend, boy- friend, employer, business partners, servants, security guards, tenants, casual acquaintance, teacher, newspaper agent, shop keeper) of the victim was highest both in 2003 and 2014. K. Bhowmik and R. Chaliha in their study reported that most of the rape victims (55.4%) had their male friend as the alleged accused⁵. It can be said that women have more danger from their known persons compared to unknown persons. Moreover, the above data compels us to look at what is happening in and around our homes and workplaces too.

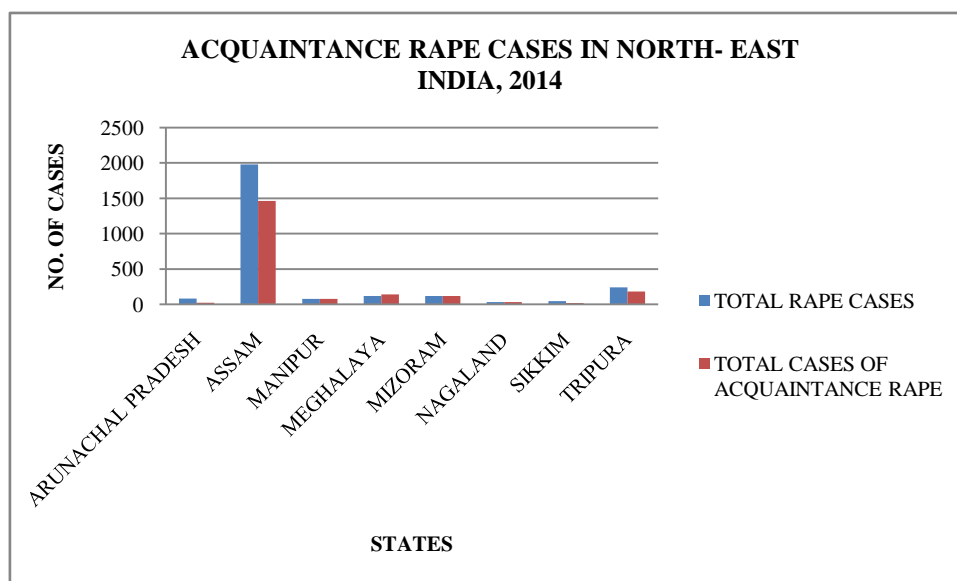


Fig. 1.1 Showing a comparison between rape and acquaintance rape cases in North- East India, 2014

The consequences of acquaintance rape are often far-reaching. Self-blame is a recurring response which prevents disclosure. Research has indicated that the survivors of acquaintance rape report similar levels of depression, anxiety, complications in subsequent relationships, and difficulty attaining pre-rape levels of sexual satisfaction to what survivors of stranger rape report (Koss & Dinero, 1988). In a study of acquaintance rape survivors (Wiehe & Richards, 1995), 97 percent informed at least one close confidant. The percentage of women who informed the police was drastically lower, at 28 percent. A still smaller number (twenty percent) decided to prosecute. Koss (1988) reports that only two percent of acquaintance rape survivors report their experiences to the police.

V. CONCLUSION

Rape is a serious crime against the women and the entire society too. Though Assam Government has introduced several measures such as forming of women investigation cell in the police department, setting up of a woman's cell in each district and sub- division and forming a special juvenile police unit in the district headquarter to prevent rape and other crimes against women in the state yet the picture is not improving. Thus, to reduce the incident of sex crimes in the state, the society needs to change. There is the need of proper education including sex- health and sex- education especially to the young adolescent group so that they does not grow with the wrong notions about the other gender and the process of procreation. Moreover they should be reared with strong moral values and it should be taught to these innocent minds that the dignity a woman is to be respected.

¹ Pangannavar, A.Y. Self- help Groups (SHGs) and Women Empowerment in India. New Delhi: New Century Publications Publications, 2006.

² Ahuja, R. Social Problems in India. New Delhi: Rawat Publications, 2003.

³ Rongpharpi, R. & Mazumder, A. "A Study of Alleged Rape Victim Cases in Dibrugarh District." World Wide Journals. (2016):10-12. Web. <http://www.worldwidejournals.com>. Date of access: November 02, 2018.

⁴ Aneja, S. Sexual Violence Against Women with special reference to Rape: Victimization and Judicial Approach in India. (2012). Web. <http://www.shodganga.inflibnet.ac.in>. Date of access: November 01, 2017.

⁵ Bhowmik, K. & Chaliha, R. "A Descriptive One Year Study on the Alleged Male and Female Victims and Accused of Sex Crimes." J Indian Acad Forensic Med. (2011):214- 220. Web. <http://www.medind.nic.in>jal>. Date of access: October 28, 2018.