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**Introduction**

Indian women in ancient times held a high level of respect but later, due to political, social and economic changes they lost their status with an increase in literacy rate, health status, work and political participation. Social evils such as child marriage, dowry death, domestic violence, exploitation of female worker at workplace, abuse, sexual harassment and rape have increased greatly in different parts of India (Dreze & Khera, 2000). In India, women suffer from different types of violence and it has become a great concern. According to one study, almost 30% of the children suffered from different types of sexual abuse such as making a child reveal her private parts and being photographed nude, etc. and this is increasing on a daily basis. From 2005 to 2010, significant rise in rape cases was seen. There were 22172 cases in 2010 compared to the 18359 reported cases in 2005. The reason for this increase could be exposure to mass media (Rawat, 2013).

The word rape comes from the Latin word “rapere” and is defined as “unlawful sexual activity”. There are different types of rape such as marital, consensual, penetrative and non-penetrative and varies culturally. Rape is a global problem where the majority of the victims are women, and men are sexually violent perpetrators. Rape is one of the most common types of violence in which great violation of the integrity of the female body occurs (Kapadia, Jaju, & Rani, 2017). Rape is considered as a major public health issue and a life-threatening act in which the victim suffers from humiliation and fear. It is an assault on the victim, her family and also on the community (Ismail & Mishra, 2016). It has been observed from media news and studies that more than 50% of the rape cases remained unreported because of victim dishonour and retaliation. In India, rape is one of the common crimes and one case of rape is reported every 20 minutes (Bradley, Sahariah, & Siddiqui, 2017). According to different reports, young females are the most vulnerable group of victims of rape. In 2012, according to the annual report of National crime record bureau of India around 24,923 cases of rape were reported and out of this, 98% of rape was committed by the known person. Around 25% of female students in India are raped during their 4–5-year period of college (Srivastava & Pal, 2015). Rape has negative consequences on mental health, physical health, interpersonal relation and academic performance among the victim. Social, physical, emotional and psychological effects include posttraumatic stress, anxiety, eating disorders, psychological distress, chronic pain, drug abuse, suicide and destructive and sexualized behaviours. The risk of psychological harm is even greater if the rape is committed by some relative or if the use of force is involved (Kumari & Barn, 2018).

Rape is considered a serious human rights violation. Many efforts have been done by women rights advocates to prevent such violence but despite all this, rape culture still exists in the country and has filled the lives of women with terror and pain from which they can never recover (Kohli, 2012). The impact of sexual harassment on the victims is a primary concern but it is also important to determine the factors which can lead to such behaviour. Therefore, this study is conducted with the main objective of determining the impact of rape on the life of victims and the factors which are associated with rape.

## Research Problem

Rape is considered as the highest growing crime in India. Rape is a social harm that effects almost all societies. Presently in India, incidence of rape is on the highest scale. Although rape or sexual abuse is not a new phenomenon, but the fact that such an issue still prevails in the 21st century which is an era of modernization and globalization, is worrisome. This can be observed in the rape case of Delhi which occurred on December 16, 2012. Rape is not confined to a geographical area but it is a global issue and is mostly under-reported. Rape incidents frequently occur in the capital and these occurrences are a great concern for the government, society and administration. Studies conducted on rape so far have been unable to determine the causes of rape, socioeconomic conditions and the sufferings of rape survivors. The significance of this study lies in the fact that Delhi, which is the capital of India, is nowadays considered as the capital of rape. A huge gap exists between reported cases and the actual occurrence of cases. The problem needs to be identified with some solutions. Therefore, a study is needed which can assess the factors that are associated with the rape crime. The study was carried out to explore the factors which are associated with the occurrence of rape. The study has not only determined the causes of rape but also provides solutions to prevent the occurrence of these crimes. The study also determined the impact of rape on the lives of victims and society. This study will also help to determine the possible measures that can bring the victims back into the mainstream and how can this crime be mitigated if not eradicated.

# Literature Review

The term “violence against women” has now become a “silent epidemic”, with increasing cases of sexual assault, molestation and rape being reported throughout the country. Rape is the crime in which somebody uses force to have sex with a person against the wish of the person. “Rape is a very critical issue that involves cultural, legal and psychological aspects” (Rufus & Murugesan, 2019). In urban areas, women are twice as more likely to experience sexual violence; especially in developing countries like India. Women across the world face sexual harassment and ‘rape’. According to different studies, rape is a serious challenge and a question mark on the credibility of the government (Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2011). Rape is very rarely reported by women and girls because of religious and social factors, and a fear of rejection by family and society (Harter, 2011). According to the National Crime Records Bureau of India, in the last 4 decades, an eight-fold increase in rape cases has been seen. UN Women report (2010) states that in New Delhi, about 67% of women experienced sexual harassment 3 to 5 times in one year (Jagori, 2010). Baxi, in her study, argues that in India, the prosecutions of rape are inherently biased against women. She stated that the trial is not carried out in order to punish the culprit but to reach a compromise. This study brings attention to the culture of compromise in India, which envelops rape prosecutions achieved between the culprit and the victim in the process of law, through the different spurious means (Baxi, 2010). Another study was conducted in which it was reported that along with liberalization and development, the culture of rape is also increasing to a great extent. In this study, rape was categorized as a heinous and deliberate crime that is committed by men for several reasons such as the desire for sex and to punish the victim. In this study, it is indicated that in rural areas rape cases are slightly higher as compared to urban areas (Basu, 2011).

In another study, it is stated that the victim's character, clothing revoltingness, acquaintances and physical attractiveness are factors which play a significant role in attracting more chances of being raped (Kamdar, Kosambiya, Chawada, Verma, & Kadia, 2017). According to the 2012 statistics, New Delhi has the highest number of rape cases among all cities of India, whereas Jabalpur has the highest rape reports per capita. Since 2012, many of the rape cases have received major attention of the media and spurred protests, which has led the Indian government to change its penal code for sexual assault and rape crimes (Heller-Nicholas, 2011). The issue of rape is associated with a physical and mental problem. According to different studies, the rape incident usually leaves behind a life long and painful scar on the victim. It creates permanent damage for the health of the victims. Pregnancy associated with the rape, results in shortening of one's life, leads to dropping-out of school, and unplanned marriage or marrying the wrong person. Psychologically, rape can cause anxiety, low self-esteem, guilt, frustration, fear, depression, disappointment, and anger with oneself or another. (Achunike & Kitause, 2014).

# Methodology

## Study Setting

This study was carried out in New Delhi which is a capital of India and is a massive metropolitan area in the north of a country.

## Study Design

In this study, the socio-cultural reasons that contribute to rape culture, and the effects of literacy on the same were explored. A mixed-method approach was used. Both primary and secondary data was collected. For secondary data analysis, literature was searched on different databases such as Google scholar PsycINFO and PUBMED. Those studies were included which were cross-sectional and determined the prevalence of rape in India. The qualitative studies in which experiences of victims were determined were also included in the secondary analysis. Around 20 articles were searched on different databases, out of which 10 met the selection criteria.

## Study Population

Interviews were conducted from 2 victims. Initially, for this study, I decided to conduct around 4 interviews to understand the female experience with rape, however, due to small response rate, only 2 in-depth interviews and 2 informal interviews were done to achieve the desired result. The total time for one interview was around 1 hour. All interviews were carried out in a closed room where there was no distortion, and at a suitable place for the respondents.

## Informed Consent

Verbal informed consent was taken from the respondents before the start of the interview. Those who were not willing to participate in this study were not included in the interview. I specifically mentioned, in the informed consent that, “You can leave the discussion (interview) anytime if you do not feel comfortable”. I also informed my respondents that they can withhold any information they do not want to disclose.

## Data Analysis

Interviews were recorded and then I listened to the recorded interviews to get a “sense of the whole”. After that, I identified different segments and units that were relevant to my study objectives. I took reflection notes while listening to the recorded interview. After that, I translated the related verbatim into the English language. The segmentation gave me the "meaning units", and the themes which emerged were used for the analysis.

# Findings

## Cases of Rape Victims:

Both these cases of rape are based on the interview given by the rape victims on their sexual harassment experience.

A 16-Year-old Roshni Nagar, who was living in the servant quarter of one of the well-known families of Delhi and one day the alcoholic son of the owner raped her. The girl was also employed in a nearby playschool as a caretaker. The participant had reported that she was threatened by the perpetrator whenever she wanted to tell anyone. She also has three younger sisters which is the reason why she did not tell about this incident to anyone and because of her poor father. The son had threatened to kill her and the other members of the family. One day, she noticed that the person was irritating her younger sister and then she decided to tell about the incident to her family and narrated everything. After that, her family told everything to the boy’s family who instead asked them to remain quiet; her father took her to the police station to register a complaint but the police didn't cooperate with them and blamed the girl. The girl with her family was then shifted to another place. During the whole interview, the girl expressed anxiety and hesitation about explaining this incidence. She claimed resentment and fear towards that person. She mentioned that she is still very fearful towards men and always tries to avoid men. In addition to these anxieties and fear, her self-esteem appeared to be very low.

The second participant was a 17-year-old girl who had come to Delhi with her aunt and uncle in search of a job. She started working as a housemaid. After 2 years, she was dragged by a boy's gang in a moving van while she was coming back home from a nearby market. They drove the girl for about 30 minutes, covered the eyes with a blindfold and tied her hands together and then took her to an unknown location where 5 to 6 men tortured, assaulted and raped her. She was given drugs and was ordered to do sexual acts. The girl stated that she had suffered abuse for 1 month. One day, a team of police suddenly arrived and rescued her. The girl was sent back to her village. During the time of the interview, she had feelings of shame and sadness about the past. She expressed great concern that she had lost her virginity. She was unable to tell the entire details of her past. According to her, it was the worst incident of her life and she may never be able to forget it all her life. She described the incidence as frightening and painful; more significantly, the girl also has recurring nightmares. Her self-esteem level was very low and she said that she doesn't like herself anymore.

## Factors Associated with Rape Culture

Participants were asked about the factors which in their opinion could be a reason for rape culture in India. All of them stated that sexually aggressive behaviour is one of the main reasons of rape culture in India.

“In our country, males are considered dominant……. young men experience increased mobility, autonomy, power and opportunity in comparison to young girls…………. They are socialized in the context of an ‘asli mard’ who must be courageous, confident ‘daring and courageous and be able to prove their masculinity, and because of this they are at high risk of committing a crime like rape” (Participant 1).

Another factor which was identified as a reason for rape culture in India was the low socio-economic status of women.

"I think young men who don't have any job and work, harass girls. Secondly in our country, only those girls are safe and protected who belong to a rich background and whose brother is well known and have good command. Daughters of common men like us are not safe in this country" (Participant 2)

During the analysis, overcrowded places was also identified as a factor which can lead to rape.

“Delhi is a very crowded city and there is always a fear of being sexually harassed by men…. Now I never allow my sisters to go alone and I always prefer that they take with them our mother or any other family member” (Participant 1).

## Participants’ experience towards reporting the case to the police

Respondents were asked to share their experiences regarding reporting to the police. Participants in this study expressed great dissatisfaction in reporting case to the police due to the police disbelieving and their disrespectful attitude. Respondents faced a significant barrier in reporting the complaint to the police.

"It was when everyone was blaming me and I suffered great humiliation in the police station. There is no legal support for us as we belong to a lower middle-class family" (Participant 2).

"The police were trying to blame me; all of them were drunk and laughing. They were asking shameful questions in front of my father which was humiliating for me and I thought I’d commit suicide or kill all the police officers" ( Participant 1).

## Rape and Illiteracy

Participants were asked to share some details of the people who have raped them. In the first case, it was determined that the participant was educated and a university going person. Whereas, in the second case all those who were involved in the rape were illiterate.

“He was a university student…. many times I had seen him coming home drunk” (Participant 1)

“I don't know much about them but how they were talking showed that they were not educated" (Participant 2).

## The attitude of a family member

Participants were asked to share their experience regarding support from family. A mixed opinion was observed.

"Well, my family supported me in fighting with the community who always tried to blame me. But there was hidden anger among my family which I can feel most of the time and due to this I always tried to keep myself locked in my room" (Participant 1)

"When this incidence had happened, my husband was the first person who rejected me, and after that my family. Before this, my husband truly loved me but after that, he started thinking as I am something contaminated" (Participant 2).

## The Reaction of the Participants’ Mothers

This incident has led to fear and panic among the victims’ mothers. In response to my questions, Rakhi (a mother of a victim) spoke about how depressing this incident was. She was frightened as the perpetrator was threatening to kill her daughter.

"Since that incident, I have been on antidepressants, I was always walking from room to room just to check whether my daughter was okay" (Participant 1 mother).

The other participant’s family shows anger towards police, relatives and a government. They felt that the police responded insufficiently and did not cooperate with them. These feelings were tied with a strong sense of injustice.

"I feel very angry as no one helped us. I think that it is a social service and responsibility to help my daughter get justice. Police didn't help us and, blamed my daughter for it. (Participant 2 mother).

## Prevalence of Rape between the Years 1990-2019

Data was collected from different databases regarding rape statistics in Delhi. As shown in figure 1, significant increase in the prevalence of rape cases was seen from 2001 to 2018 in Delhi. In 2001, 326 cases of rape were reported, which rose to 76 in 2012 and 780 in 2018 respectively. As shown in figure 2, the total number of rape cases in the whole country also increased significantly. In 2013, 2923 rape cases were registered which increased to 38947 in 2016.



**Figure 1:** Number of cases in Delhi from 2001-2018.



**Figure 2:** Number of cases of rape in India from 1991-2016.

# Discussion

Rape is an alarming condition in India. With the advent of electronic media, it has become public knowledge. The interviews highlighted the factors associated with rape culture in India. In this study, the non-cooperative behaviour of the police was seen. This is consistent with the literature where it is stated that rape is one of the major under reported crimes in India. It is due to this reason that rape victims have to face lengthy investigations and prosecution. If no proper evidence is present, then rape victims can't get justice in the court. The girls and women who have been raped usually go through the most humiliating and painful experience when they report to the police (Merry, 2011; Sundaresh, 2011).

In this study, police investigation seems quite torturous. These results are inconsistent with the other studies that were conducted in other developing countries. In all these studies, it is stated that victims are questioned by the police regarding different elements of crime such as use of force, penetrations, what they were wearing, sexual history and other control tactics again and again which can be a great trauma for the victim and her family.

Another finding of this study was the negative consequences of the rape on both physical and mental health of the participants. Other studies also stated the same results such as the majority of victims feel bad about themselves, depressed, distrustful of others, violent and reluctant to seek further help. In other literature f it is mentioned that feelings of helplessness, threat and danger are not only felt at the time of the rape but it remains there in the future, even when everything gets settled (Kamdar, Kosambiya, Chawada, Verma, & Kadia, 2017).

Other result of this study is that rape occurs in an open place with many people around. In contrast, previous literature stated that rape is more likely to occur in those places which are private and dark. This is because these places are quiet and less populous where perpetrator is not likely to be interrupted by others (Abeid et al., 2015).

Another important finding of this study was the significant rise in the number of cases from 2001 to 2018 in Delhi. This shows that Delhi which is the capital of India is the most unsafe place for women where one rape incidence happens every day. Significant increase in rape cases is also seen in India. This depicts that the empowerment and constitutional aspects of the country are in danger and need to be modified to make Delhi a safe city to live in.

In this study, an important finding is that rape cases occur at public places and it is inconsistent with other studies. Secondly changing social structure leads to the convergence of time and space of likely oﬀender and the absence of women guardians, thus allowing illegal activities such as sexual harassment every day. This can be because most women spend their time at school, college and the workplace and have increased contact with men. Therefore, in the absence of guardian can be expected to be the target of these types of incidences. Another finding of this study is that women after rape, prefer to remain quiet due to improper and corrupt justice system and tolerance of these incidents encourages the offenders to do these crimes without any fear. The study reveals that one incident of rape occurs on the bus. This is in consistent with the rape case which occurs in 2012 (Durham, 2015). This finding, therefore, makes a very valuable contribution to the literature which at present is not at all concerned with public transport in India.

The results of this study reveal that both educated and illiterate people can be involved in rape. No relation between literacy and rape incidents have been seen in this study. However, the literacy rate of a female can emerge as a major predictor in almost all cases. The result findings show that if women are educated then more cases will be reported and it will, in turn, empower women. The increased reporting of rape cases will ensure justice and will help in abating these types of crimes (Tripathi & Rao).

# Recommendations

More research should have been conducted to determine the factors associated with rape in India. Quantitative survey should be carried out on national level to know the prevalence of rape in India. In India, recently measures have been taken to address the harassment of women at workplace and home but very little attention has been given to sexual harassment at public places specifically during the journey of women to school, colleges and work. It is strongly recommended to make policies and implement them, which is specifically related to harassment of women at public places. Policies regarding the punishment of criminals should also be properly implemented as these incidences happen because culprits know that they can never be punished. Reliable data on this form of sexual harassment is also needed on the national level if effective preventive measures are to be formulated. Another strong recommendation is that policies should be made regarding the reporting of such incidents as most of these cases are not reported.

# Conclusion

A study was carried out to determine the factors that are responsible for rape incidences in Delhi India. Two cases of rape have been taken in this study and a mixed method approach was used to collect data. Interviews of the victims were done and secondary data was collected to determine the trends of prevalence of rape cases in India and Delhi. Strong sexual desire, illiteracy, lack of job opportunities and corrupt judicial system are some of the reasons due to which prevalence of these incidents have increased in the last decade.

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Rawat, R. (2013). Tadapatri Masthanaiah Journal of Current Research, 7,(7), 17976-17984 RESEARCH ARTICLE ON OF RAPE CASES IN INDIA: A STUDY OF LAST ONE DECADE Ramu Rawat and 2Tadapatri Masthanaiah. *International Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai Sri Krishnadevaraya University Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh ABSTRACT Objectives: In this study we examine the rape trends and situation In India an one decade by age and region. Methods: Present study used National Crimes Records Bureau (NCRB) Indi*.

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