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# Evaluation of Impact of SARS COVID-19 Virus on Sexual Assault Cases in India

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# **Abstract**

Children are the gift given by God to humanity. Sexual abuse of Children is one of the most heinous crimes. CSA (child sexual abuse) and SA (Sexual Assault) is the most reported crime against children across worldwide. It affects not only physically but also mentally it may lead to death. Both girls and boys in India face severely assault like early marriage, domestic violence, bullying, child labor, and many more children can be sexually assaulted in any place like home, streets, schools, workplaces, prisons, orphans. It affects the overall development of the children. According to NCRB 109 children face any form of CSA every day in India. Keeping in view the alarming situation of sexual crime against children. Indian government passed a law against the crime against women in 2018 and the crime against children in 2012. In 2012, the amendment of the POCSO (Protection of children from sexual offenses) act in sections 4, 5, 6, 9, 14, 15 and 42 is made to save the children from sexual assaults.

The objective of our study is to describe the overall crime rate of DELHI NCR on child abuse and sexual assaults in the year 2019, March 2019 to June 2021, under IPC 376, 377, 354, POCSO Act 2012, etc. Forensic Laboratory receives 5-10 cases of child sexual abuse every month. In most cases, the criminal is known and/or unknown to the victim. In this study, we also try to create awareness towards the Sexual Assault and the POCSO Act.

### **Abbreviations**

CSA: Child Sexual Abuse SA: Sexual Assault

NCRB: National Crime Record Bureau

POCSO: Protection of children from sexual offenses

IPC: Indian Penal Court

WHO: World Health Organization

RFSL: Regional Forensic Science Laboratory

# Introduction

Crime is an act or action, which breaks the laws or rules created for the good well of society. In India when a criminal commits a crime he or she will punish according to IPC (Indian Penal Court). According to National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB), the crimes recorded in India have increased by 28% in 2020 as compared to 2019; such cases rise due to the breakdown of COVID rules. During this period there has been a fall in crimes such as rape, kidnapping, and crime against children. As per NCRB data, yearly 1.6% of cases

are increased. Which crime rate against women per lakhs 3.78 in 2018 was as compared in 2017 are 3.59. And in 2019 it is 4 lakhs [1].

Delhi is known as the crime capital of India; somehow the crime has come down but it is still known as the "Crime Capital". According to NCRB data, it is the most unsafe city for women in India or the country. As per the NCRB report, Approx 10000 cases against Women have been registered in 2020, whereas in 2019 it was approx 13,000. However, as compared to other states Delhi remains exposed. The data shows by NCRB about 98.7% of the suspects and the victim were known to each other. The suspects were their family members, friends, neighbors, online friends, employees, estranged partners, and rapes on the pretext of marriage [2, 3].

In the first six months of this year (2021) as compared to 2020 Crime against women in the capital of India were increased by 63.3% according to the data shared by Delhi police. In 2020, COVID-19 changed the crime profile of India. The cases of overall crime were lower than in 2019 but the cases of violation of COVID-19 or disobedience were increased by 20 times in just a year. Due to the Novel Corona virus disease, India remained contained for the year 2020 [4].

On 11 March 2020, WHO (World Health Organization) announced COVID-19 as a public health emergency all over the world. Collectively many countries referred to "LOCKDOWN" to stop the spread of viruses. In, India a national wide lockdown was held from March 25 to May 31, 2020. During this period movement of people was limited, which contributed to or helps down the several crimes in India. According to the latest NCRB report, the overall crime rate in Delhi is lower down up to 16% in 2020 as compared to 2019. Indian government passed a law against the crime against women in 2018 and the crime against children in 2012 [5-8].

The Regional Forensic Science Laboratory (RFSL) Biology Division, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi receives Sexual assault (SA) and Child sexual assault (CSA) cases on regular basis. According, to RFSL data the total number of cases deposited from March 2019 to March 2020 is 440 of which 198 are of SA and CSA. And during the pandemic that is from March 2020 to June 2021 the total number of cases is 378 of which 112 are of SA and CSA. By keeping this view the total number of SA and CSA cases is decliner during this period [9].

#### Material and methods

In this study we are focusing on the detailed history of the CSA and SA cases from March 2019 to March 2020. Total number of cases in this duration is 439 out and during the pandemic that is from March 2020 to June 2021 the total number of cases is 377 of which 112 are of SA and CSA. The data of 68 cases from the total reported cases is analyzed. In this study we are also focusing on the relationship between nature of crime and age of the victim, Victim and Accused (Known/Unknown), Victim and Accused on the basis of religion, report of DNA (Inclusion/Exclusion) the basis of time-lapse, Crime reporting time by adults and children's, where (location) the crime take place, And Pre-COVID and Post-COVID sexually assault cases. In the laboratory after performing the standard DNA testing, we get results and after comparing it with the given data we conclude it [10-13].

S No	Sections of case	Age/gender/religion (Victim)	Relationship/Age/Gender/Re- ligion (Accused)	Time lapse	Location of crime	DNA report result	Physical violence	Frequency of crime	Population base
1	377/506 IPC, 4POSCO ACT	4/Male/Hindu	Neighbour(Known)/14/ Male/ Hindu	1 Day	House	Exclusion	No	1	No
2.	376/323/506 IPC	23/Female/Hindu	Boyfriend(Known)/21/Male/ Hindu	6-Months	Hotel & On Road	Inclusion	Yes	Many Times	No
3.	6 POSCO ACT	10/Female/Hindu	Brother(Known)/18/Male/ Hindu	6-7 Months	House	Inclusion	No	Many Times	No
4.	363/377/394/324 IPC, 6 POSCO ACT	16/Male/Hindu	Known/24/Male/Muslim	13-Days	Railway Station	Inclusion	Yes	1	Victim-No Accused- Yes
5.	328/376( 2G)/34 IPC	18/Female/Hindu	Friends(known)/18/Male/Hindu/18/male/hindu	Same Day	Office	Inclusion	No	1	No
6.	365/376/506/34 IPC	22/Female/Hindu	Boyfreind(Known)26/Male/ Hindu	2 Days	House	Inclusion	-	1	No
7.	376 D/323/354 B/506/509/34 IPC	31/Female/Hindu	Known/Accused Not Found	3 Days	House	Profile Preserved	Yes	Many Times	No
8.	354 A/376 IPC	36/Female/Hindu	Known/Male/32/Hindu	3 Days	Footpath	Exclusion	No	1	Yes
9.	376 IPC & 6 POCSO ACT	17/Female/Hindu	Known/Male/33/Hindu	2 Months	House	Inclusion	Yes	Many Times	Victim-No Accused- Yes
10.	377 IPC & 6 POCSO ACT	4 Year 9months/ Male/Christian	Accused Not Found	4 Days	School	Profile Preserved	Yes	Many Times	No

11.	363/342/376/506/34 IPC & 4/17 POCSO ACT	14/Female/Hindu	Known/Male/27/Muslim	1 Day	Water Tank Room	Inclusion	No	1	Yes
12.	376/377/354 B/328 IPC	38/Female/Hindu	Known/Male/30/Hindu	1 Day	House	Exclusion	No	1	No
13.	363/376 IPC & 6 POCSO ACT	15/Female/Hindu	Known/Male/Not Found/Mus- lim	20 Days	House	Profile Preserved	Yes	Many Times	No
14.	363/366/376/174 IPC & 4 POCSO ACT	15/Female/Hindu	Boyfriend(Known)/Male/22/ Hindu	5 Days	House	Inclusion	No	-	Yes
15.	376 IPC & 4 POCSO ACT	17/Female/Hindu	Known/Male/22/Hindu	1 Day	Office	Inclusion	No	-	Yes
16.	376/365/392/34 IPC	36/Female/Mus- lim	Accused Not Found	1 Day	Car	Profile Preserved	No	-	Victim-Yes Acccused- Not found
17.	363/376 IPC & 6 POCSO ACT	15/Feamale/ Hindu	Accused Not Found	Same Day	-	Profile Preserved	No	Many Times	Victim-Yes Acccused- Not found
18.	363/376 IPC& 6 POCSO ACT	12/Female/Hindu	Known/Male/19/Hindu	Same Day	Truck	Inclusion	No	2 Times	Victim-Yes Acccused- Not men- tion
19.	328/376/323 IPC	20/Female/Hindu	Friend(Known/Male/19/Hindu	Same Day	House	Exclusion	Yes	-	No
20.	376 B/323 IPC	55/Female/Hindu	Husband(Known)/Male/60/ Hindu	Same Day	House	Inclusion	Yes	-	Yes

			,						
21.	376 IPC & 6 POCSO ACT	15/Female/Hindu	Brother(Known)/Male/18/ Hindu	1 Day	House	Exclusion	-	-	No
22.	363/376 IPC & 6 POCSO ACT	15/Female/Hindu	Known/Male/24/Hindu	1 Day	Restau- rant	Inclusion	-	-	No
23.	363/366A/376 IPC & 6 POCSO ACT	15/Female/Hindu	Husband(Known)/Male/26/ Hindu	3 Years	-	Inclusion	-	-	Yes
24.	363/376 IPC & 6 POCSO ACT	17/Female/Hindu	Husband(Known)/Male/19/ Muslim	13 Days	-	Exclusion	-	-	No
25.	363/376 IPC & 6 POCSO ACT	16/Female/Hindu	Boyfriend(Known)/Male/24/ Muslim	3 Days	-	Inclusion	Yes	-	No
26.	363/376/354 IPC & 6 POCSO ACT	13/Female/Hindu	Uncle(Known)/Male/50/Mus- lim	2 Days	-	Exclusion	-	Many Times	Yes
27.	323/376/377/509 IPC	26/Female/Hindu	Friend(Known)/Male/22/Hindu	-	-	Inclusion	Yes	-	Yes
28.	376 IPC	26/Female/Hindu	Boyfriend(Known)/Male/Not Mention/Hindu	6 Months Pregnant	-	Profile Preserved	Yes	-	Yes
29.	363/366A/376 IPC & 6 POCSO ACT	15/Female/Hindu	Husband(Known)/Male/22/ Muslim	2 Days	House	Exclusion	-	-	Yes
30.	376/354/323 IPC	26/Female/Hindu	Boyfriend(Known)/Male/20/ Hindu	4 Months Pregnant	-	Exclusion	Yes	Many	Yes
31.	363/376/342/354/54A/ 276D/34 IPC & 6 POCSO ACT	16/female/hindu	1. Unknown/Male/37/Hindu 2. Unknown/Male/44/Hindu 3. Unknown/Male/43/Hindu	I Day	Jhuggi	Inclusion	Yes	Many	Yes

32.	363/366A/376 IPC & 6 POCSO ACT	17/Female/Hindu	Husband(Known)/Male/22/ Hindu	2 Months Pregnant	-	Inclusion	No	-	-
33.	363/376DA IPC & 6 POCSO ACT	15/Female/Hindu	1. Neighbour(Known)/Male/22/ Hindu 2. Neighbour(Known)/Male/26/ Hindu	1 Day	Jhuggi	Exclusion	-	-	Yes
34.	366/366A/376 IPC & 6 POCSO ACT	15/Female/Hindu	Boyfriend(Known)/Male/19/ Hindu	3 Months	-	Inclusion	-	-	No
35.	376/506 IPC	19/Female/Hindu	Cousion(Known)/Male/19/ Hindu	Same Day	Isolated Place	Inclusion	No	-	No
36.	376/328 IPC	22/Female/Hindu	Boyfriend(Known)/Male/24/ Hindu	Same Day	Hotel	Exclusion	-	-	No
37.	376(2) IPC & 5 POCSO ACT	17/Female/Hindu	Boyfriend(Known)/Male/28/ Hindu	I Month Preg- nant	Shop	Inclusion	-	4-5 Times	Yes
38.	376 IPC	22/Female/Hindu	Neighbour(Known)/Male/47/ Hindu	Same Day	House	Exclusion	-	-	No
39.	363/376D/323/354/506 IPC & 4 POCSO ACT	12/Female/Hindu	1. Uncle(Known)/Male/27/ Hindu 2. Unknown/Male/32/Hindu 3. Unknown/Male/35/Hindu	Same Day	Hotel	Exclusion	Yes	-	No
40.	376/323/506 IPC & 4/12 POCSO ACT	19/Female/Hindu	Boyfriend(Known)/Male/19/ Hindu	2 Days	Guest House	Exclusion	No	-	No
41.	376AB IPC & 6 POCSO ACT	5/Female/Hindu	Neighbour(Known)/Male/11/ Hindu	6 Days	-	Exclusion	-	-	No

42.	376/342/509 IPC	22/Femal E/Hindu	Friend(Known)/Male/29/Hindu	3 Days	Hotel	Profile Preserved	-	-	Victim-No Acccused- Yes
43.	376/506/34 IPC & 4 POC- SO ACT	13/Female/Hindu	Friend(Known)/Male/19/Hindu	2 Days	Covid Centre	Exclusion	-	-	No
44.	376/506 IPC	22/Female/Hindu	Boyfriend(Known)/Male/21/ Hindu	4 Days	-	Exclusion	-	Many	No
45.	354/174 IPC & 10 POCSO ACT	4/Female/Hindu	Neighbour(Known)/Male/47/ Hindu	1 Day	-	Exclusion	-	-	Victim-Ye Acccused- No
46.	376/392/506 IPC	32/Female/Hindu	Unknown/Male/26/Hindu	Same Day	Jungle	Exclusion	Yes	-	-
47.	376/376AB/506 IPC & 6 POCSO ACT	12/Female/Hindu	Neighbour(Known)/Male/29/ Hindu	5 DAYS	House	Profile Preserved	-	2 Times	Victim-Ye Acccused- No
48.	377/34 IPC & 6 POCSO ACT	12/Female/Mus- lim	1. Unknown/Male/15/Muslim 2. Unknown/Male/15/Muslim 3. Unknown/Male/17/Muslim	1 Day	Flat	Exclusion	-	2 Times	-
49.	363/376 IPC & 6 POCSO ACT	15/Female/Hindu	Boyfriend(Known)/Male/26/ Hindu	3 Days	-	Exclusion	-	-	-
50	363/366/376 IPC & 6 POCSO ACT	15/Female/Hindu	Known/Male/20/Hindu	Same Day	-	Exclusion	-	-	-
51.	376/363 IPC & 6 POCSO ACT	15/Female/Hindu	Known/Male/20/Hindu	2 Days	-	Profile Preserved	-	Many Times	Victim-No Acccused- Yes

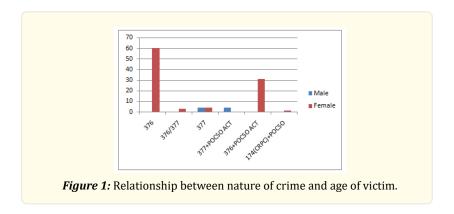
52.	376 IPC	35/Female/Hindu	Father(Known)/Male/20/Mus- lim	Same Day	House	Exclusion	-	2 Months	No
53.	376/328 IPC & 4 POCSO ACT	17/Female/Hindu	Known/Male/58/Hindu	1 Day	Hotel	Exclusion	-	-	No
54.	376/506/509 IPC	20/Female/Hindu	Stepfather(Known)/Male/47/ Hindu	7 Months	House	Exclusion	-	-	No
55.	363/376/368 IPC & 4 POCSO ACT	15/Female/Hindu	Friend(Known)/Male/19/Hindu	10 Days	-	Exclusion	-	-	-
56.	323/342/354/354B/506/ 509/376 IPC	28/Female/Hindu	Boyfriend(Known)/Male/30/ Hindu	15 Days	Flat	Exclusion	Yes	-	Yes
57.	376/506 IPC	21/Female/Hindu	Boyfriend(Known)/Male/30/ Hindu	1 Day	Hotel	Inclusion	-	-	Yes
58.	328/376 IPC	28/Female/Hindu	Known/Male/43/Hindu	Same Day	Hotel	Inclusion	-	-	-
59.	376 IPC	33/Female/Hindu	Known/Male/35/Hindu	27 Days	House	Exclusion	-	-	Victim-Yes Acccused- No
60.	328/376 IPC	25/Female/Hindu	Known/Male/24/Hindu	Same Day	Flat	Inclusion	No	-	-
61.	376 IPC	20/Female/Hindu	Known/Male/29/Hindu	9 Months Pregnant	Office	Profile Preserved	No	-	Victim-Yes Acccused- No
62.	363/366A/376 IPC & 6 POCSO ACT	15/Female/Hindu	Boyfriend(Known)/Male/26/ Hindu	2 Years Child Fir- (Missing) 5/10/2017 Found- 16/12/2020	-	Inclusion	-	-	-

63.	363/328/376B IPC & 6 POCSO ACT	12/Female/Hindu	1.Known/Male/30/Hindu 2.Known/Male/22/Hindu	15 Days	-	Exclusion	Yes	3-4 Days	Victim-Yes Acccused Not Men- tion
64.	377/323/506/509 IPC	43/Female/Hindu	Husband(Known)/Male/48/ Hindu	Same Day	House	Profile Preserved	Yes	-	-
65.	377 IPC	30/Female/Hindu	Husband(Known)/Male/-/ Hindu	2 Days	Hotel	Profile Preserved	-	-	-
66.	376 IPC	39/Female/Mus-	Father(Known)/Male/64/Mus- lim	Same Day	House	Exclusion	-	2 Months	-
67.	376/328 IPC	38/Female/Nepali	Unknown/Male/40/Hindu	Same Day	Office	Inclusion	-	-	Victim-Yes Acccused- Not Men- tion
68.	376 IPC	24/Female/Hindu	Known/Male/29/Hindu	2 Days	Farm- house	Exclusion	-	-	Yes

**Table 1:** Details of all the cases examined.

# Result and Discussion Result

According to the above observation, it was found that in a figure 1 the relationship between the nature of crime and the age of victims in IPC 376 is sixty (60) females; in IPC 376/377 three (3) females; in IPC 377 four (4) males and four (4) females both are minor; in IPC 377+POCSO four (4) minor males; in IPC 376+POCSO thirty-one (31) females and we also observed that there is One case of 174Crpc+POCSO. In figure 2 we observed, the relationship between victims and accused in which out of 68 victims, 89.7% accused are known to the victim and 5.88% are unknown and about 4.4% accused are not found. In figure 3 we observed the relationship between victims and accused based on religion in which Hindu victims are 92.64%, followed by Muslim victims are 4.41%, Christian victims are 1.4%, and One case of Nepali victims. Wherever the accused percentage is 85.29% are Hindus; 14.7% are Muslims. In figure 4 we conclude the DNA report based on time-lapse in which we include the report of Same day, One day, Within 72 hours, more than 72 hours, and also the cases of paternity. According to our data we found that the positive reports are about 35.29%, the negative reports are 45.58%, and the profile preserved is 19.11%. In figure 5 we observed the reporting time by an adult and the child on the same day, One day, Within 72 hours, more than 72 hours, in which 54.41% are children and 45.58% are adults. In figure 6 we observed the location of assaults in Houses, Hotels, Offices, Footpath, School, Vehicles, Jhuggi, Isolated places. We concluded that most of the cases happened in Houses about 32.35% followed by Hotels 14.7% and 27.9% are the places which were not mentioned. In figure 7 we observed the percentage of COVID and Post COVID cases of Sexually Assault from March 2019 to June 2021 during this period we included the time interval of March 2019 to March 2020 and March 2020 to June 2021. We have seen a gradual decrease in the cases during the Pandemic of about 27.66% [14-16].





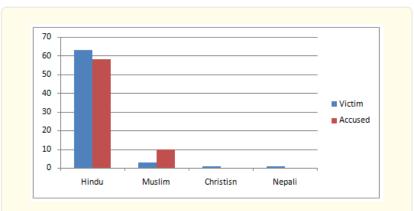
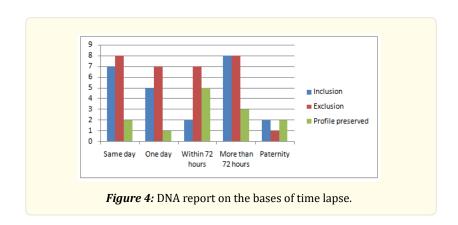
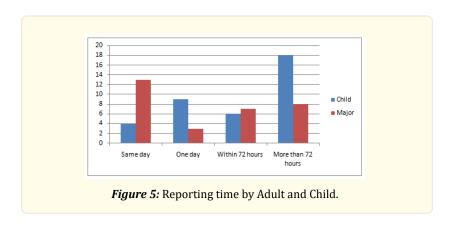
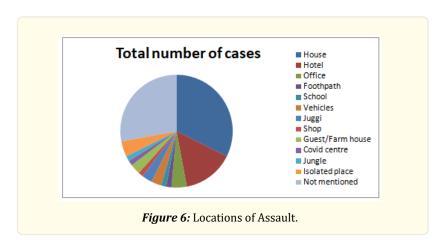
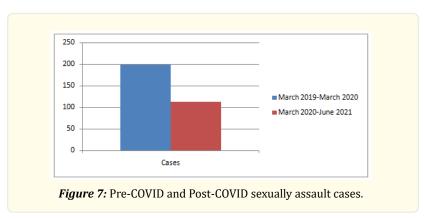


Figure 3: Relationship between Victim and accused on the bases of religion.









# Discussion

Sexual abuse of Children is one of the most heinous crimes. CSA (child sexual abuse) and Sexual Assault (SA) is the most reported crime. It affects not only physically but also mentally it may lead to death. According to NCRB 109 children face any form of CSA every day in India. The crimes recorded in India have increased by 28% in 2020 as compared to 2019; such cases rise due to the breakdown of COVID rules. During this period there has been a fall in crimes such as rape, kidnapping, and crime against children. The capital of India Delhi is known as the crime capital. As per the NCRB report, approx 10000 cases against women has been registered in 2020, whereas in 2019 it was approx 13,000. According, to RFSL data the total number of cases deposited from March 2019 to March 2020 is 440 of which 198 are of SA and CSA. And during the pandemic that is from March 2020 [17] to June 2021 the total number of cases is 378 of which 112 are of SA and CSA. By keeping this view the total number of SA and CSA cases is decliner during this period. In this study we are also focusing on the relationship between nature of crime and age of the victim, Victim and Accused (Known/Unknown), Victim and Accused on the basis of religion, report of DNA (Inclusion/Exclusion) the basis of time-lapse, Crime reporting time by adults and children's, where (location) the crime take place, And Pre-COVID and Post-COVID sexually assault cases. In the laboratory after performing the standard DNA testing, we get results and after comparing it with the given data we conclude it. We observed the percentage of COVID and Post COVID cases of Sexually Assault from March 2019 to June 2021 during this period we included the time interval of March 2019 to March 2020 and March 2020 [18, 19] to June 2021. We have seen a gradual decrease in the cases during the Pandemic of about 27.66%.

U. K. Kulkarni et al carried out a study at the Directorate of forensic science laboratories, Biology Division Mumbai, Maharashtra. In

this study we saw some shocking facts and the objective of this study is to focus in relation with sexual abuse which are- child sexual abuse cases under IPC 376,377,354 POCSO act 2012 were reported by 48% children. Among them, 54% were female children, and 43% were male children, 24% of children face different forms of sexual abuse, 57% reported other forms of sexual abuse and 19% had been sexually assaulted. [2] In another study, Sumner Kaur et al is to discuss the overall crime rate of Delhi NCR in the year 2017–2018 and to study the reasons behind the delayed reporting. When we drive the analysis, the secondary objective of the study is to find the possible effects of delayed medico-legal examination on forensic DNA evidence and the objective of this study is to evaluate the statistical percentage of child sexual abuse cases [20].

# Conclusion

Crime against women and children is a global pandemic, and there has been a flare-up for a few years. As compared to other countries, India's rank crime against women and children is 148 out of 170 countries. According to NCRB data, the most unsafe state in India is Assam followed by Rajasthan. If we talk about the metropolitan cities in India Delhi rate is 28%, followed by Mumbai 14.3% and Bangalore is 7.7% [21-24]. The crime against women and children is increasing irrespectively to their gender and age of the child; our results show the crime happened in the familiar places like houses, neighbor houses, office, etc. are more prone to such types of cases. In India the number of laws is implemented for women's safety still crime rate against women is increasing day by day for many years but the increasing rate of crime against women is rapidly blowing till 2019. Crime rates over the last two years have decreased according to data reported at RFSL. Awareness and Education are the two important key rules which have to be imposed on society to reduce such number of cases. Judicial and media should be more focused on such type of crime so, that justice for women and children can be done. We observed the percentage of COVID and Post-COVID cases of Sexual Assault from March 2019 to June 2021; during this period, we included the time interval of March 2019 to March 2020 and March 2020 to June 2021. We have seen a gradual decrease in the cases during the Pandemic of about 27.66% [26-33].

# **Declaration of conflicting interests**

The authors confirm that there are no potential conflicts of interest regarding research, publication of articles, and authorship.

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- 33. Delhi ranks first in crimes against women.

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