

ANALYSIS OF WOMEN VICTIMIZATION IN WEST BENGAL

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Abstract

Keywords:

Crime,
Crime against women,
Rate of crime,
Trends and Patterns,
Correlation.

This paper is based on crime against women that has occurred in the districts of West Bengal. District level analysis has been done in order to identify the district where the incidences against women has occurred the most. Further, crime rate of 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011 has been emphasised to understand the trends and pattern of offences against women. Apart from that, crimes against women during 2011 is discussed in detail explaining the distribution of total crime against women, total head wise crime expressed in percentage as well as represented them through maps and in several forms of graph. Socio-economic indicators have been taken to see their correlation in order to explain the reasons of causes of crimes against women.

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1. Introduction

Crime according to Oxford dictionary is “an offence against an individual of the state which is punishable by law.” Such acts are interplay of several factors of demographic, social and economic factors. Apart from such factors, it is also an effect of increasing urbanisation (Tahir 1996). In fact crime in general is an issue having its background based on sociology, psychology, physiology but in geography it is related with environmental criminology by which crime can be prevented by environmental design (Jacob 1961, Newman 1972, Davidson 1981 and Brantingham and Brantingham 1981). Crime in geography is an interaction between space, environment and peculiarity of place.

Objectives

- To study the temporal trends of crime against women.
- To analyse the factors responsible for crime against women.

2. Research Method

This paper is based on secondary data and that has been obtained from National Crime Record Bureau (MHA) and Census of India. The data pertaining to crime against women for the year 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011 is taken from NCRB for its analysis. Data of demographic detail is collected from Primary Census Abstract 2011 of West Bengal, Census of India, to analyse the causes of crime against women in the districts of West Bengal. To know the rate of crime against women, rate per lakh of female population is calculated. The obtained data is organised in Microsoft excel and further represented them in several form of graphs and it is also processed in Arc map to prepare the maps showing spatial distribution of crime against women. SPSS was used to find the coefficient of correlation. In the correlation table the variables taken are x1 illiterates, x2 non-workers, y1 rape, y2 kidnapping and abduction, y3 dowry death, y4 torture and y5 molestation.

Study area

The state West Bengal sprawls over an area of 8875200 sqkm and extends between the latitude and longitude of 85°50’’ E to 89 °50’’E and 21° 25’’N to 27° 13’’N. It inhabits the total population of 91276115 under 19 districts of the state. It has 40203 number of villages covered under 341

C.D.Blocks. There exists 129 statutory towns and 780 total census town (Census 2011). During 2001, there were total 375 towns and it rose to 909 in 2011. Total number of villages in 2001 was 40782 and in 2011 it reduced to 40203. Population density is 1028 and sex ratio is 950. Total literacy of the state is 76.26 per cent out of which male is 81.68 per cent and female is 70.54 per cent.

It extends from Himalaya in the north to Bay of Bengal in the south. The given figure of study area portrays the present position according to the census of India 2011. Between 2001 and 2011, Mednipur district was bifurcated into two districts and was named as PaschimMednipur and PurbaMednipur. Total number of districts rose to 19 in 2011 from 18 in 2001.

West Bengal, an Indian state located in the eastern part on the coastal region of Bay of Bengal. It shares its boundaries with Bangladesh in east and with Nepal and Bhutan in north. The state also touches the state boundaries with Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar, Sikkim, and Assam. A state also came into light due to its several historical events like-conquered by Ashoka in 2nd century, ruled by several sultans since 13th century onward till British began to rule from 18th century. The state is drained by river Ganga and it has two branches one named as Padma while it enters Bangladesh and the other as Bhagirathi that flows in the state.

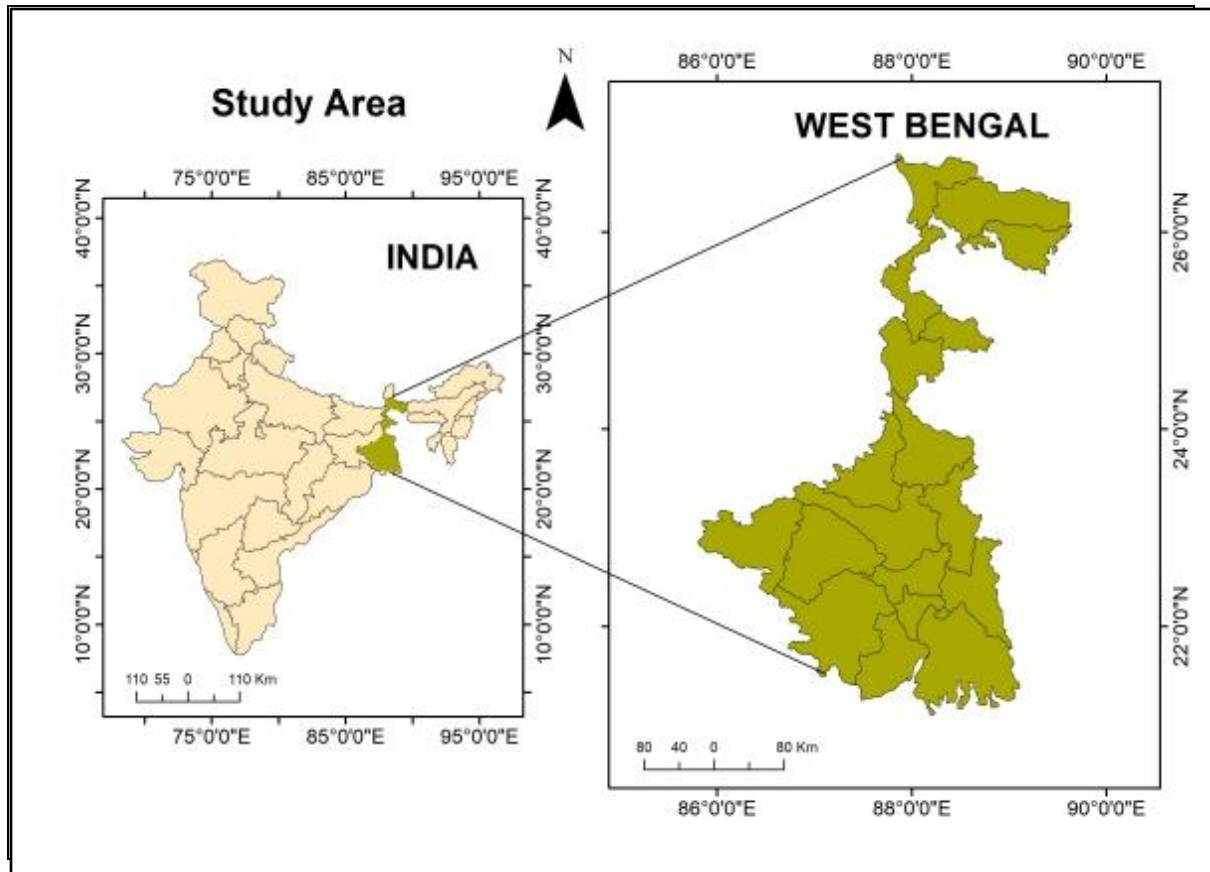


Fig 1.1

Literature Review

Lots of work has been done on crime by numbers of scholars, geographers, criminologists and sociologists, but very few of them has paid attention on crimes against women. In this paper an attention has been made to review literatures of crimes against women to understand the problems in geographical perspective like spatial patterns of crime and factors effecting the crime rate. Crime rate vary due to the effects of factors like social, cultural, economic, gender inequality and demographic characteristics. Habib (2008), cited from Social Science Research Council of the Planning Ministry that more than 90 per cent of adolescence girls and women were been sexually assaulted at various work place in Bangladesh and most of them are not even reported. Bindel (2008), found group of men sexually assaulted four women at taxi stand of Johannesburg in South Africa. Shankarjha et al. (1998), whether it is theirs home, offices, industries or public places women are discriminated and deprived from their rights and also they are victimised and traumatised. Ahuja (1987),revealed that 24 per cent incidences of rape took

place at victims house, 17 per cent at offenders house, 12 per cent at the houses of offenders relatives and remaining 47 per cent occurred at different distant places. Singh (1990), men having more power than women becomes a reason of increasing crimes against women. Some of the other reasons like population change, mental disorders, poverty, unemployment, lack of housing and diseases leads to rise in crimes against women (Shaw and McKay 1942, Schmidt 1960 and Herbert 1977,). Sethi (2008), every nine minutes a women is raped in Mexico and in Sweden every ten days they are beaten to death. Ahuja (1987), unemployment, poverty and alcoholism are the cause of wife battering. Singh (1990), reporting of dowry death in India is low but still it is on rise. According to Mukhopadhyay (1999), beating of wife, harassment and dowry death depends on culture and women's status in society. Rajalakshmi et al (2005), committing crimes against women is committing crimes against society. Administration and criminal justice system must involve in providing economic and social empowerment to stop crimes against women. First graduate student from backward tribe committed suicide due to psychological torture done by professor belonging to high caste of the Vidyasagar University (Economic and Political Weekly, 1992). Dhanagare (1969), in urbanism and crime, found the rate of kidnapping and abduction is higher in the cities than their respective states. Sen (2004), in her research paper emphasised on migration of women to overseas colonies and tea gardens of Assam. Such women's were not only migrated for contractual work but were also forced for sexual activities. Sometime, the women were deceived, decoyed and kidnapped when they were unable to migrate voluntarily. Hackett (2011), in his findings, low gender-equality development in India indicates the rate of dowry death is high comparatively. It is noticed in rural towns and villages the cruelty rate is higher than the major cities for developed states like Kerala, which has high rates of literacy, gender equality and expectancy of life.

3. Results and Analysis

While analysing the data of offences against women that occurred in West Bengal state, it was found that the year 2011 registered 76 per cent which is highest among the preceding years. As it is evident from the fig 1.2, in 2001, it recorded 17 per cent which is approximately five and half times more than the previous year 1991. In 1981, cases of crime were one per cent more than in 1991. Overall since 1991 number of incidences of offences against women continued increasing.

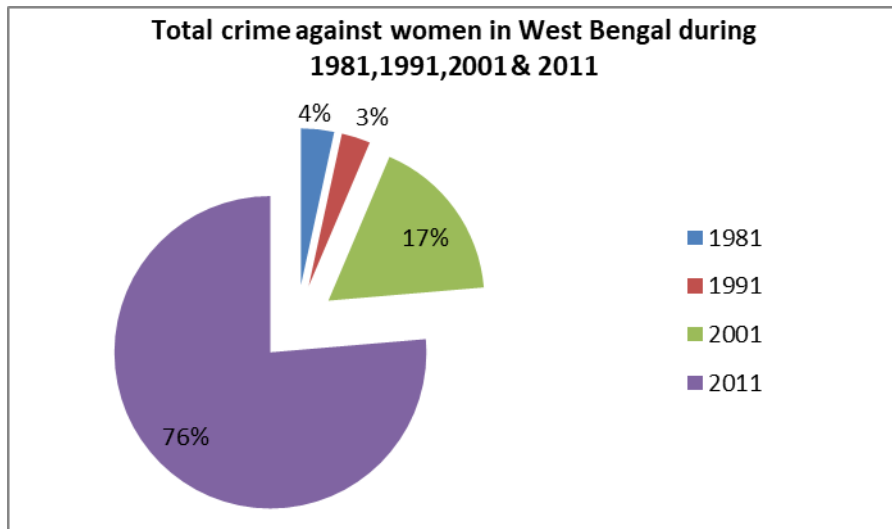


Fig 1.2

In the earlier part have discussed about the total offences against women occurred during 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011. In this part the rate of crime against women has been discussed for the same year. It is noted that the crime rate against women has kept increasing since 1981. In fact the rate of crime in 2011 was very high in most of the districts of West Bengal. Districts like Murshidabad (131.06) and Nadia (109.63) recorded the highest. In 24 Parganas South, Jalpaiguri and 24 Parganas North crimes against women increased at the rate of 89.84, 87.36 and 77.29 in 2011 and in the remaining districts crime rate was below 70. It is surprising that the crime rate in 2001 and 2011 increased sharply as is evident from the table 1.1. Crime rate during 1981 was below 9 and in 1991 was below 12. Overall it is concluded that the rate of crime per lakh of female population kept increasing since 1981.

District	Crime rate per lakh of female population			
	1981	1991	2001	2011
24 Parganas/North	7.67	4.68	15.11	77.29
24 Parganas South	4.90	1.93	20.38	89.84
Bankura	2.14	1.83	10.21	21.32
Birbhum	3.31	2.74	18.31	30.38
Burdwan	4.90	3.07	15.84	37.83

Coochbehar	6.42	12.30	22.62	65.96
DakshinDinajpur	24.56	66.17
Darjeeling	8.93	4.83	16.18	59.37
Hoogly	5.61	2.98	19.90	38.38
Howrah	4.56	2.06	9.75	62.36
Jalpaiguri	5.50	3.56	16.79	87.36
Kolkata	..	4.86	24.99	53.32
Malda	3.23	3.76	12.99	61.68
Murshidabad	4.31	3.87	14.05	131.06
Nadia	8.88	3.71	22.65	109.63
Midnapur	3.07	2.72	15.78	38.51
PurabMidnapur	44.44
Purulia	2.98	2.96	14.13	26.59
West Dinajpur/Uttardinajpur	4.64	1.39	13.37	58.58

Source: Compiled by Author from data collected from NCRB, MHA, PCA West Bengal (1981, 1991, 2001, 2011)

A detail of head wise crime against women is discussed in this part of the paper. Records of 1981, 1991, 2001 and 2011 have been taken for the analysis (table1.2). Data during 1981 and 1991 covered only rape and kidnapping and abduction as because the collection of data pertaining to other type of crime against women was not initiated (NCRB). Looking into head wise crime against women the most crime that took place against women was torture recorded 3859 number of cases in 2001 and 19772 in 2011. It was followed by molestation 954 cases in 2001 and 2363 in 2011. A Kidnapping and abduction case in 2001 was 695 and 3711 in 2011. Rape registered 709 numbers of cases in 2001 and 2363 in 2011. Overall among the crimes against women cases of torture were very high.

Crimes	1981	1991	2001	2011
Rape (Sec. 376 IPC)	480	469	709	2363
Kidnapping & Abduction (Sec. 363 to 373 IPC)	816	662	695	3711
Dowry Death (Sec. 302/304 IPC)	265	510
Torture (Sec. 498-A IPC)	3859	19772
Molestation (Sec. 354 IPC)	954	2363
Sexual Harasment (Sec.509 IPC)	48	200
Importation of Girls (Sec.366-B IPC)	3	0
Sati Prevention Act, 1987
Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956
Indecent Rep. of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986
Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961

Source: Compiled by Author from data collected from NCRB, MHA, (1981, 1991, 2001, 2011)

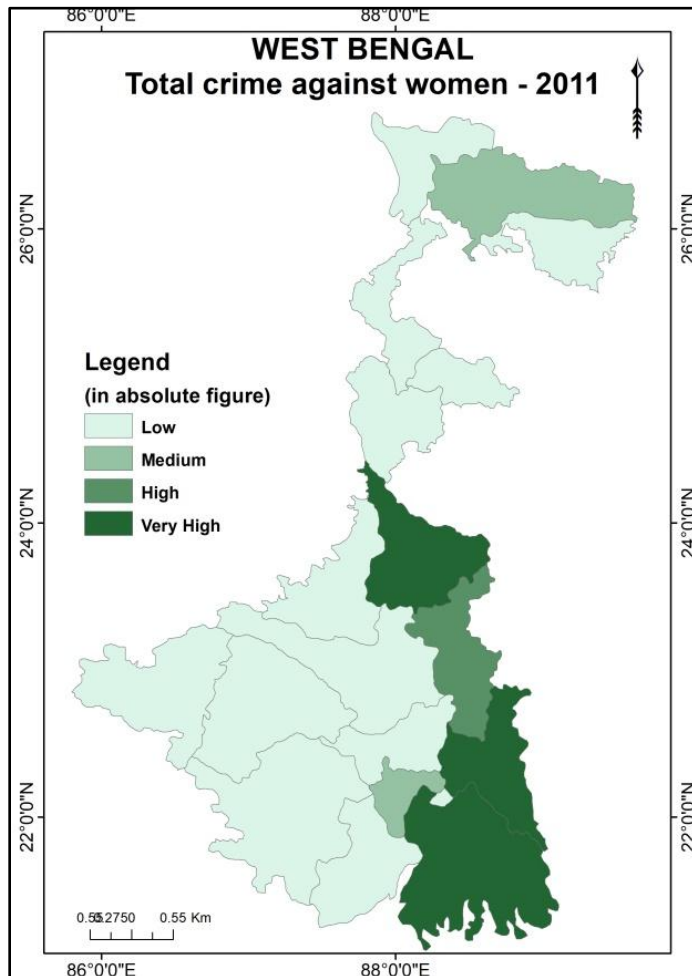


Fig 1.3

During 2011, the number of incidences against women and its rate per lakh female population were very high as compared to the preceding years. Thus in this section of the paper data for 2011 has been discussed in detail.

From the fig 1.3 it is noticed that in 2011, very high and high numbers of cases of crime against women were found in the districts stretching on the south eastern side of the state sharing an international boundary with Bangladesh. The districts having very high numbers of cases of crime were Murshidabad (4556), 24 Parganas North (3780) and 24 Parganas South (3583). High numbers of cases of offence against women were found in the district of Nadia (2756). Jalpaiguri and Howrah districts registered medium number of cases of crime against women and the remaining recorded low number of cases.

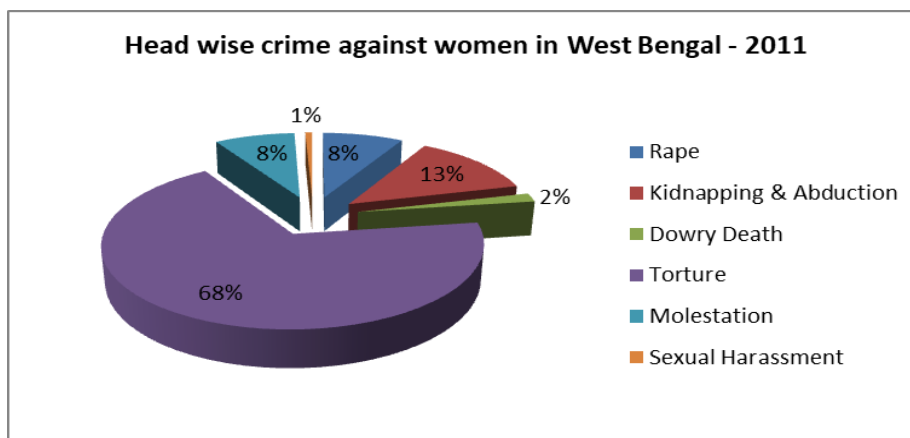


Fig 1.4

In 2011, among the crimes against women 68 per cent cases of torture recorded was the highest and it was followed by kidnapping and abduction 13 per cent along with rape and molestation 8 per cent each (fig 1.4). The least registered case was from dowry death (2 per cent) and sexual harassment (1 per cent).

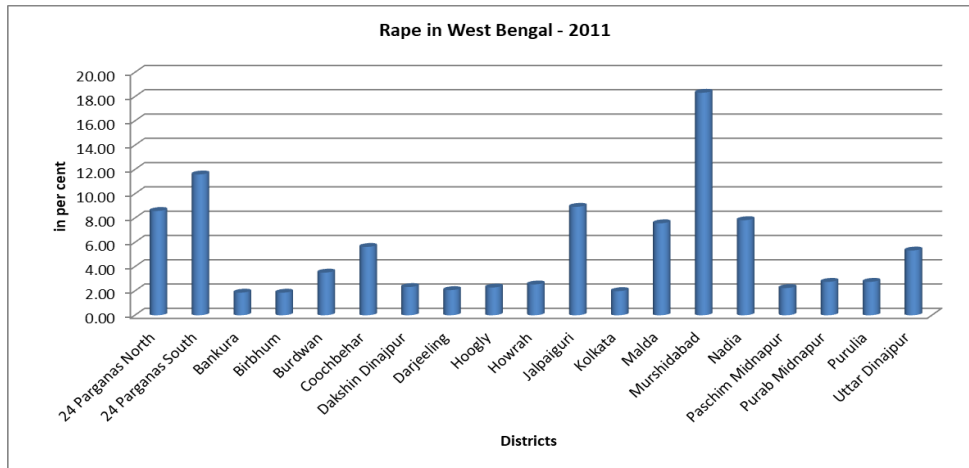


Fig 1.5

Rape is an offence termed to be very heinous in the society. As per records of National Crime Record Bureau, 2011 of West Bengal, Murshidabad registered 18.32 per cent which is highest than the following district 24 Parganas South (11.60 per cent). Both the districts lie on the south eastern part of the state sharing an international boundary with Bangladesh. District Jalpaiguri in northern part of the state recorded 8.93 per cent and 24 Parganas North in the south eastern part showed 8.39 per cent registered cases of rape (fig 1.5) It has been reviewed from the literature that the cases of rape mostly occur due to certain reasons like ill motives, alluring victims with gifts, giving drinks laced with drugs, etc.

As it is evidenced from the correlation table (1.3) that rape has a positive relationship with illiterates ($r=0.737$) which is significant at 0.05 level. It is estimated that 54 per cent of cases of rape are convicted by illiterates which is determined by its $r^2=0.543$, and the remaining 46 per cent are caused by other factors. Therefore, it is identified that the districts Murshidabad, and 24 Parganas South that registered maximum percentage of rape cases has high percentage of illiterates. District Jalpaiguri too has more percentage of illiterates than literates.

Table 1.3 Correlations

	x1	x2	y1	y2	y3	y4	y5
x1	1	.836**	.737**	.661**	.635**	.814**	.506*
x2	.836**	1	.514*	.655**	.793**	.858**	.378
y1	.737**	.514*	1	.859**	.548*	.820**	.759**
y2	.661**	.655**	.859**	1	.815**	.916**	.645**
y3	.635**	.793**	.548*	.815**	1	.845**	.387
y4	.814**	.858**	.820**	.916**	.845**	1	.616**
y5	.506*	.378	.759**	.645**	.387	.616**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

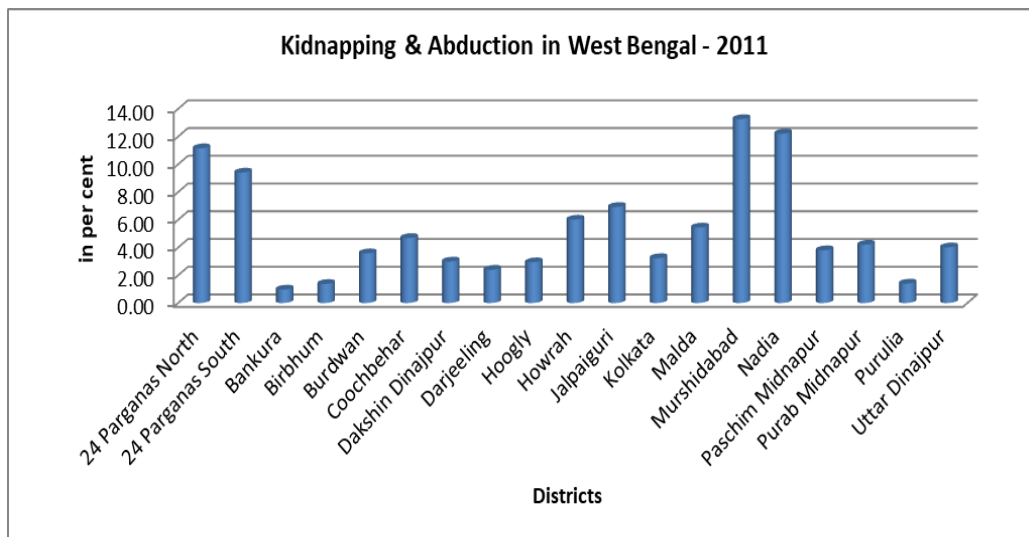


Fig 1.6

Cases of kidnapping and abduction of women were mostly reported from Murshidabad (13.26 per cent) and it was followed by Nadia 12.21 per cent, 24 Parganas North 11.16 per cent and 24 Parganas South 9.40 per cent. All the three districts share the international boundary with Bangladesh. Women's or teenage girls are mostly victimised for such mentioned reasons like for marriage, for earning high income, slavery, prostitution, false hope of providing job, etc.

Kidnapping and abduction has true bearing on illiterates ($r=.661$), and non-workers ($r=.655$) (refer table 1.3). It is noted that 44 per cent of cases are convicted by illiterates and 43 per cent by non-workers which is determined by their $r^2=0.436$ and 0.426 and the remaining 56 and 57

per cent are caused by other factors. Thus we can say that where the percentage of illiterates and non-workers are high their occurrences of crime like kidnapping and abduction are probably high. Like the districts 24 Parganas North and 24 Parganas South have high per cent of non-workers, Murshidabad has high per cent of illiterates and in Nadia district it could be some other factors.

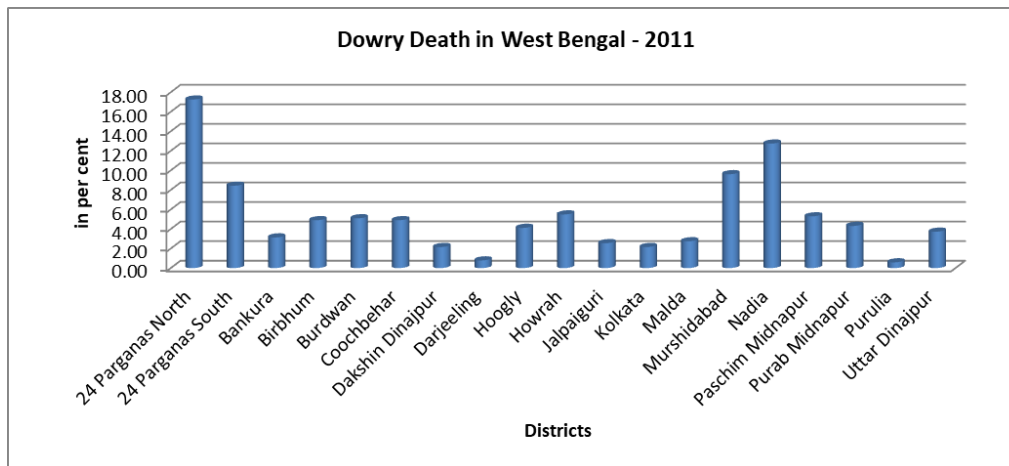


Fig 1.7

Dowry death cases are also on rise. In 2011, 17.25 per cent cases of dowry death was registered in 24 Parganas North and it was followed by Nadia recording 12.75 per cent. Districts like Murshidabad and 24 Parganas South registered 9.61 and 8.43 per cent. Such cases are probably arisen due to insufficient dowry given in the form of materialistic or monetary at the time of marriage.

The offenders of dowry death can be from groups like main workers, non-workers, and literates. From the correlation table it is established that dowry death has true bearing on main workers, non-workers and literates which are determined by their r value 0.801, 0.793 and 0.755 significant at 0.05 level (table 1.3).

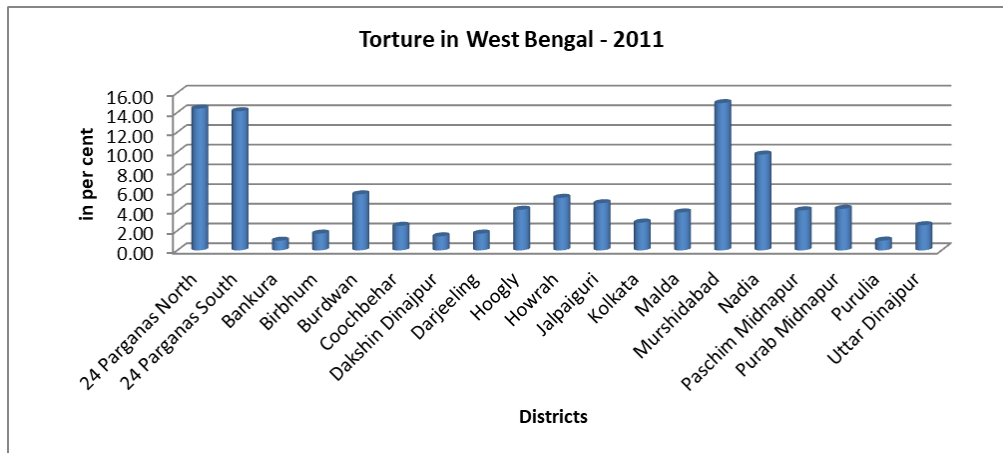


Fig 1.8

A case of torture mostly begins at the house of in-laws where all the family members of in-laws including husband are involved. Such type of offences mostly occurs due to insufficient dowry, opposing extra marital affair of husband, giving birth to girl child, opposing alcoholic addiction of husband etc. From the fig it is noted that maximum cases of torture were reported from the districts Murshidabad (14.95 per cent), 24 Parganas North (14.40 per cent), and 24 Parganas South (14.13 per cent) and they all lie in south eastern part of the state.

Torture has positive relationship with non-workers and illiterates which is known by their r value 0.858 and 0.814 given in the table 1.3. Its r^2 value .736 determines that 74 per cent cases of torture are caused by non-workers and the remaining by other factors. 66 per cent of torture cases are made by illiterates as it is determined by its r^2 value 0.662. So the districts like Murshidabad, 24 Parganas North and 24 Parganas South have high percentage of illiterates and non-workers.

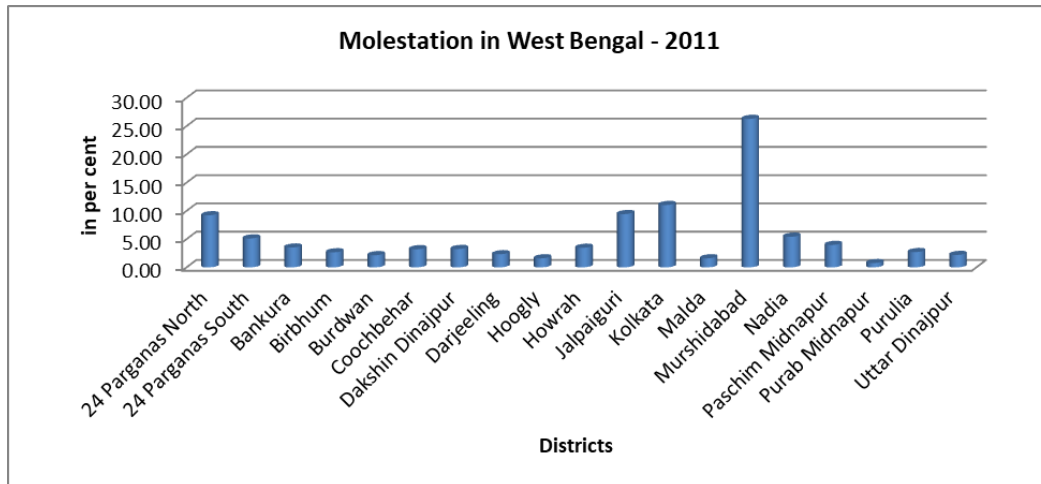


Fig 1.9

Molestation cases are been reported mostly from the district Murshidabad (26.28 per cent) and Kolkatta (11.05 per cent). It mostly take places when the victims are alone at their house, on the lonely street, jungle vicinity area, on way to office, public places, etc. Sexual harassmet cases are also high in Kolkatta.

There exist a positive relationship between molestation and illiterates known by its r value .506 (table 1.3). In Murshidabad percentage of illiterates is high and also the cause of molestation too. In Kolkatta the percentage of illiterates are low but still the cases of molestation is high because the region is urban and it is evidenced from the literature that the crimes in urban area is more (Mukhopadhyay 1999).

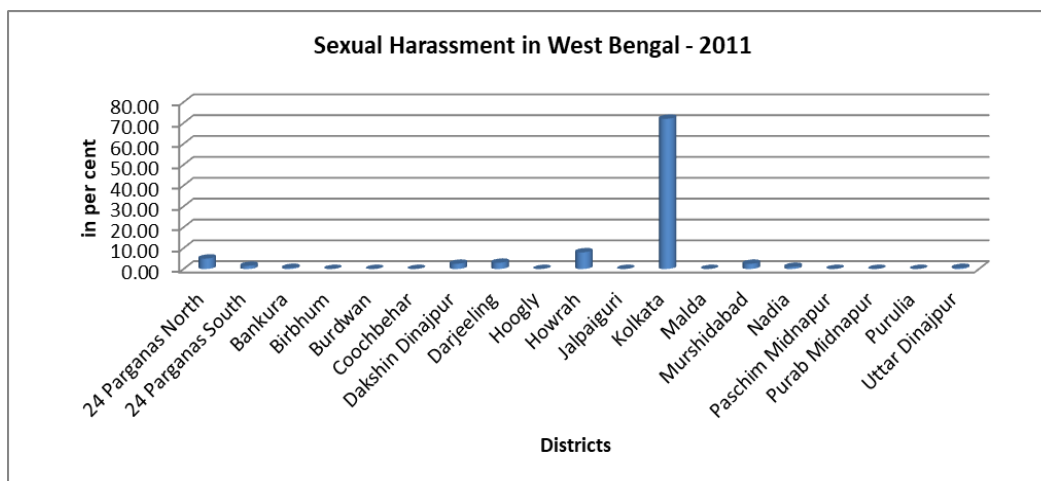


Fig 1.10

Kolkatta reported 72 per cent and 24 Parganas North 5 per cent cases of sexual harassment

4. Conclusion

From the above analysis it is understood that the crimes against women has kept increasing since 1981. Crime rate in 2001 and 2011 is just the double of the preceding years. Among all type of crimes against women, incidences of torture were very high. It was also depicted from the map that the districts lying on the south eastern part of the state registered high percentage of crimes. In the districts among all, Murshidabad, 24 Parganas North and 24 Parganas South had high per cent of cases of crimes against women. Characteristically, these districts of the state have high percentage of illiterates and non-workers. From the analysis of correlation table rape, kidnapping and abduction, dowry death, torture and molestation has a positive relationship with illiterates and non-workers. Thus we must think and act according about illiterates and non-workers in order to reduce the rate of crimes against women.

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