

# Decadal Changes in Domestic Violence Rates in India– A District-Level Analysis of National Crime Records Bureau's Statistics.

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## I. INTRODUCTION: GEOGRAPHIES OF CRIME

Studies on geographies of crimes in India have tried to delimit regions of higher crimes rates within the subcontinent. They have found associations of higher rates of violent crimes with areas of subcultures of violence.

Spatial patterns of crimes can reveal not only zones of concentrations of higher and lower crime rates but can act as a direction for further analysis of the patterns and the reasons for such similar rates of crimes occurring and concentrating locally. Over different periods, it has been found that there is a subculture of violent behaviour in the north-central region of India. Studies also reveal that the original north-central zone of subculture has been spreading out, and the emergent zone of violent subculture has been developing in the peripheral regions of the original zone.

Shaban (2000) attempted to find regional patterns of gender-specific crimes in India with the help of National Crime Records Bureau data and points at the north-central belt prone to higher rates of crimes against women, which he attributes to lower sex ratio and urbanization.

Menon and Johnson (2004) explore regional differences in domestic violence in rural India based on National Family Health Survey (NFHS- 1999). Contrary to their hypothesis that women of southern India might experience less violence given their higher status, the study revealed that the odds of women in southern India being beaten by their husbands were two times higher than women of the north. Also, women in joint families experienced less violence compared to the ones in nuclear households.

Doan and Kelly (1997) have explored geographical patterns of violence between intimate partners within metropolitan regions. Sahoo and Pradhan (2009) used logistic regression to predict the prevalence of Domestic Violence using responses using secondary data from NFHS 2 (IIPS), and Sahoo and Raju (2007) analyzed the patterns of rural and urban working women's experiences of Domestic Violence in India again with the help of secondary data accessed from NFHS 2 (IIPS).

Datta (2011) framed zones of weak and strong patriarchy within which 'regional genderscapes' are drawn out. Datta (2016) applied regional genderscapes to offer an important frame of analysis for crimes against women. Basu and Pandit (2016) situate domestic violence rates recorded in states and districts across India in relation to the overarching regional genderscapes.

Butola (2013) sends out a caveat to researchers relying on official statistics of crimes against women for their analysis. He points out many limitations that stymie a realistic explanation which could be underreporting, owing to various systemic and personal reasons, yet brings out the utility of such studies, as the error of underreporting is evenly distributed in all regions of the country.

In order to understand whether certain regions have a higher propensity for the occurrence of crimes against women in general and domestic violence in particular, the pattern of crimes recorded in the regions requires to be analysed over a longer period of time to arrive at any conclusion.

## II. DATABASE AND METHODOLOGY

Crime records documented by Crime in India published by the National Crime Records Bureau's (NCRB) statistics has been analysed for the study. District-level data under the 'cruelty by husbands and relatives' category have been mapped using Arc GIS software to analyse rates of reporting of domestic violence in India. To analyse the pattern of occurrence of domestic violence in India, data on three-year averages of crimes have been used. Since crime rates may have a tendency to fluctuate if analysed for a single year, three-year crime averages have been calculated for 640 districts of India. This exercise ensures the negation of cases of a particular year that might act as an outlier to the data set spanning across two time periods to analyse decadal changes. The average values of the three years data have been taken for analysis. The rate of crime per lakh population has been used for analysis instead of incidence of crimes as rates offer a more refined and normalised representation of the intensity of crimes. The years taken into consideration are 2000, 2001, and 2002 (the base year 2001) and the years 2010, 2011 and 2012 (the base year 2011).

The rates are then classified into groups with the help of mean and standard deviation method.

The groups that emerged from this exercise are districts with rates of domestic violence below 1.92 cases per lakh population, 1.93 to 5.44 cases per lakh population, 5.45 to 8.97 cases per lakh population, 8.98 to 12.50 cases per lakh population and above 12.51 cases per lakh population.

The following section analyses district level patterns of reporting of domestic violence during 2001 and 2011.

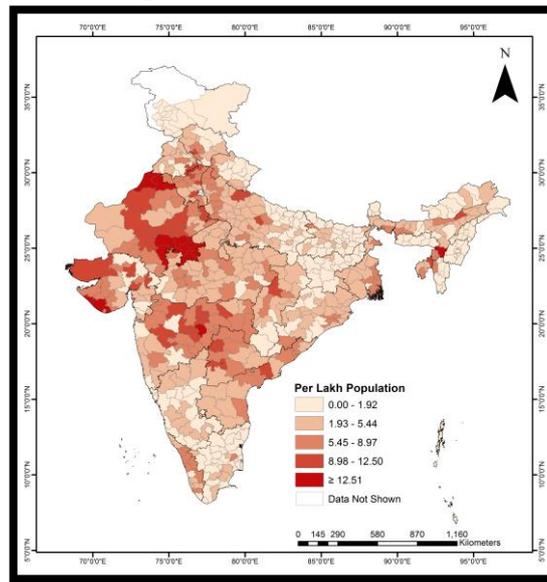
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III. DISTRICT LEVEL PATTERNS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, 2001 AND 2011.

The incidences of domestic violence experienced by women and reported at police stations across districts of India have

been mapped and analysed at ten-year intervals. The first set of analyses discusses the crimes that took place in 2001, and the second on decadal level data pertaining to incidences of domestic violence in 2011.

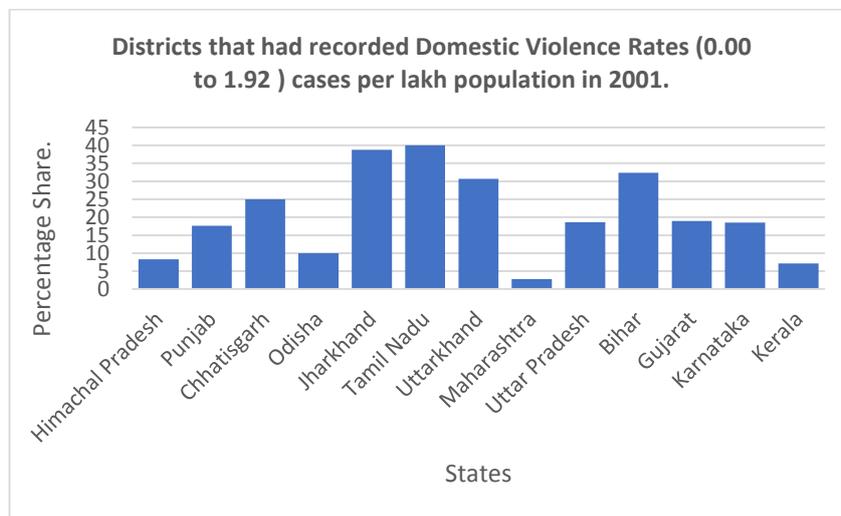
Map: 1. Domestic Violence, 2001



(Source: Crime in India, National Crime Records Bureau, 2000, 2001, 2002)

Map 1, showing rates of domestic violence in 2001, shows higher reporting of the crime cutting through diagonally from the states of Rajasthan and Gujarat through eastern districts of Maharashtra and central Andhra Pradesh<sup>2</sup>. The map is indicative of higher rates being reported in the northern and

central parts of the country. To get a detailed analysis, the districts have been grouped along with the states and the percentage share of the districts to the total number of districts in that state in 2001.

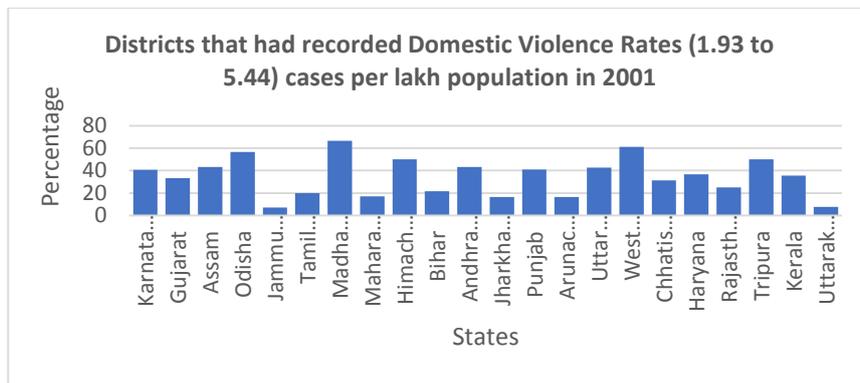


40 percent of the total districts from Tamil Nadu, 38.8 percent from Jharkhand, 32.4 percent from Bihar, among other states, recorded the lowest rates of domestic violence. The next

section lists districts where domestic violence was recorded at a rate between 1.93 to 5.44 cases per lakh population.

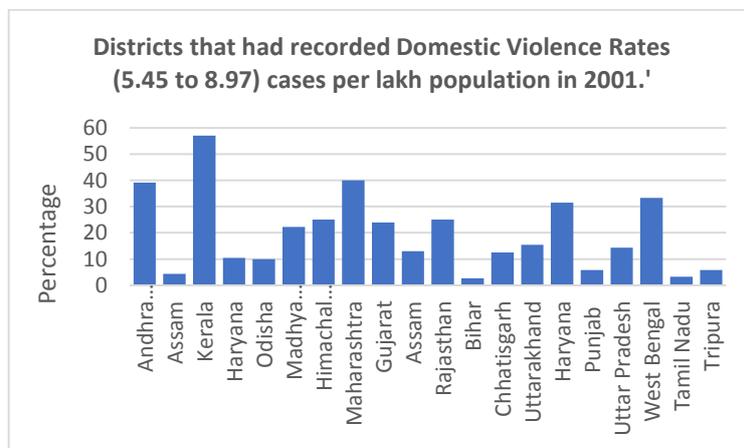
<sup>2</sup> Since the datasets pertain to pre-Telangana state formation, the analysis would refer to Andhra Pradesh where ever

references to districts of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh are made.



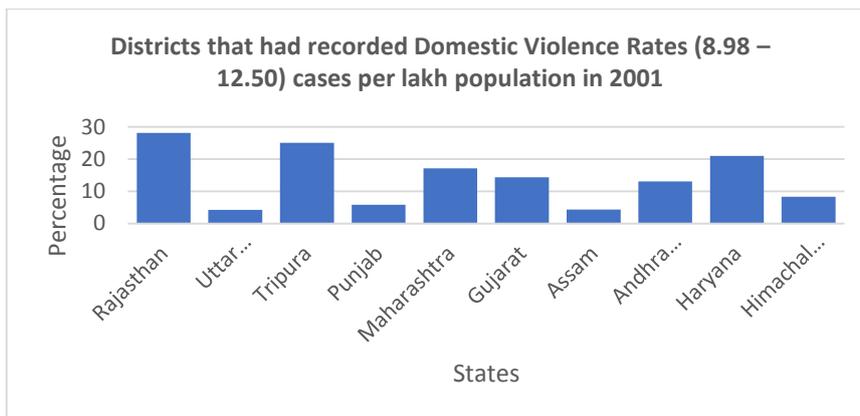
66.6 percent of the total districts from Madhya Pradesh, 61.1 percent from West Bengal, 56.6 percent from Odisha, 43.3 percent from Assam, and 43.4 of Andhra Pradesh recorded rates of domestic violence rates between 1.93 to 5.44 cases

per lakh population. The section below shows districts along with the states where domestic violence was recorded at 5.45 to 8.97 cases per lakh population.



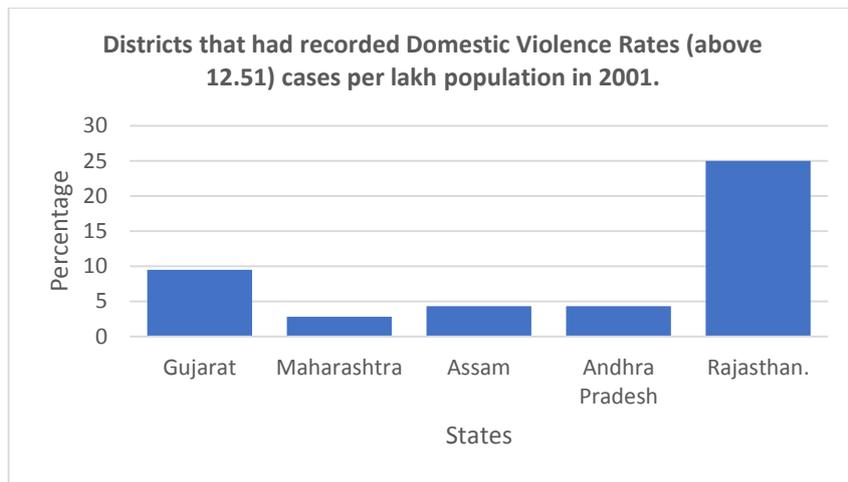
57.1 per cent of the total districts from Kerala, 40 percent from Maharashtra and 39.1 percent from Andhra Pradesh recorded domestic violence Rates between 5.45 to 8.97 cases

per lakh population. In the section below, districts that recorded domestic violence rates between 8.98 to 12.50 cases per lakh population have been listed along with the states.



28.1 percent of the total districts of Rajasthan, 25 per cent of the districts of Tripura, 21 per cent of Haryana, 17.1 per cent of Maharashtra recorded domestic violence rates between 8.98 to 12.50 cases per lakh population. In the section below,

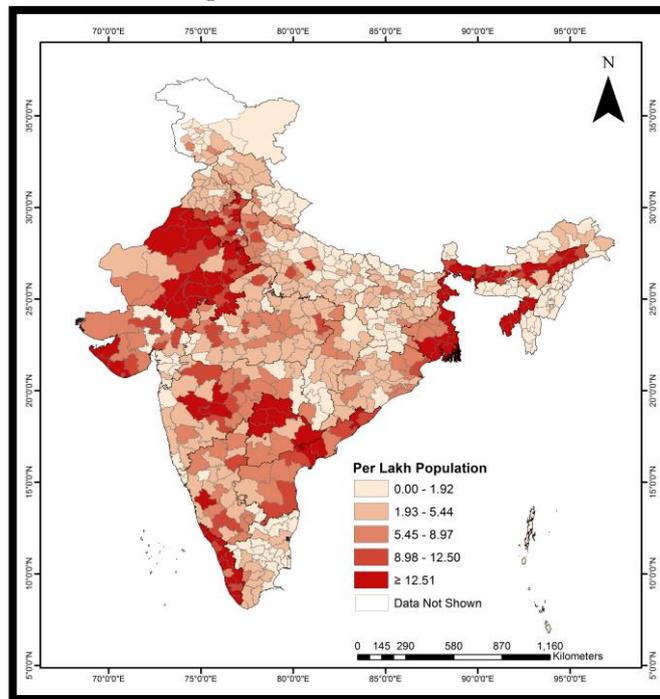
the districts that recorded Domestic Violence Rates above 12.51 cases per lakh population have been grouped with the States.



25 per cent of the total districts of Rajasthan recorded higher rates of domestic violence above 12.51 cases per lakh population. The preceding section shows the rates of domestic violence recorded in districts of India in 2001. From the above analysis, it becomes clear that within each state, there exist regions of high domestic violence, regions of moderate domestic violence and regions of low rates of domestic violence, as records of the complaints depict. The example of the state of Gujarat is being elucidated here to understand how within a state the rates of crimes vary from one district to another. 9.5 per cent of the total districts of Gujarat recorded rates of domestic violence ranging above 12.51 cases per lakh population, 14.3 per cent recorded rates of domestic violence ranging between 8.98 to 12.50 cases per

lakh population; 23.8 per cent recorded rates of domestic violence ranging between 5.45 to 8.97 cases per lakh population; 33.3 percent of the districts recorded rates ranging between 1.93 to 5.44 cases per lakh population and finally the remaining 19 percent of the districts recorded ranging between 0.00 to 1.92 cases per lakh population in 2001. This clearly shows that the geographical unit of a state has a wide range of diversity in the rates of crimes being reported. It is significant because the state organise surveillance uniformly within the boundaries of a state. The next section documents records of domestic violence reported in 2011. The analysis begins with mapping the rate of domestic violence at the district level.

Map:2 Domestic Violence, 2011

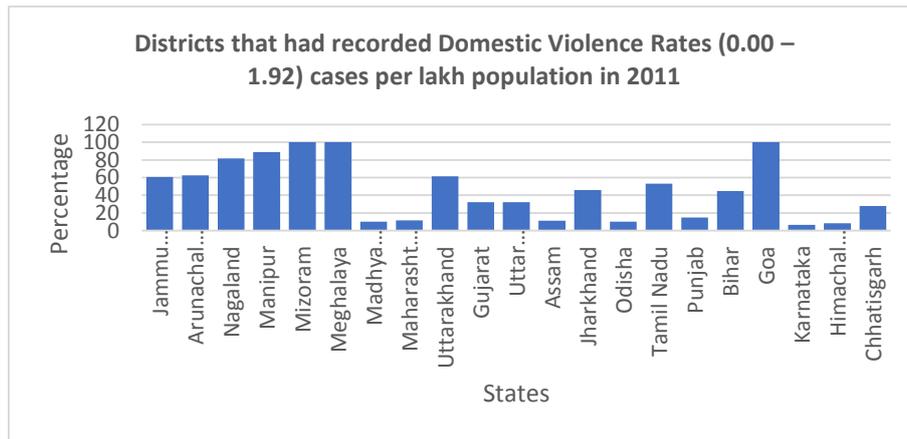


(Source: Crime in India, National Crime Records Bureau, 2010, 2011, 2012)

Map 2 shows the spatial patterns of reporting of cases of domestic violence across the country and attempt to strike a juxtaposition with the data mapped for 2001.

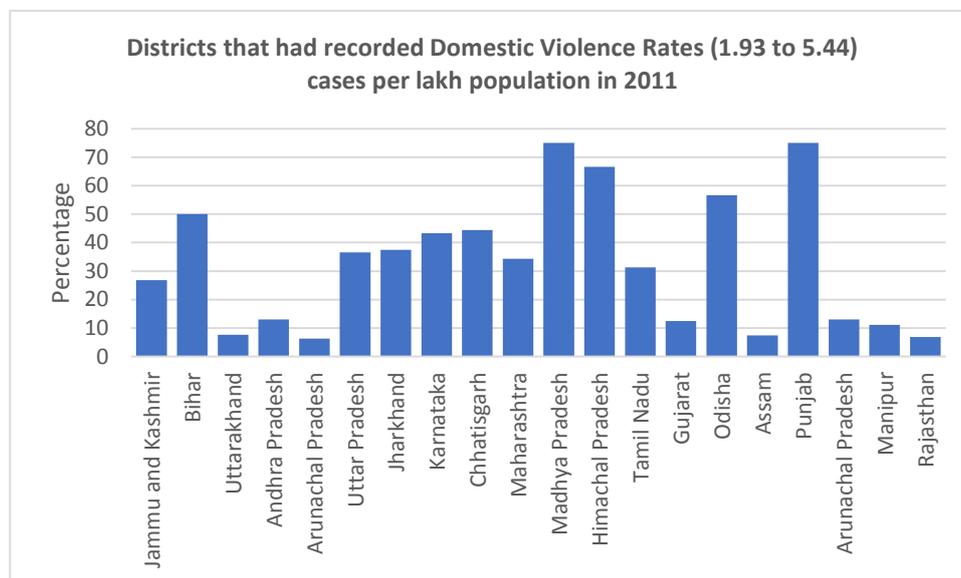
The groups of rates of domestic violence that emerged statistically for 2001 were re-applied for categorizing the district level domestic violence data for 2011 too. This method was adopted to understand the position of the districts vis a vis the groups of rates of crimes after a decade.<sup>3</sup> The map shows that the region that recorded high rates of reporting of incidences of domestic violence in 2001, continued to report high rates of domestic violence in 2011. The region of the North Central belt spreading into Rajasthan

and Gujarat regions around coastal Andhra Pradesh and Kerala recorded high rates of domestic violence. The contiguous regions located around regions of high rates of domestic violence also recorded an increase in the rates of domestic violence from 2001 to 2011. Parts of West Bengal, Assam, and Tripura too recorded high rates. To get a clearer view the of the rates of domestic violence reported in the districts, the districts have been grouped according to the rates of domestic violence along with the States as was done for 2001. The section below shows districts that recorded rates of domestic violence between 0.00 to 1.92 cases per lakh population in 2011.



The graph above indicates that 100 per cent of the districts from Mizoram, Meghalaya and Goa, 88.8 per cent of the total districts of Manipur, 81.8 per cent of the districts of Nagaland recorded the lowest rates of domestic violence against women in the country.

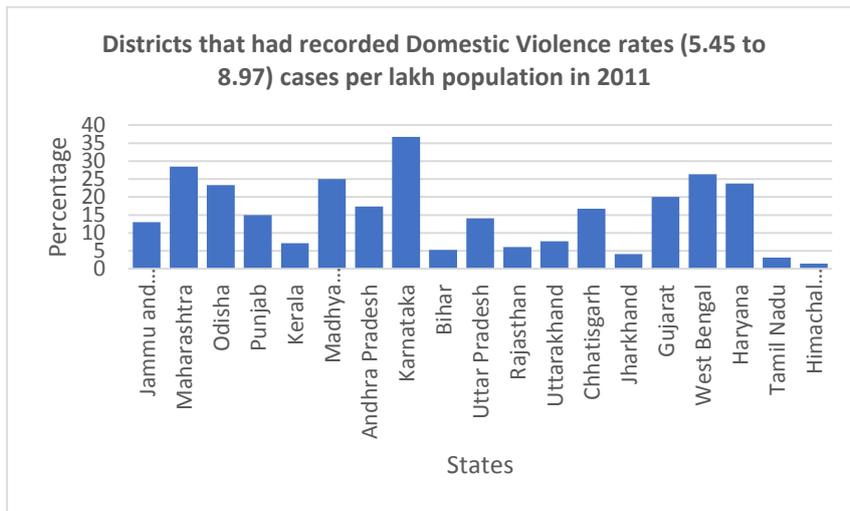
The following districts recorded rates of domestic violence ranging from 1.93 to 5.44 cases per lakh population. The districts have been organised below along with the states.



<sup>3</sup> The reason for using same groups for analysis of the two decades facilitates the examination of incremental changes over the basal rates of the previous time period.

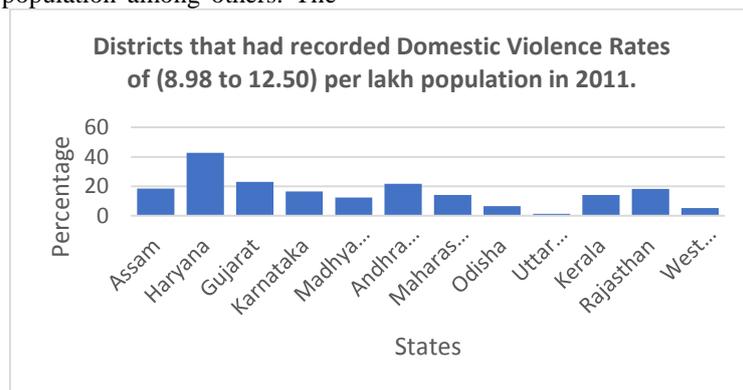
75 per cent of the total districts of Punjab, 56.6 per cent from Odisha, 50 from Bihar among other states reported domestic violence rates between 1.93 to 5.44 cases per lakh population.

The districts that recorded domestic violence rates between 5.45 and 8.97 cases per lakh population has been presented below along with the states.



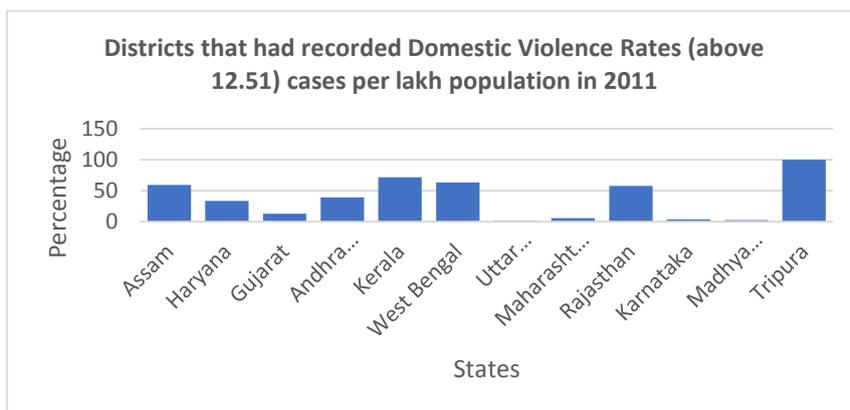
The graph above shows that 36.7 per cent of the total districts of Karnataka, 28.5 percent from Maharashtra and 26.3 per cent from West Bengal recorded domestic violence rates of 5.45 to 8.97 cases per lakh population among others. The

districts that recorded domestic violence rates between 8.98 to 12.50 cases per lakh population have been listed below, along with the states.



42.8 percent of the total districts of Haryana 23 per cent from Karnataka, among others, recorded domestic violence rates of 8.98 to 12.50. The districts that recorded the highest rates

of domestic violence, rates above 12.51 cases per lakh population, have been listed below, along with the states.



100 per cent of the districts from Tripura, 71.4 per cent from Kerala, 63.15 per cent from West Bengal, 57.6 per cent from Rajasthan, among others, recorded high rates of domestic violence of above 12,51 cases per lakh population.

From the above analysis, it may be deduced that variation in the rates of domestic violence is well pronounced within States. States as units of crime analysis may not yield desired results since within states, there appears a wide range of rates of reporting domestic violence.

For the analysis of variation in the reporting of cases of domestic violence, once again, the example of the state of Gujarat may be selected since the districts show wide variation in the reporting of the rates of domestic violence.

12.5 per cent of the total districts from Gujarat recorded rates of domestic violence above 12.51 cases per lakh population;

in 23 per cent it ranged between 8.98 to 12.50 cases per lakh population; 20 per cent of the total districts recorded domestic violence ranging between 5.45 to 8.97; 12.5 percent of the total districts ranged between 1.93 to 5.44 and in the remaining 32 percent of the total districts the rates ranged between 0.00 to 1.92 cases per lakh population. As was observed in 2001, rates of domestic violence at the district levels for the year 2011 once again revealed major variation within the state boundary in Gujarat.

To analyse the decadal change in the rates of domestic violence at the district levels, in the following section, attempt has been made to understand the proportion of districts that have recorded differential rates of domestic violence during 2001 and 2011.

**Table: 1. Number of districts according to the magnitude of rate of Domestic Violence in 2001 and 2011.**

Years	Rates (0.00-1.92) cases per lakh population	Rates (1.93-5.44)  cases per lakh population	Rates (5.45-8.97)  cases per lakh population	Rates (8.98-12.50) cases per lakh population	Rates (≥ 12.51) cases per lakh population	Total  (Number of Districts)
2001	245 (41)	206 (34)	98 (16)	34 (6)	13 (2)	596
2011	196 (31)	203 (31)	87 (14)	54 (9)	92 (15)	632

Table:1 shows the percentage of districts that are in each of the five groups representing rates of domestic violence. In 2001, districts that had recorded the lowest rates of domestic violence (0.00 – 1.92 cases per lakh population) had the highest number of districts (41 %) but after a decade in 2011, the percentage of districts that had recorded lowest rates of domestic violence decreased to 31 per cent of the total number of districts. In 2001, 34 percent of the districts recorded domestic violence at rates ranging from 1.93 to 5.44 cases per lakh population. It declined marginally to 31 percent of the total number of districts analysed in 2011. 16 percent of the total number of districts recorded rates of domestic violence ranging from 5.45 to 8.97 cases per lakh population which marginally declined to 14 per cent of the districts in 2011. 6 per cent of the total number of districts recorded domestic violence rates ranging from 8.98 – 12.50 cases per lakh population which rose to 9 per cent in 2011. Only 2 percent of the districts recorded domestic violence rates of above 12.51 cases per lakh population in 2001, but after a decade, the percentage of districts rose significantly to 15 percent in 2011.

The decrease in the percentage of districts recording lower rates of domestic violence and the rise in the percentage share of districts registering high rates of domestic violence is an indication of the increased use of domestic violence laws by women. It also indicates that women are increasingly resorting to the institutions of the State to mitigate domestic issues that were earlier treated as family issues or private issues. The decade long awareness generation by the State and NGOs perhaps led to the rise in reporting of cases of domestic violence. The other significant reason could be the enactment of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA, 2005), which is a civil law in nature thereby encouraging aggrieved women to seek legal recourse. This change may have encouraged women to report incidences of domestic violence which ensured that their partners are not criminally indicted, but the process of complaint may help reform them.

The above section clearly indicates that the districts have shown changes in rates of reporting incidences of domestic violence from 2001 to 2011. To understand the level of change, the shift in the rates of reporting domestic violence is being discussed in the following section.

## IV. DECADAL CHANGE IN THE POSITION OF THE DISTRICTS FROM 2001 TO 2011

To understand the percentage of districts that had recorded changes in the rates of domestic violence from 2001 to 2011, a summary table is being presented below.

**Table: 2. Change in the Rates of Domestic Violence in Districts of India, 2001 – 2011.**

Rates of Domestic Violence in 2001	Rates of Domestic Violence in 2011 (Percentage Share)				
	Rate: (0.00 – 1.92 cases per lakh population)	Rate: ( 1.93 – 5.44 cases per lakh population)	Rate: (5.45 – 8.97 cases per lakh population)	Rate: (8.98 – 12.50 cases per lakh population)	Rate: (>12.50 cases per lakh population)
Rate: (0.00 – 1.92 cases per lakh population)	64.7	29.5	3.08	1.7	.8
Rate: ( 1.93 – 5.44 cases per lakh population)	14.7	45.7	20.3	9.6	9.1
Rate: (5.45 – 8.97 cases per lakh population)	3.2	18.9	26.3	18.9	32.6
Rate: (8.98 – 12.50 cases per lakh population)	0	15.1	15.1	21.2	48.5
Rate: (>12.50 cases per lakh population)	0	0	7.1	14.2	78.5

The table shows that of the districts that had reported domestic violence rates of 0.00 to 1.92 cases per lakh population in 2001, of those districts, only 64.7 percent of the districts had continued to record similar rates of domestic violence while the rest of the districts registered higher rates of domestic violence in 2011. The districts that recorded domestic violence rates ranging from 1.93 to 5.44 cases per lakh population in 2001, only 45.7 percent of the districts recorded similar rates in 2011, while 14.7 per cent of the districts registered a decline in reporting and the rest of the districts reported higher rates compared to 2011. The districts that recorded domestic violence rates of 5.45 to 8.97 in 2001, had only 26.3 per cent of those districts recorded the same range of domestic violence rates in 2011. In the districts that had recorded domestic violence rates of 8.98 to 12.50 cases per lakh population in 2001, only 15 percent of those districts reported similar rates of violence in 2011, while 48.5 percent of districts recorded higher rates. In the districts that had recorded above 12.51 cases per lakh population rates of domestic violence in 2001, only 14.2 and 7.1 districts recorded lower rates in 2011, but 78.5 percent of the districts recorded similar high rates in 2011.

## V. CONCLUSION

The analysis reveals that the crime rates in the majority of the districts have remained similar to the rates that were reported in 2001 after a decade in 2011. A smaller group of districts have recorded a rise in the rates of domestic violence and an

even lesser number of districts have recorded a decline in the rates of domestic violence. This finding validates that there appears a rise in the cases of domestic violence in the peripheral areas of the traditional zones of higher rates of crimes against women. The study also reveals that districts that recorded higher rates of domestic violence in 2001 continued to do so in 2011 even after a decade. Inter district variations in reporting of cases of domestic violence throw light on the existence of factors beyond the regional subculture that are at work while determining rates of reporting of domestic violence.

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