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## India's or World's Daughter...?

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### **Abstract:**

*This paper attempts to study the image created by the term 'India's Daughter' that is much discussed in recent years and to explore the sexual crime rate with reference to few select countries across the world. The most painful incident is made into a film that has left our country amidst serious and undeserved allegations, calling India a rape capital. Sadly, it is a fact that violence against women is everywhere across the globe and that India is not alone in facing the problem and there is an equal concern everywhere. But the film has sparked much criticism against India. In that backdrop, there are some unfair justifications claiming that sexual violence is worse in India than in other countries. The study examines sexual assaults in other most developed countries like USA, UK, Sweden etc. and attempts to compare the statistics provided by United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime report and the survey by Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network. However, rape, which is absolutely a heinous crime is never supported or reasoned by this study.*

**Keywords:** India's Daughter, sexual crimes, reports, comparative study

This paper attempts to study the image created by the term 'India's Daughter' that is much discussed in recent years and to explore the sexual crime rate with reference to few select countries across the world. The most painful incident is made into a film that has left our country amidst serious and undeserved allegations, calling India a rape capital. Sadly, when the term 'India's Daughter' is Googled (searched for), nothing comes up, except the sites of rape victim's story describing India's Past, present and future with reference to violence against women and damaging India's reputation.

It is a universally accepted fact that violence against women is everywhere across the globe and that India is not alone in facing the problem and there is an equal concern everywhere. It is beneficial to any sufferer to offer some practically applicable measures to reduce the crime rate by illustrating the countries that have already implementing those methods. However, despite the criticism and accusations, Indians are working to make the country safer for women.

The term "India's Daughter" straight away connects with the BBC's film, that does not leave any positive connotation to the condition of Indian people. Though, the film is banned in India, it has got widespread national and international coverage. Further, it has sparked much criticism over the treatment of women in India. In that backdrop, there are some unfair justifications claiming that sexual violence is worse in India than in other countries. Though it is a bad analogy, the statistics from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime report (2010) says that there are 1.8 incidents of reported rape in India per 100,000 people, compared to 27.3 in the U.S, 28.8 in UK, 63.5 in Sweden, 120 in South Africa, showing here in fig.1.

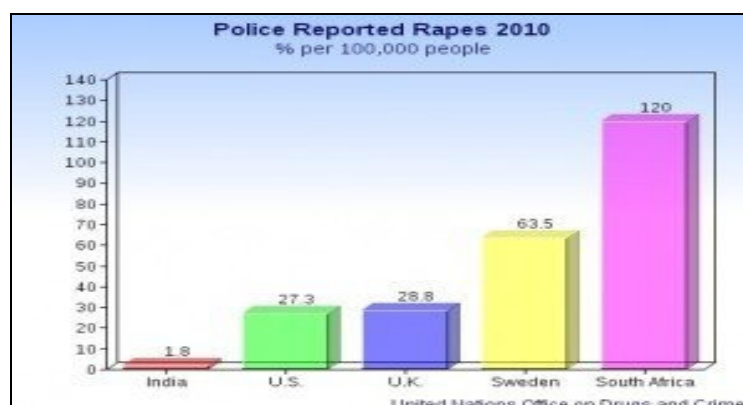


Figure 1

On the other hand, it is argued that in India very less number of rape cases are reported. Owing to several reasons like pressure from society to cover up abuses, victim's/family's fear of humiliation or retaliation, reluctance of police to register the cases etc., only a very few rapes get reported. But, even the USA's RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network- US's largest anti-sexual violence organization) survey says the majority of sexual assaults are not reported to the police in USA as well. And only 344 out of every 1,000 sexual crimes are reported to police. Surprisingly, the RAINN lists the following reasons for not reporting the sexual violence crimes to police during 2005-2010 by the victims. They are -

20% feared retaliation,

13% believed it was a personal matter,

13% believed the police would not do anything to help,

8% believed it was not important enough to report,

7% did not want to get the perpetrator in trouble,

8% reported to a different official,

2% believed the police could not do anything to help,

30% gave another reason or did not cite one reason.

This kind of specific and precise survey may not be yet done in India, but on the whole, the rationale for not reporting rape crime in USA is almost similar to that of India.

The study further analyses a comparative chart by M Tracy Hunter (Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0) using UNODC's data with reference to violence against women in some of the developed and still developing countries. The table (fig-2) illustrates rape and sexual assault rate trends among select countries of France, United States, Hong Kong (China) Brazil, Russia, Italy, India and Greece. The rate is per 100,000 people during 2003 to 2011. The data for United States is from Federal Bureau of Investigation and the data source is UNODC, Crime against women, Sexual Violence Table of July 2013.

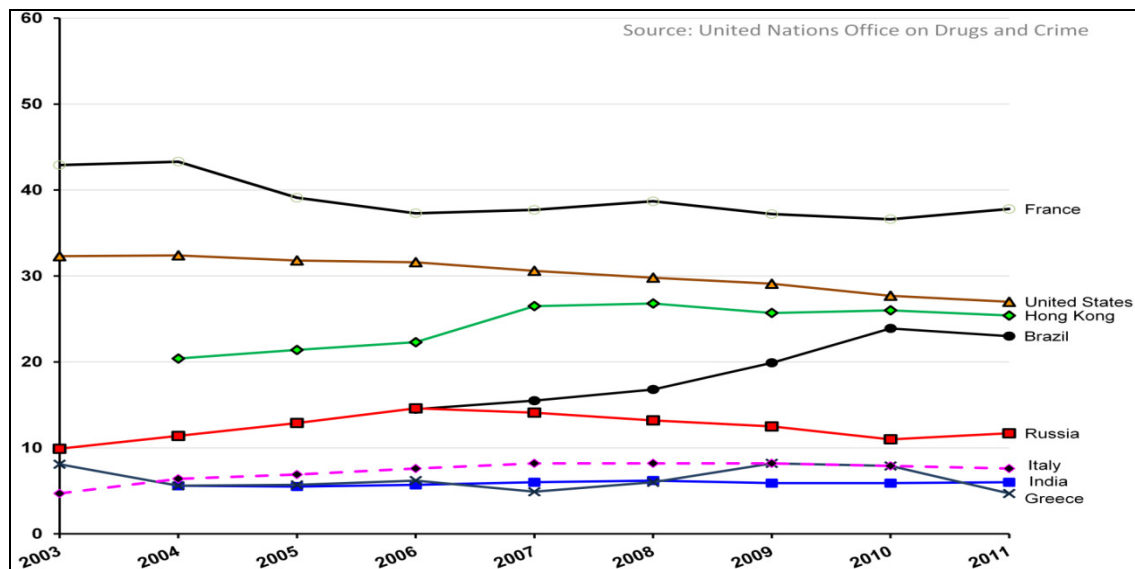


Figure 2

Apparently, crimes always go proportional to population. In any society, it is taken for granted that one in thousand will be a crook and criminal. Adjusting all figures to population, assuming that 90% of the rapes are not reported in India, while 100% of rapes are reported in the West, India still has lower rapes according to the percentage of population. However, it is important to analyse the UNODC Homicide Statistics of 2010 by United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime that considered number and rate per 100,000 population. It is a fact that India has been maintaining a present continuous status of 'developing country' for many decades. Yet, it can be compared with other most developed countries like USA, UK, Sweden etc. in rape and crime, population. However, rape, which is absolutely a heinous crime is never supported or reasoned by this study. And these figures by no means are an excuse for any kind of violence against women. The only aim of this paper is to restore India's image, as India already suffers great loss.

Further, when it is examined, there is no such reason that makes 'developed nations' to be proud of on safety and prevention mechanisms regarding atrocities against women. Ironically, despite their (US, UK, etc.) less population, better policing, more courts and judges, stricter legal system and most advance technology what these nations achieved is a point of discussion. Though, their rape crime rate is very high, the rape cases have not been filmed by any channel giving titles like 'America's Daughter' or 'Great Britain's Daughter.' Since the rape victims are everywhere across the world, it is better to refer them as 'World's Daughters'.

On the other hand, despite India being among the least policed nation with higher population, with few courts and judges, it actually has a high conviction rate for rape. In this poor country, sources are very limited that one police for 1000 people and one judge for one million people. And most of the time police struggle in providing security to politicians as a part of their duty. An article in Time, refers to the Guardian report that UK has 7% of reported rapes resulted in convictions during 2011-12; Sweden, the conviction rate is

10%; while India, a developing nation with countless challenges, incredibly managed a remarkable 24.2% conviction rate in the same year.

Dave Prager, the author of “Delirious Delhi” gives a vivid portrayal of Delhi and compares New York to Delhi. He is against comments such as ‘Delhi-the crime capital’. The New Yorkers Dave and Jenny actually live in Delhi as a part of their research. They state “We don’t argue with reports that show Delhi to be India’s ‘crime capital’. But while Delhi may be dangerous by Indian standards, it’s positively tranquil as compared to American cities. The Delhi region had 495 murders in 2007 or 2.95 murders for every 100,000 people by the National Crime Records Bureau’s population estimates. In that same year, however, New York City had 5.94 murders per 100,000 people - and that was a year that New York City was named the safest big city in the United States. There’s a similar story for rape in 2007: 3.57 per 100,000 in New Delhi, 10.48 per 100,000 in New York.” He further analyses crimes that ‘wouldn’t garner even a sentence in an American paper because so many bigger crimes would elbow it out of the way’ are obsessively reported in Indian news publications. Post the Delhi gang rape, Indian media have faithfully recorded each and every rape case, highlighted them for the world and continue to do so.

However, the active and constructive reporting of media results not only in growing awareness on preventive measures of rape crimes, but also in settling issues like getting support to the victim, making her realize that ‘it is not her fault’, punishing the offender and inspiring the victim to lead a normal life. The Delhi gang rape case has infuriated thousands of people, who demonstrated strong will to bring in changes for stricter laws in punishing the perpetrators. Further, the public protests compel the government to provide adequate security for women and to check the lapses by (amendment of section 354-A, B, C, D and 370) passing new legislation in 2013 namely The Nirbhaya Act. Earlier, India has never witnessed such a collective show of anger at the government’s failure to ensure the safety of women, seeking severe punishment for sex crimes. Therefore, the new Act has specifically categorized certain acts like- lewd expressions, acid attack, sexual harassment, voyeurism, stalking as offences and they are incorporated into the Indian Penal Code. The new Act also includes death for repeat rape offenders. Obviously, the law has given women the confidence to report sexual offenses and to fight against them. Thereafter, 15% of increase in the number of reports on crimes against women, are found during 2014-15. Further, the government has introduced new guidelines to hospitals to provide safe treatment of rape victims.

For the sake of ‘World’s Daughters’, films have to be produced and they must showcase a happy and gender balanced nations against the sorrow filled countries. Certainly, the film producers and directors require much more creativity and smartness to film various ways of preventive mechanisms that generate native and realistic feelings among men as well and inspiring them to be real men who stand against victimization of women.

However, it is a long way to India to have more judges, toilets, police and fast and effective mechanisms to fix the problems as it requires massive pumping of funds. Meanwhile, it is far more important to fix attitudinal problems of our people. This can happen only through education which also requires some radical changes in the system itself, to bring in transformation in the attitudes of the next generations. The policy makers must attempt serious measures to reform the education system allowing to transform chauvinistic and cynical attitudes and to perform better behavioral patterns.

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