

SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC PATTERNS AMONG ACCUSED INDIVIDUALS IN SEXUAL OFFENCE CASES: A FORENSIC EVALUATION AMONG THE NILGIRIS POPULATION

Karthik Dhanapal^{1,*}, Harish Sreethu², Monica Annakumar³

¹Senior Assistant Professor, Forensic Medicine and Toxicology, Government Medical College and Hospital, Udthagamandalam, Tamil Nadu, India-643 006. Email: dr.karthikmbbs@gmail.com

²Assistant Professor, Forensic Medicine and Toxicology, Government Medical College and Hospital, Udthagamandalam, Tamil Nadu, India-643 006. Email: harishsreethu@gmail.com

³Research Scholar, School of Life Sciences, JSS Academy of Higher Education (Ooty Campus), Udthagamandalam, Tamil Nadu, India, 643 006. Email: monicakumar182000@gmail.com

***Corresponding author: Karthik Dhanapal, Senior Assistant Professor, Forensic Medicine and Toxicology, Government Medical College and Hospital, Udthagamandalam, Tamil Nadu, India-643 006. Email: dr.karthikmbbs@gmail.com**

ABSTRACT

Sexual offenses have likely existed since the beginning of the civilisation of human. Deep-rooted power imbalances, gender inequality, and cultural norms that promote dominance—often linked to traditional masculinity and the enslavement of women—contribute to sexual harassment. As a result, individuals frequently use sexual behaviour not only to satisfy their desires but also to control, intimidate, or punish those who challenge gender norms. Every region in the country is experiencing a steady rise in sexual harassment cases, with some areas seeing more stringent legislation related to these issues. According to a medical survey, the number of documented sexual offenses has been increasing every day. This article examines the survey data collected in recent years at the Government Medical College and Hospital, Nilgiris, which has a significant impact on understanding sexual offenses. It also presents the sociodemographic profile of those accused of sexual crimes, including details such as their relationships with victims, marital status, socioeconomic level, educational background, age, and victim distribution—all highlighting the importance of age and victim numbers. The complete statistical report covers the sexual offenses reported in 2024 in the Nilgiris district.

Keywords: Sexual offence, Case report, Sociodemographic profile, Harassment data

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INTRODUCTION

Sexual crimes against women are among the most severe abuses of human rights; they endanger the autonomy, dignity, and physical integrity of their victims as well as the moral and legal underpinnings of any society[1,2]. Sexual violence is still widespread and underreported, despite India's sophisticated legal system for preventing, punishing, and compensating for such crimes being exemplified by the Indian Penal Code (IPC), Criminal Law (Amendment) Acts, and other specialized laws like the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act[3,4].

The law enforcement's deficiencies and the widespread patriarchal and misogynistic societal views are responsible for the horrifying increase in sexual crimes, such as rape, sexual assault, harassment, and trafficking[5,6]. Only by putting in place a thorough legal and social response can India address the damaging problem of sexual violence and go closer to true gender justice[7,8]. Sexual

violence should be treated equally in all legal systems, as per the Yogyakarta Principles and the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)[9]. Numerous incidents show that there is relatively little legal protection for male and transgender victims in India[10].

Legislation about sexual offenses should be gender-neutral to guarantee that all victims, regardless of their biological characteristics, receive equal justice[11]. Indian laws must provide a legal framework that acknowledges sexual assault as a crime impacting any individual to meet both international human rights standards and the values of equality and non-discrimination as expressed in Articles 14 and 15 of the Indian Constitution[12,13]. In this regard, a survey of female students at Indian colleges and universities revealed that both male students and faculty members participate in overt and covert sexist activities on campus[14].

Researchers have carried out a thorough study of domestic workers in India to learn how they would

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likely react to sexual harassment in the unorganized sector. They gave each respondent eleven potential sexual harassment scenarios and nine potential replies to each one. Studies have discovered that women are more inclined to utilize self-centered tactics with less assistance from friends and family. Women only report harassment to family members or authorities when they have proof. In any situation, women are unlikely to voice complaints to their female supervisor. It should come as no surprise that poorer women and migrant are more likely to keep quiet about harassment than women who are comparatively better off[15,16].

Sexual harassment occurs in many places outside of schools and homes as well. In this study, we analyzed a case report at the Government Medical College and Hospital, Nilgiris, in 2024. The cases are categorized based on gender, age, marital status, and victim complications, and we created a statistical table and distribution charts based on age and density, including frequencies for relationship with the victim, marital status, Sexual Experiences Survey, and educational level.

DATA ANALYSIS:

The data analysis of the sociodemographic profile of people suspected of sexual offenses in 2024 comprises distribution plots based on age and density, as well as frequencies for relationship with victim, marital status, SES, and educational level.

FREQUENCIES FOR RELATIONSHIP WITH VICTIM

Relationship With Victim	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Intimate Partner	25	53.191	53.191	53.191
Stranger	5	10.638	10.638	63.830
Authority Figure	1	2.128	2.128	65.957
Neighbour	6	12.766	12.766	78.723
Relative	6	12.766	12.766	91.489
Acquaintance	4	8.511	8.511	100.000
Total	47	100.000		

Table 1- The victim's relationship is classified into intimate partner, stranger, authority figure,

neighbour, relative, and acquaintance, according to which the frequencies are computed.

Sexual harassment often starts quietly and gradually becomes visible. Victims face risks of financial, psychological, physical, and verbal abuse from bus drivers and other passengers during their journeys. Such cases are frequently underreported and kept out of mainstream media[17]. Table 1 shows data on the number and frequency of people at risk of sexual harassment. The analysis of 47 accused individuals at the Government Medical College & Hospital, Nilgiris, in 2024 reveals that 53.2% of the accused were intimate partners—substantially higher than strangers at 10.6%. This suggests that most sexual offenses occur within close personal relationships rather than by strangers. Neighbours and relatives each account for 12.8%, while authority figures make up 2.1%, and acquaintances 8.5%. Additionally, a study was conducted to measure the types and frequency of harassment experienced by women using Chennai's public transit from a victimological perspective. Data were gathered through a self-reported questionnaire from a convenience sample of 530 women. The results indicate that nearly 35% of young women experienced some form of harassment in the past six months[18,19]. Further surveys have been carried out in other regions of India to gather data on sexual harassment[20-22].

Another study showcased that the chance of getting an unplanned pregnancy is elevated. In India, 6.4% of survey participants reported having ever been victims of sexual intimate partner violence. Sexual intimate partner violence (IPV) was considerably more common among those who were uneducated, in the lowest wealth index quintile, belonged to a scheduled caste, were multiparous, and were not exposed to the media. The respondents reported that 12.1% of pregnancies were unplanned, and 22.9% of women who had ever had sexual IPV said that their most recent pregnancy was unplanned. Compared to their reference groups, women who experienced sexual IPV were considerably more likely to have an unwanted pregnancy if they were younger, had parity ≥ 1 , and had larger households[23]. In our study, we witnessed the increased frequencies in intimate partners, with 53.191 percent among 25 cases (Table 1).

FREQUENCIES FOR MARITAL STATUS

Marital Status	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Married	20	42.553	42.553	42.553
Unmarried	26	55.319	55.319	97.872

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Divorced	1	2.128	2.128	100.000
Missing	0	0.000		
Total	47	100.000		

Table 2- The frequency is determined by the victims' marital status, which includes married, single, divorced, and missing.

In the sociodemographic profile of frequencies for marital status, unmarried women are more at risk than those in other groups. For young girls and unmarried women, the frequency rate is 26 (55.319 percent). Across the world the sexual harassment in public for the young generation and single women is gradually increasing, and several studies have also witnessed the report. According to a recent UNFPA Egypt study, 23% of Egyptian females between the ages of 18 and 19 said they had experienced harassment in the previous year in places including squares, markets, and streets. Additionally, 39% of female students at the time of the poll reported experiencing violence in public areas. Furthermore, a 2011 UN scoping study from the Safe Cities Global Initiative revealed that 68% of women in Quito, Ecuador, had been victims of sexual abuse within the preceding 12 months. Furthermore, in six marketplaces in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, 55% of women reported having been sexually assaulted in a marketplace during the previous 12 months[24]

Whereas married women are equally affected, with a frequency of 20 (42.553 percent). A study conducted in 2015-16 announced that approximately 25% of women who had ever been married said they had encountered violence at some point in the year[25]. According to the table 2, in the divorced category, one case was documented. Unmarried women are more likely to produce complications in this area. There are around 2.128 percent divorced women who have raised the complaint against sexual harassments whereas the divorced women are vulnerable to sexual harassment, social exclusion, restricted access to legal and psychological care, and no claim to funds or properties acquired during marriage[26].

FREQUENCIES FOR SES

SES	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Low	44	93.617	93.617	93.617
Middle	3	6.383	6.383	100.000
High	0	0.000		

Total	47	100.000		
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Table 3- The sexual experiences survey (SES) frequencies for individuals from lower, middle, and missing classes

Socioeconomic analysis revealed a striking pattern showing 44 reported cases, with 93.6% of accused individuals belonging to a low socioeconomic status. In India, various parts of the country frequently experience sexual harassment of women in low-level employment[27]. According to a different study, widespread sexual harassment can hurt women's psychological, emotional, and financial well-being. Potential victims were more likely to quit their employment in Sweden and enroll in worse institutions in Delhi to avoid sexual harassment [28].

Several study describes the low-income and middle-income countries (LMICs) such as India Pursuant to the WHO's most current estimate, 27% of women between the ages of 15 and 49 who have ever been married or in a relationship have at least once in their lifetime experienced physical or sexual abuse (or both) at the hands of intimate partners, compared to 13% over 12 months[29]. Based on our study, there were around 6.4% from middle socioeconomic backgrounds. No cases were reported among individuals of high socioeconomic status. This substantial disparity requires careful interpretation, as it may reflect various factors including differential reporting patterns, variations in access to legal resources, or genuine associations between socioeconomic disadvantage and offending behaviour.

FREQUENCIES FOR EDUCATION LEVEL

Education Level	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
School	19	40.426	40.426	40.426
Graduate	10	21.277	21.277	61.702
Illiterate	18	38.298	38.298	100.000
Missing	0	0.000		
Total	47	100.000		

Table 4- Sexual harassments among based on people's education, which is divided into school, college, and illiterates

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The accused's educational background varied significantly; graduates are less prone than other groups to be implicated in sexual harassment incidents. The study was conducted in Nepal, which holds around 150 secondary school students. Owing to the results, the majority of the 150 respondents (82.0%) had a high degree of knowledge about sexual harassment. Respondents' "suggestions for preventing sexual harassment can be stopped by enacting strict rules, regulations, and policies against those who engage in the practice" (85.3%), conducting awareness campaigns about the issue (83.3%), and providing training on how to handle sexual harassment (75.3%). The degree of knowledge of sexual harassment and the chosen sociodemographic factors did not significantly correlate. It is advised that schools run a regular awareness campaign or sensitization program to educate students about sexual harassment[30]. In this study, the recorded percentages of cases among those with school-level education and those who are illiterate are 40.426 and 38.298, respectively.

One hundred female undergraduate students took part in a descriptive, cross-sectional survey. The majority of participants (81%) stated that all unwanted sexual behavior is related to sexual harassment, 72% stated that they are most fearful of sexual harassment at night, and 83% stated that public transportation is the most likely place for sexual harassment. The majority of participants (81%) were unaware of any laws about sexual harassment, and 91% of them thought that the occurrence of sexual harassment had increased during the previous ten years[31]. Witnessing the survey, many cross sectional survey suggests that school students and illiterates are often accused of this condition. In contrast, our case study found that 21.3 percent of the accused had graduate-level credentials. This suggests that knowledge of the wider society is reflected in educational attainment. The graduates are more conscious of sexual harassment than schoolchildren and illiterates. The high proportion of illiterate individuals among the accused suggests potential links between lack of education and involvement in sexual offenses.

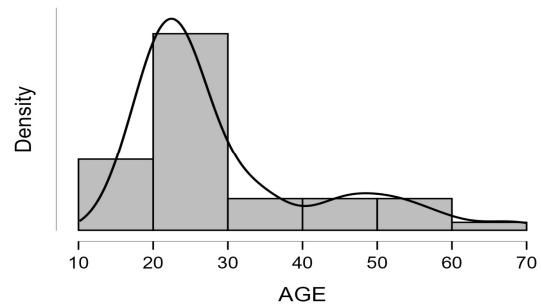
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS ANALYSIS OF DATA

	V ali d	Mo de	Me dia n	M ea n	Std. Dev iatio n	Min imu m	Max imu m
A G E	47	23.000 ^a	24.000	29.213	12.472	17.000	68.000

Table 5 Descriptive Statistics analysis of the data ^a the mode is computed assuming that variables are discrete.

The demographic profile indicated that the accused population was relatively young, with a mean age of 29.2 years and a median age of 24 years. The age distribution ranged broadly from 17 to 68 years, suggesting that while sexual offences occur across different age groups, there is a notable concentration among younger adults. Regarding marital status, unmarried individuals formed the majority at 55.3 percent, followed by married persons at 42.6 percent, and divorced individuals at 2.1 percent. The predominance of intimate partner relationships among accused persons, combined with this marital status distribution, indicates that sexual offences occur in both marital and non-marital intimate relationship contexts.

Distribution Plots



Graph 1- The division of sexual harassment in terms of age and number of reported cases

These findings provide important insights into the sociodemographic profile of individuals accused of sexual offence cases within this specific regional context. The data emphasise that sexual violence is primarily perpetrated within intimate relationships by younger individuals facing economic disadvantages and having varied educational backgrounds. Understanding these patterns is crucial for developing targeted prevention strategies, designing appropriate intervention programs, and allocating support services more effectively to address sexual offences in the community.

CONCLUSION

Intimate partner, unmarried, low socioeconomic status, and illiteracy accounted for 53.191% (Table 1), 55.319% (Table 2), 93.617% (Table 3), and 38.298% (Table 4) of the 47 cases that were reported in 2024 at Government Medical College and Hospital, Nilgiris. The average age of these individuals was between 24 and 29.2 years old. Higher rates are also found for school children under the age of 18, with 40.426% (Table 4). According to

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the data that is currently available, victims are those with low socioeconomic position and little to no education. Pursuant to the Norms database, 47 individuals have been reported as of one year (2024). Worldwide, several awareness camps are being organized, particularly for sexual harassment, which affects all people of all hues. To help people realize the problems that affect both themselves and their daughters, this form of awareness needs to be practiced frequently.

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