The Facets Of Cyber Crimes Against Women In India: Issues And Challenges

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ABSTRACT

Cyber crimes which is a new age crime involving electronics medium for committing crimes have drastically increased over the past few years primarily whose maximum victims fall into the category of women followed by children. Due to large number of user bases it is easier to commit cyber crimes and also at the same time difficult on the part of the investigating bodies to find the offender. The intermediaries roles and the awareness of common people regarding cyber crimes and measures to be taken if you are victimized is questionable in India which is far behind on digital literacy among public. This paper analyzes thoroughly the cyber crimes committed against women in India. It discusses the legal framework of It analyses using figures of the National Crime Records Bureau. The researchers have also examined the reasons why the cyber crimes against India are increasing. At last the measures being taken by Government is briefly discussed along with the preventive steps that can be taken at individual level by women and females to avoid being victimized of cyber crimes.

General Words- Legal, Cyber, Electronics

Key Words- Cyber Crimes, Women, IT Act, India, NCRB

I.   INTRODUCTION

May it be the case of Avinash B.S., a 26 year old MBA student with millions of dreams committing suicide due to sextortion or , the number of cases rising in the field of cyber space is no less than a football rolling down a mountain which is uncontrollable. Cyber-crimes are the new age offences that involves or are committed via electronic medium. Owing to the easy availability of electronic devices as if it has become the fourth basic necessity of human existence after air, food and shelter and lack of awareness and knowledge of the users, it has now become the new normal to extract money, stalk, bully, harass and even abetting to suicide. Practically, we are far behind in terms of managing cyber-crimes due to lack of equipment's, technologies, cyber experts and the offenders are way forward in advancing newer forms of cyber-crimes every now and then. In January 2021, it was alleged that there was a data leakage of 150 million Indian and put forth into sale which was denied by the centre and CERT-IN was looking into the matter with the help of other international IT experts was informed to the public at large by the IT Minister.[1] Quite surprisingly came up the Dhantia village cyber gang case who committed a scam of Rs. 300 crore. The leader of the gang, Jamshed Khan who was the son of a rickshaw puller, along with the other families of the village near Bareilly (Uttar Pradesh) who primarily depended over embroidery and farming as

occupations were getting richer scamming people mainly from Jharkhand luring them for offers and then hacking their bank accounts. The very recent case of hacking of the official twitter handle of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India puts a reasonable question in the mind of the general public of India that, if the best cyber experts of our country aren't capable enough of securing the personal id of Hon'ble Prime Minister, in that case, safeguarding the right to privacy of citizens of this country is a day dream. The uncontrollable increasing number of abusive contents in social media platforms is a nightmare to many.

There has been increasing number of cyber crimes in the past half decade. Comparing the total number of reported cyber crime cases, shows an upward graph of 12317 in 2016, 21796 in 2017, 27248 in 2018, 44735 in 2019 and 50035 in 2020.

Figure 1: Total Number of Cyber Crimes reported from 2016-2020

That amounts to an increasing crime rate of 1% in 2016 to 1.7% in 2017 to 2.1% in 2018 followed by 3.3% in 2019 and 3.7% in 2020.
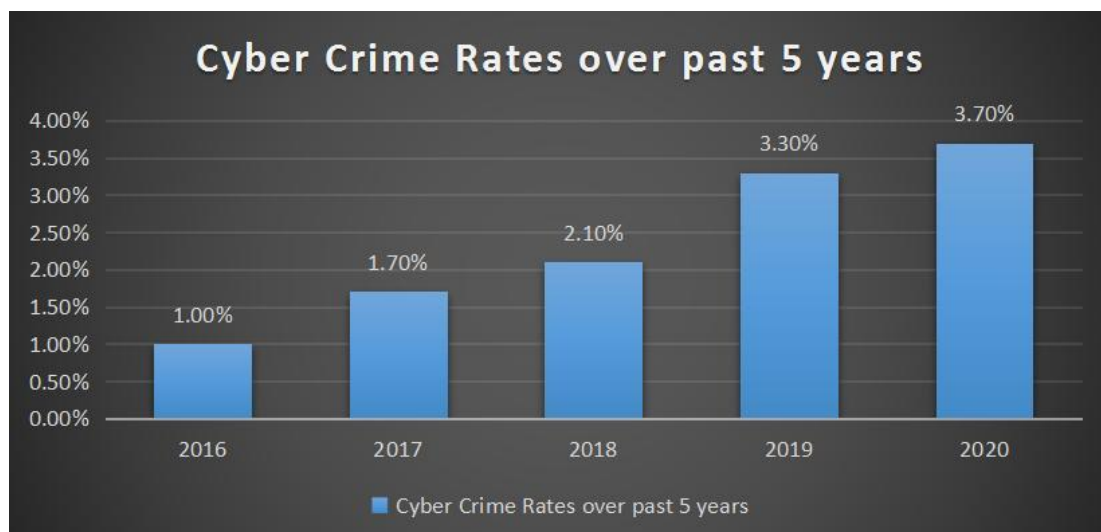
Figure 2: Cyber Crime Rates reported from 2016-2020

Crimes against women has been persistent against women since time immemorial. Sati System, dowry, Cruelty, domestic violence, rape and many more such crimes have committed against women specifically which even today after independence of 70 years and according to various studies and reports, the graph has always been in an ascending order. Cyber crime against women is comparatively a new age crime and it involves offences committed against women using electronics medium. There are mainly 5 types of crimes as categorized by reports of National Crimes Record Bureau (hereby to be referred as NCRB) Cyber Blackmailing/ Threatening, Cyber Pornography/ Hosting/ Publishing Obscene Sexual Materials, Cyber Stalking/ Cyber Bullying of Women, Defamation/Morphing, Fake Profile. Apart from the above heads there are large number of crimes reported under the head of other crimes according to the NCRB reports from 2017-2020. The NCRB started publishing Cyber Crimes against Women from 2017 which gives the figures of total number of cyber crimes committed under the three different laws under which cyber crimes against women are punishable i.e Indian Penal Code, 1860, Information Technology Act, 2000 and Special Local Legislations.

The landmark judgement of Suhas Katti v. State of Tamil Nadu[2] has set an example of conviction in cases of cyber crimes where this case of cyber stalking and harassment of women reached a conviction sentence within 7 months from the date of filing the first information report.

In another landmark judgement of Hon'ble Supreme Court, Shreya Singhal v. Union of India[3] it was held that how the ambiguity of section 66a of the Information Technology Act, 2000 was strucked down as it was violating article 19, freedom of speech and expression which is a Fundamental right.

But at the same time, it is also a serious concern that the total number of cases of cyber crimes against women is increasing overall. In the year 2017, total 4242 cases of cyber crimes against women were reported which increased to 6030 in the year 2018 but subsequently it increased to 8379 in the year 2019 and the latest NCRB report of 2020 shows that 10405 cases were reported. The total number of reported cyber crime cases against women in 2020 is 10405 out of which 7184 falls under the category of other crimes according to the NCRB Report which means there is a serious lack of having enacted legislations to fight against cyber crimes against women in India. 1655 number of cases were reported under the head of Cyber pornography/ Hosting/ Publishing Obscene Sexual materials (Sec.67A/67B (Girl Child) of IT act r/w other IPC/SLL) followed by 887 reported cases under Cyber Stalking/Bullying (Sec.354D IPC r/w IT Act). State of Karnataka reported the highest number of cases reported against women which amounts to 2859 followed by Maharashtra and Assam with 1632 and 1071 respectively.
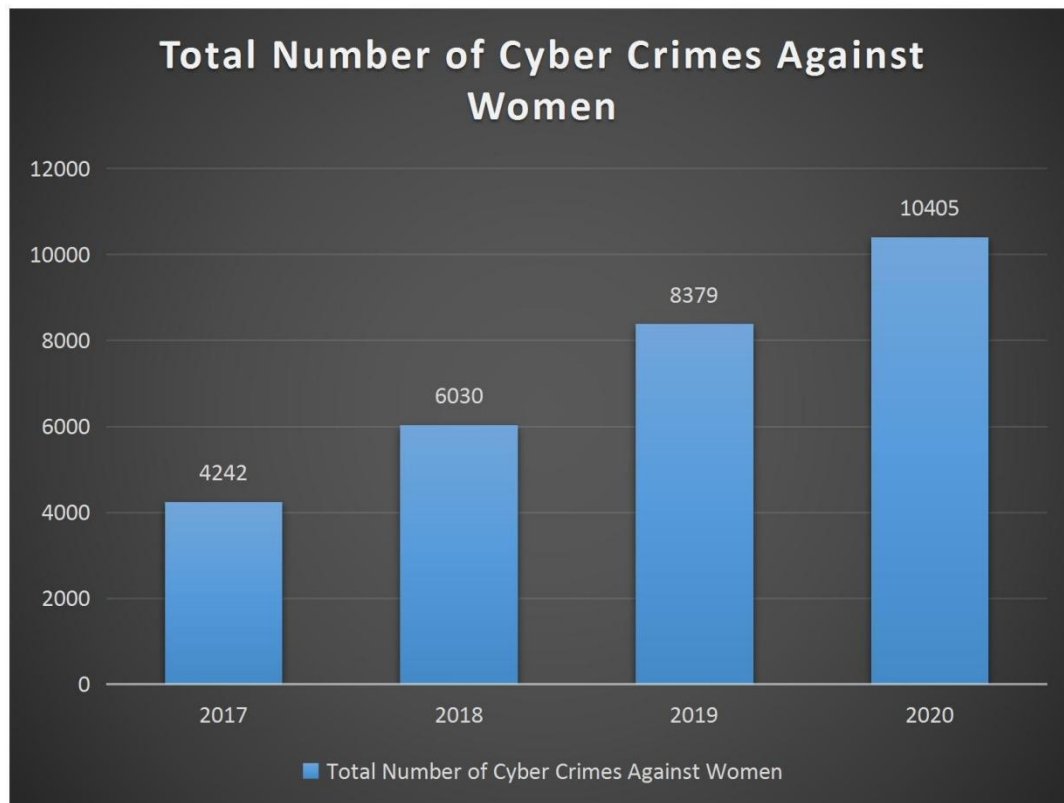
Figure 3: Total number of Cyber Crims against women from 2017-2020

In the year 2017, total 21796 cases of cyber crimes were reported in India out of which 4242 cases were cyber crimes against women which amounts to 19.46%. Subsequently in 2018, 27248 cases of total number of cyber crime cases were reported out of which 6030 cases were cyber crimes against women, making it 22.13%. In the year 2019, 44735 cases of cyber crimes were reported and in that 8379 cases were cyber crimes against women which amounts to 18.73% of the total cyber crimes committed. In the latest NCRB Report of 2020, 10405 cases of cyber crimes against women is reported out of 50035 total number of cyber crimes reported in India which makes it 20.79%.

The researchers in this paper aim to give a statistical analysis of different types of cyber crimes committed against women in cyber sphere over the time span of 4 years i.e from 2017 to 2020, thereby understanding the trend of the cyber crimes, increased and decreased in the against women. The author also tends to highlight which 3 states have topped the list in each of the cyber crimes, in each of the year so as to give a clear picture of the most dangerous states for women in cyber sphere. The researchers have also made an attempt to understand the most probable reasons for increasing rate of cyber crimes against women and propose solutions for the same.

2. HYPOTHESIS

Laws Protecting women in cyber space is not enough to safeguard the rights of women in cyber space.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Whether the laws protecting women in cyber space is productive enough to safeguard the rights of women in cyber space?

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher has adopted Doctrinal

Methodology to study the status of women victims of cyber crimes. Primary as well as secondary sources is used. The research is completed with the help of all existing literature available in the form of judgments, reports, laws, books and online data including online journals, research articles.

The researcher has also analyzed the National Crime Records Bureau data on women who are victims of cyber crimes. The judgments of Supreme Court and High Court of India will be used for analysis and recommendations will be made to meet the challenges faced by the Indian legal system at present.

5. LAWS PROTECTING WOMEN IN CYBER SPACE IN INDIA

Cyber Crimes per say are punishable under 3 legislations i.e Information Technology Act, 2008, Indian Penal Code, 1860 and Special Local Legislations. Apart from the general offences under these acts, there are specific sections which protects women under the above acts from the cyber space with one or more than one legislations taken together. Such provisions under 5 different heads appear in the NCRB report since 2017.

Sl No.	Offence	Section	Statute	Punishment
1.	Criminal Intimidation	Section 503 read with Section 506	Indian Penal Code read with Information Technology Act, 2000	Imprisonment upto 2 years or fine or both
	Extortion	Section 383 read with Section 384	Indian Penal Code read with Information Technology Act, 2000	Imprisonment upto 3 years or fine or both
2.	Cyber Pornography/ Hosting/ Publishing Obscene Sexual Materials	Section 67A	Information Technology Act, 2000	1st Conviction- Imprisonment upto 5 years & fine upto Rs. 10,00,000 2nd and Subsequent Conviction- Imprisonment upto 10 years & fine upto Rs. 10,00,000
		Section 67B	Information	1st Conviction-

No.			Technology Act, 2000	Imprisonment upto 5 years & fine upto Rs. 10,00,000 2nd and Subsequent Conviction- Imprisonment upto 7 years & fine upto Rs. 10,00,000	
3.	Cyber Stalking/ Cyber Bullying of Women	Section 354D	Indian Penal Code read with Information Technology Act, 2000	1st Conviction- Imprisonment upto 3 years & fine 2nd and Subsequent Conviction- Imprisonment upto 5 years & fine	
4.	Defamation/Morphing	Section 469	Indian Penal Code read with Information Technology Act, 2000	Imprisonment upto 3 years or fine or both	
5.	Fake Profile	Section 465	Indian Penal Code read with Information Technology Act, 2000	Imprisonment upto 2 years or fine or both	

6. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF CYBER CRIME AGAINST WOMEN IN CYBER SPACE

Below is the statistical analysis of cyber crimes against women as per the National Crimes Bureau Report.[4] A separate report in tabular form for the cyber crimes committed against women started being penned down since 2017. The researchers have analyzed the reports of the past 4 years from 2017-2021.

6.1 Total Number of Cyber Crimes Against Women from 2017-2020

States	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Andhra Pradesh	173	217	356	375	1121
Arunachal Pradesh	0	1	5	1	7
Assam	379	670	703	1071	2823
Bihar	36	14	60	47	157

Chhattisgarh	89	64	85	117	355
Goa	9	21	5	19	54
Gujarat	94	184	226	277	781
Haryana	79	112	251	222	664
Himachal Pradesh	30	52	47	52	181
Jharkhand	26	13	43	20	102
Karnataka	729	1374	2698	2859	7660
Kerala	126	160	139	246	671
Madhya Pradesh	192	276	301	274	1043
Maharashtra	1119	1262	1503	1632	5516
Manipur	27	9	2	26	64
Meghalaya	6	32	21	39	98

Mizoram	4	4	2	1	11
Nagaland	0	2	1	2	5
Odisha	62	228	437	560	1287
Punjab	61	97	87	110	355
Rajasthan	89	116	188	238	631
Sikkim	0	1	1	0	2
Tamil Nadu	53	77	124	306	560
Telangana	196	336	288	649	1469
Tripura	1	5	3	3	12
Uttar Pradesh	265	340	518	749	1872
Uttarakhand	30	78	28	72	208
West Bengal	270	170	170	344	954
A&N Islands	2	5	2	3	12
Chandigarh	5	5	13	10	33
D&N Haveli and Daman & Diu	1	0	2	3	6
Delhi	76	79	56	51	262
Jammu & Kashmir	13	23	14	25	75
Ladakh	-	-	-	0	0
Lakshadweep	0	3	0	2	5
Puducherry	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**4242**	**6030**	**8379**	**10405**	**29056**

Table 1: Total Number of Cyber Crimes

Against Women from 2017-2020

The total number of cyber crimes reported against women from 2017-2021 is 29056 out of which 4242 are reported in 2017, 6030 are reported in 2018, 8379 are reported in 2019 and 10405 cases are reported in 2020. Maharashtra reported 1119 (26.37% out of the total cases of under the above head) cases of cyber crimes against women which is highest in 2017. In the

year 2018, Karnataka reported the highest number of cyber crimes against women with the digits of 1374 (22.78% out of the total cases of under the above head). In the following year of 2019, Karnataka had 2698 (32.19% out of the total cases of under the above head) reported cases which was highest amongst all the states. In the latest report of 2020, again Karnataka had the highest number of reported cases of cyber crimes against women amounting to 2859 (27.47% out of the total cases of under the above head).
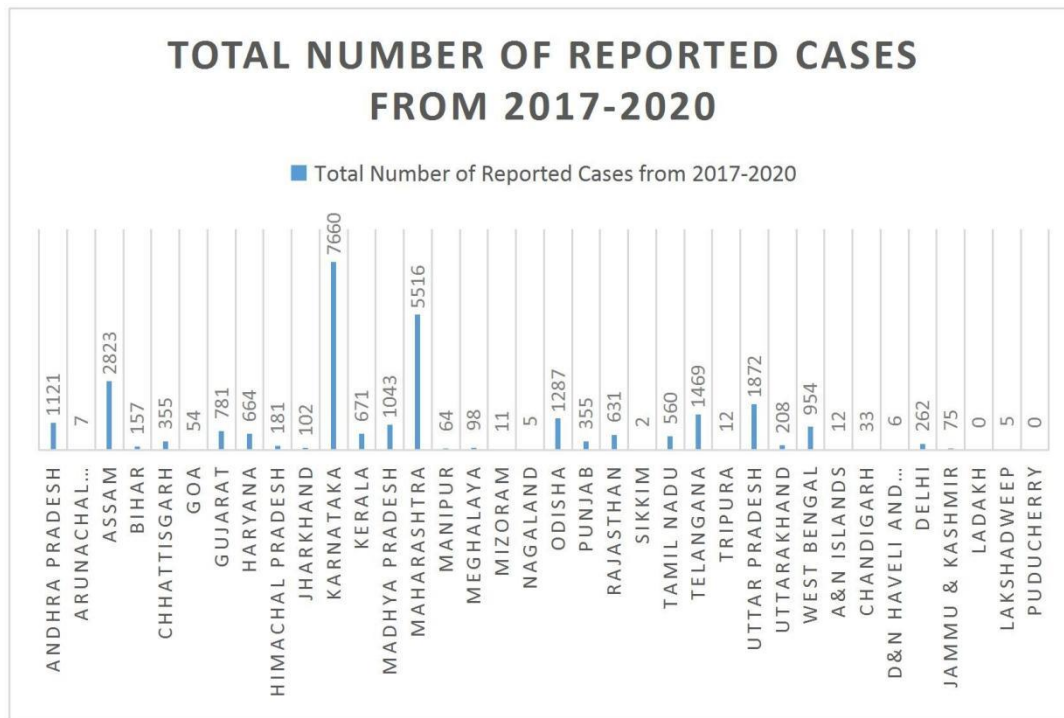

Figure 4: State-wise total number of reported cases of Cyber Crimes against women from 2017-2020

Comparing the stats of the cyber crimes against women from 2017-2020, Karnataka (26%) reported the highest number of cases followed by Maharashtra (19%) and Assam (10%) respectively. The above three states constituted 55% of the total crimes reported. Analyzing the figures of the past 4 years i.e 2017-2020, total number of cases have increased.
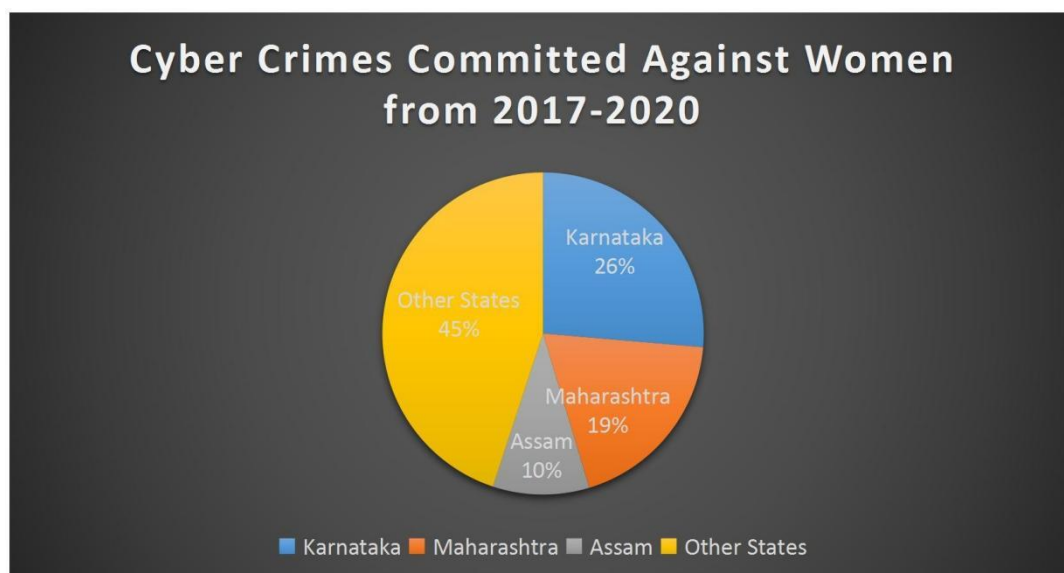
Figure 5: Top-3 cities with highest number of reported cases of Cyber Crimes against women from 2017-2020

6.2 "Cyber Blackmailing/ Threatening (Sec.506, 503, 384 IPC r/w IT Act)"

States	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Andhra Pradesh	11	12	23	5	51
Arunachal Pradesh	0	0	0	0	0
Assam	70	29	12	2	113
Bihar	0	3	2	0	5
Chhattisgarh	0	2	2	0	4
Goa	0	0	0	0	0
Gujarat	1	1	6	7	15
Haryana	5	5	2	1	13
Himachal Pradesh	0	0	0	0	0
Jharkhand	0	0	0	0	0
Karnataka	1	2	0	0	3
Kerala	6	6	3	0	15
Madhya Pradesh	0	4	1	6	11
Maharashtra	7	5	9	12	33
Manipur	0	0	0	0	0
Meghalaya	1	3	0	1	5
Mizoram	0	0	0	0	0
Nagaland	0	0	0	0	0
Odisha	0	0	0	1	1
Punjab	2	6	4	1	13
Rajasthan	0	2	1	3	6
Sikkim	0	0	0	0	0
Tamil Nadu	1	2	4	7	14
Telangana	12	10	9	19	50
Tripura	0	0	0	0	0
Uttar Pradesh	5	2	11	0	18
Uttarakhand	0	9	12	0	21
West Bengal	5	6	6	6	23
A&N Islands	0	0	1	0	1

Chandigarh	1	0	0	0	1
D&N Haveli and Daman & Diu	0	0	0	0	0
Delhi	0	0	4	0	4
Jammu & Kashmir	3	4	1	3	11
Ladakh	-	-	-	0	0
Lakshadweep	0	0	0	0	0
Puducherry	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**132**	**113**	**113**	**74**	**432**

Table 2: Total Number of Cases of Cyber Blackmailing/ Threathening (Sec. 506,503, 384 IPC r/w IT Act) from 2017-2020

The total number of crimes reported in cyber blackmailing or threatening in 2017 is 132 whereas it reduced to 113 in 2018, subsequently it was against 113 reported cases in 2019 and it reduced to 74 in 2020. In the past 4 years i.e from 2017-2020, 432 cases are reported against cyber blackmailing or threatening to women punishable under Sec.506, 503, 384 IPC r/w IT Act. Assam reported the highest number of cases reported in 2017 with 70 reported cases (53.03% out of the total cases of under the above head). In the year 2018, again Assam had the highest number of reported cases with the figures of 29 (25.66% out of the total cases of under the above head). Subsequently in the year 2019, Andhra Pradesh reported the highest number of cyber crimes with 23 reported crimes (20.35% out of the total cases of under the above head). In the latest report of 2020, Telengana has reported the highest number of cases which is 19 (25.67% out of the total cases of under the above head).
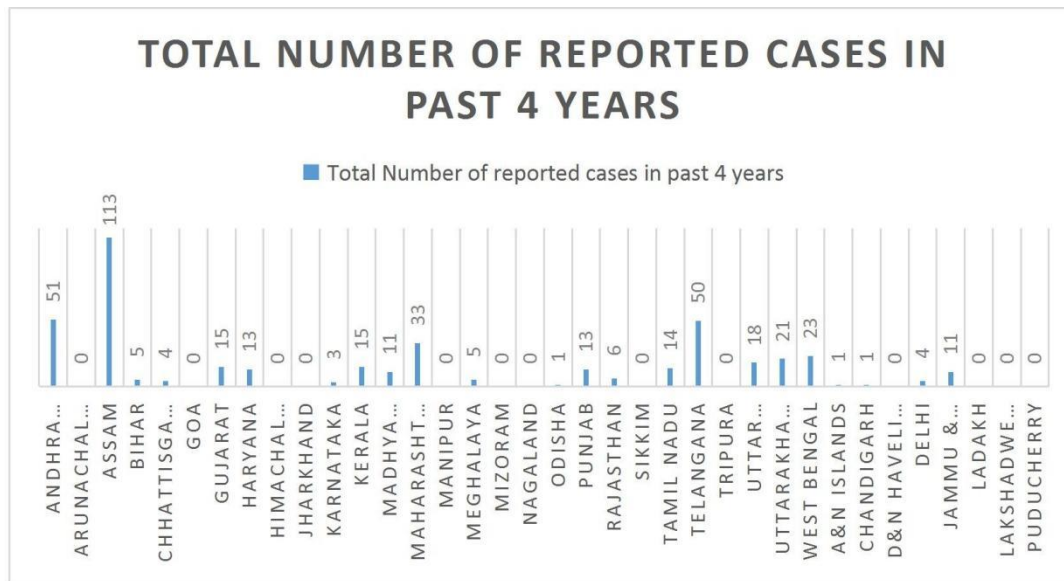
Figure 6: State-wise total number of reported cases of Cyber blackmailing or threatening against women from 2017-2020

Looking at the sum total over the past 4 years, Assam (26%) has the highest number of cases followed by Andhra Pradesh (12%) and Telengana (12%) respectively. The above three states constituted 50% of the total crimes reported Cyber Blackmailing / Threatening under Sec.506, 503, 384 IPC r/w IT Act over the past 4 years (2017-2020). Analyzing the figures of the past 4 years i.e 2017-2020, total number of cases have decreased.
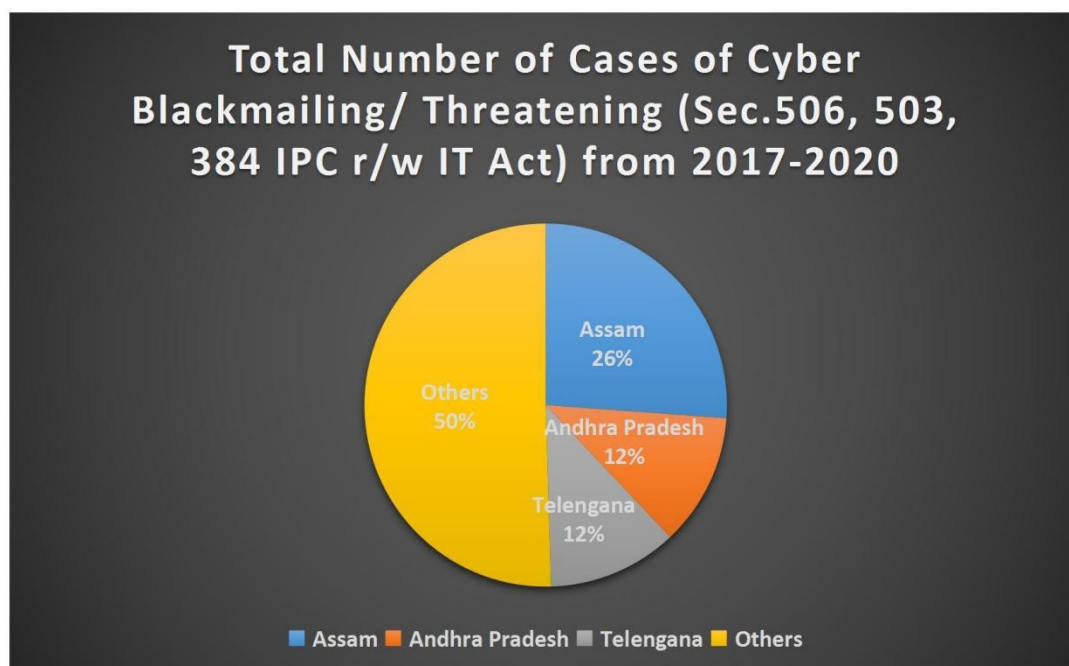

Figure 7: Top-3 States with highest number of reported cases of Cyber blackmailing or threatening against women from 2017-2020

6.3 "Cyber Pornography/ Hosting/ Publishing Obscene Sexual Materials (Sec.67A/67B (Girl Child) of IT act r/w other IPC/SLL"

States	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Andhra Pradesh	1	5	11	21	38
Arunachal Pradesh	0	0	4	0	4
Assam	76	172	144	211	603
Bihar	4	2	4	3	13
Chhattisgarh	1	15	21	34	71
Goa	0	3	0	1	4
Gujarat	3	11	21	17	52
Haryana	6	34	41	64	145
Himachal Pradesh	6	27	28	31	92

Jharkhand	0	8	1	3	12
Karnataka	24	42	72	142	280
Kerala	10	53	43	113	219
Madhya Pradesh	21	52	60	52	185
Maharashtra	14	31	42	75	162
Manipur	0	1	1	3	5
Meghalaya	2	1	2	7	12
Mizoram	0	0	0	1	1
Nagaland	0	0	0	0	0
Odisha	23	172	341	292	828
Punjab	3	26	16	22	67
Rajasthan	5	10	28	24	67
Sikkim	0	1	1	0	2
Tamil Nadu	8	26	27	147	208
Telangana	24	42	55	11	132
Tripura	0	4	2	2	8
Uttar Pradesh	17	91	178	325	611
Uttarakhand	2	10	4	23	39
West Bengal	4	2	2	10	18
A&N Islands	0	1	0	1	2
Chandigarh	2	0	1	1	4
D&N Haveli and Daman & Diu	0	0	0	0	0
Delhi	13	13	5	8	39
Jammu & Kashmir	2	6	3	10	21
Ladakh	-	-	-	0	0
Lakshadweep	0	1	0	1	2

Puducherry	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**271**	**862**	**1158**	**1655**	**3946**

Table 3: Total Number of Cases of Cyber Pornography/ Hosting/ Publishing Obscene Sexual Materials (Sec.67A/67B) from 2017-2020

The total number of reported cases in Cyber Pornography/ Hosting/ Publishing Obscene Sexual Materials under Sec.67A/67B(Girl Child) of IT act r/w other IPC/SLL in 2017 was 271 which increased to 862 in 2018 and then took a great leap to 1158 in 2019 and 1655 in 2020. Taken up together 3946 cases are reported over in the span of 2017-2020. In the year 2017, Assam had the highest number of reported cases with the figures of 76 (28.04% out of the total cases of under the above head). Assam and Odisha reported the highest number of cases in 2018 with 172 cases each (19.95% each out of the total cases of under the above head). Subsequently in the year 2019, Odisha reported the highest number with 341 reported crimes (29.44% out of the total cases of under the above head). In the latest report of 2020, Uttar Pradesh has reported the highest number of cases which is 325 (19.63% out of the total cases of under the above head).
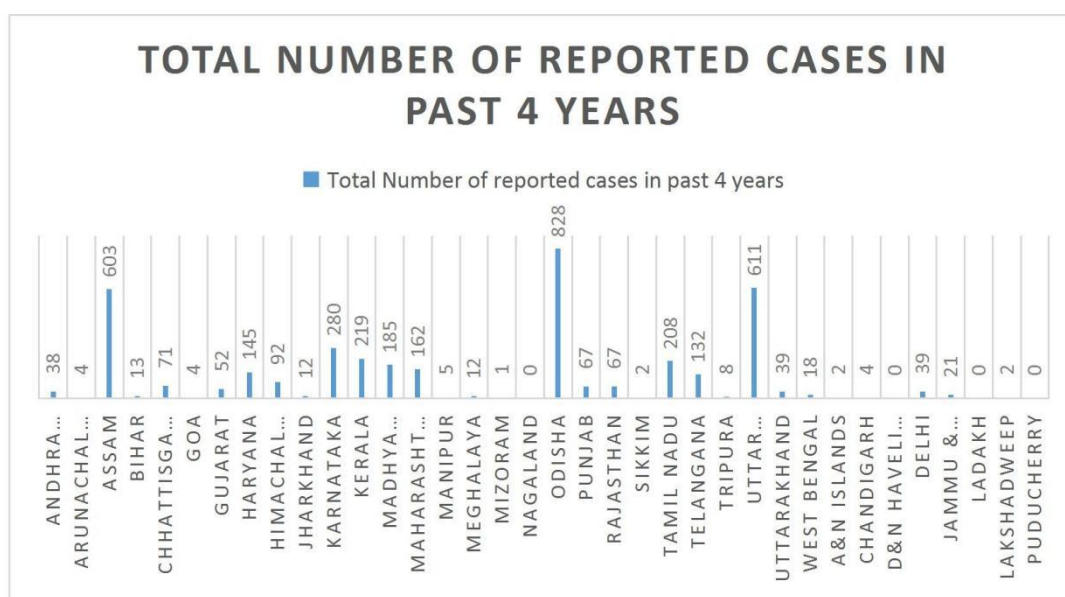

Figure 8: State-wise total number of reported cases of Cyber Pornography/ Hosting/ Publishing Obscene Sexual Materials

Comparing all the four years from 2017 to 2020, Odisha (21%) reported the highest number of cases followed by Uttar Pradesh (16%) and Assam (15%) respectively. The above three states constituted 52% of the total crimes reported Cyber Pornography/ Hosting/ Publishing Obscene Sexual Materials under Sec.67A/67B(Girl Child) of IT act r/w other IPC/SLL over the past 4 years (2017-2020). Analyzing the figures of the past 4 years i.e 2017-2020, total number of cases reported in 2018 increased compared to 2017 but subsequently in 2019 the numbers rose up at a very high rate and further more in 2020.
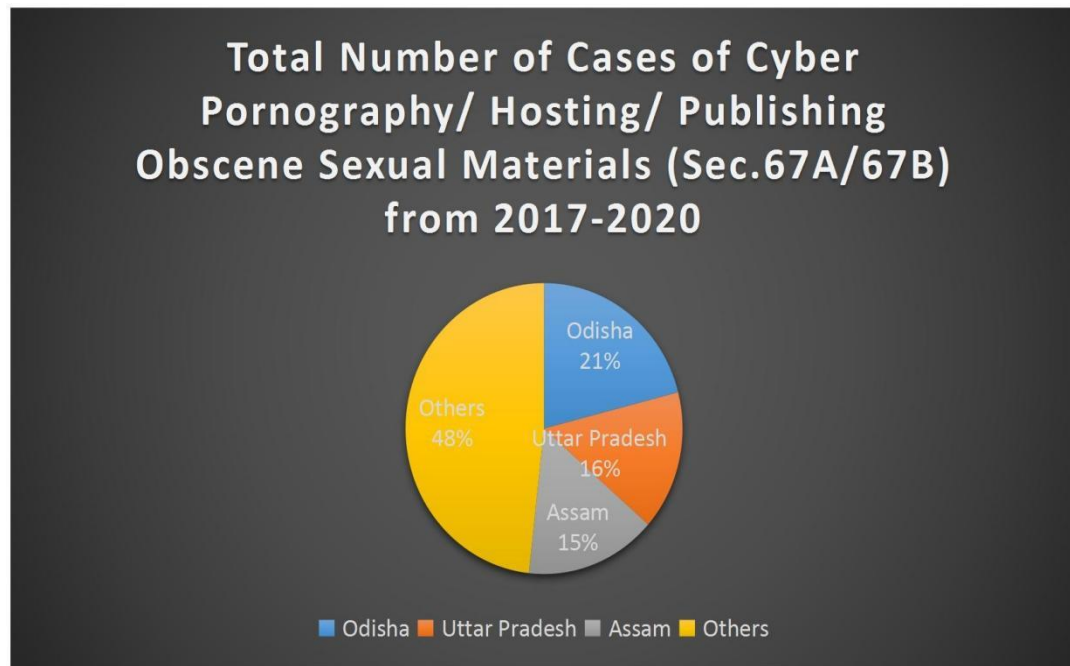
Figure 9: Top-3 States with highest number of reported cases of Cyber Pornography/ Hosting/ Publishing Obscene Sexual Materials against women from 2017-2020

6.4 "Cyber Stalking/ Cyber Bullying of Women (Sec.354D IPC r/w IT Act)"

States	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Andhra Pradesh	48	82	54	145	329
Arunachal Pradesh	0	0	0	0	0
Assam	12	18	0	1	31
Bihar	2	2	0	11	15
Chhattisgarh	11	14	3	2	30
Goa	0	0	0	1	1
Gujarat	15	11	28	26	80
Haryana	27	5	65	19	116
Himachal Pradesh	1	1	7	7	16
Jharkhand	2	0	0	0	2
Karnataka	14	4	4	1	23
Kerala	8	8	4	14	34
Madhya Pradesh	25	36	28	28	117
Maharashtra	301	398	427	388	1514
Manipur	7	3	0	3	13
Meghalaya	0	0	0	0	0
Mizoram	0	0	2	0	2

Nagaland	0	0	0	0	0
Odisha	6	7	2	0	15
Punjab	7	16	13	14	50
Rajasthan	12	30	8	12	62
Sikkim	0	0	0	0	0
Tamil Nadu	2	1	6	7	16
Telangana	27	18	37	100	182
Tripura	0	0	0	0	0
Uttar Pradesh	6	24	65	76	171
Uttarakhand	0	9	0	1	1
West Bengal	9	18	18	17	62
A&N Islands	0	0	1	1	2
Chandigarh	2	5	1	1	9
D&N Haveli and Daman & Diu	1	0	0	0	1
Delhi	9	28	17	12	66
Jammu & Kashmir	1	0	1	0	2
Ladakh	-	-	-	0	0
Lakshadweep	0	0	0	0	0
Puducherry	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**555**	**738**	**791**	**887**	**2971**

Table 4: Total number of cases in Cyber Stalking/ Cyber Bullying of Women under Sec.354D IPC r/w IT Act

The total number of crimes reported in Cyber Stalking/ Cyber Bullying of Women under Sec.354D IPC r/w IT Act, in 2017 is 555 whereas it increased to 738 in 2018, subsequently it rose to 791 reported cases in 2019 and 887 in 2020. In the past 4 years i.e from 2017-2020, 2971 cases are reported. In the year 2017, Maharashtra had the highest number of reported cases with the figures of 301 (54.23% out of the total cases of under the above head). In 2018 again Maharashtra reported the highest number of cases reported in 2017 with 398 reported cases (53.92% out of the total cases of under the above head). Subsequently in the year 2019 also, Maharashtra reported the highest number with 427 reported crimes (53.98% out of the total cases of under the above head). In the latest report of 2020 also, Maharashtra has reported the highest number of cases which is 388 (43.74% out of the total cases of under the above head). Maharashtra has been consistently topping the list with the highest number of cases related to cyber stalking / bullying of women in cyber space.
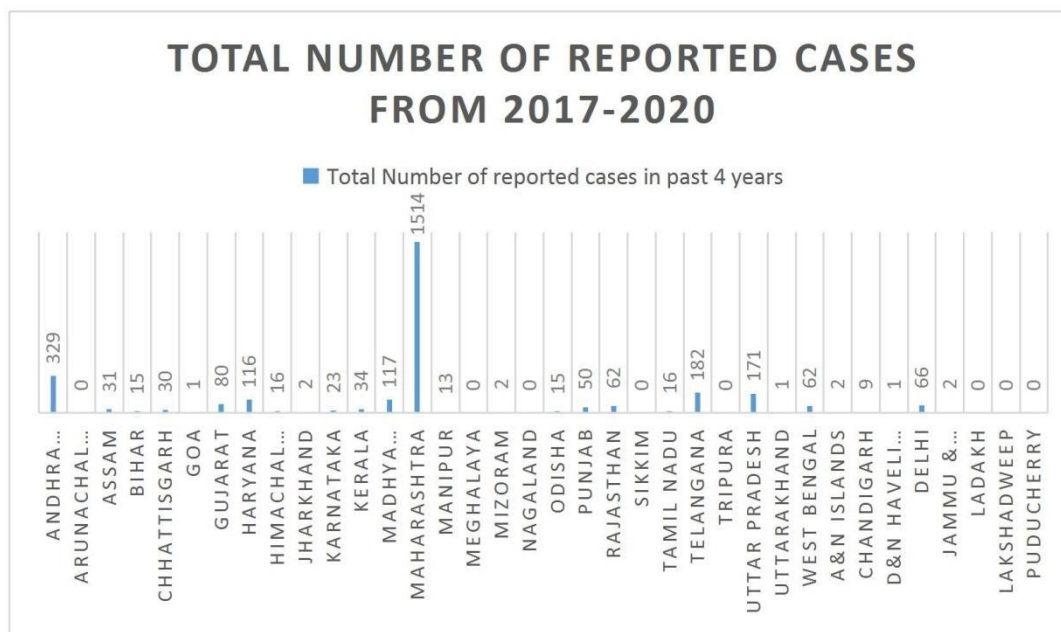
Figure 10: State-wise total number of reported of Cyber Stalking/ Cyber Bullying of Women from 2017-2020

Comparing all the four years from 2017 to 2020, Maharastra (51%) reported the highest number of cases followed by Andhra Pradesh (11%) and Telengana (6%) respectively. The above three states constituted 68% of the total crimes reported Cyber Stalking/ Cyber Bullying of Women punishable under Sec.354D IPC r/w IT Act over the past 4 years (2017-2020). Analyzing the figures of the past 4 years i.e 2017-2020, total number of cases reported from 2017-2020, the total number of reported cases have been consistently increasing.
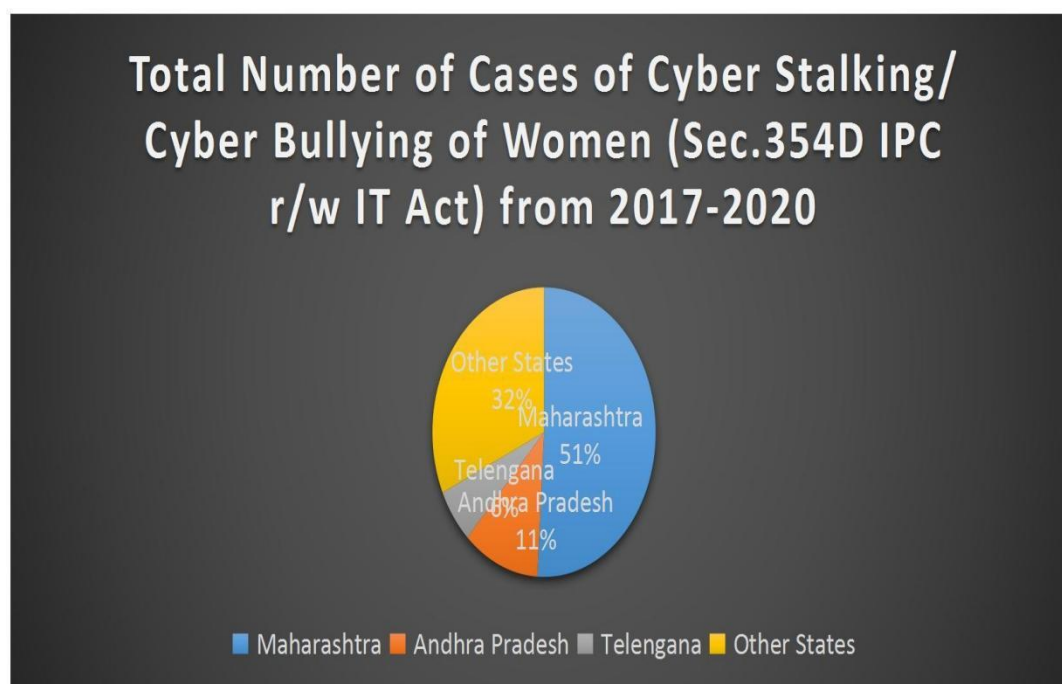

Figure 10: Top-3 States with highest number of reported cases of Cyber Stalking/ Cyber Bullying of Women from 2017-2020

6.5 "Defamation/Morphing (Sec.469 IPC r/w IPC and Indecent Representation of Women (P) Act"

States	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Andhra Pradesh	0	6	0	1	7
Arunachal Pradesh	0	0	0	0	0
Assam	2	0	0	0	2
Bihar	0	0	1	2	3
Chhattisgarh	1	0	0	0	1
Goa	0	0	0	0	0
Gujarat	0	4	4	1	9
Haryana	0	0	0	1	1
Himachal Pradesh	0	0	0	0	0
Jharkhand	0	0	0	0	0
Karnataka	0	1	0	0	1
Kerala	2	1	2	1	6
Madhya Pradesh	0	1	0	2	3
Maharashtra	1	0	2	0	3
Manipur	0	0	0	0	0
Meghalaya	0	0	0	1	1
Mizoram	0	0	0	0	0
Nagaland	0	0	0	0	0
Odisha	0	36	49	220	305
Punjab	0	0	1	0	1
Rajasthan	0	9	2	1	12
Sikkim	0	0	0	0	0
Tamil Nadu	18	0	0	17	35
Telangana	0	0	0	1	1
Tripura	0	0	0	0	0
Uttar Pradesh	0	0	0	0	0
Uttarakhand	0	2	0	0	2
West Bengal	25	0	0	1	26

A&N Islands	0	0	0	0	0
Chandigarh	0	0	0	0	0
D&N Haveli and Daman & Diu	0	0	0	0	0
Delhi	0	0	0	0	0
Jammu & Kashmir	1	2	0	2	5
Ladakh	-	-	-	0	0
Lakshadweep	0	0	0	0	0
Puducherry	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**50**	**62**	**61**	**251**	**424**

Table 5: Total number of cases of Defamation/Morphing (Sec.469 IPC r/w IPC and Indecent Representation of Women (P) Act

The total number of crimes reported in Defamation/Morphing (Sec.469 IPC r/w IPC and Indecent Representation of Women (P) Act, in 2017 is 50 which got increased to 62 in the year 2018, subsequently it rose to 61 reported cases in 2019 and suddenly there was a high rise to 251 number of cases reported in 2020. In the past 4 years i.e from 2017-2020, 424 cases are reported. In the year 2017, West Bengal had the highest number of reported cases with the figures of 25 (50.00% out of the total cases of under the above head).

Odisha reported the highest number of cases reported in 2018 with 36 reported cases (58.06% out of the total cases of under the above head). Subsequently in the year 2019, Odisha again reported the highest number with 49 reported cases (80.32% out of the total cases of under the above head). In the latest report of 2020 also, Odisha has reported the highest number of cases which is 220 (87.64% out of the total cases of under the above head). Odisha has been consistently been topping the list of defamation / morphing since 2018-2020.
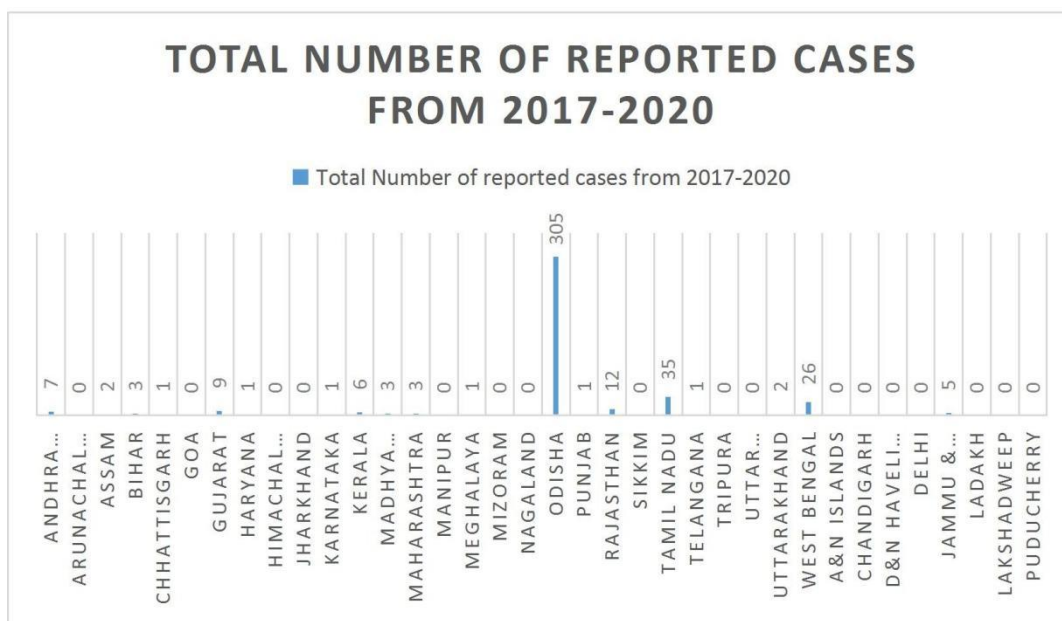
Figure 11: State-wise total number of reported cases of Defamation/Morphing of women from 2017-2020

Comparing all the four years from 2017 to 2020, Odisha (72%) reported the highest number of cases followed by Tamil Nadu (8%) and West Bengal (6%) respectively. The above three states constituted 86% of the total crimes reported Defamation/Morphing (Sec.469 IPC r/w IPC and Indecent Representation of Women (P) Act over the past 4 years (2017-2020). Analyzing the figures of the past 4 years i.e 2017-2020, total number of cases reported has been consistently increasing from the time span of 2017-2020.
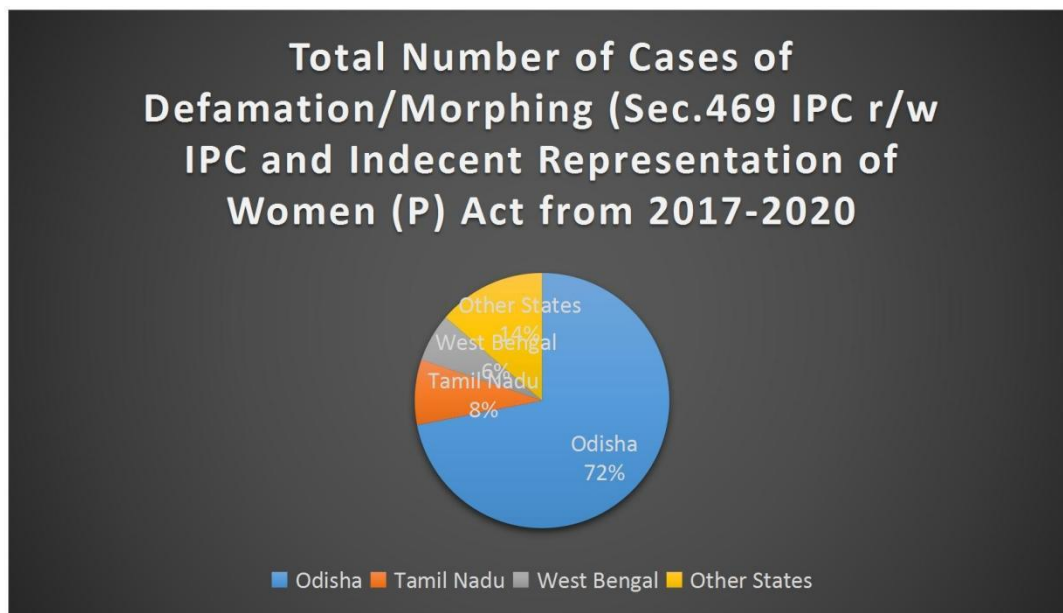

Figure 12: Top-3 States with highest number of reported cases of Defamation/Morphing of women from 2017-2020

6.6 "Fake Profile (IT Act r/w IPC/SLL)"

States	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Andhra Pradesh	3	16	2	22	43
Arunachal Pradesh	0	0	0	0	0
Assam	21	94	173	182	470
Bihar	0	1	0	4	5
Chhattisgarh	3	0	0	2	5
Goa	0	0	0	0	0
Gujarat	6	6	5	2	19
Haryana	5	4	3	16	28
Himachal Pradesh	14	6	6	7	33

Jharkhand	0	0	2	0	2
Karnataka	9	3	1	1	14
Kerala	4	8	13	5	30
Madhya Pradesh	1	0	0	2	3
Maharashtra	9	13	33	15	70
Manipur	1	0	0	0	1
Meghalaya	0	0	0	0	0
Mizoram	1	0	0	0	1
Nagaland	0	1	0	0	1
Odisha	0	0	0	13	13
Punjab	8	5	1	18	32
Rajasthan	5	6	10	3	24
Sikkim	0	0	0	0	0
Tamil Nadu	0	1	7	17	25
Telangana	3	12	2	14	31
Tripura	0	1	0	1	2
Uttar Pradesh	6	6	21	13	46
Uttarakhand	18	13	1	4	36
West Bengal	26	5	5	7	43
A&N Islands	0	0	0	0	0

Chandigarh	0	0	0	0	0
D&N Haveli and Daman & Diu	0	0	0	0	0
Delhi	4	5	2	5	16
Jammu & Kashmir	0	1	2	1	4
Ladakh	0	0	0	0	0
Lakshadweep	0	0	0	0	0
Puducherry	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**147**	**207**	**289**	**354**	**997**

Table 6: Total number of cases of fake profile

The total number of crimes reported in creating fake profile in 2017 is 147 whereas it reduced to 207 in 2018, subsequently it was against 289 reported cases in 2019 and it further increased to 354 in 2020. In the past 4 years i.e from 2017-2020, 997 cases are reported Fake Profile under IT Act r/w IPC/SLL. In the year 2017, West Bengal had the highest number of reported cases with the figures of 26 (17.68% out of the total cases of under the above head). Assam reported the highest number of cases reported in 2018 with 94 reported cases (45.41% out of the total cases of under the above head). Subsequently in the year 2019, again Assam reported the highest number of cases with 173 reported crimes (59.86% out of the total cases of under the above head). In the latest report of 2020, Telengana has reported the highest number of cases which is 182 (51.41% out of the total cases of under the above head).
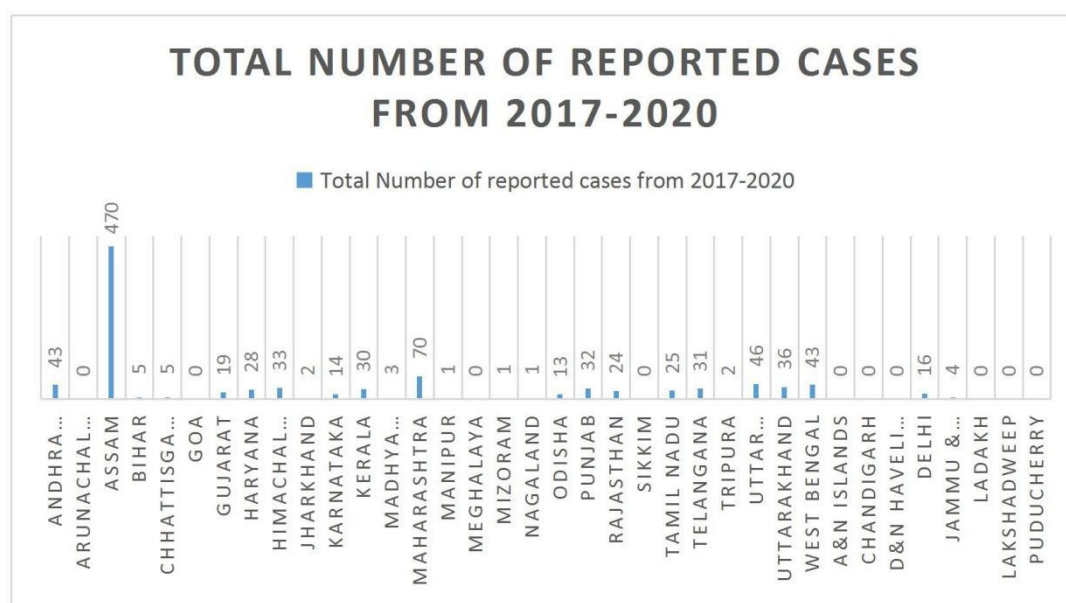

Figure 13: State-wise total number of reported cases of fake profile of women from 2017-2020

Comparing all the four years from 2017 to 2020, Assam (47%) reported the highest number of cases followed by Maharashtra (7%) and Uttar Pradesh (5%) respectively. The above three states constituted 59% of the total crimes reported Fake Profile under IT Act r/w IPC/SLL. Analyzing the figures of the past 4 years i.e 2017-2020, total number of cases are rising.
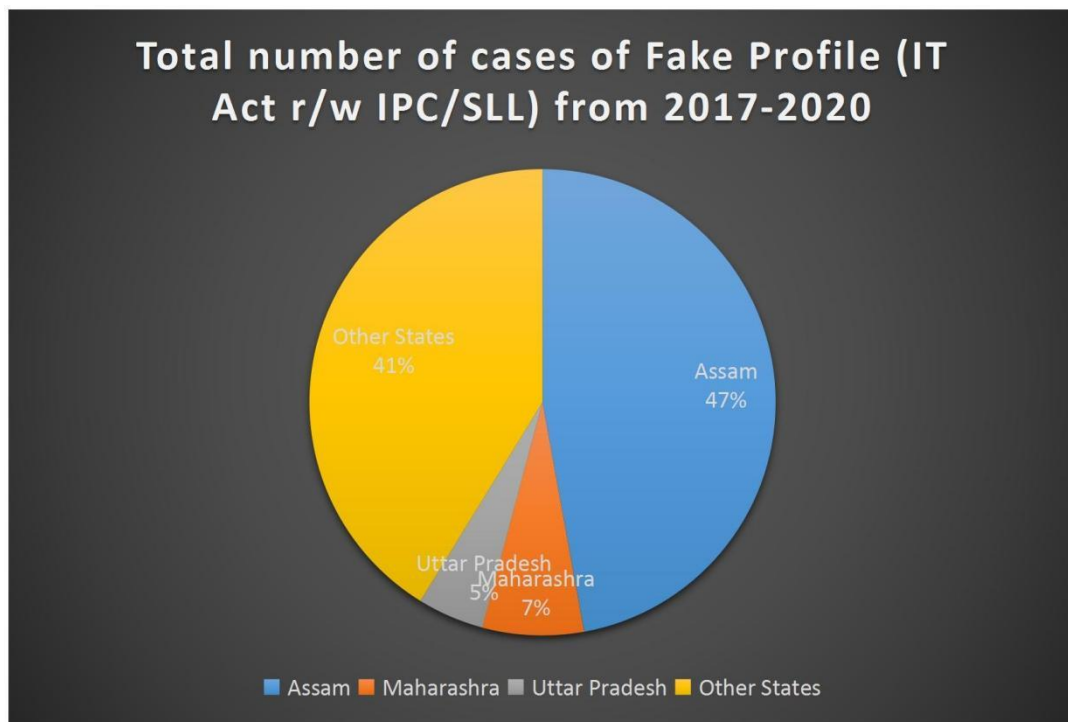
Figure 14: Top-3 States with highest number of reported cases of fake profile of women from 2017-2020

7. REASONS FOR INCREASING CYBER CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN IN INDIA

a. **Easier to commit comparative to other physical crimes:** Generally when we talk about crimes, we think about physical crimes or violent crimes that involves some kind of physical injury. To commit such a crime we generally need to do some physical labour, we need to plan and execute such an act using a weapon. On the other hand cyber crimes can be committed with the help of as simple and common device like a mobile phone, a device which each and everyone has access to in the present world. So practically speaking it is much more easier to commit a cyber crime against women owing to geographical location, anonymity, no physical activity involved.

b. **Negligence of Users:** When we ask ourselves, how many of us actually read the agreement clauses of various apps and websites while we sign up on them, most of us would answer it negative. We often unknowingly give applications and virus permission to enter our own electronic devices and breach our right to privacy. the intimate moments,etc.

c. **Mishandling of Computer Resources:** We tend to keep same or similar passwords on one or multiple sites as a result of which if someone can crack the code of any one of the application, then all the other applications can be easily targeted. Knowingly or unknowingly we save personal and private pictures or videos in our devices and even a slightest part of negligence on our part lands us in great problem like telling our passwords to close friends, recording intimate moments, etc.

d. **Lack of Awareness about cyber crimes:** Most of users of cyber space are unaware about the laws regarding cyber space and have no idea what recourse to take when

there is a breach of their right. The female users tend to easy fall in prey of predators and then get victims of frauds, sextortion, etc. Many of the victims also commit suicide because of unawareness of legal recourse in case their rights are infringed on cyber space. This is a major reason for women easily getting cheated by the cheaters.

e. **Storing of Unlimited Data in Limited Space:** We tend to store hefty data in a limited space. So, due to lack of much knowledge about the coding and other technical terms, once the phone gets DE-encrypted or decoded, that leads to complete access to all the data by the hackers and women get easily victimized by such an act.

f. **Women being Vulnerable and Easy Targets:** Due to delicacy , innocence and kindness, women in general easily fall into the prey of the deceiver. Since time immemorial women have been classified vulnerable group. This leads to predators making easy targets to women.

g. **Awareness to report Cyber Crime Cases:** Increasing number of cyber crimes reporting cases may be another reason to have contributed in increasing number of cyber crimes against women in India.

h. **Male Percentage on Social Media is more than women:** According to a report[5], the total percentage of men is 73% on one of the social media site, Instagram whereas the female ratio is 27% in the year 2021 in India. This can be another reason of women being the target of large scale of male members on these platforms as strictly going by the patriarchal mindset even still today many of the male and men think that women and girls shouldn't be using the social media sites. Hence in the name of criticism or just to have fun, they tend to abuse the women on these social media networking sites. What they don't understand is it's adverse effect on the mental health of such women and girls.

i. **Erasing from Internet is Impossible:** In this digitized world, something that is uploaded on the web, it is next to impossible to remove it completely from the web. So before capturing, saving or uploading any content on the web, we should be very careful so to take maximum precautionary measures to safeguard ourselves.

8. MEASURES TO PREVENT WOMEN BEING VICTIMIZED OF CYBER CRIMES

Cyber Crime Prevention Against Women and Children (CCPWC) was constituted by The Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India to make a effective road map to safeguard women and children from cyber crimes.[6] Cyber crime Prevention against Women and Children) Scheme was formulated after the discussions and deliberations made by the committed constituted above. Some of the basic features of this scheme are:-

- Rs. 87.12 Crore has been granted to the States and the Union Territories for setting up of Cyber Forensic training Labs. This would also include the costing of hiring of Junior Cyber forensic consultant for operation of lab in every State and Union Territory.

- Rs. 6 crore is granted to the States and Union Territories for training 40500 members belonging to the profession of criminal justice administration like police, prosecutors and Judicial Officers by the end of 31st March 2020. How far this scheme is successful in India is again a subject matter of study.

- Believing that cyber space can be the best place to spread awareness against crimes on cyber space, a Twitter handle "CyberDost"

launched was launched to make tweets on cyber crime Awareness.

- Proposal to set up Centre for Excellence for research and development in this field was proposed in order to prevention & control Cyber crimes.

- The various components of the scheme includes Online Cyber crime reporting Unit, Forensic Unit, Capacity Building Unit, Research & development Unit and Awareness Creation Unit.

8.1 Preventive Measures on Individual Level to Decrease Cyber Crimes in India

i. **Awareness of Cyber Crimes:** It's very important for a user of a device to first know it well and then use it. In the light of the same awareness regarding the different types of cyber crimes is very important for women and girls. Even female children starting from the schools should be made aware of the cyber crimes because after the outbreak of the covid-19 pandemic even the children had online classes and they too are very well versed with these technologies and it's very easy to deceive female children for passwords, suicides through games, child pornography,etc.

ii. **Being Alert & Applying Reasonableness on Web:** "Prevention is better than cure." So, all the women must take due preventive steps to safeguard themselves from cyber crimes. Some of the basic steps can be:

A. Keeping every device password protected.

B. Not sharing Passwords/One Time Passwords with anyone.

C. Keeping separate passwords for various sites and devices.

D. Staying alert before clicking on any

random links, like texts which reads "Hey you just won 5 lakh rupees".

E. Not sharing your bank and other account details on random platforms.

F. Not trusting or easily getting deceived by strangers on social media sites.

G. Not sharing intimate or private pictures with strangers.

H. Using Firewalls as a safety measure.

I. Not meeting online acquaintances all alone.

J. Don't leave your webcam connected.

K. Securing Devices with anti-virus softwares.

9. CONCLUSION

From the statistical analysis of the cyber crimes committed against women over a span of 4 years from 2017 to 2020, it is clearly evident that the cyber crimes against women are increasing day by day. Women were already being subjected to many gender specific crimes since a long period of time and now in addition to that they are being victims of these new age cyber crimes too. The biggest problem with cyber crimes is that it's far way more difficult to tackle than conventional crimes because this goes beyond the borders of the states and nations. Also each and every one has some or the other electronic devices. It is easier for offenders to commit cyber crimes even being miles apart from the victim. In that case self awareness among females and women is also very important so as to not to make themselves contribute towards becoming a victim. There is a severe lack of awareness among women about the cyber laws and what to do further when a person becomes a victim of cyber crime. This leads to mental agony and has many a times led to suicide attempts by victims too. So, awareness of cyber laws is very important for women not just to avoid becoming a victim of such cyber crimes but also reporting of cyber crimes. Another very important dimension is even today the procedure after filing up of a cyber crime

follows the very conventional methods of investigation. New forms of crime needs newer ways to tackle them too which is strongly recommended by the author. Improving cyber security by the Government and other authorized agencies and institutions is the need of the hour. Cyber patrolling, awareness, training & capacity building of investigators can definitely help in curving the menace of cyber crimes.

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