Research Paper

Motives and Myths Behind Rape in India

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ABSTRACT

Rape is a kind of sexual assault that usually involves sexual intercourse or other forms of sexual penetration and is carried out without consent. Rape myths are prejudicial, stereotyped and false beliefs about sexual assaults, rapists, and rape victims. The purpose of the study is to look through newspaper archives over the past one year and examine the various motives and factors influencing rape. By finding the commonality in the motives of rape and the reason behind why rapists behave this way, effective measures can be taken to prevent such behaviours in the future. The patterns found in the factors influencing rape can be used to disapprove the rape myths. The results show that the most common motive for rape in revenge. There are multiple factors that influence rape. The results of this study can be useful for both the police department as well as the forensic department.

Keywords: *Rape, Motive, Factors, Myths, Victims, Perpetrators*

If my daughter or sister engaged in pre-marital activities and disgraced herself and allowed herself to lose face and character by doing such things, I would most certainly ... put petrol on her and set her alight. AP Singh, lawyer for those convicted of the rape and murder of *India's Daughter (BBC News, March 2015; Udwin 2015)*

Rape is a kind of sexual assault that usually involves sexual intercourse or other forms of sexual penetration. Rape is carried out without consent. This act can be carried out by physical force, abuse of authority or against someone who is unconscious, incapacitated and incapable of giving valid consent. According to the Delhi Police, five women were raped and eight were molested every day on an average in Delhi in 2018. (India Today, 2019). Only 2% of the sexual assault cases in India get reported. (Palermo et al. 2013). There are mainly three types of rape which are anger rape, power assertive rape and sadistic rape. (Nicholas Groth, 1979). According to WHO, the primary factors that lead to the act of sexual violence against women, including rape, are strong beliefs in family honour and sexual purity, attitudes of male sexual privilege and weak laws for acts involving sexual violence.

According to the Indian Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2013, a man is said to commit "rape" if he:— (a) penetrates his penis, to any extent, into the vagina, mouth, urethra or anus of a woman or makes her to do so with him or any other person; or (b) inserts, to any extent,

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any object or a part of the body, not being the penis, into the vagina, the urethra or anus of a woman or makes her to do so with him or any other person; or (c) manipulates any part of the body of a woman so as to cause penetration into the vagina, urethra, anus or any part of body of such woman or makes her to do so with him or any other person; or (d) applies his mouth to the vagina, anus, urethra of a woman or makes her to do so with him or any other person. According to the annual report of National Crime Records Bureau 2013, rape is the fourth most serious crime in India.

Prejudiced, stereotyped and false beliefs about sexual assaults, rapists, and rape victims are known as rape myths. They often create a feeling of hostility toward victims and affect the decisions taken by the criminal prosecution (Burt & Martha, 1980). Blaming and shaming of the victim, questioning of the victim's honesty, and various other problems are caused due to these false myths. Rape myths can lead to the victimization and stigmatisation of the victim. It can cause the victim to blame themselves, thereby causing psychological issues and failure to report the rape. (Hockkett et. al, 2015).

Aim
To look into the motives and various factors (age, gender & marital status of the victim, details of the perpetrator, caste, state, time & exact location of the rape, weapons used, whether they knew the perpetrators and whether they survived or not) that influence rape and to examine various rape myths based on the common patterns found.

Objectives of the Study
- To find the motives of rape using newspaper archives in India
- To study the various factors (age, gender, location, time, medium, caste etc.) causing rape in India
- To find the similarity in the factors of rape across India
- To study the various rape myths commonly present and to examine the accuracy behind the myths using the factors.

Research Design
This is a descriptive study. The research design used is content analysis. The study primarily depended on available secondary data.

Procedure
The data was collected by using newspaper archives of two major national newspapers, The Hindu and the Times of India. The archives from August 2018 to August 2019 were examined. The sources were carefully studied and the various themes were coded onto an excel sheet. The different themes were details of the perpetrators (age, occupation, their relation with the victim), the type of rape, the age of the victim, the gender of the victim, the state in which the rape was committed, the exact location of the crime, the time when the crime was committed, any mediums that were used, the caste of the victim, whether the victim survived or not, the marital status of the victim and whether the perpetrator was someone the victim knew A pilot study was done using newspaper archives of The Hindu in the month of January 2019.

RESULTS

Figure 1: The following figure shows the Motives of the Rape

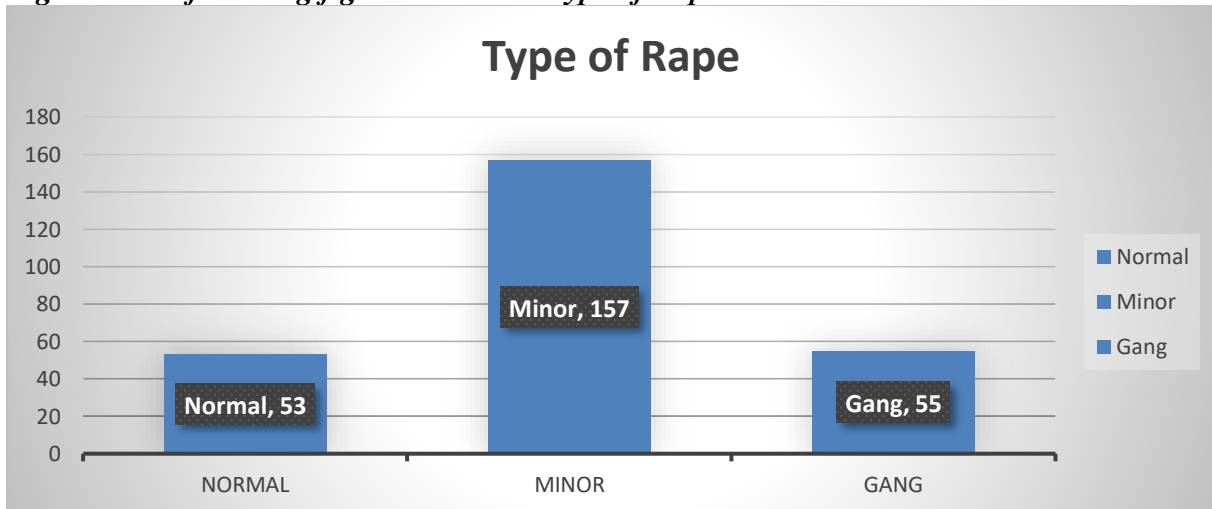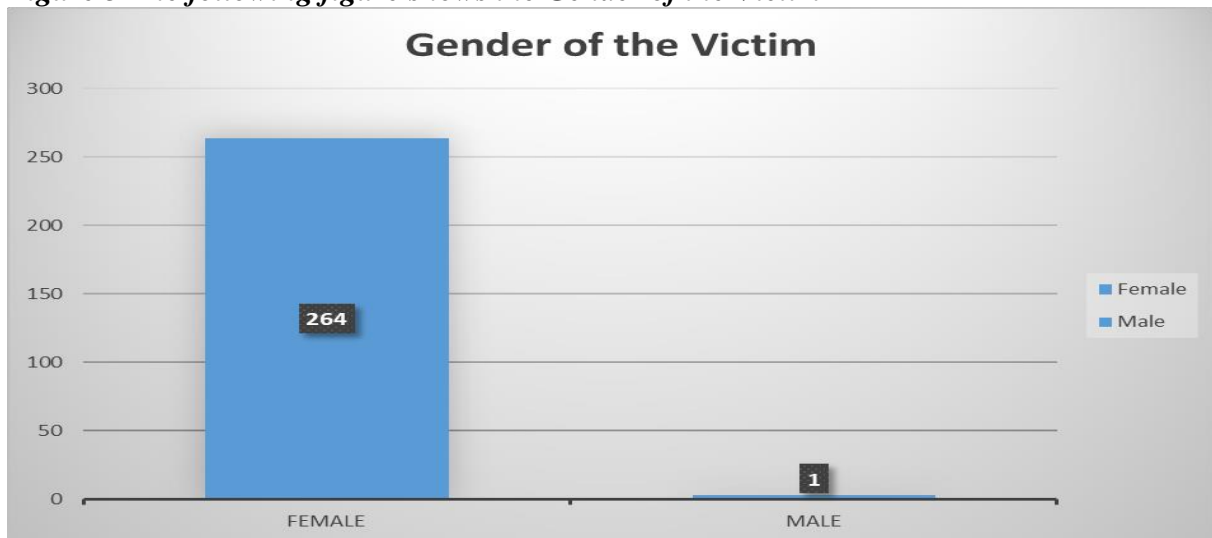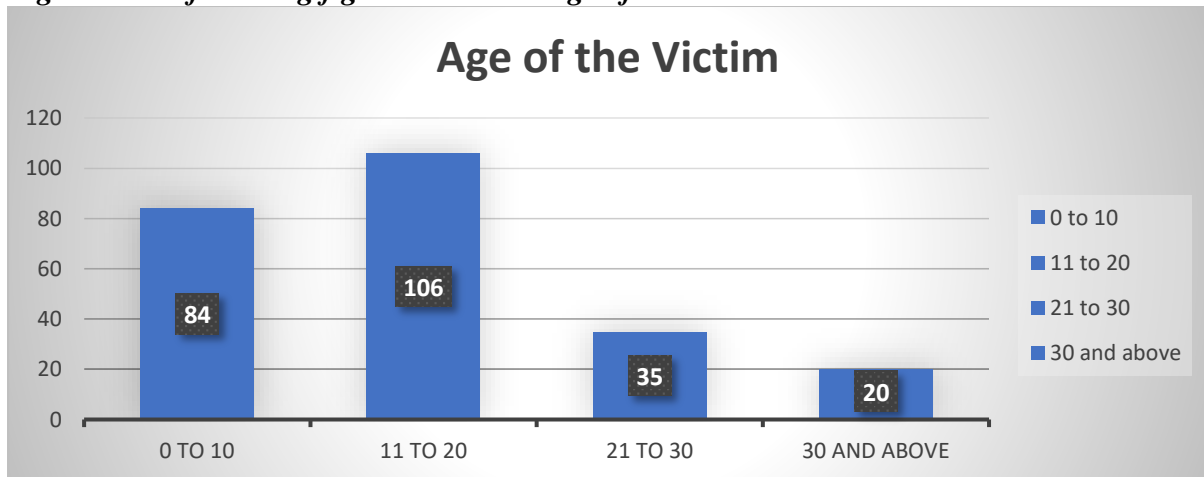*Figure 2 The following figure shows the Type of Rape.*

Figure 3 The following figure shows the Gender of the Victim

The following figure contradicts the rape myth, men don't get raped.

Figure 4 The following figure shows the Age of the Victim.

The following figure contradicts the rape myth only young, 'attractive' women and girls, who flirt and wear 'revealing' clothes, are raped.

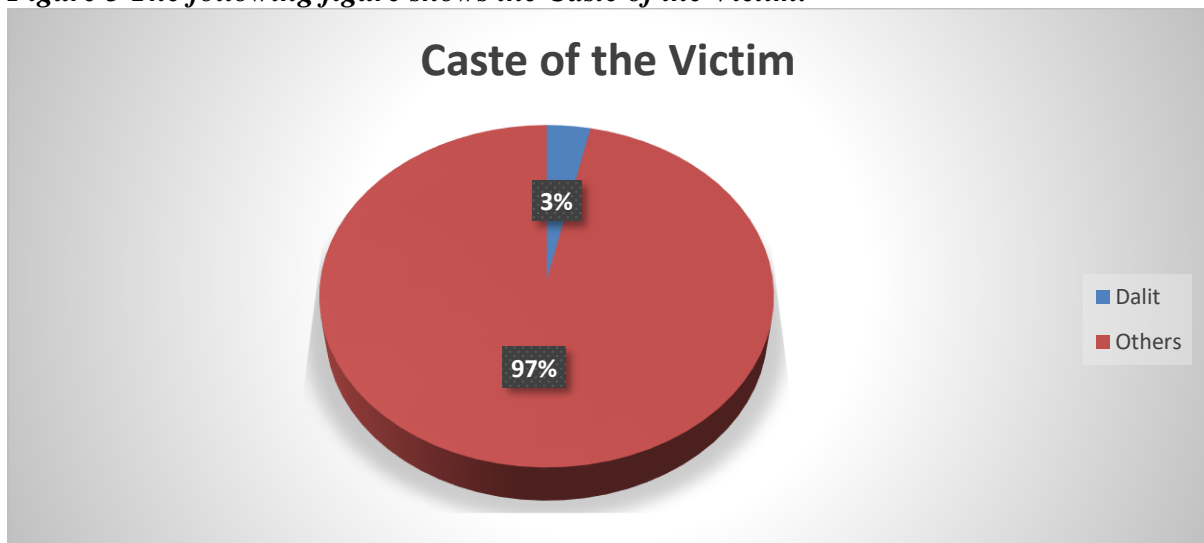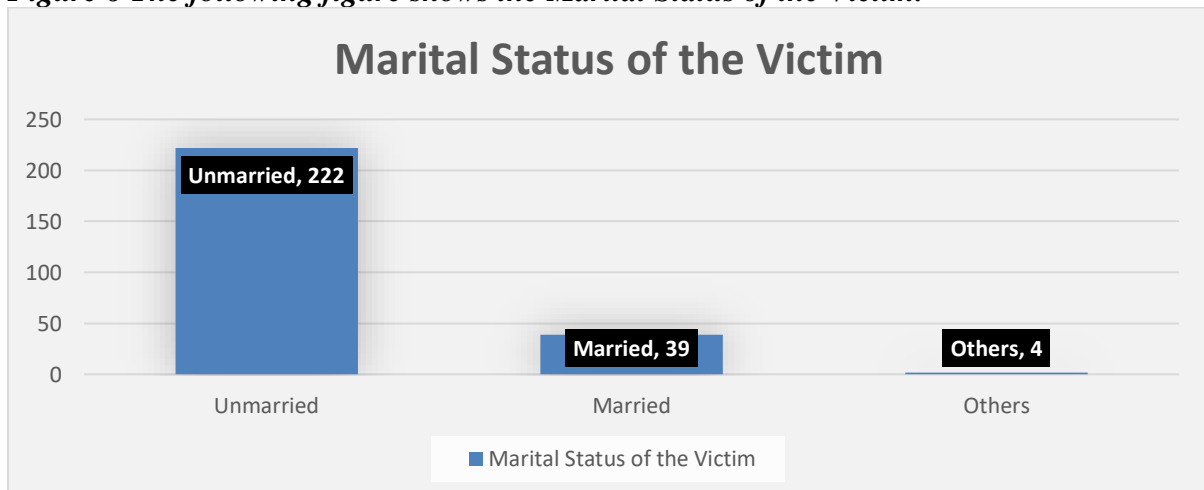*Figure 5 The following figure shows the Caste of the Victim.*

Figure 6 The following figure shows the Marital Status of the Victim.

Figure 7 The following figure depicts the survival rate of the victim.
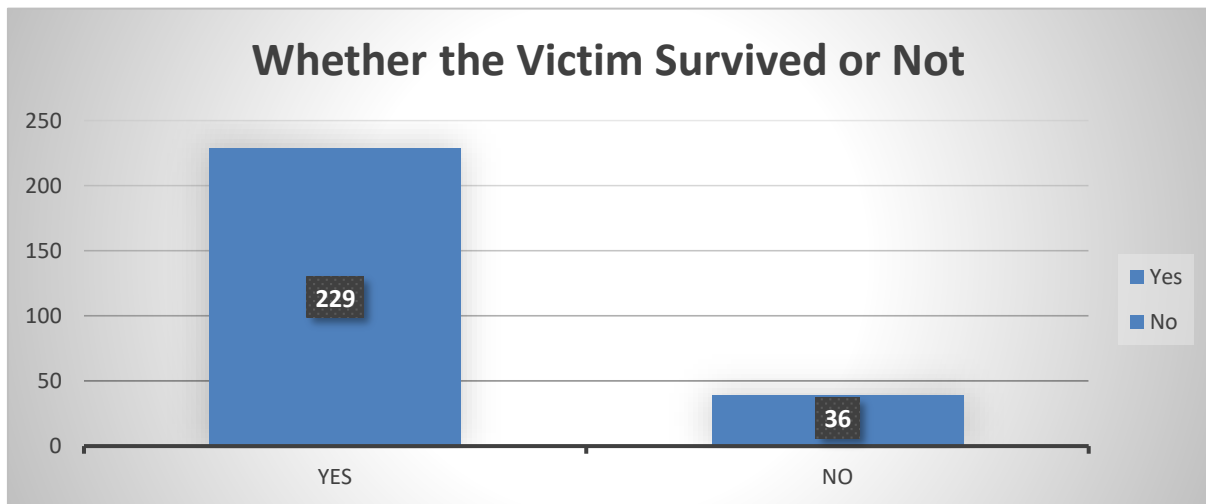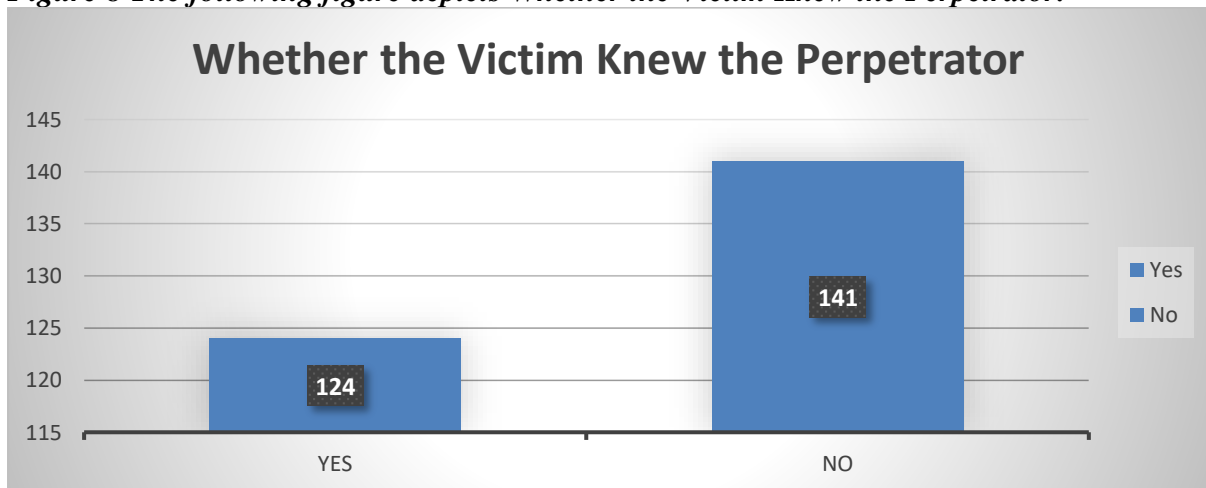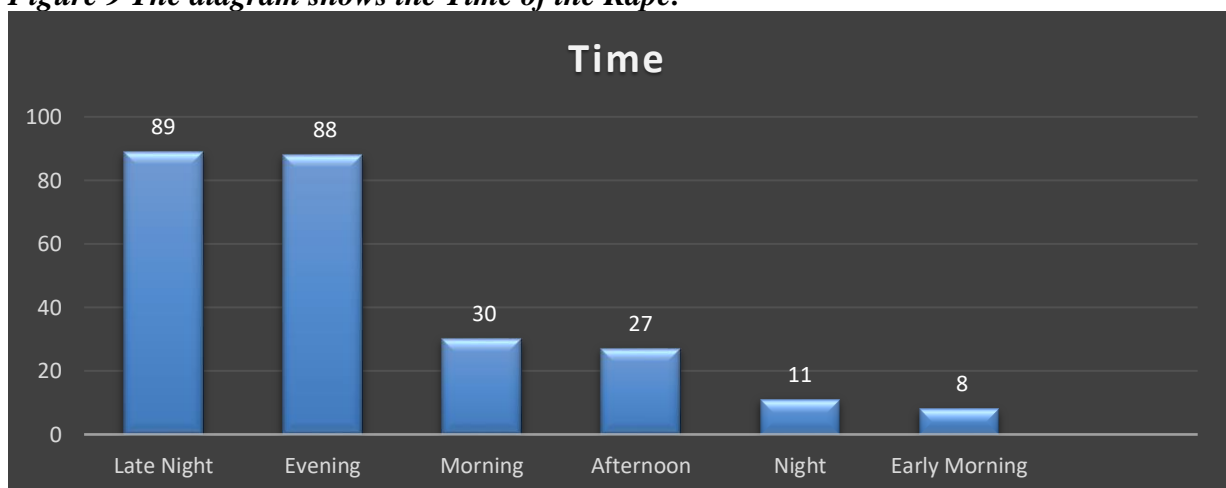

Figure 8 The following figure depicts Whether the Victim Knew the Perpetrator.

The following figure contradicts the rape myth, women are most likely to be raped by strangers.

Figure 9 The diagram shows the Time of the Rape.

The following figure contradicts the rape myth, women are most likely to be raped after dark so women shouldn't go out alone at night.

Figure 10 The following figure shows the Exact Location of the Rape.

Location
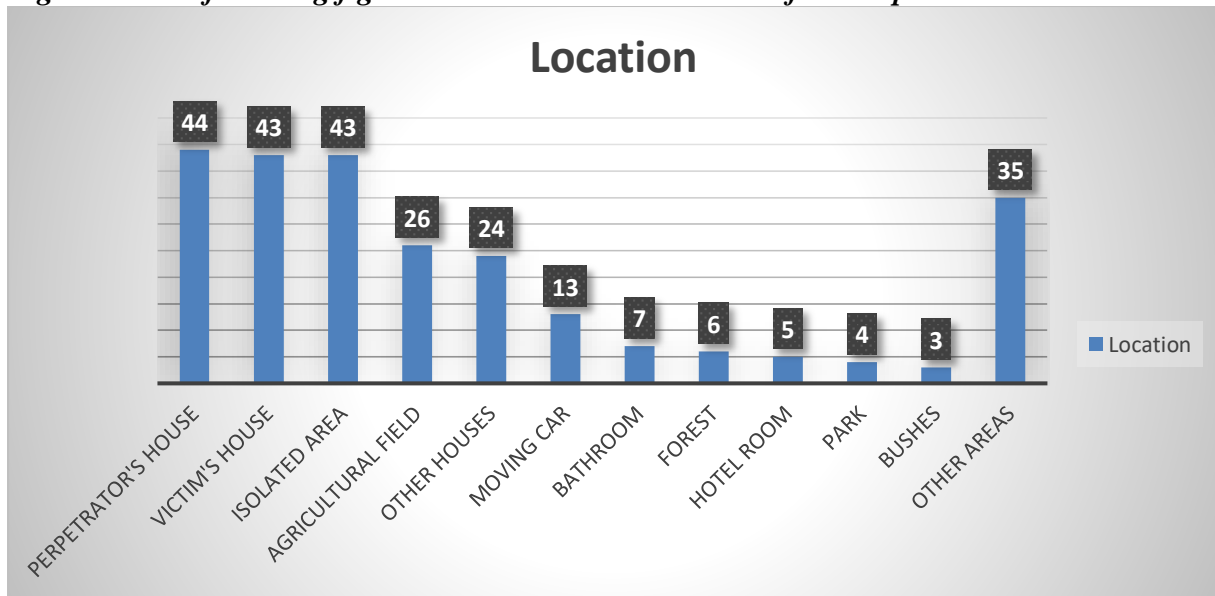
The following figure contradicts the rape myth, sexual assaults most often occur in public or outdoors.

Figure 11 The following figure shows the State of the Rape.

State

Figure 12 The following figure shows the Jobs of the Perpetrators

Job of Perpetrator

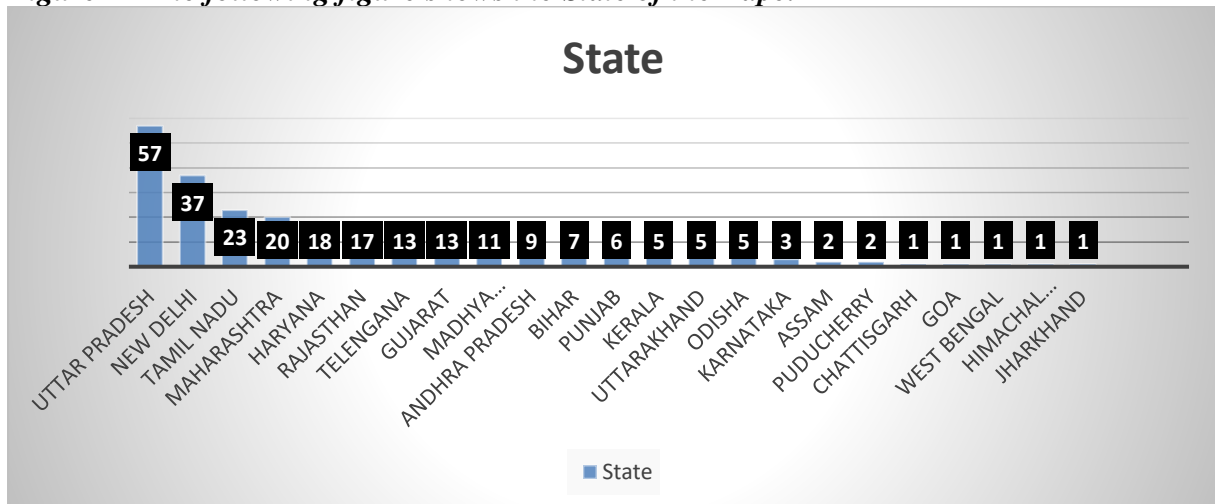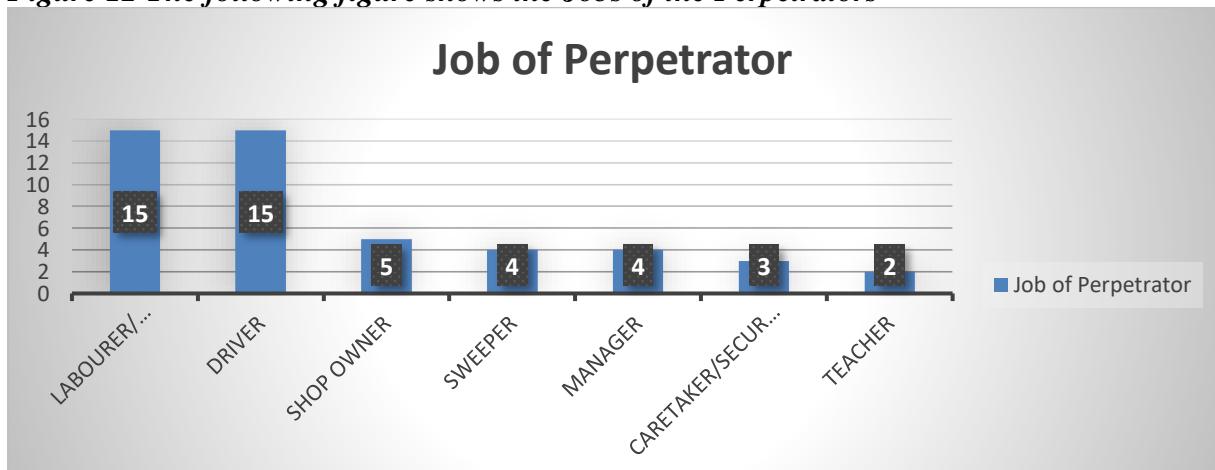*Figure 13 The following figure shows the Age Range of the Perpetrators.*
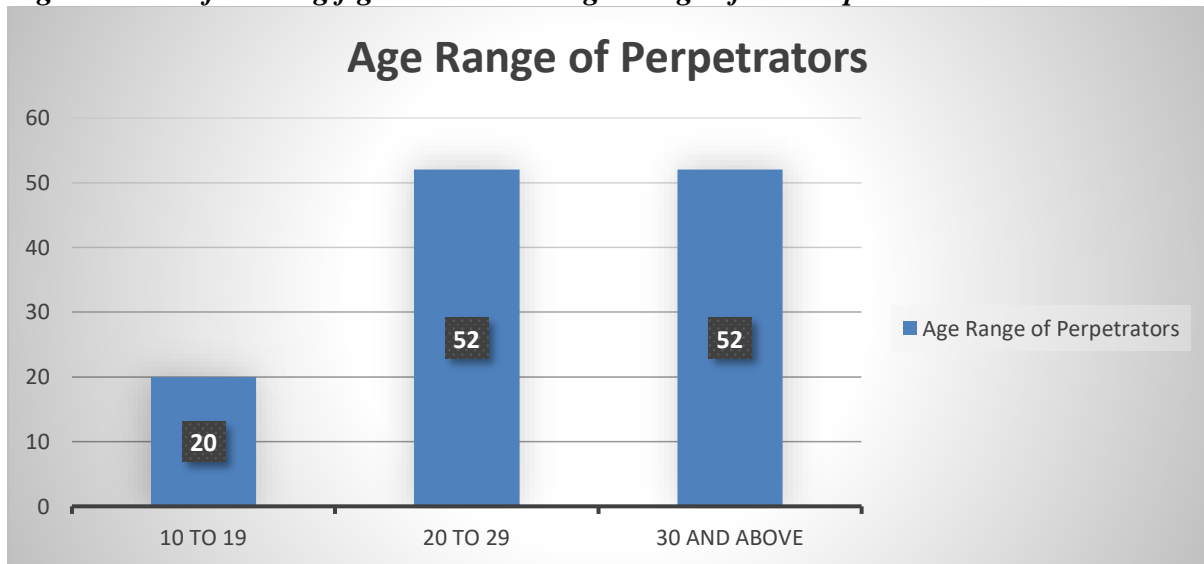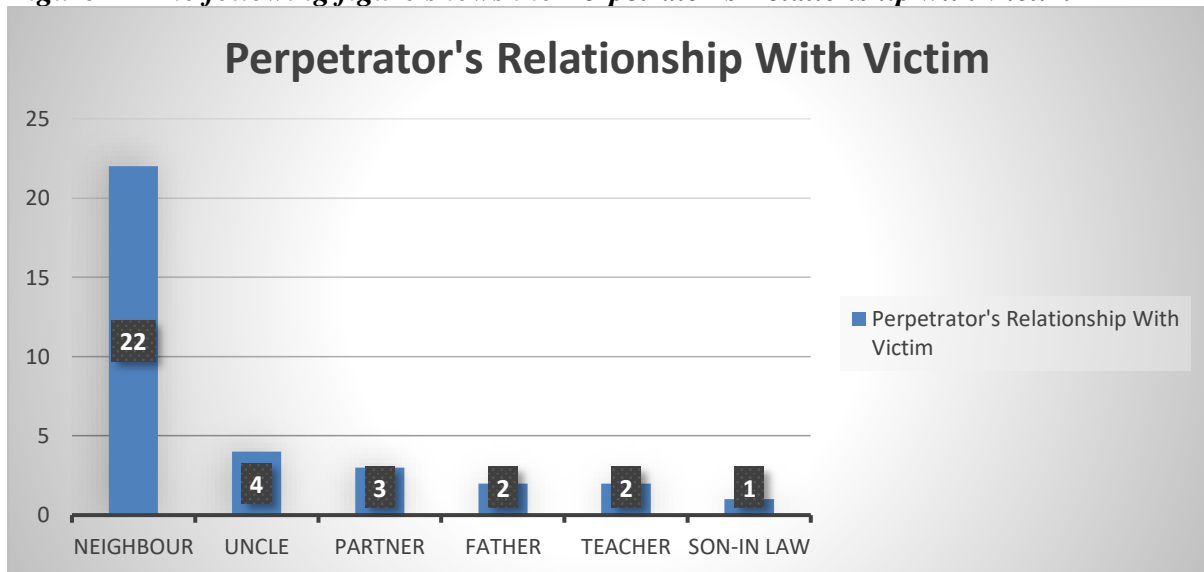

Figure 14 The following figure shows the Perpetrator's Relationship with Victim

DISCUSSION

From the 265 reported rape cases that were analysed, 36 of the cases mentioned the motive of the perpetrators. Vengeful behaviour is mainly motived by authority, desire for any kind of status or by power. They usually do it to not lose any kind of honour that they hold in society (McKee, 2008). Revenge is seen as a way to signal to others that one is strong and should not be messed with. If someone who has harmed you is related to another person, you can seek revenge on that person, even if you have never had any previous contact with them. (Vernimmen, 2019). The second motive was that the victim was alone. Since there was no one around the victim, there are very less chances of getting caught. Decreased chances of someone to monitor and capture a perpetrator can act as a motive for them to commit sexual assault and rape. Broken CCTV cameras as well as improper security can further aid to this motive. This is a threat to women safety as one cannot roam around freely at any time of the day without getting cautious and worried. In most of the cases, the victim was killed after the rape was committed to make sure that the perpetrator stays anonymous. In UP, women stranded alone at night can dial 112 and the police will help them reach home

safely. (The New Indian Express, 2019) The third motive was the influence of alcohol. In most cases, the perpetrator was the one under the influence of alcohol. The direct effect theory states that alcohol may have a direct effect on the sexual or the aggressive centres of the brain. (Rada, 1975). Alcohol has a psychopharmacological effect as it reduces inhibitions, it impairs judgements and also reduces the ability of the person to interpret cues. Although this does not justify the actions of the perpetrator.

Out of 265 cases, 157 of the cases are minor rape cases. 1.6 in 100,000 minors, that is about 7200 are raped every year in India (Pandey,2013). 59% of the cases that were examined were minor rape cases, most of the minors being below the age of 12. 17,557 minor rape cases were reported in 2017 (News18, 2019). 99% of the victims of the rape cases that are reported are females. Only one case was reported in the newspaper where the victim was a boy. The lower number of rape cases involving a male victim can be due to the fact that such cases do not get reported much as there is still a stigma surrounding such cases, especially in a society that has a strong masculine custom. The maximum number of victims fall between the age range of 11-20. Out of the 265 cases, in 106 cases, the victim's age range fall between this. In the cases where the caste was mentioned, the victim was of the Dalit caste. Dalits in the 21st Century continue to suffer social oppression and discrimination (News18, 2018). Out of the 265 cases, the victim survived in 229 of them. Even though the victim survived, they are left with never ending trauma about their dreadful experience. This can lead to disturbing psychological conditions such as depression, panic attacks and PTSD. In 43.5% of the rape cases in Delhi, there was an involvement of a family member or a friend of the victim (Times of India, 2019).

The next theme that was looked into was Whether the Perpetrator was someone the Victim knew. The results show that out of the 265 cases, in 141 of them, the perpetrator was a complete stranger. In 124 of the cases that is in 47% of the cases, the victim knew who the perpetrator was. In 22 of the cases, the perpetrator was the victim's neighbour. In 43.5% of the rape cases in Delhi, there was an involvement of a family member or a friend of the victim (Times of India, 2019). From the total 265 cases, 89 of the cases happened during late night that is after 10pm and 88 of the cases happened in the evening, that is from 4pm to 7pm. Majority of the rape crimes happen in either the perpetrators' houses, the victims' houses or any isolated or secluded areas. Out of the 265 cases, 44 cases happened in the perpetrators' houses, 43 of the cases happened in the victims' houses and 43 of the cases happened in secluded or remote areas. 5% of the cases happened in a moving car, where the victim was either walking on the road or in her house, when they were kidnapped, put into a moving car, raped and then they were dumped in an isolated area. Other significant locations included hotel rooms, bathrooms, bushes, parks and forests. The National Crime Records Bureau ranks Uttar Pradesh as the worst in terms of women security and Madhya Pradesh as the state where rape is most widespread (NCRB, 2018).

Most of the perpetrators had daily wage jobs and small sized jobs. Majority of the perpetrators were workers or drivers. Some of the perpetrators were sweepers and security guards. When it comes to the age range, a vast majority of the perpetrators fall in the age range of 20 to 29. Surprisingly, in 20 of the cases, the perpetrator was a minor. Most of the cases didn't have a specific medium which was used by the perpetrators. It was also observed that in cases where the perpetrator is some sort of a shop owner, the rape took place in the shop when the victim came to purchase something. In the cases that did have the influence of an external medium, the most common ones are iron rod, alcohol, drugs, and hit with something tough (Rock/Brick).

The myth, women are most likely to be raped after dark was proven wrong as according to the study, there are almost equal number of rape cases committed in the evening and late at night. The rape myth, women are most likely to be raped by strangers was proved wrong by this study as in 124 of the cases, the perpetrator was someone the victim knew personally. The rape myth only young, 'attractive' women and girls, who flirt and wear 'revealing' clothes, are raped, was proved wrong according to the study, as victims of all age groups are present. The rape myth, men don't get raped is proved wrong according to the study. Even though only one male victim rape case was reported, it is significant enough to show that men do get raped. The rape myth, sexual assaults most often occur in public or outdoors, is proved wrong by this study. Most of the rapes were committed in the perpetrators or the victims' house, which shows that not all sexual assaults or rape happen in the public or the outdoors. The rape myth, it is impossible to rape one's wife or intimate partner is proved wrong by this study. In some of the cases that were examined, it is seen that the person whom the victim has an extra marital affair with or someone whom the victim met online and then established a relationship with them turned out to be the perpetrator who committed the rape later.

CONCLUSION

The main focus of the present study was to find the motives behind rape. Number of rape cases committed over the years have increased. From the reported cases that were analysed, it was seen that the main motive for rape is revenge. Other motives include the victim was alone, alcohol, the victim did not say no, blackmail and the influence of pornography. It was observed that the trends were consistent throughout the year. The main themes found in this study were details of the perpetrators, the type of rape, the age of the victim, the gender of the victim, the state in which the rape was committed, the exact location of the crime, the time when the crime was committed, any mediums that were used, the caste of the victim, whether the victim survived or not, the marital status of the victim and whether the perpetrator was someone the victim knew. Various rape myths were also proved wrong using the themes. The present study concludes the importance of sex education is both men and women and how we should stop considering rape as a stigma and stop attributing the blame to the victims. Both the rapists and rape victims should be provided proper therapy and counselling sessions for their betterment.

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