

**Atrocities  
against  
Women  
A Study of  
Dowry Torture  
and  
Sexual Violence  
in Orissa**

**A Government of India  
(Department of Women  
And Child Development)  
funded Sankalp Study**

**The views expressed in the report is that of the Project Director and not of the Department of Women and Child Development, Government of India, which has funded the study**

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## PREFACE

The incidence of atrocities against women has been increasing alarmingly in the country. Orissa is no exception to this trend. Although, the rate of crime committed against women in Orissa is less compared to other States and Union Territories, the rate of total cognisable crimes in the State is close to the All-India average.

The atrocities against women is directly linked to subjugation, marginalisation and disempowerment of women. The global, national and regional efforts to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and to work towards a broad-based movement for engendered development have yet to make substantive impact.

The present piece of research work "**Atrocities against Women -A Study of Dowry Torture and Sexual Violence in Orissa**" has critically analysed the genesis, cause, nature and extent of dowry torture and sexual violence in the State in a larger integrated social perspective like their relationships with the status of women, urbanisation and industrialisation, family and society, stress management system as well as institutional and legal redressal mechanism. The study has suggested a multi-pronged action plan to prevent and control the incidence of such crimes.

Research on gender issues, especially on crime against women, is a problematic task as there is always reluctance on the part of the victims of such violence to reveal and discuss their problems. The Project Co-ordinator, Ms. Kalpana Mishra; alongwith the Research Officer and Investigators; has adopted a process of participatory observation by visiting and staying with the local people of the areas covered under the study to win their confidence to collect the data from the targeted groups. They deserve acclamation.

The preliminary background data to plan the research design was collected from various governmental and non-governmental agencies. We express our gratitude on this account to the Home Department, Government of Orissa; Women and Child Development Department, Government of Orissa and the State Commission for Women, Orissa. A number of non-governmental and women organisations in the sample districts have facilitated the collection of data. We express our gratefulness to them.

We owe a prime debt to the Department of Women and Child Development, Government of India for funding the project. We express our deep gratitude to Mrs. Kiran Aggarwal, Secretary, Department of Women and Child Development and Mrs. Sarojini Ganju Thakur, Joint Secretary, Department of Women and Child Development for their timely initiative, advice and valuable support to conduct and complete the study. Mr. M. P. S. Sethi and Mr. A. Manohar, Joint Director and Assistant Director of the Department of Women and Child Development respectively deserve special thanks for their technical inputs and guidance as well as overall support to the conduct of the project.

Mr. P.K. Mishra, Assistant Planning Officer, Forest and Environment Department, Government of Orissa deserves special thanks in utilising his expertise in data processing and thereby giving the report a definite shape.

Dr. Ajaya Kumar Mishra, Chairman, Sankalp has taken keen interest in the conduct of the project from the outset. He, alongwith other resource persons, experts and staff of Sankalp provided valuable support and guidance. Mr. Ajit Kumar Swain and Mr. Bijaya Kumar Mishra have provided a link in field works and logistic support. Mr. Ranjanlal Bhuyan has provided the necessary computational inputs. Dr. Jayadev Sahu, Research Officer, Lok Sabha Secretariat has taken pains in going through the draft and giving necessary suggestions. Their efforts deserve special appreciation.

It is hoped that the report will be of great use not only for the researchers but also for the administrators and policy makers in their endeavour to prevent and control crimes against women and to work towards an engendered development paradigm.

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April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2000

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**Chapter One**  
**Introduction**

**Atrocities against Women: National Scenario**

Crime against women have been increasing in the country at an alarming rate. In absolute numbers, an increase of 10,073 cases was reported at All-India level in 1998 over 1997. The gap is sharply widened when a comparison is made between 1991 and 1998, which shows an increase of 57,217 reported cases. The details of crimes committed against women in India between 1991-98 under different heads are described in Table 1.1. The year-wise variations in different crime heads are shown in Figure 1.1. An analysis of the percentage growth in crimes against women in India between 1991 to 1998 shows that while there is 8.31 per cent rise in the reported crimes in 1998 over 1997, the growth rate is 77.19 per cent over 1991. The average annual growth rate over the 7 years between 1991 to 1998 is 8.58 per cent (see figure 1.2).

The All-India crime rate, i. e. number of crimes per lakh population for crimes against women reported to the police worked out to be 13.5 during 1998. However, when estimated with reference to female population, this rate almost doubles to 28.1 per lakh female population (see Crime against Women, 1998, National Crime Records Bureau, Government of India). This rate of crime is highly disturbing as a sizeable number of crimes against women go unreported due to social and family pressures and stigmas attached to them.

Equally dismaying is the poor disposal of cases under crime against women by the courts. The disposal rates in cases of Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Special Laws (SLL) crimes at the national level in 1998 is as low as 19.0 and 52.1 per cent respectively (see Crime against Women, 1998, National Crime Records Bureau, Government of India). This calls for urgent reforms in criminal justice system in the country to develop a quick judicial response.

**Table 1.1**  
**Crime against Women in India between 1991-98**

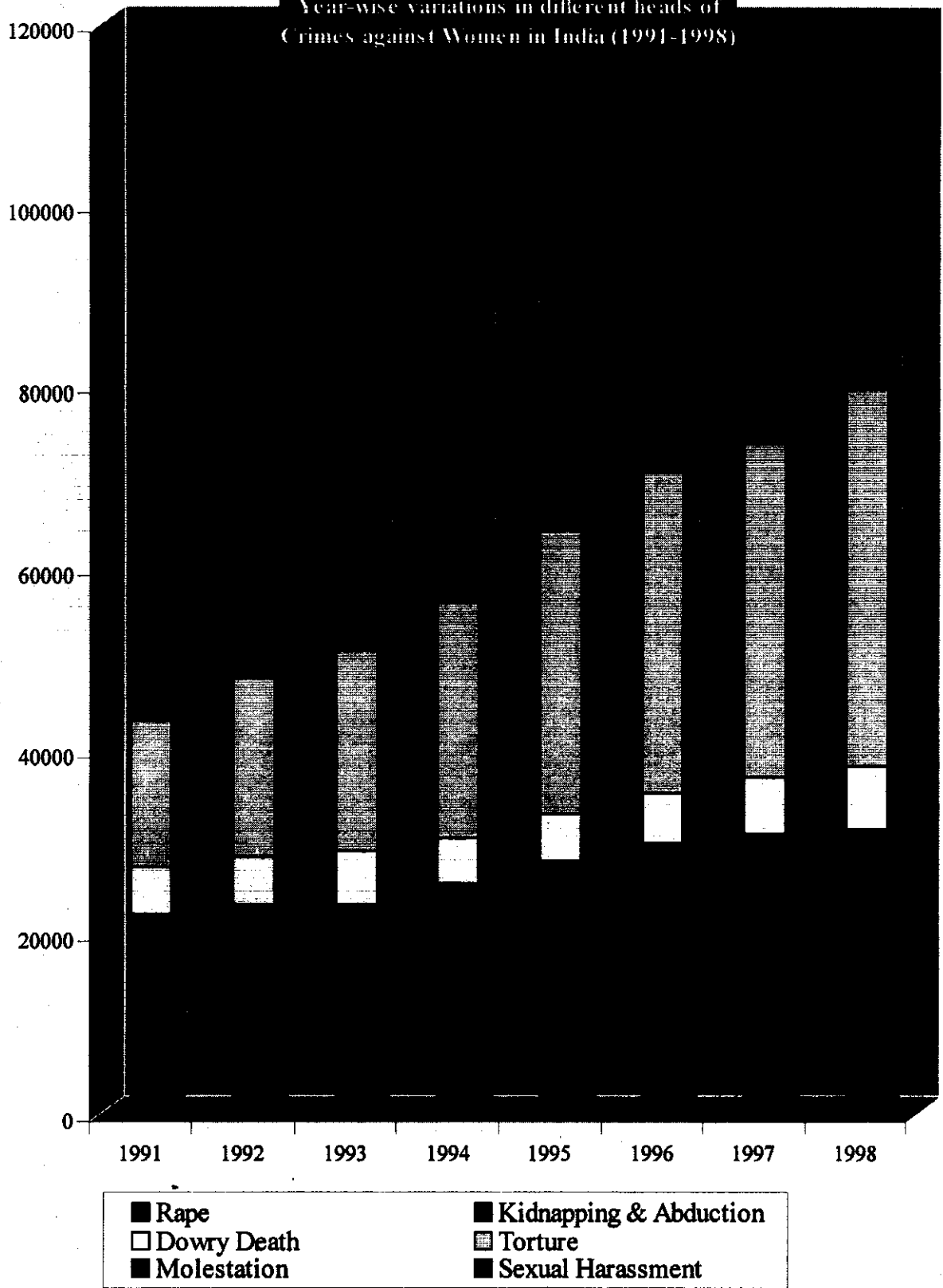
Sl.	Crime Head	Year			
		1991	1992	1993	1994
1	Rape	9793	11112	11242	12351
2	Kidnapping & Abduction	12300	12077	11837	12998
3	Dowry Death	5175	4962	5817	4935
4	Torture	15949	19750	22064	25946
5	Molestation	20611	20385	20985	24117
6	Sexual Harassment	10293	10751	12009	10496
7	Importation of Girls	-	-	-	167
8	Sati Prevention Act	-	-	-	2
9	Immoral Traffic (P) Act	-	-	-	7547
10	Indecent Rep. of Women (P) Act	-	-	-	389
11	Dowry Prohibition Act	-	-	-	-
	<b>Total</b>	<b>74121</b>	<b>79037</b>	<b>83954</b>	<b>98948</b>

Source: Crime in India-1995 & Crime in India-1998,  
National Crime Record Bureau,  
Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, New Delhi

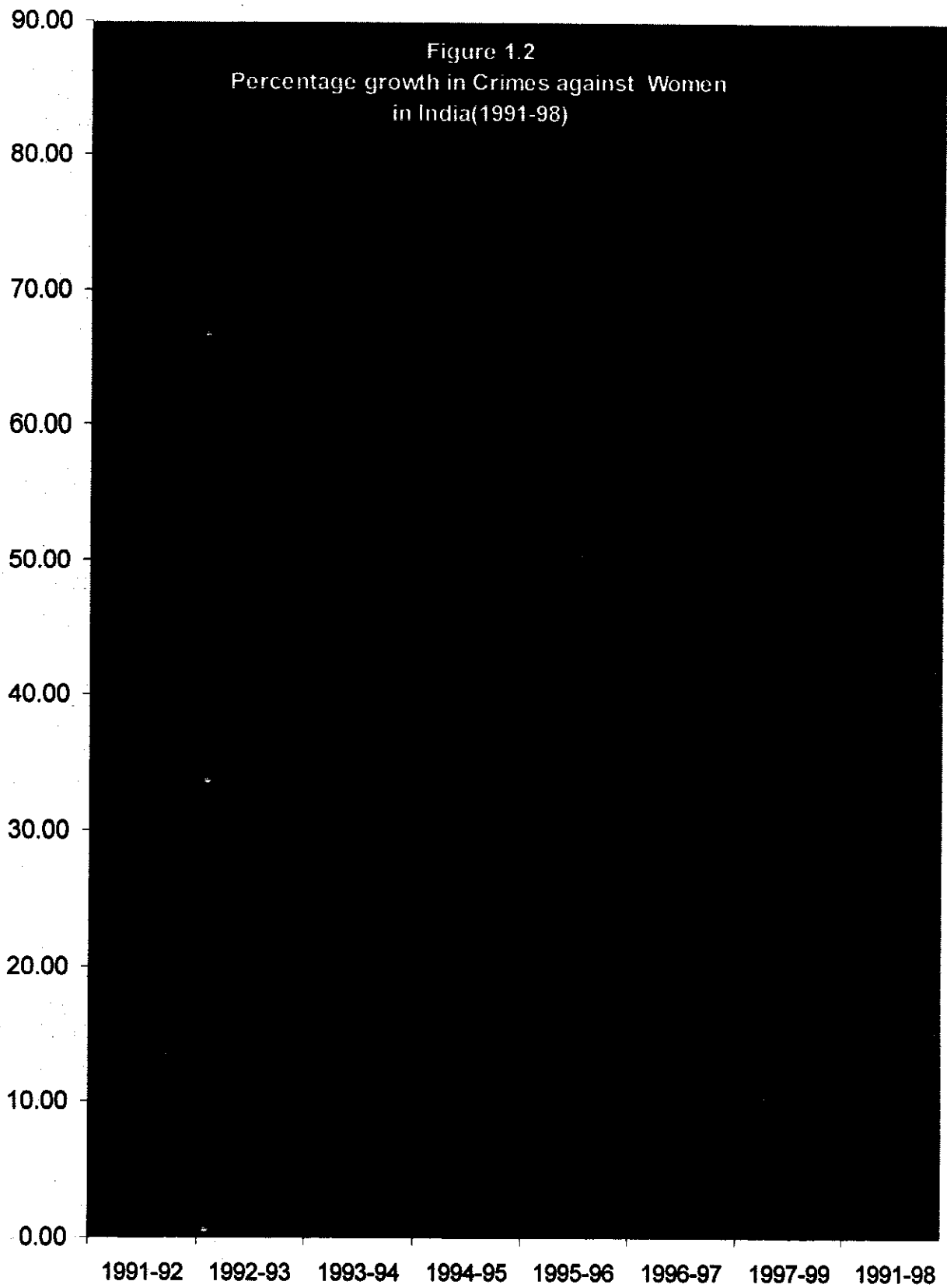
**Table 1.1(Contd...)**

Sl.	Crime Head	Year			
		1995	1996	1997	1998
1	Rape	13754	14846	15330	15031
2	Kidnapping & Abduction	14063	14877	15617	16381
3	Dowry Death	5092	5513	6006	6917
4	Torture	31127	35246	36592	41318
5	Molestation	28475	28939	30764	31046
6	Sexual Harassment	4756	5671	5796	8123
7	Importation of Girls	191	182	78	146
8	Sati Prevention Act	27	0	1	0
9	Immoral Traffic (P) Act	8447	7706	8323	8695
10	Indecent Rep. of Women (P) Act	539	96	73	192
11	Dowry Prohibition Act	-	2647	2685	3489
	<b>Total</b>	<b>106471</b>	<b>115723</b>	<b>121265</b>	<b>131338</b>

**Figure 1.1**  
**Year-wise variations in different heads of Crimes against Women in India (1991-1998)**



Source: Crime in India-1995 and Crime in India-1998,  
 National Crime Record Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs,  
 Government of India, New Delhi



Source: Crime in India-1995 & Crime in India-1998,  
National Crime Record Bureau,  
Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, New Delhi

## Atrocities against Women in Orissa

Orissa is ranked 13 on basis of rate of total cognisable crimes and 12 on the basis of percentage share in incidence and rate of crime committed against women in States and UTs during 1998. The total reported cases of crimes against women in Orissa registered a steep increase of 101.1 per cent from 1994 to 1998. In 1994, the total numbers of reported cases were 2,213; which increased to 4,450 in 1998(see Table 1.2). The rape, dowry death, molestation and eve-teasing cases in Orissa has gone up by 86.5, 42.0, 66.1 and 91.8 per cent between 1994 to 1998. The cruelty by husband and relatives, which may include dowry torture, has increased by 159.0 per cent in these years. A comparative study of various crimes against women in Orissa between 1994 to 1998 is described in Figure 1.3. The figure, however, concentrates only on major crime heads.

**Table 1.2**

**Various Crimes against Women in Orissa between 1994 to 1998  
-A comparative study**

Crime Head	1994	1998	Percentage variations in 1998 over 1994
Rape	364	679	86.5
Kidnapping & Abduction	221	514	132.6
Dowry Death	169	240	42.0
Cruelty by husband & relatives	361	935	159.0
Molestation	955	1586	66.1
Eve-Teasing	122	234	91.8
Importing of Girls	2	0	-100.0
Sati Prevention Act	0	0	
Immoral Traffic (P) Act	8	11	37.5
Indecent Representation of Women(P) Act	11	2	-81.8
Dowry Prohibition Act	*	249	*
Total	2213	4450	101.1

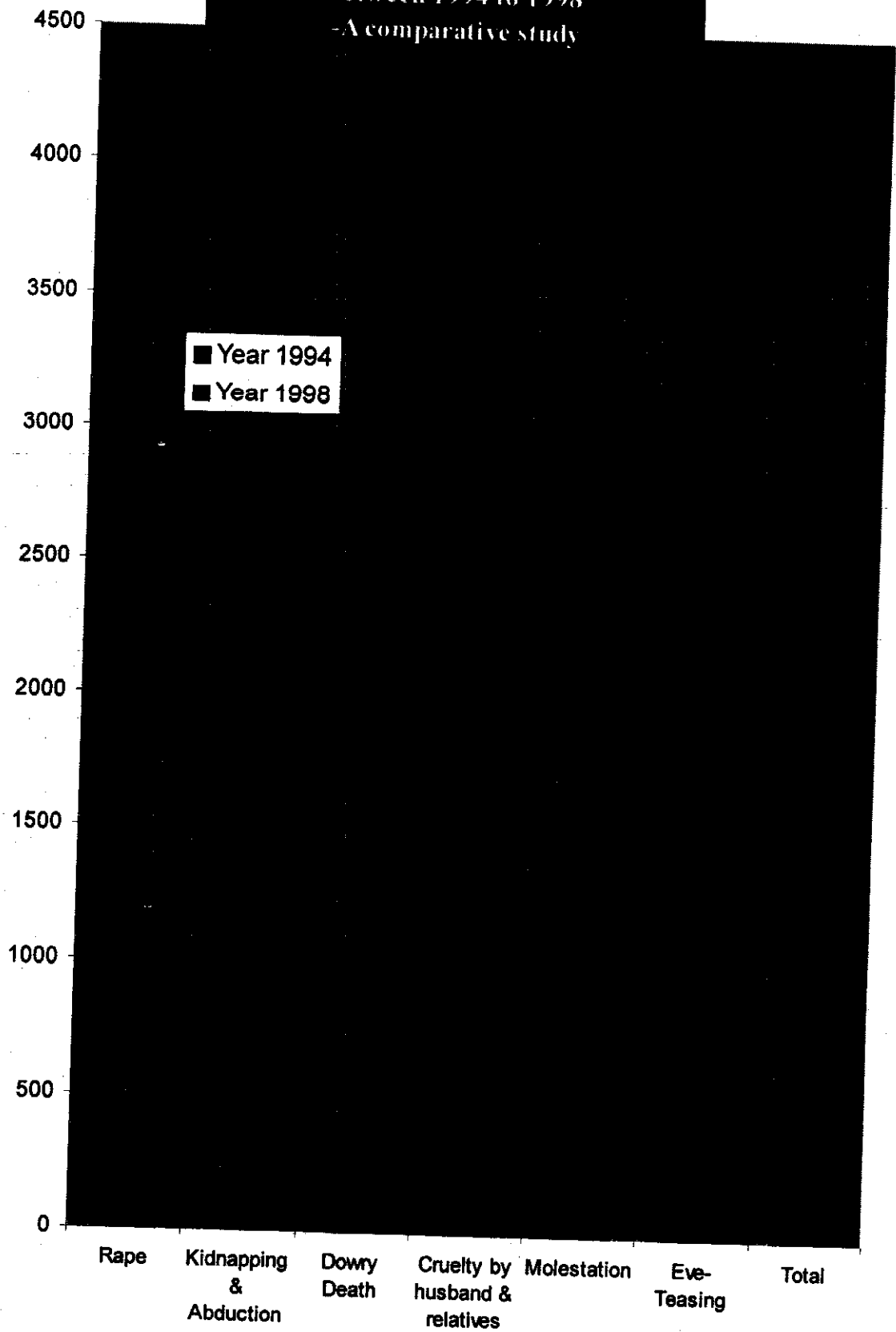
Source: Crime in India-1995 & Crime in India-1998,  
National Crime Record Bureau,

Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, New Delhi

\* Data for the same is not available

\*\* The variation is not shown because of non-availability of data related to 1994

**Figure 1.3**  
**Various Crimes against Women in Orissa**  
**between 1994 to 1998**  
**-A comparative study**



Source: Crime in India-1995 & Crime in India-1998,  
 National Crime Record Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs,  
 Government of India, New Delhi



The data available with the Home Department of the Government of Orissa through its Annual White Papers on Police Administration also needs a critical analysis and an integrated interpretation to assess the State Government's source of information. The papers provide detail information regarding Dowry Torture and Rape in Orissa over successive years.

The reported cases of dowry-related crimes against women are categorised into 3 major heads by the Government of Orissa :

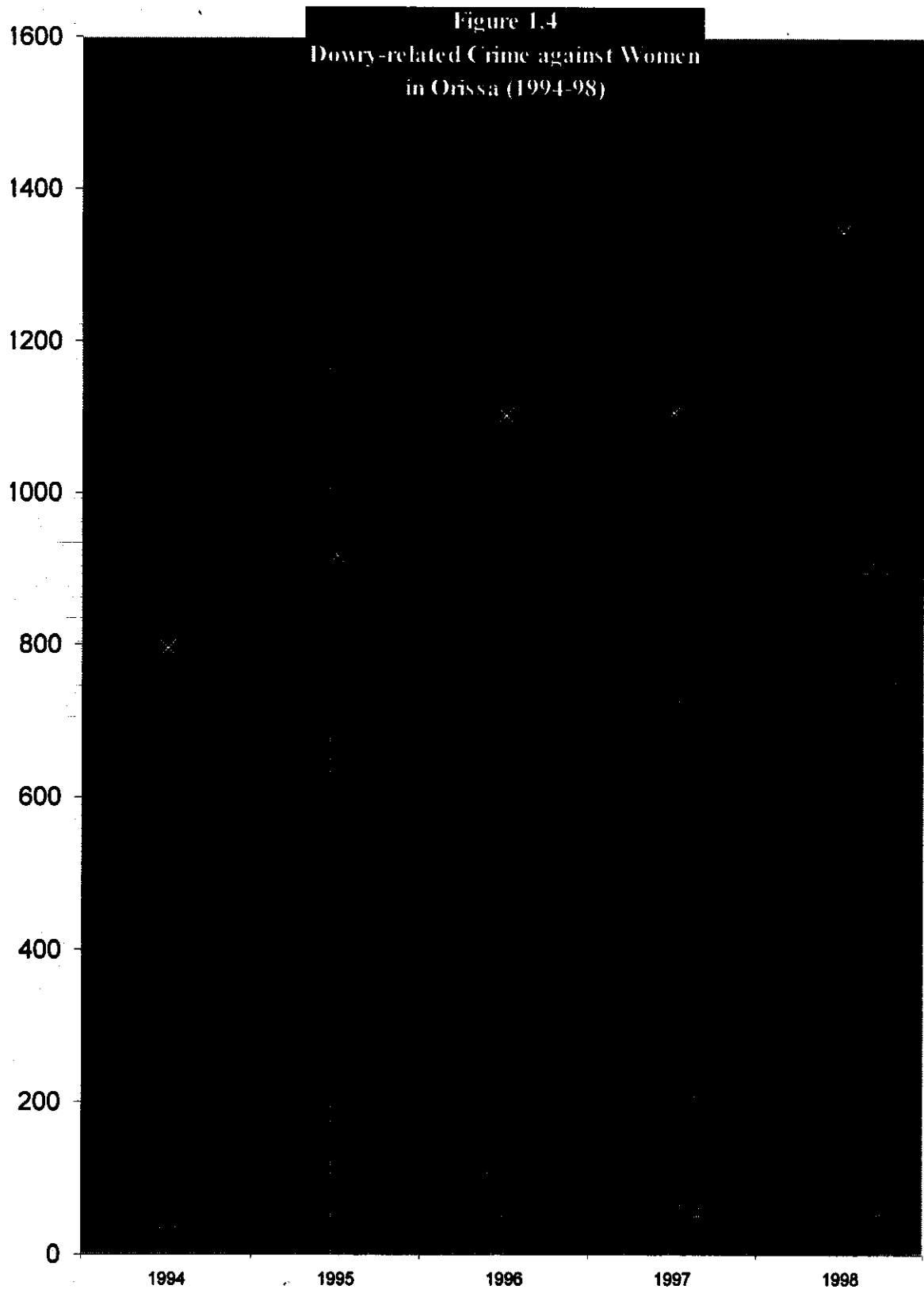
- Dowry-related Murder
- Dowry-related Suicide
- Dowry-related Torture

The dowry-related crimes in Orissa have been increasing substantially over the years. While the total number of 796 dowry-related crimes were reported in 1994, the same had increased to 1,343 in 1998(see Table 1.4 and Figure 1.4). In comparison to the rise in dowry-related crimes, the settlements are quite low. While a total number of 5,263 dowry-related crimes were reported between 1994 to 1998; only 245 cases or 4.66 per cent were settled (48 convicted and 197 acquitted). The percentage of cases settled over the reported ones was 13.1 in 1994, which had fallen to a meagre 0.1 in 1998. The sliding down in the percentage of cases settled is noticed in all the 3 dowry-related crime heads between 1994 to 1998. The figure 1.5 shows the year-wise variation in reported dowry-related crimes and their settlements. The year-wise and total percentage variations in number of convictions and acquittals are given in figure 1.6. The conviction rate is quite less in comparison to the acquittals. Between 1994 to 1998, the conviction rate was 19.60 per cent in contrast to the acquittal rate of 80.40 per cent. . The most gruesome aspect of dowry-related crimes is dowry-related murder, which has gone up from 265 cases in 1994 to 387 in 1998. Dowry-related torture constitutes the major segment of the reported dowry-related crimes.

**Table 1.3**  
**Dowry-related Crime against Women in Orissa (1994-98)**

Year	Category	Reported	Challan	Settled		% of cases settled over reported
				Convicted	Acquitted	
1994	Dowry-related Murder	265	231	13	57	26.4
	Dowry-related Suicide	43	36	2	8	23.3
	Dowry-related Torture	488	423	3	21	4.9
	Dowry Cases (Total)	796	690	18	86	13.1
1995	Dowry-related Murder	314	271	10	39	15.6
	Dowry-related Suicide	39	31	3	5	20.5
	Dowry-related Torture	565	461	5	14	3.4
	Dowry Cases (Total)	918	763	18	58	8.3
1996	Dowry-related Murder	354	324	9	35	12.4
	Dowry-related Suicide	37	35	-	3	8.1
	Dowry-related Torture	710	622	1	4	0.7
	Dowry Cases (Total)	1101	981	10	42	4.7
1997	Dowry-related Murder	324	268	2	6	2.5
	Dowry-related Suicide	54	44	-	2	3.7
	Dowry-related Torture	727	605	-	1	0.1
	Dowry Cases (Total)	1105	917	2	9	1.0
1998	Dowry-related Murder	387	149	-	-	0.0
	Dowry-related Suicide	55	24	-	1	1.8
	Dowry-related Torture	901	257	-	1	0.1
	Dowry Cases (Total)	1343	430	0	2	0.1

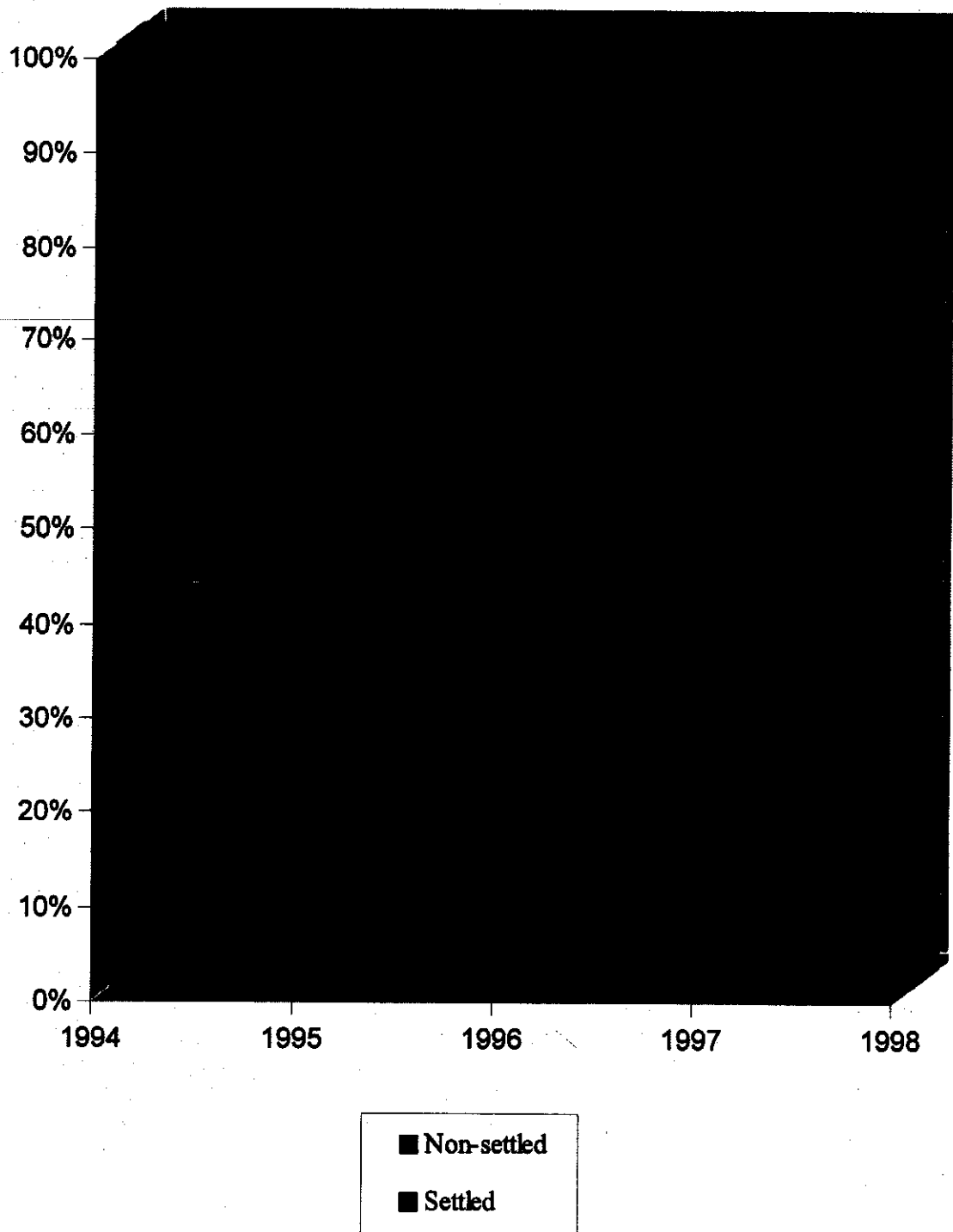
Source: White Papers on Police Administration-1998 and 1997,  
Home Department,  
Government of Orissa



—◆— Dowry-related Murder    —●— Dowry-related Suicide  
 —▲— Dowry-related Torture    —■— Dowry Crime (Total)

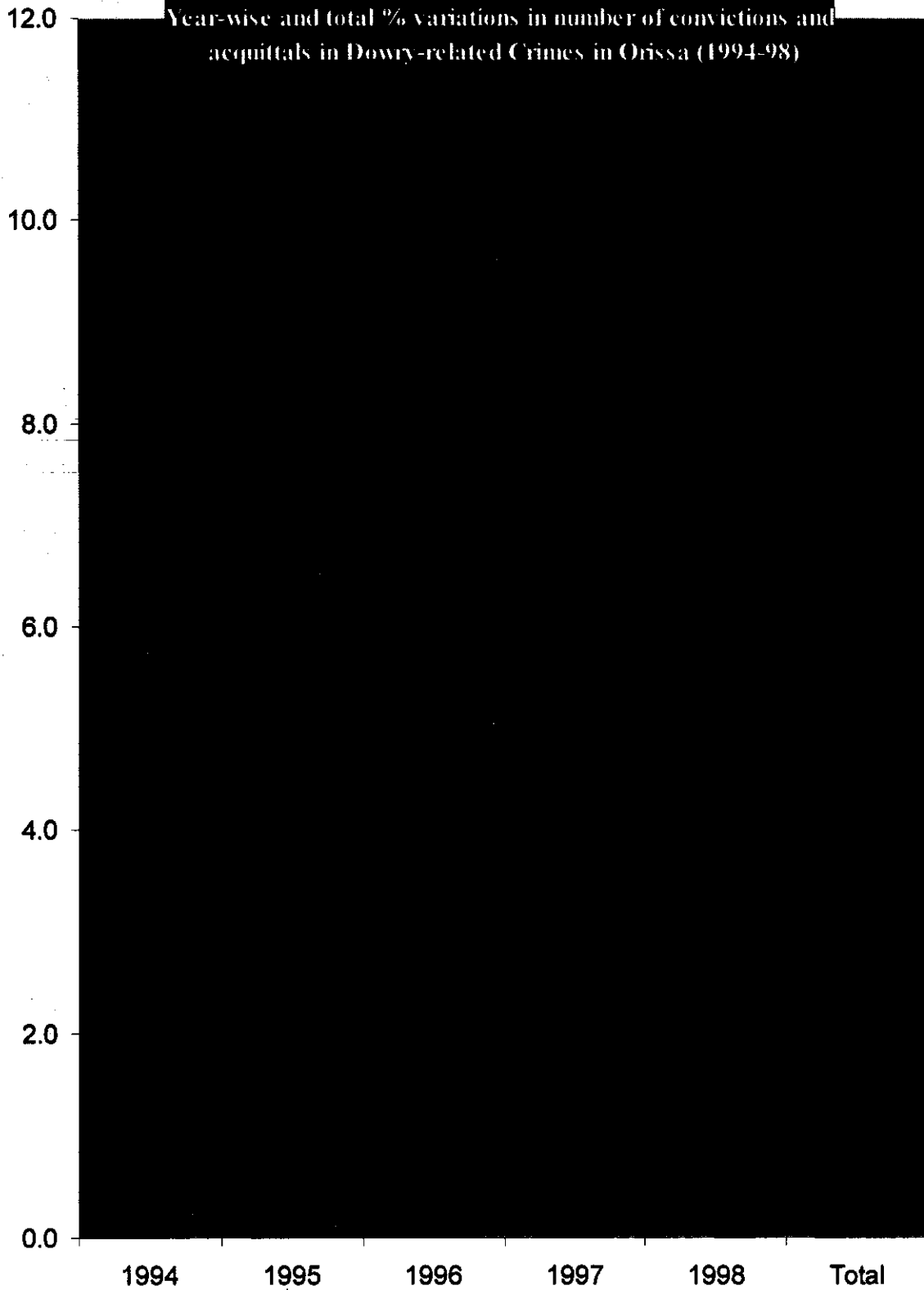
Source: White Papers on Police Administration-1998 and 1997, Home Department, Government of Orissa

**Figure 1.5**  
**Year-wise variations in reported Dowry-related Crimes**  
**and their settlements in Orissa(1994-98)**



Source: White Papers on Police Administration-1998 and 1997,  
Home Department,  
Government of Orissa

Figure 1.6



Source: White Papers on Police Administration-1998 and 1997,  
Home Department,  
Government of Orissa

Rape cases in Orissa have also been increasing over the years. The number of rape victims has increased from 617 in 1996 to 796 in 1998, representing an increase of 22.48 per cent (see table 1.4). On the contrary, the percentage of cases settled over reported ones has decreased from 3.4 in 1996 to 0.6 in 1998. The rate of conviction is also quite meagre in comparison to the acquittals. Between 1996 to 1998, while 30 accused were acquitted, only 8 accused were convicted.

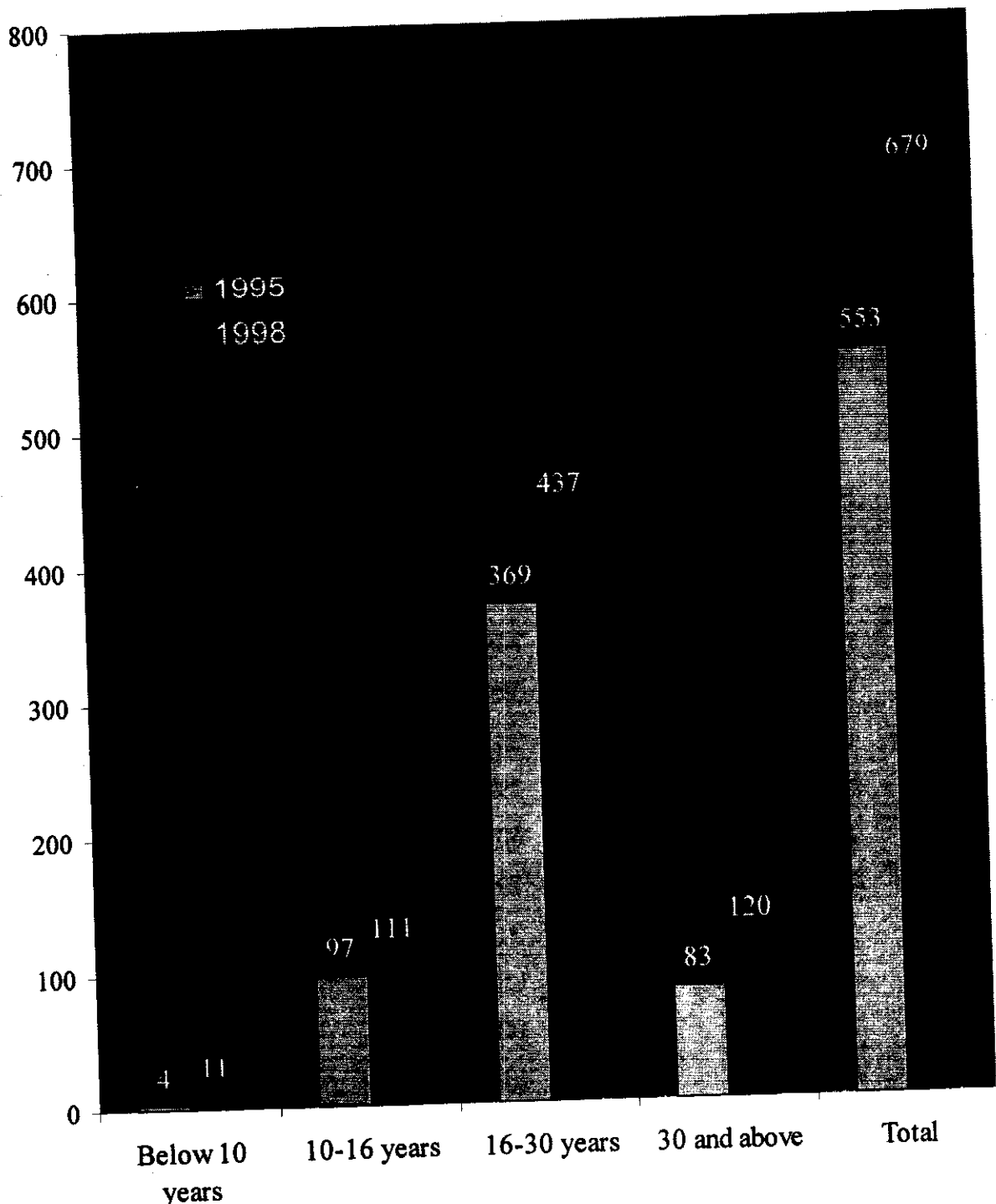
**Table 1.4**  
**Rape cases in Orissa (1996-98)**

Year	Reported	Challan	Settled		% of cases settled over reported
			Convicted	Acquitted	
1996	617	336	4	17	3.4
1997	683	378	1	11	1.8
1998	796	418	3	2	0.6

Source: White Papers on Police Administration-1996, 1997 and 1998;  
Home Department;  
Government of Orissa

An analysis of the victims of rape in Orissa by age-groups in 1995 and 1998 is shown in figure 1.7. The reported rape cases in all age groups have increased. The total increase is by 22.78 per cent from 1995 to 1998. The increase is most prominent (175 per cent) in case of rape victims below 10 years. The rape victims between 16 to 30 years age-group continues to be the largest segment. It may be noted here that there is a discrepancy in the data provided by the Government of India and the Government of Orissa. While the National Crime Record Bureau Data has calculated the reported rape cases in 1995 and 1997 as 553 and 679 respectively, the Annual White Papers on Police Administration of Orissa Government calculates the same as 562 and 796 respectively.

**Figure 1.7**  
**Age-wise variation of victims of rape**  
**between 1995 and 1998**



Source: Crime in India-1995 & Crime in India-1998,  
 National Crime Record Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs,  
 Government of India, New Delhi

An analysis of the available Orissa Government data on the growth of reported dowry-related crimes and rape cases shows interesting but disturbing findings. Between 1986 to 1998, there has been 500 per cent increase in dowry related cases, while the rape cases registered a 363 per cent rise(see Table 1.5 and Figure 1.8). The rise is observed to be more prominent after 1990. While both dowry and rape record a growth of 45 per cent during 1986 to 1990, the respective growth in dowry and rape during 1991 to 1998 is observed to be 251 per cent and 315 per cent respectively. The increase in both dowry and rape cases between 1986 to 1998 is 440 per cent.

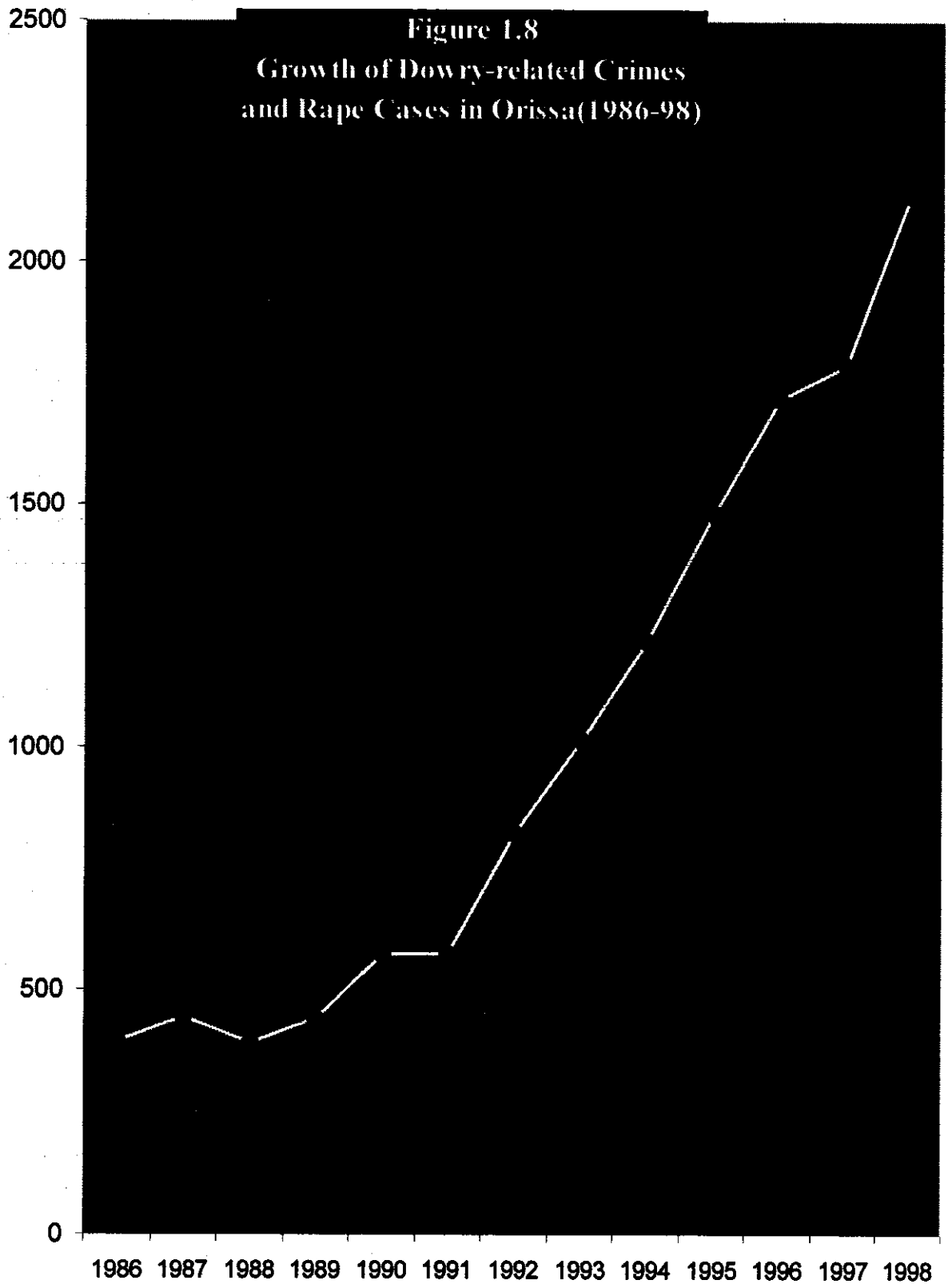
**Table 1-5**  
**Growth of Dowry-related Crimes and Rape Cases in Orissa(1986-98)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>No. of Dowry-related Crimes Reported</b>	<b>No. of Rape Cases Reported</b>
1986	224	172
1987	255	189
1988	206	186
1989	244	196
1990	324	250
1991	383	192
*1992	495	326
1993	608	405
1994	796	422
1995	918	562
1996	1101	617
1997	1105	683
1998	1343	796

Source - White Papers on Police Administration (1986-90, 1994-98),  
Home Department, Government of Orissa

\*Since data on dowry death/torture in 1992 is not available, a mean average of the cases in 1991 and 1993 has been taken to graphically represent the variations in different years





Source - White Papers on Police Administration  
(1986-90, 1994-98),  
Home Department, Government of Orissa

### Atrocities against Women in Orissa (District Profile)

An analysis of the available data on district-wise incidence of dowry-related crimes in Orissa shows that in Cuttack district, the atrocities are the highest in 1997 and 1998. Khurda, Kendrapara, Balasore, Puri, Jajpur and Ganjam also continues to report higher rate of dowry-related crimes in 1997-98(see Tables 1.6 and 1.7 as well as Figures 1.9 and 1.10). The atrocities are less in Boudh, Deogarh, Nawapara and Nawarangpur districts in 1997-98. The growth of dowry-related crimes in 1998 over 1997 is prominent in Koraput(266.67 per cent), Malkangiri(125.00 per cent), Sundargarh (105.88 per cent), Angul (76.47 per cent) and Phulbani (71.43 per cent) districts; although the number incidents are comparatively less in Koraput, Malkangiri and Phulbani districts compared to the rest of districts in the State(see Figure 1.11). Boudh, Jharsuguda, Rayagada and Puri districts have shown negative growth rate of 100.00, 37.50, 22.22 and 4.00 per cent; while Deogarh and Nawarangpur districts have shown zero growth rate. 13 districts out of 30 districts of the State has recorded higher percentage of dowry-related crimes in 1998 over 1997 against the State-wide occurrence of 21.54 per cent.

In case of reported rape cases in the State, Mayurbhanj continues to record highest number of victims in both 1997 and 1998. The other districts; which have higher percentage of victims in both the years; are Khurda, Sundargarh, Keonjhar, Balasore, Cuttack, Angul, Koraput, Puri and Phulbani (see Tables 1.8, 1.9 and 1.10 as well as Figures 1.13 and 1.14). The percentage growth rate of reported rape cases in 1998 over 1994 (see Figure 1.12) is highest in Kendrapara district (316.67 per cent); followed by Khurda (313.33 per cent) and Dhenkanal (250.00 per cent). Boudh and Rayagada districts have a negative growth rate of 33.33 per cent and 10.00 per cent respectively. Nayagarh and Jagatsinghpur districts have recorded zero rate of growth. 14 districts out of the 30 districts shows a higher rate of rape cases than the All-Orissa percentage growth rate of 88.60 per cent between 1994 to 1998. The rate of settlement of rape cases in 1997 and 1998 is quite meagre in all of the districts. While 1997 saw the settlement of 12 cases (1 convicted and 11 acquitted) in 7 districts, only 4 cases were settled (1 convicted and 3 acquitted) in 1998 covering 3 districts,

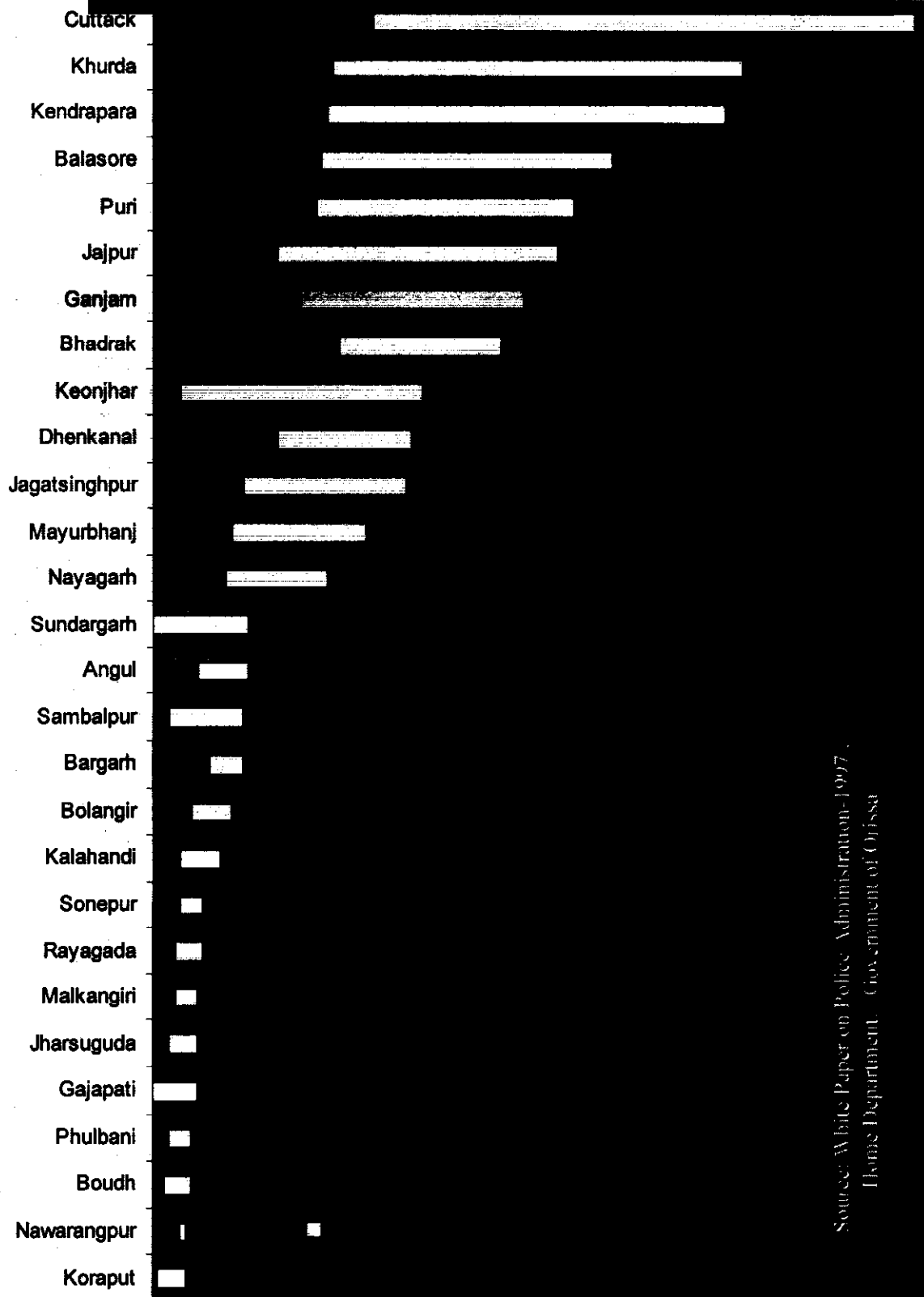
<b>Table-1.6</b>					
<b>District-wise Profile of reported Dowry-related Murder, Dowry-related Suicide and Dowry-related Torture Cases in Orissa in 1997</b>					
Sl.	Districts	Dowry-related Murder	Dowry-related Suicide	Dowry-related Torture	Total Dowry-related Crimes
1	Angul	4	4	9	17
2	Balasore	30	-	52	82
3	Bargarh	6	4	6	16
4	Bhadrak	33	-	29	62
5	Bolangir	6	1	7	14
6	Boudh	1	1	5	7
7	Cuttack	34	5	97	136
8	Deogarh	4	-		4
9	Dhenkanal	18	4	24	46
10	Gajapati	-	-	8	8
11	Ganjam	21	5	40	66
12	Jagatsinghpur	13	3	29	45
13	Jajpur	20	2	50	72
14	Jharsuguda	2	1	5	8
15	Kalahandi	2	3	7	12
16	Kendrapara	30	1	71	102
17	Keonjhar	4	1	43	48
18	Khurda	31	1	73	105
19	Koraput	-	1	5	6
20	Malkangiri	2	2	4	8
21	Mayurbhanj	11	3	24	38
22	Nawapara	1	1	3	5
23	Nawarangpur	2	3	1	6
24	Nayagarh	12	1	18	31
25	Phulbani	1	2	4	7
26	Puri	27	2	46	75
27	Rayagada	1	3	5	9
28	Sambalpur	3	-	13	16
29	Sonepur	5	-	4	9
30	Sundargarh	-	-	17	17
	All-Orissa	324	54	727	1105

Source: White Papers on Police Administration-1997,  
Home Department, Government of Orissa

Sl.	Districts	Dowry-related Murder	Dowry-related Suicide	Dowry-related Torture	Total Dowry-related Crimes	Percentage variation in 1998 over 1997
1	Angul	7	1	22	30	76.47
2	Balasore	45	-	67	112	36.59
3	Bargarh	7	4	8	19	18.75
4	Bhadrak	27	1	40	68	9.68
5	Bolangir	7	2	14	23	64.29
6	Boudh	-	-	-	0	-100.00
7	Cuttack	34	3	122	159	16.91
8	Deogarh	2	-	2	4	0.00
9	Dhenkanal	26	3	29	58	26.09
10	Gajapati	3	-	6	9	12.50
11	Ganjam	23	3	52	78	18.18
12	Jagatsinghpur	15	-	32	47	4.44
13	Jajpur	23	3	54	80	11.11
14	Jharsuguda	-	-	5	5	-37.50
15	Kalahandi	3	3	7	13	8.33
16	Kendrapara	33	3	86	122	19.61
17	Keonjhar	16	4	52	72	50.00
18	Khurda	29	2	91	122	16.19
19	Koraput	5	4	13	22	266.67
20	Malkangiri	5	6	7	18	125.00
21	Mayurbhanj	13	5	40	58	52.63
22	Nawapara	4	-	2	6	20.00
23	Nawarangpur	1	2	3	6	0.00
24	Nayagarh	13	1	36	50	61.29
25	Phulbani	2	-	10	12	71.43
26	Puri	26	-	46	72	-4.00
27	Rayagada	2	2	3	7	-22.22
28	Sambalpur	6	1	14	21	31.25
29	Sonepur	2	-	13	15	66.67
30	Sundargarh	8	2	25	35	105.88
	All-Orissa	387	55	901	1343	21.54

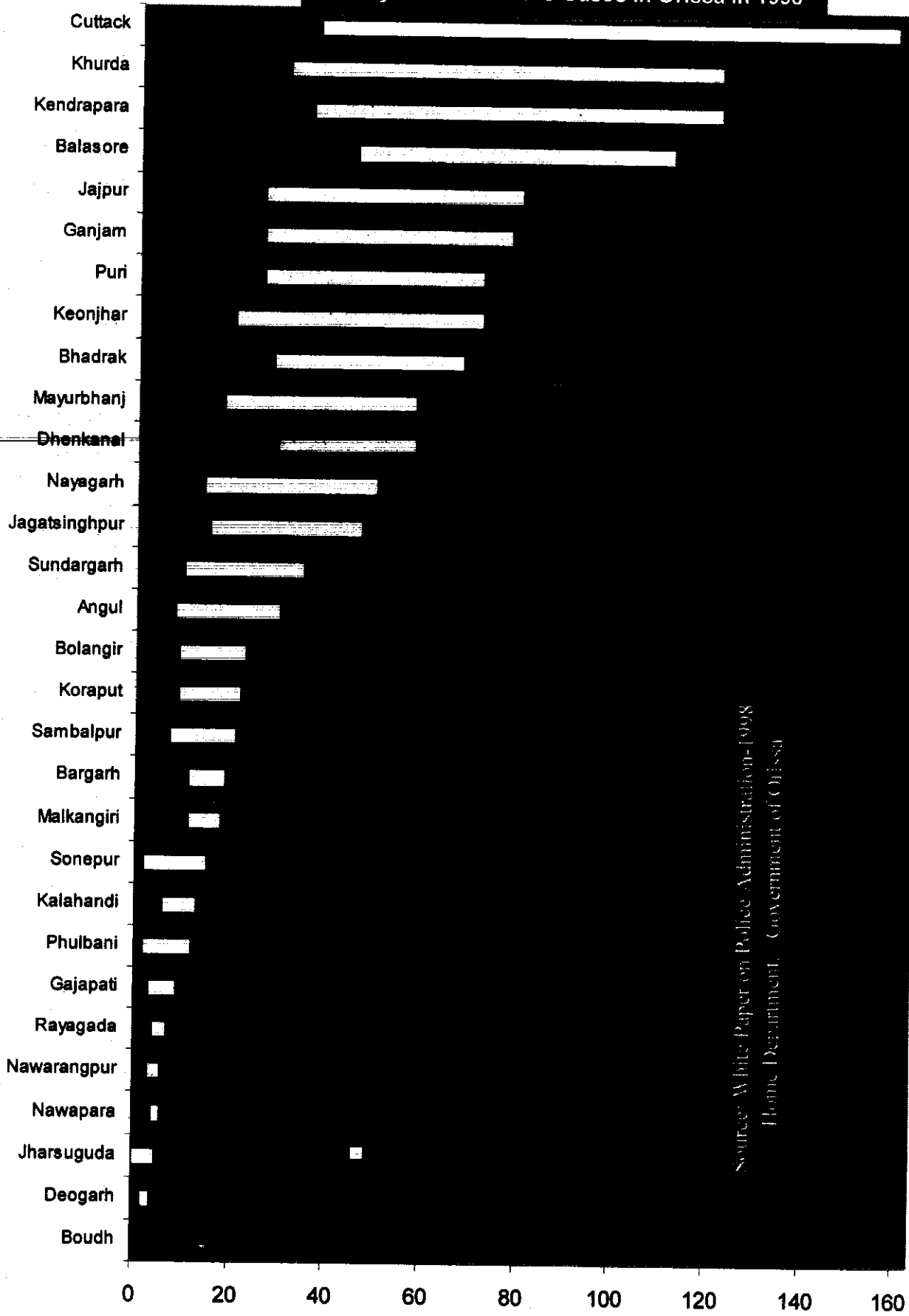
Source: White Papers on Police Administration-1998,  
Home Department, Government of Orissa

**Figure 1.9**  
**District Profile (descending order) of reported**  
**Dowry-related Murder, Dowry-related Suicide and Dowry-related Torture**  
**Cases in Orissa in 1997**



Source: White Paper on Police Administration-1997,  
 Home Department, Government of Orissa

District Profile (descending order) of reported Dowry-related Murder, Dowry-related Suicide and Dowry-related Torture Cases in Orissa in 1998



Source: White Paper on Police Administration-1998  
Home Department, Government of Orissa

**Figure 1.11**  
**Percentage variation in Dowry-related Crimes**  
**in the Districts of Orissa in 1998 over 1997**

Source: White Papers on Police Administration-1997 and 1998, Home Department, Government of Orissa

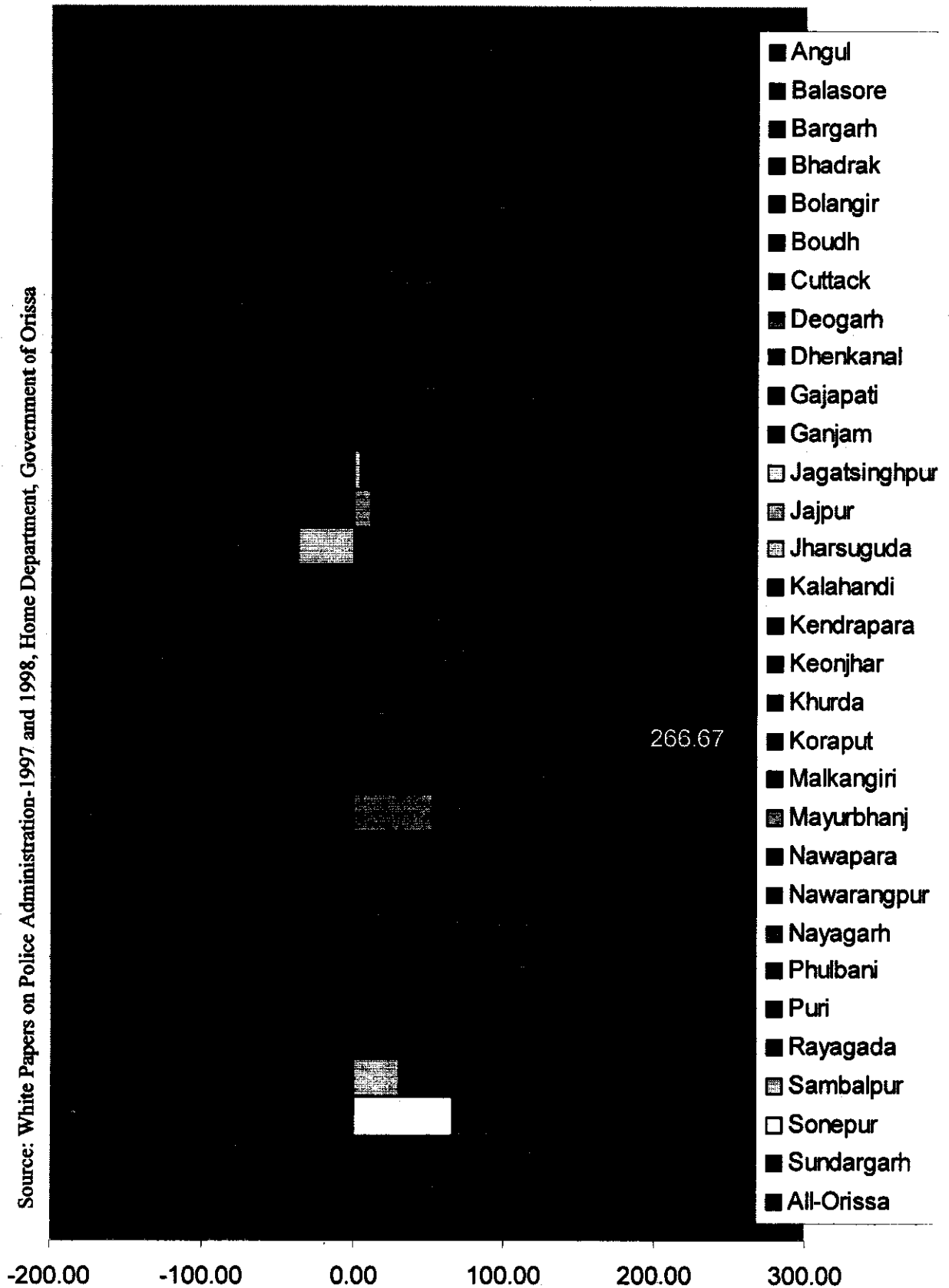


Table-1.8 District-wise Profile of Reported Rape Cases in Orissa (1994-98)							
Sl.	Districts	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Percentage variations in 1998 over 1994
1	Angul	11	14	11	30	33	200.00
2	Balasore	23	31	50	48	60	160.87
3	Bargarh	13	14	16	9	21	61.54
4	Bhadrak	8	22	15	10	15	87.50
5	Bolangir	16	19	21	20	23	43.75
6	Boudh	9	2	12	16	6	-33.33
7	Cuttack	34	31	39	43	48	41.18
8	Deogarh	3	5	6	4	8	166.67
9	Dhenkanal	6	8	5	12	21	250.00
10	Gajapati	6	3	12	7	10	66.67
11	Ganjam	16	19	4	21	23	43.75
12	Jagatsinghpur	10	15	20	24	10	0.00
13	Jajpur	7	18	11	9	19	171.43
14	Jharsuguda	10	12	8	13	13	30.00
15	Kalahandi	9	12	7	14	22	144.44
16	Kendrapara	6	11	15	13	25	316.67
17	Keonjhar	21	33	61	47	60	185.71
18	Khurda	15	32	18	30	62	313.33
19	Koraput	22	31	27	39	29	31.82
20	Malkangiri	7	13	14	19	14	100.00
21	Mayurbhanj	34	38	65	79	75	120.59
22	Nawapara	3	2	8	5	10	233.33
23	Nawarangpur	10	19	14	15	14	40.00
24	Nayagarh	9	15	11	10	9	0.00
25	Phulbani	19	20	24	30	25	31.58
26	Puri	11	14	20	24	25	127.27
27	Rayagada	20	26	20	17	18	-10.00
28	Sambalpur	15	20	20	20	23	53.33
29	Sonepur	5	6	8	8	15	200.00
30	Sundargarh	44	57	55	47	60	36.36
	All-Orissa	422	562	617	683	796	88.63

Source: White Papers on Police Administration-1996, 1997 and 1998  
Home Department, Government of Orissa



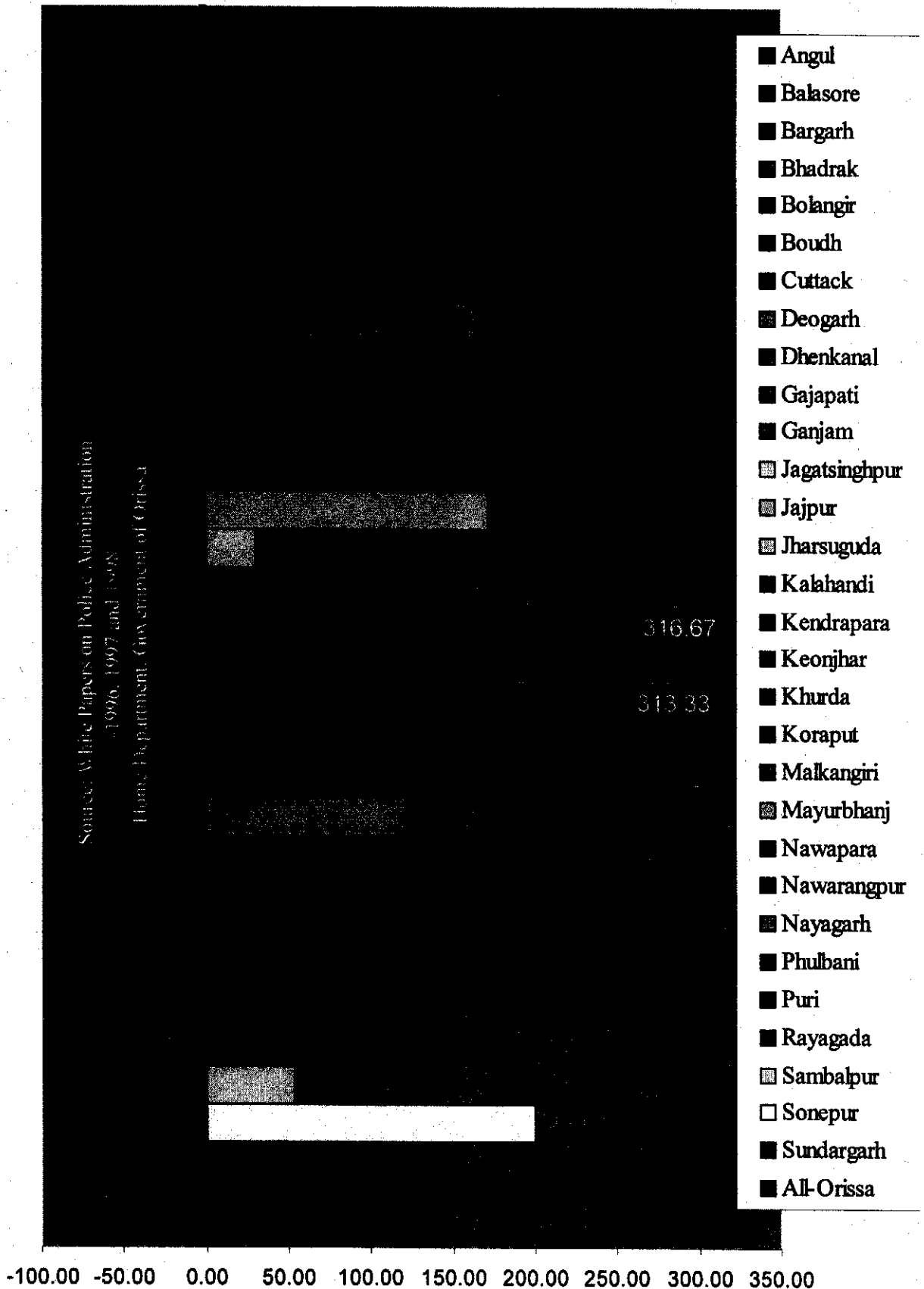
<b>Table-1.9</b>						
<b>District-wise Profile of Rape Cases in Orissa in 1997</b>						
Sl.	Districts	Reported	Challan	Settled		% of cases settled over reported
				Convicted	Acquitted	
1	Angul	30	19	0	0	0.00
2	Balasore	48	22	1	3	8.33
3	Bargarh	9	7	0	0	0.00
4	Bhadrak	10	4	0	0	0.00
5	Bolangir	20	7	0	2	10.00
6	Boudh	16	8	0	0	0.00
7	Cuttack	43	13	0	1	2.33
8	Deogarh	4	3	0	0	0.00
9	Dhenkanal	12	5	0	0	0.00
10	Gajapati	7	2	0	0	0.00
11	Ganjam	21	9	0	0	0.00
12	Jagatsinghpur	24	7	0	0	0.00
13	Jajpur	9	2	0	0	0.00
14	Jharsuguda	13	9	0	0	0.00
15	Kalahandi	14	11	0	0	0.00
16	Kendrapara	13	6	0	0	0.00
17	Keonjhar	47	34	0	0	0.00
18	Khurda	30	11	0	1	3.33
19	Koraput	39	20	0	0	0.00
20	Malkangiri	19	13	0	0	0.00
21	Mayurbhanj	79	56	0	0	0.00
22	Nawapara	5	4	0	0	0.00
23	Nawarangpur	15	8	0	0	0.00
24	Nayagarh	10	5	0	0	0.00
25	Phulbani	30	17	0	1	3.33
26	Puri	24	10	0	0	0.00
27	Rayagada	17	16	0	0	0.00
28	Sambalpur	20	11	0	0	0.00
29	Sonepur	8	3	0	1	12.50
30	Sundargarh	47	36	0	2	4.26
	All-Orissa	683	378	1	11	1.76

Source: White Paper on Police Administration-1997,  
Home Department, Government of Orissa

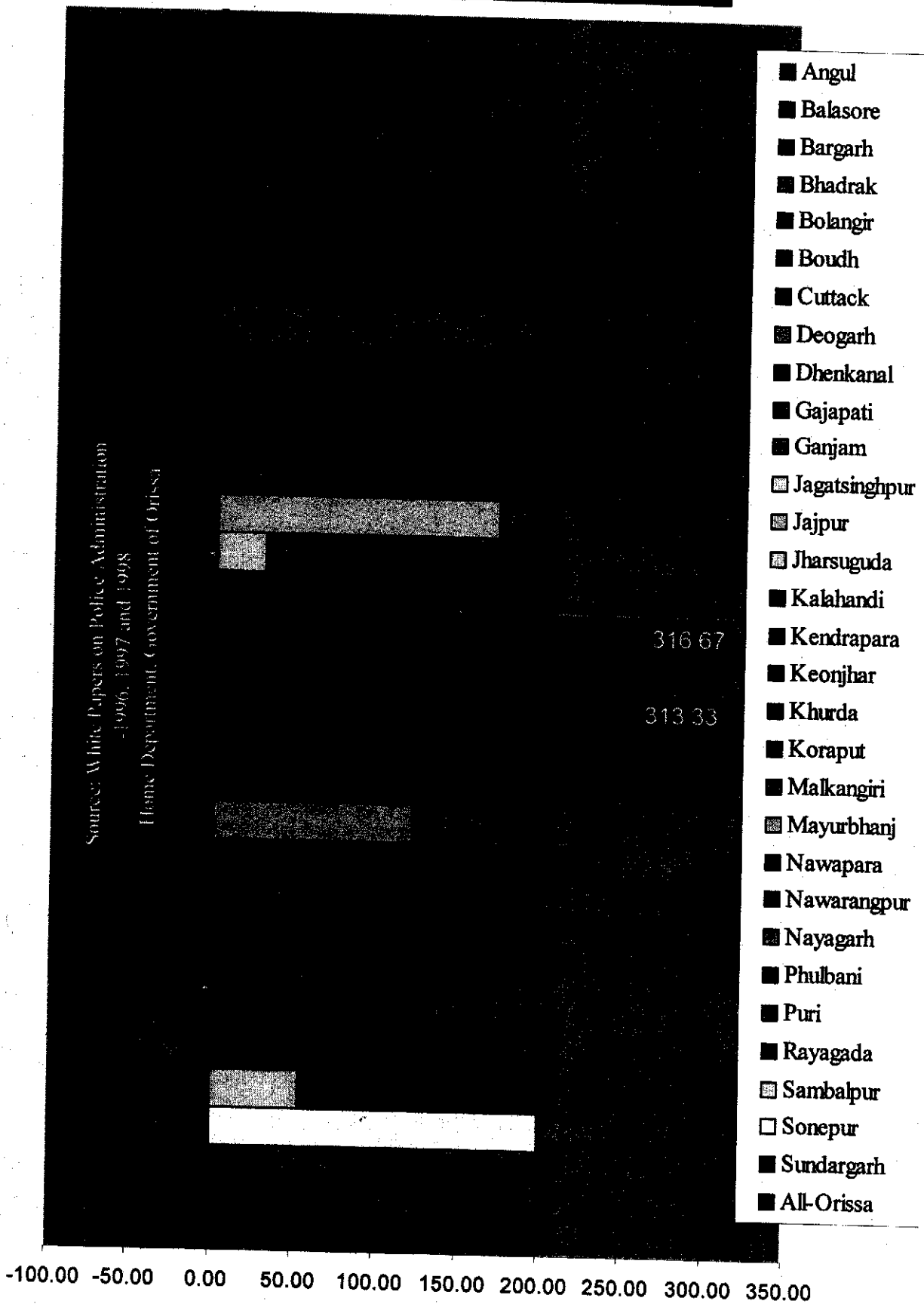
Sl.	Districts	Reported	Challan	Settled		% of cases settled over reported
				Convicted	Acquitted	
1	Angul	33	11	0	0	0.00
2	Balasore	60	19	0	0	0.00
3	Bargarh	21	12	0	0	0.00
4	Bhadrak	15	10	0	0	0.00
5	Bolangir	23	16	0	0	0.00
6	Boudh	6	4	0	0	0.00
7	Cuttack	48	17	0	0	0.00
8	Deogarh	8	3	0	0	0.00
9	Dhenkanal	21	14	0	0	0.00
10	Gajapati	10	6	0	0	0.00
11	Ganjam	23	16	0	0	0.00
12	Jagatsinghpur	10	6	0	0	0.00
13	Jajpur	19	5	0	0	0.00
14	Jharsuguda	13	10	0	0	0.00
15	Kalahandi	22	17	1	0	4.55
16	Kendrapara	25	3	0	0	0.00
17	Keonjhar	60	41	0	0	0.00
18	Khurda	62	26	0	0	0.00
19	Koraput	29	16	0	0	0.00
20	Malkangiri	14	9	0	0	0.00
21	Mayurbhanj	75	47	1	1	2.67
22	Nawapara	10	6	0	0	0.00
23	Nawarangpur	14	12	0	0	0.00
24	Nayagarh	9	2	0	0	0.00
25	Phulbani	25	8	0	0	0.00
26	Puri	25	5	0	0	0.00
27	Rayagada	18	15	0	0	0.00
28	Sambalpur	23	10	0	0	0.00
29	Sonepur	15	9	0	0	0.00
30	Sundargarh	60	33	1	0	1.67
	All-Orissa	796	408	3	1	0.50

Source: White Paper on Police Administration-1998,  
Home Department, Government of Orissa

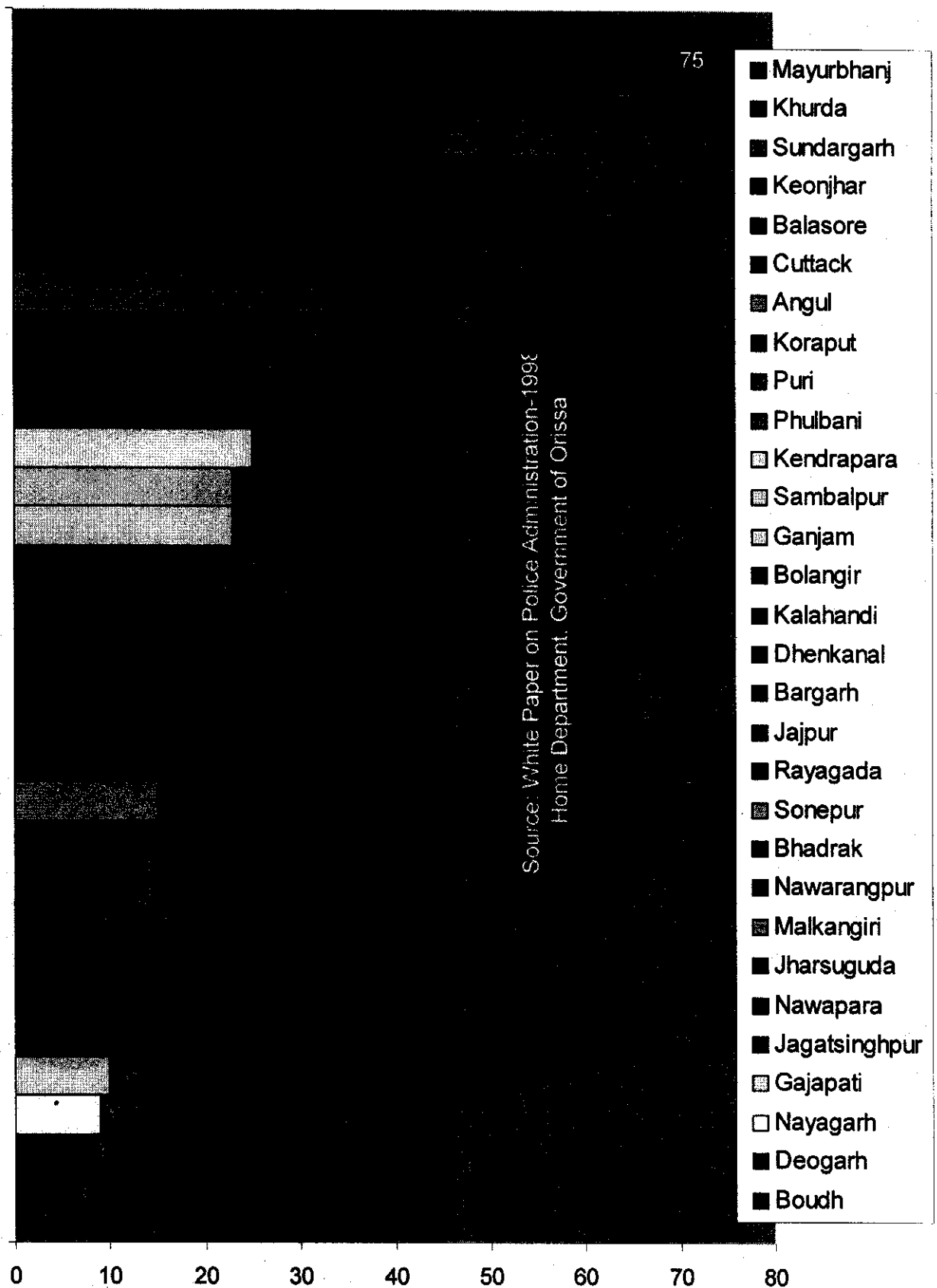
**Figure 1.12**  
**District Profile of Reported Rape Cases in Orissa**  
 (Percentage variations in 1998 over 1994)



**Figure 1.12**  
**District Profile of Reported Rape Cases in Orissa**  
 (Percentage variations in 1998 over 1994)



**Figure 1.14**  
**District Profile(descending order)**  
**of Reported Rape Cases in Orissa in 1998**

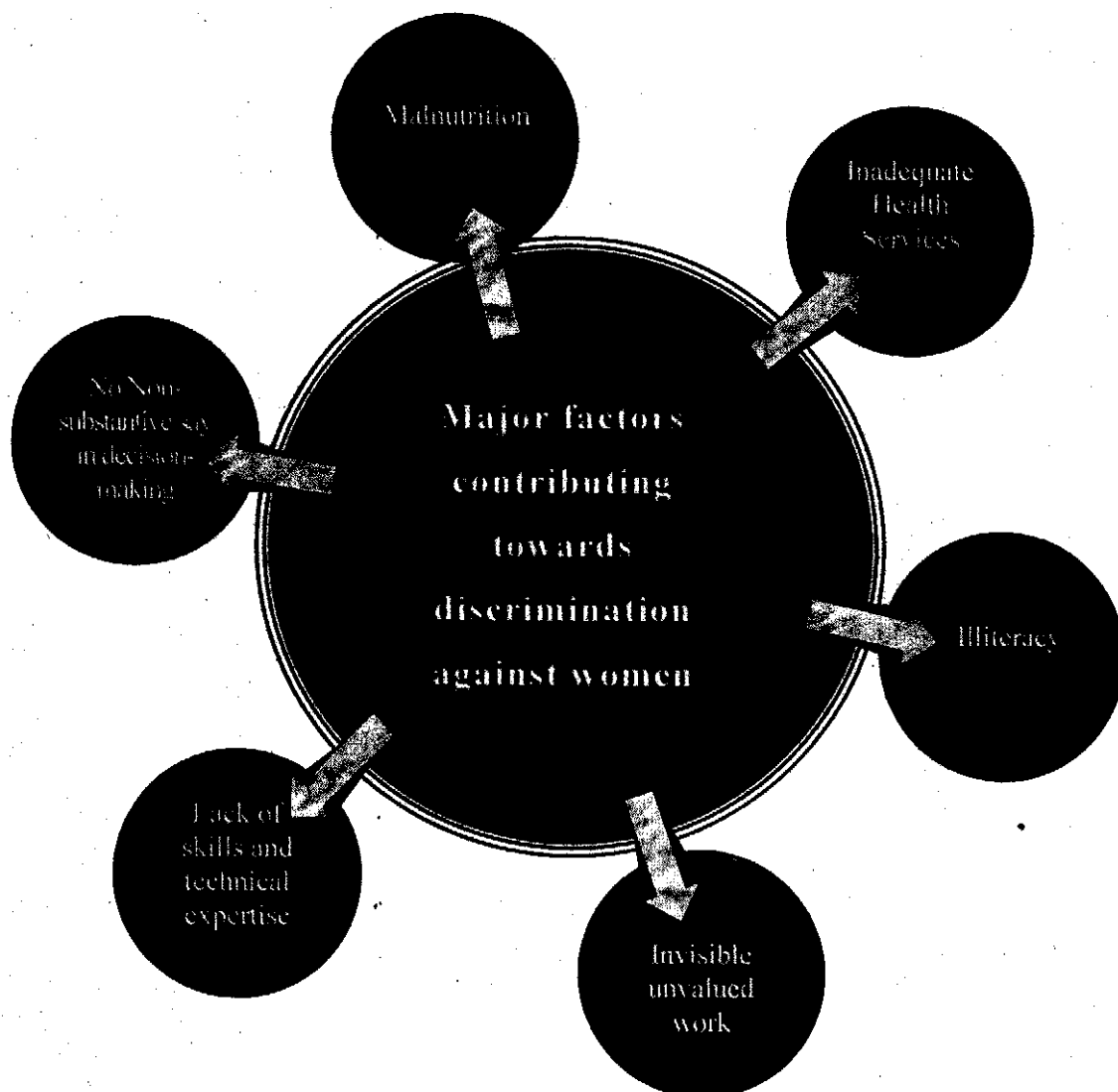


## Factors contributing towards atrocities and discrimination against women

The atrocities against women are directly related to gender inequalities-subjugation, marginalisation and disempowerment of women. The major areas of discrimination against women (see figure 1.15) in the country, for that matter in the State of Orissa, could be broadly categorised as follows:

- Malnutrition
- Inadequate Health Services
- Illiteracy
- Invisible unvalued work
- Lack of skills and technical expertise
- No/non-substantive say in decision-making

**Figure 1.15**



Although, India is a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and has taken legislative and administrative measures to prevent and control violence against women; the desired impacts are yet to be felt and percolated.

### **Need for the Study**

It was proposed to undertake a study on Atrocities against Women, with special reference to Dowry Torture and Sexual Violence in the State of Orissa to come out with an integrated set of findings and recommendations with an pan-Indian perspective to prevent and control atrocities against women.

The review of the existing work on dowry torture and sexual violence against women in India and covering the State of Orissa; reveals a vacuum in the analysis of such incidents in a larger integrated social perspective like their relationships with the status of women, urbanisation and industrialisation and legal redressal mechanism.

The main objectives of the study were as follows:

- ◆ to study the genesis, nature and extent of dowry related torture and death as well as sexual violence in Orissa;
- ◆ the causes of dowry demands and sexual harassment;
- ◆ the physical-mental-psychological-emotional impact of such violence perpetuated on women;
- ◆ the individual (victim's), family and societal responses to such violence;
- ◆ effectiveness of legal redressal mechanism to prevent and control such crimes;
- ◆ existence and impact of stress management system, including counselling;

- ◆ the effects of urbanisation and industrialisation on the increase of dowry torture and sexual violence, including those related to working women;
- ◆ linkages between crime against women, urban crime and crime against weaker sections of the society in areas of dowry cruelty and sexual violence;
- ◆ the relationship between incidence of violence in the areas of dowry torture and sexual violence as well as the status of women;
- ◆ examine the institutional responses, role of judiciary and police and also knowledge about different laws;

The study was also aimed at suggesting a sustainable engendered development paradigm for gender equity to prevent dowry torture and sexual violence.

### **Hypotheses**

The study was based on the following hypotheses :

- ⇒ Dowry torture is prevalent at the all levels of socio-economic strata
- ⇒ Dowry torture is a continuous process leading to dowry murder and dowry suicide
- ⇒ Acceptance of dowry torture is directly related to the status of the victims, with economic independence of women giving them flexibility in exercising appropriate choices
- ⇒ Dowry, which is a social evil, has been accepted as a social practice with most families trying to accommodate the demands at the time of marriage and also afterwards
- ⇒ Sexual violence against women is directly related to the status of women, especially the economic empowerment



- ⇒ The impact of dowry torture and sexual violence has a deeper mental, psychological and emotional impact in comparison to the physical aspects
- ⇒ Urbanisation and industrialisation; which have lead to the changing socio-cultural ethos with premium on competitiveness, aggressiveness and violent attitudes; have contributed to the rise of atrocities against women
- ⇒ Such atrocities are also rising in rural, backward and inaccessible areas; which are in a process of transitional development and are being mainstreamed for urbanisation
- ⇒ Victims and their families in most cases accept the torture and violence rather than protest or withdraw from the scenario
- ⇒ Societal response to such incidents is very poor and enforces the need for attitudinal changes for elimination of discrimination and violence against women
- ⇒ Legal redressal mechanism to prevent and control such crime have failed to adequately respond as the rate of settlements is very poor
- ⇒ Conviction rates in such crimes are very lower in comparison to the acquittal rates, which is a critical commentary on the investigating mechanism
- ⇒ The existing stress management mechanism, including counselling services, is utterly inadequate and even non-existent in backward and inaccessible areas to cope up with the situation
- ⇒ Multi-pronged integrated uninterrupted efforts; comprising of vigorous social campaign to bring attitudinal change to prevent and control discrimination and atrocities against women, raising the social and educational status of women, economic empowerment of women as well as safeguards and reforms in the criminal justice system are needed to control the crime against women.

### **Methodology**

The study is mainly based on primary data collected by a team of Project Co-ordinator, Research Officer and Investigators under the guidance and supervision of the Project Director through a system of participatory observation. Two sets of schedules-one on dowry torture and the other on sexual violence (Annexure -I) were

prepared and pretested before collection of data from the field. Primary data collected has been supplemented by data collected from Home Department, Government of Orissa; Women and Child Development Department, Government of Orissa; State Commission for Women, Orissa and enriched through a process of consultations with various non-governmental organisations, social activists working in the field and experts doing research work on crime against women.

A three-stage stratified sampling procedure has been followed in the selection of samples for the purpose of study. In the first stage, districts have been selected on the basis of level of development and dominance of tribal population. Accordingly; Cuttack and Khurda have been selected to represent developed districts, Bolangir and Rayagada to represent backward districts and Kondhamal and Kalahandi as tribal dominated districts.

In the second stage, 2 blocks from each district have been chosen to represent urban and rural background of the samples. Accordingly, Tumudibandha (rural) and G. udayagiri (urban) blocks from Kondhamal district, Madanpur- Rampur(rural) and Bhawanipatana(urban) blocks from Kalahandi district, Gunapur(rural) and Rayagada(urban) blocks from Rayagada district, Agalpur(rural) and Patnagarh(urban) blocks from Bolangir district, Kantapada(rural) and Cuttack(urban) blocks from Cuttack district and Balianata(rural) and Bhubaneswar(urban) blocks from Khurda district have been selected.

In the third stage, 100 sample victims each of dowry torture and sexual violence have been selected from each sample district. The 1,200 samples were distributed to represent urban and rural background in the ratio of urban to rural population of the districts as far as possible. The distribution of sample size with its rural and urban background is given in Table 1.11.

**Table 1.11**  
**Rural / Urban Population and Sample Size.**

Sl. No.	Districts	Population (1991 Census)		Dowry Sample Size		*S.V Sample Size		Total
		Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban	
1	Cuttack	1486878	485861	70	30	70	30	200
2	Khurda	986733	516281	60	40	60	40	200
3	Rayagada	624658	89326	83	17	83	17	200
4	Bolangir	1101518	129420	89	11	89	11	200
5	Kondhama l	510619	35662	87	13	87	13	200
6	Kalahandi	1052740	78163	90	10	90	10	200
Total		5763146 (81)	1334713 (19)	479 (80)	121 (20)	479 (80)	121 (20)	1200 (100)

Figures in Parentheses indicate Percentage to Total.

Source -Field Data

Population Source - Directorate of Economics and Statistics.

\*S.V. represents Sexual Violence

Field survey to collect data was conducted from May 1999 to October 1999. The data collected has been tabulated and analysed through use of simple statistical tools to test the hypotheses.

## **Limitation of Study**

Violence against women being a sensitive issue, difficulty was faced in eliciting information from the victims in large number of cases. In few cases, objections were raised by male members of the family. Close associates of the victims had to be contacted and taken into confidence in such cases for supplementing information. Within the time and budgetary constraints, authenticity of the information has been maintained as far as possible.

Institutional response to the violence has been collected mainly from the victims' standpoint, as within the time constraint the concerned agencies could not be contacted in person to crosscheck the statements of the victims. However, the primary nature of information elicited from the victims has an advantage over the data presentation by the institutional agencies.

## **Chapter Plan**

The first chapter gives an introduction to the study. It analyses the growth in the incidence and rate of atrocities against women in the country and also in Orissa with a comparative perspective in different crime heads in time series. The objectives, hypotheses and methodology of the study have also been provided in this chapter.

The second chapter contains the main findings of the study on dowry torture. The age group distribution, caste configurations, educational background, occupational status, awareness level and adaptation process of the dowry victims; economic status of in-laws' families; decision-makers of dowry demands; time span in occurrence of dowry torture; causes, nature, frequency and categories of dowry torture; nature of redressal process; causes of non-reporting; family and societal response as well as institutional response have been critically analysed in this chapter.

The third chapter provides the main findings of the study on sexual violence. The age variations, caste configurations, educational background, occupational status

The third chapter provides the main findings of the study on sexual violence. The age variations, caste configurations, educational background, occupational status and marital status of the sexual violence victims; educational background, occupational background and economic status of the heads of the parents' families of the sexual violence victims; gender discrimination among sexual violence victims; relationship with parental families; access to media; the categories of inflictors of the sexual violence; nature and causes of sexual violence; nature of redressal; causes of non-reporting as well as family support have been analysed empirically in this chapter.

The fourth chapter provides 5 case studies, which are specifically developed in-depth from the samples, highlighting the nature and circumstance of violence and the institutional response to these cases.

The fifth and final chapter contains the conclusions of the study and provides a set of recommendations for the prevention and control of atrocities against women in the State of Orissa, with a pan-Indian perspective.

The schedules used in conducting the study have been annexed as Appendixes. The references contain only selective thematic reports and books. The ephemeral, but helpful source, has been the articles appeared in major English and Oriya dailies between 1987 to 2000.

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Chapter Two

**Findings of Study-Dowry Torture**

The concept of dowry is age old. It has existed in the society perhaps from the day marriage took place. So long as dowry in the form of gifts was given by the parents at the time of marriage willingly and voluntarily, it did not create any social problem. However, when the demand beyond the capability of the parents is pushed by the in-law's family before or after marriage, the practice of dowry assumes a menacing dimension. While in most cases, victim silently bears the burnt of the torture; in some cases it result in suicide, murder or separation. In this section, an attempt is made to critically analyse the dowry-related torture in the State.

### Age Group Distribution of Dowry Victims

To find out whether dowry-related torture is restricted to initial years of marriage or persists even for a longer period after marriage, the sample dowry victims have been classified into different age groups (see Table 2.1 and Figure 2.1).

Table 2.1

Age Group Distribution of Sample Dowry Victims

Sl. No.	Districts	18 - 25 Years	26 - 33 Years	34 & Above	Total
1	Cuttack	70	30	0	100
2	Khurda	57	34	9	100
3	Rayagada	44	54	2	100
4	Bolangir	59	36	5	100
5	Kondhamal	70	24	6	100
6	Kalahandi	60	30	10	100
	Total	360 (60)	208 (34)	32 (6)	600 (100)

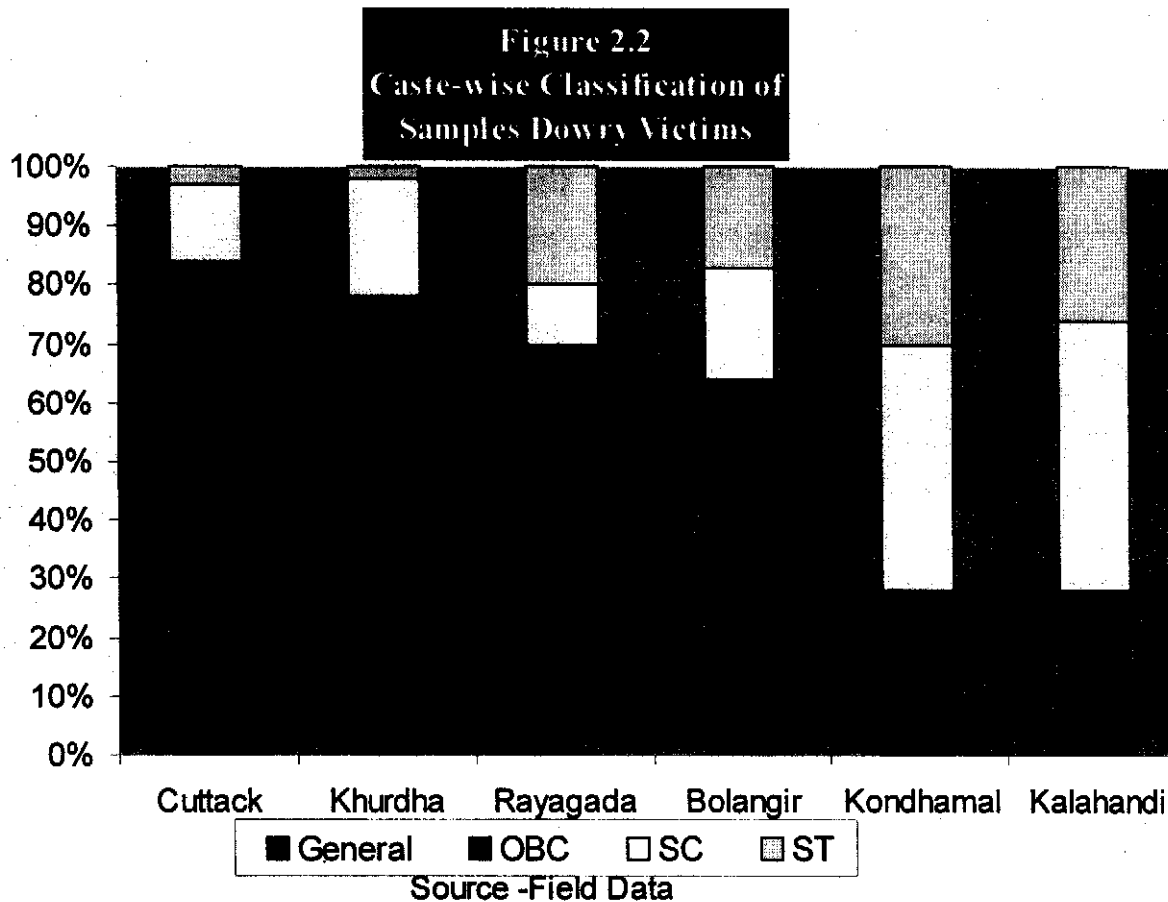
Source -Field Data (Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total.)



**Table 2.2**  
**Caste-wise Classification of Samples Dowry Victims**

Sl. No.	Districts	General	OBC	SC	ST	Total
1	Cuttack	76	8	13	3	100
2	Khurdha	58	20	20	2	100
3	Rayagada	38	32	10	20	100
4	Bolangir	18	46	19	17	100
5	Kondhamal	10	18	42	30	100
6	Kalahandi	8	20	46	26	100
	<b>Total</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>600</b>
		(35)	(24)	(25)	(16)	(100)

Figures in Parentheses indicate Percentage to Total.  
Source -Field Data



It is observed that dowry torture pervades all castes. Inter-district caste variations of the dowry victims is due to difference in the caste compositions of the districts. For example, Kondhamal and Kalahandi districts have more scheduled tribe dowry victims as they are tribal dominated districts, with the percentage of tribal population to total population constituting 51.51 and 28.89 respectively. On the contrary, Cuttack and Khurda, which have 3.49 and 5.14 percentage of tribal population to total population, have the lowest scheduled tribe victims of 3 and 2 respectively.

### Educational Background of Dowry Victims

It is generally accepted that education brings awareness among the girls and hence, they protest against marriage where dowry demands are beyond the capacity of their parents. A corollary of this is to hypothesise that dowry tortures are more among the girls with very low or no educational background. To test this hypothesis, the educational qualifications of the dowry victims were collected and analysed (see Table 2.3 and Figure 2.3).

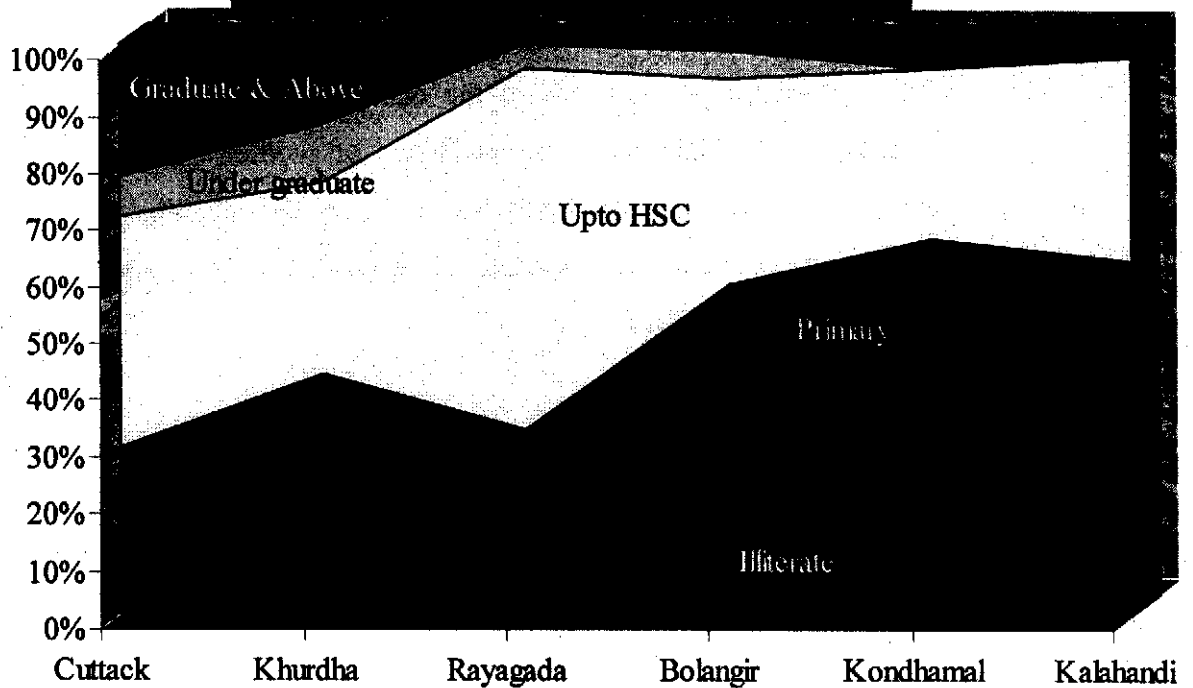
**Table 2.3**

#### Educational Background of Sample Dowry Victims

Sl. No.	Districts	Illiterate	Primary	Upto HSC	Under Graduate	Graduate & Above	Total
1	Cuttack	6	23	41	7	23	100
2	Khurdha	18	24	34	10	14	100
3	Rayagada	8	24	64	4	0	100
4	Bolangir	36	22	36	5	1	100
5	Kondhamal	44	22	30	0	4	100
6	Kalahandi	40	22	36	0	2	100
	Total	152	137	241	26	44	600
		(25)	(23)	(40)	(4)	(8)	(100)

Source: Field Data (Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total)

**Figure 2.3**  
**Educational Background of Sample Dowry Victims**



Source: Field Data

■ Illiterate ■ Primary □ Upto HSC ▒ Under graduate ■ Graduate & Above

It is found that one-fourth of the dowry victims are illiterates and close to another one-fourth (23 per cent) have cleared primary level of the study. 40 per cent of the victims have education upto High School. Only 4 per cent of them are under graduates and 8 per cent are graduates and above. The higher level of education (under graduate and above) has ensured low incidence of dowry torture. Education of girls is, therefore, an important positive element in prevention and control of dowry torture. However, in developed districts of Cuttack and Khurda, education has not been a restraining factor as 77.14 per cent of total under-graduates and above qualified dowry victims hail from the 2 districts. This signifies that the genesis of dowry is deep rooted in the social structure of these educationally developed areas. Another factor, which needs to be highlighted is that 78.94 per cent of the illiterate dowry victims hail from 3 most backward districts of Bolangir, Kondhamal and Kalahandi.

## Occupational Background of the Dowry Victims

Besides education, economic activity could be an important factor in analysing the nature of dowry torture. An analysis of the occupational status of the sample dowry victims suggests that economic independence of women can not be a full protection against dowry torture, it could only lessen the incidence. While 37 per cent of the victims are engaged in economic activities outside their homes, majority of the victims (63 per cent) are housewives.

Thus the hypothesis framed at the beginning of the study that education of women and their earning capacity could help in meeting the challenges of dowry is found to be partially correct.

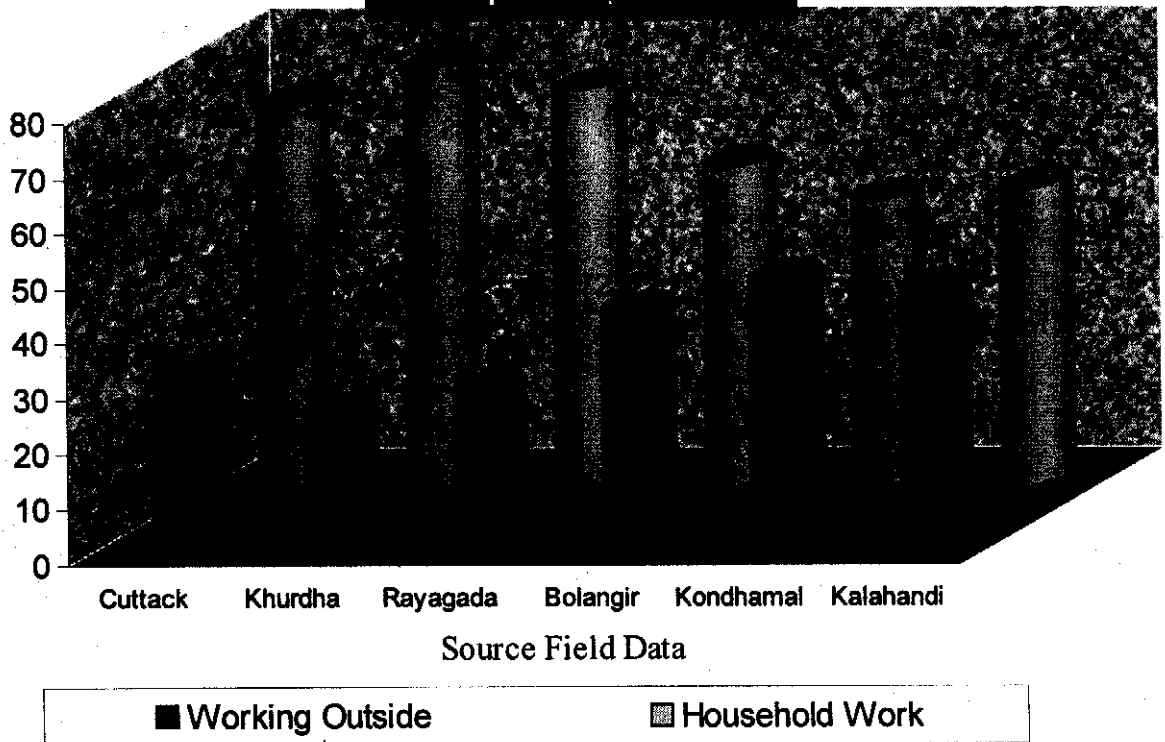
**Table 2.4**  
**Occupational Background of the Sample Dowry Victims**

Sl. No.	Districts	Working Outside	Household Work	Total
1	Cuttack	31	69	100
2	Khurdha	24	76	100
3	Rayagada	28	72	100
4	Bolangir	42	58	100
5	Kondhamal	48	52	100
6	Kalahandi	46	54	100
	Total	219	381	600
		(37)	(63)	(100)

Figures in Parentheses indicate Percentage to Total.

Source Field Data

**Figure 2.4**  
**Occupational background of the**  
**Sample Dowry Victims**



**Educational background of the Heads of the**  
**In-Laws' Families and Dowry Torture**

The educational background of the families of in-laws is an important factor in prevention of dowry torture (see Table 2.5 and Figure 2.5). It is observed that incidence of the dowry torture is less where the heads of the families of in-laws have better education. The problem is more acute, where the heads are illiterate. The incidence of torture is only 10 per cent, where the heads of the families are under graduates/graduates and above. On contrary, 34 per cent torture has taken place, where heads of the families are illiterate. The impact of illiteracy (heads of in-laws' family being illiterate) in such cases are more prominent in the 3 backward/tribal districts of Bolangir, Kondhamal and Kalahandi; which have constituted 63.86 per cent of dowry victims.

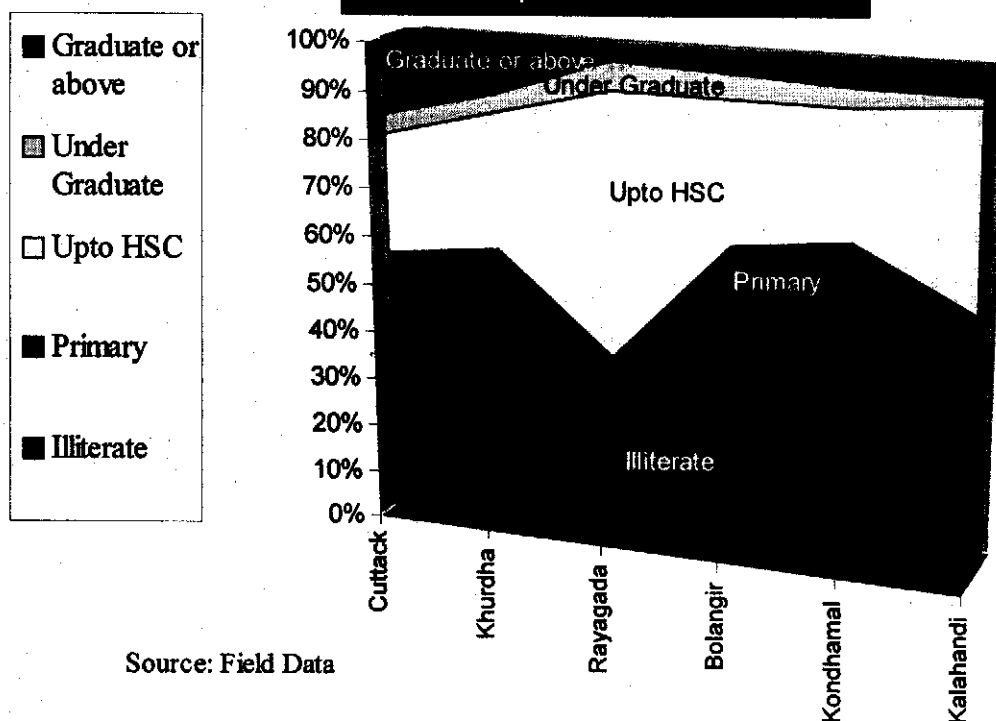
**Table 2.5**

**Educational background of the Heads of the Sample In-Laws' Families**

Sl. No.	Districts	Illiterate	Primary	Up to HSC	Under Graduate	Graduate & Above	Total
1	Cuttack	18	37	25	4	16	100
2	Khurdha	33	25	28	4	10	100
3	Rayagada	22	16	54	6	2	100
4	Bolangir	43	20	29	5	3	100
5	Kondhamal	54	12	26	4	4	100
6	Kalahandi	32	22	40	2	4	100
<b>Total</b>		202	132	202	25	39	600
		(34)	(22)	(34)	(4)	(6)	(100)

Figures in Parentheses indicate Percentage to Total.  
Source -Field Data

**Figure 2.5**  
Educational background of the Heads of the Sample In-Laws' Families



## Economic Status of in-laws' Families and incidence of Dowry Torture

The economic status of the in-law's family is a crucial input to analyse the nature of dowry torture (see Table 2.6 and Figure 2.6). It is observed that dowry torture is more rampant among families with poor income background. In fact, 85 per cent dowry tortures have taken place in families where the monthly income of the in-law's family is Rupees 3,000 or less as opposed to 15 per cent where monthly income of in-law's family is Rupees 3001 and above. A great deal of inter-district variation is, however, observed. In the districts of Cuttack, Khurdha and Rayagada more than 10 per cent of victims belong to the category of highest monthly income of Rs. 5001 and above, while 2 per cent of the families in Kalahandi and no family in Kondhamal belong to this category.

**Table 2. 6**

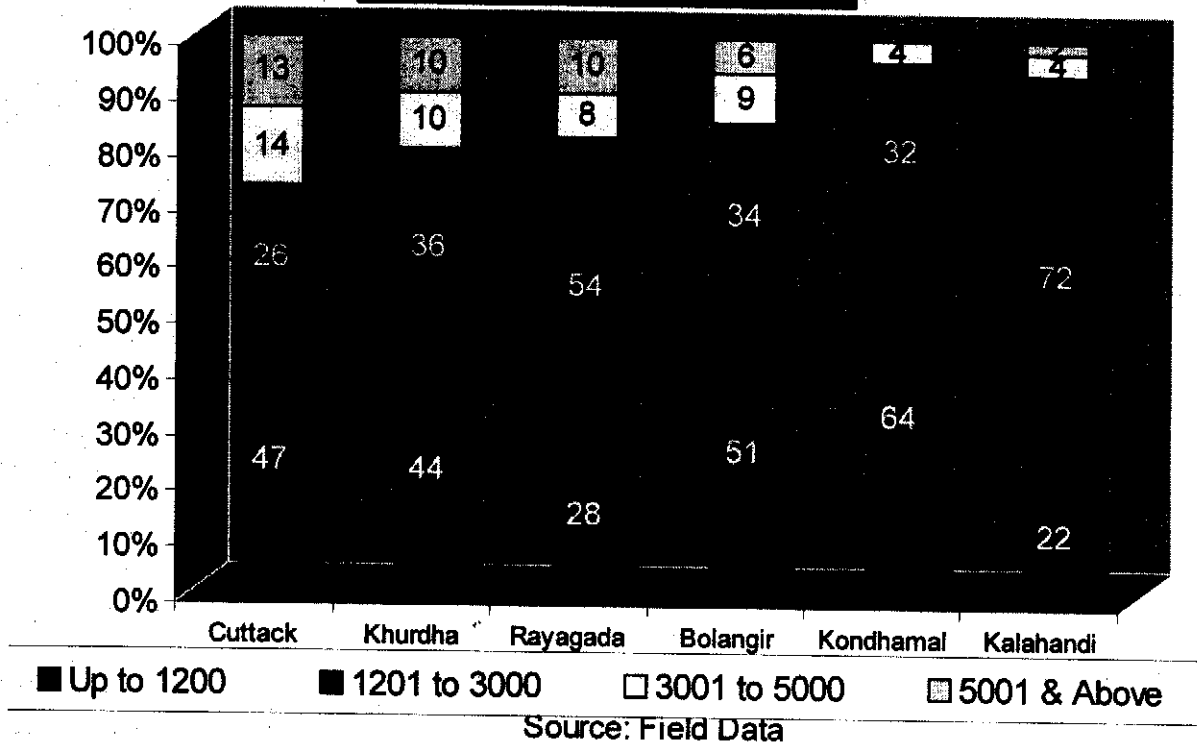
### Economic Status (monthly income) of Sample In-Laws' Families

Sl. No.	Districts	Up to 1200	1201 to 3000	3001 to 5000	5001 & Above	Total
1	Cuttack	47	26	14	13	100
2	Khurdha	44	36	10	10	100
3	Rayagada	28	54	8	10	100
4	Bolangir	51	34	9	6	100
5	Kondhamal	64	32	4	0	100
6	Kalahandi	22	72	4	2	100
	Total	256	254	49	41	600
		(43)	(42)	(8)	(7)	(100)

Figures in Parentheses indicate Percentage to Total.

Source -Field Data

**Figure 2.6**  
**Economic Status (monthly income) of**  
**Sample In-Laws' Families**



### **Decision-makers of Dowry Demands in the in-laws families**

Very often, it is alleged that women are responsible for perpetuation of dowry system and resultant dowry torture. Whether (and how much) to demand dowry at the time of son's marriage or not could be considered as an important decision of the family. Response to the question with regards to who takes major decisions in the family, shows that in 84 per cent of sample families decision makers are male members (see Table 2.7 and Figure 2.7). The popular perception regarding the role of mother-in-laws, therefore, stands punctured. It is also observed that, the process of male hegemony is more prominent in tribal/backward districts, where 78 to 98 per cent decision-makers on dowry demands are male members.

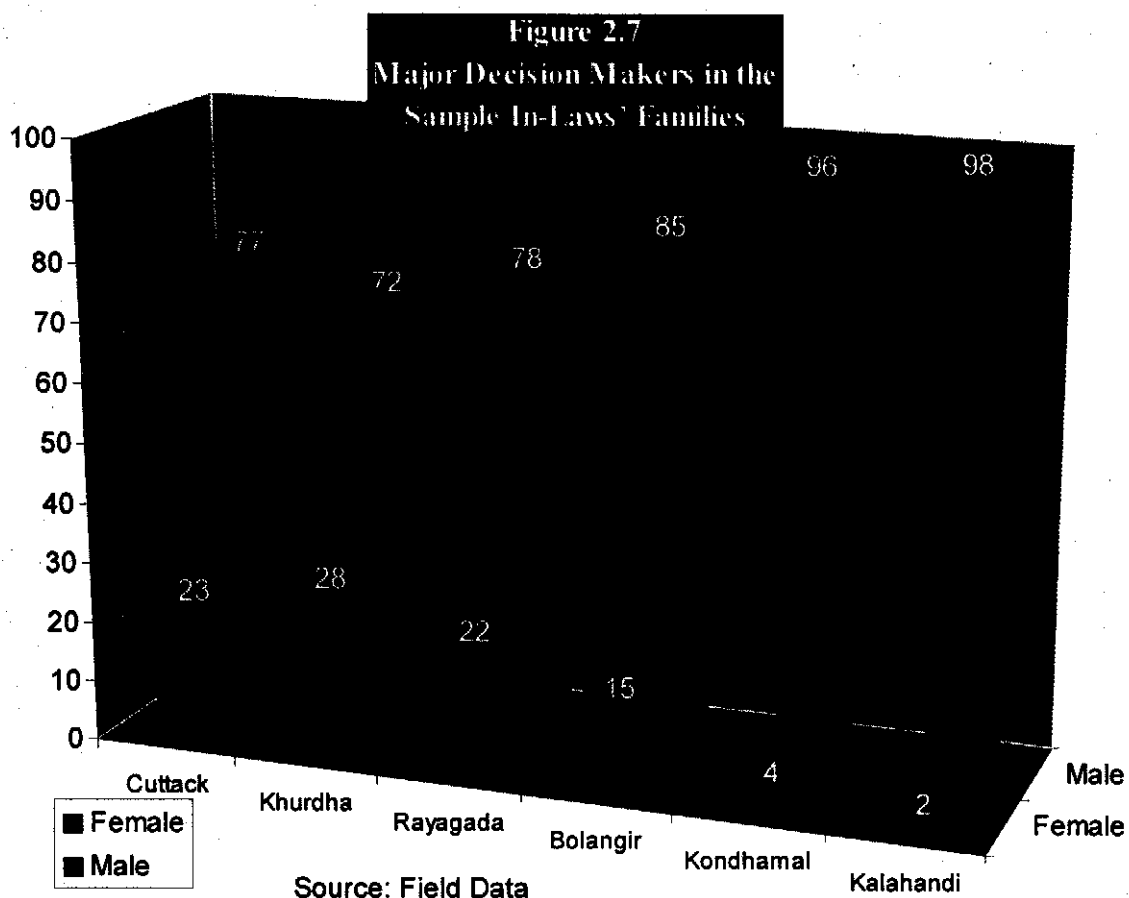


**Table 2.7**

**Major Decision Makers in the Sample In-Laws' Families**

Sl. No.	Districts	Male	Female	Total
1	Cuttack	77	23	100
2	Khurdha	72	28	100
3	Rayagada	78	22	100
4	Bolangir	85	15	100
5	Kondhamal	96	4	100
6	Kalahandi	98	2	100
	<b>Total</b>	<b>506</b> <b>(84)</b>	<b>94</b> <b>(16)</b>	<b>600</b> <b>(100)</b>

Figures in Parentheses indicate Percentage to Total.  
Source -Field Data



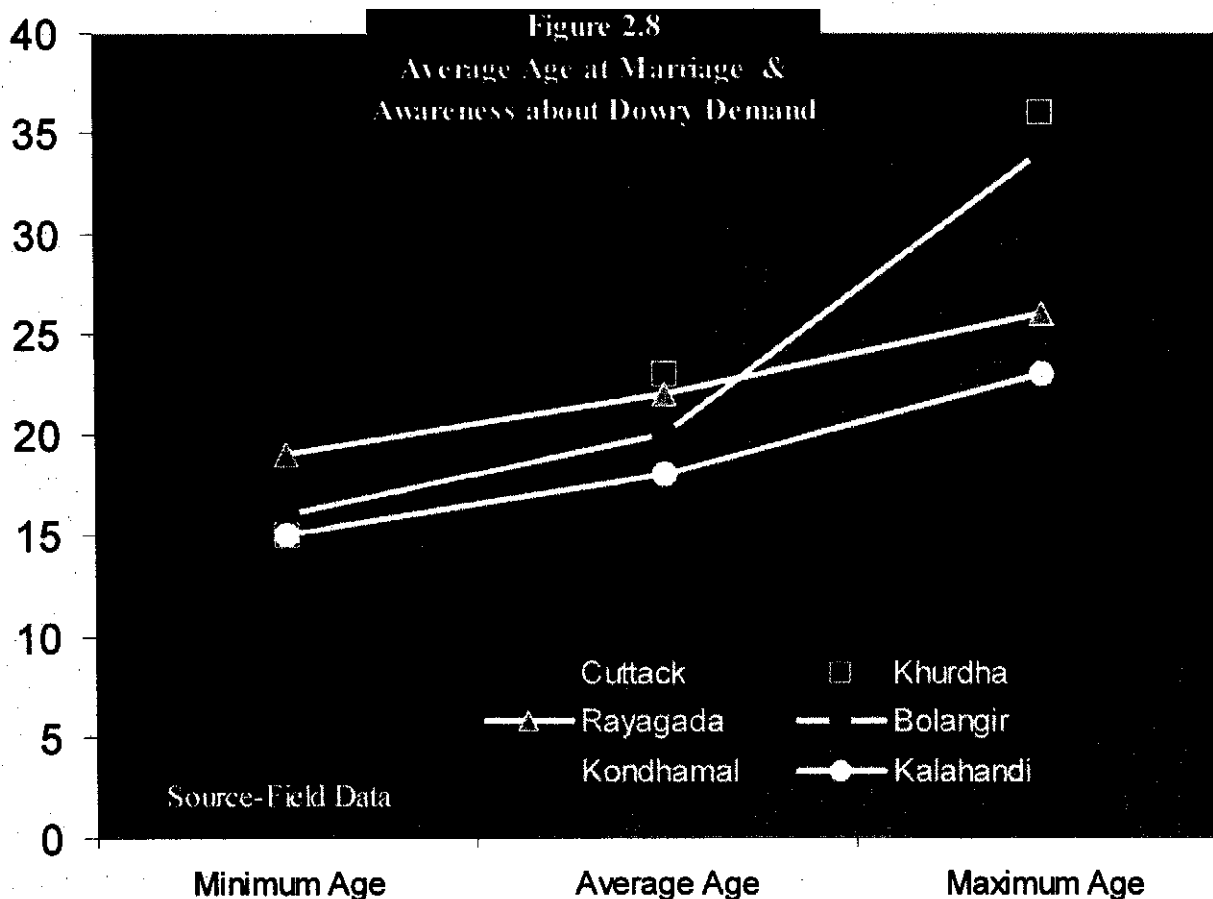
### Average Age at Marriage & Awareness about Dowry Demand

The age at marriage is a crucial input in analysing the dowry torture. With higher age, the girls are supposed to be more conscious and aware about the problems of dowry demand. The average age variations of marriage and the range of awareness about dowry demand are provided in Table 2.8 and Figure 2.8. It is found that average age of marriage is 20, with variations ranging 12 to 36. Kondhamal district has lowest age of 12 and Khurda district has the highest age of 36 at marriage. Kalahandi district has the lowest range of age variation between 15-23, while Khurda district has the highest variation of 15-30. The average percentage awareness about dowry demand at the time of marriage is 76.33. This implies that the girls in majority cases (except Kondhamal, where the awareness is the lowest of 42 per cent) are aware of the acceptance of dowry as part of the marriage.

**Table 2.8**  
**Average Age at Marriage & Awareness about Dowry Demand**

Sl. No.	Districts	Average Age	Range of Variation	Awareness(%)
1	Cuttack	21	15 -30	97
2	Khurdha	23	15 - 36	94
3	Rayagada	22	19 - 26	96
4	Bolangir	20	16 - 34	71
5	Kondhamal	18	12 - 24	42
6	Kalahandi	18	15 - 23	58
Total		20	12 - 36	458 (76.33)

Figure in Parentheses indicates Percentage to Total.  
Source-Field Data



### Nature of Dowry Demands and Adaptation of Brides in-laws' families

The particulars of dowry items and the nature of initial acceptance of the bride in the in-law's family is presented in Table 2.9 and Figure 2.9. In some cases, the dowry demands cover more than one item and, therefore, total percentage of dowry particulars is more than one hundred. Dividing items broadly into gold, cash and kind; it is observed that demand for gold which generally remains in the possession of bride comes from minimum number of families (23 per cent), while maximum number of families (67 per cent) demand dowry in kinds. While in Cuttack and Khurda; items being demanded ranges from utensils, almirah, furniture to television and scooters; in Kondhamal and Kalahandi districts demand ranges from pigs, goats to bicycle and radio/wrist-watch. In Rayagada and Bolangir, there seems to be fascination for land as dowry, besides the other items like refrigerator, scooter. The magnitude of cash demand vary from district to district, it being most prevalent in Rayagada and Khurda and least in practice in Kondhamal district. Rayagada and Kalahandi record highest

and lowest demand for gold respectively. The tribal districts of Kondhamal and Kalahandi have highest demands of dowry in kinds.

**Table 2. 9**  
**Nature of Dowry Demands and Adaptation of Brides in-laws' families**

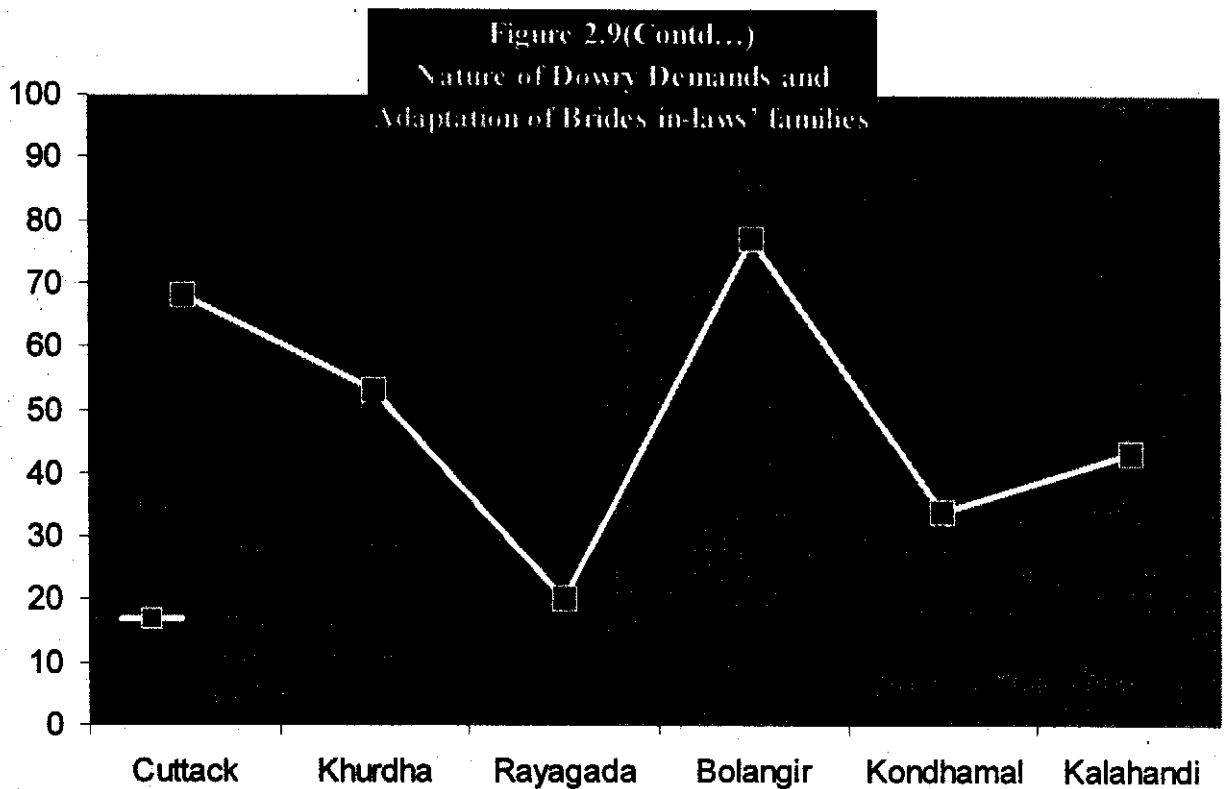
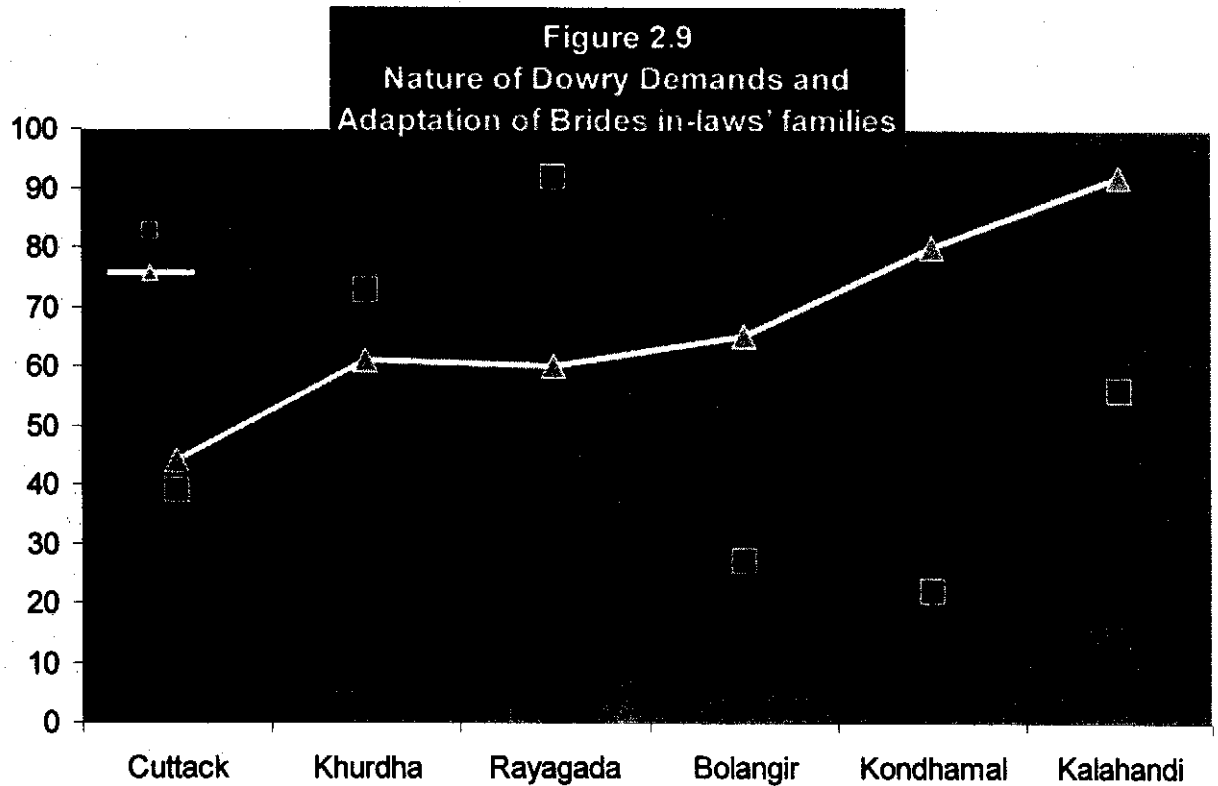
Sl. No.	Districts	Items Demanded			Parents families coping with dowry Demand(%)	Acceptance of brides by in-laws' families (%)
		Gold	Cash	Kinds		
1	Cuttack	19	39	44	45	68
2	Khurdha	26	73	61	50	53
3	Rayagada	48	92	60	18	20
4	Bolangir	18	27	65	87	77
5	Kondhamal	18	22	80	30	34
6	Kalahandi	14	56	92	34	43
Total		136	309	402	346	392
		23	52	67	(58)	(65)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total.

Source - Field Data

It may be noted that these three categories of demand are not exclusive of each other and in many cases families' demand cover more than one category. Further, it is observed that not all families where dowry tortures are reported, have demanded something at the time of marriage. The average acceptance of brides by in-law's families is 65 per cent. The acceptance rate is highest in Bolangir (77 per cent) and lowest in Rayagada (20 per cent). The tribal districts of Kondhamal and Kalahandi also show a lower acceptance rate in comparison to the developed district of Cuttack and Khurda. The average percentage of parents' families coping with the dowry demands is 58 per cent. The adaptation process is highest in Bolangir district (87 per

cent) and lowest in Rayagada district (18 per cent). Kondhamal and Kalahandi districts record a lower adaptation level in comparison to Cuttack and Khurda. Dowry, therefore, persists as a major problem after marriage.



### Time Span of occurrence of Dowry Torture

The time span of occurrence of dowry torture is shown in Table 2.10 and Figure 2.10. It is observed that in 69 per cent of the cases, torture of the bride has started within one year. The torture decreases in subsequent years. The inter-district variation ranges from 80 per cent in Khurda to 56 per cent in Kondhamal in the first year. In case of Cuttack, Khurda and Rayagada, the dowry victims have reported torture after 15 days to few months. In 20 per cent of cases, torture has started after one year and in 11 per cent of cases it has started even after 3 years.

**Table 2.10**

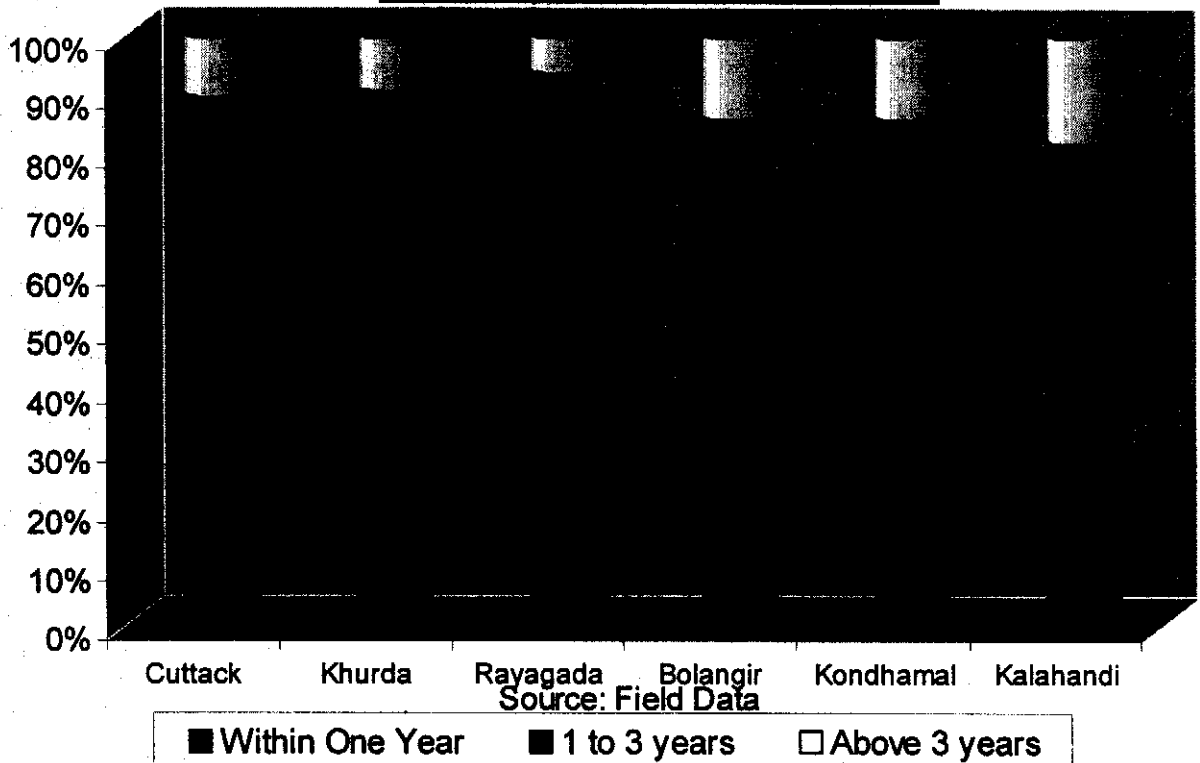
**Time Span (after marriage) of occurrence of Sample Dowry Torture**

Sl.	Districts	Within 1 year	1 to 2 years	3 years & Above	Total
1	Cuttack	78	12	10	100
2	Khurda	80	11	9	100
3	Rayagada	64	30	6	100
4	Bolangir	68	18	14	100
5	Kondhamal	56	30	14	100
6	Kalahandi	66	16	18	100
<b>Total</b>		412	117	71	600
		(69)	(20)	(11)	(100)

Figures in Parentheses indicate Percentage to Total.

Source -Field Data

**Figure 2.10**  
**Time Span (after marriage) of occurrence**  
**of Sample Dowry Torture**



### Causes of Torture

The causes of the dowry torture as per victims' versions are tabulated and presented in Table 2.11 and Figure 2.11. In some cases, the victims have assigned more than one reason and, therefore, total percentage is more than one hundred.

The most important cause (50 per cent) attributed to dowry torture has been the low socio-economic background of the victims. Low level of education, poverty of the parents and in-laws' as well as lack of earning capacity of the victims; have been held responsible for dowry torture. The socio-economic deprivation has the most disadvantaged effects on Kondhamal and Bolangir districts, which have recorded highest number of torture. The second important contributing factor (31 per cent) is the continuous greed of husband and in-laws, who persists in demanding additional dowry. The bride is tortured to put pressure on her parents to extract more benefits. Khurda and Cuttack districts account for highest number of such incidence.

Influence of other members of the family as well as neighbours constitutes the third important cause (19 per cent) of the dowry torture. This is more prominent in Rayagada, Bolangir and Kalahandi districts. The presence of unmarried sister-in-law(s) and the resultant need to give them dowry generates more demands and resultant torture. This segment, constituting 11 per cent of dowry torture, is more prominent in Khurda and Cuttack districts.

Incapability to cope with household work has also been cited as a factor responsible for dowry torture (9 per cent). The victims have stated that though dowry has not been an issue initially, their failure to cope with the household work expected from them led to more dowry demand and resultant torture in subsequent years. This has been found to be a typical feature of Kondhamal district, where women who work mostly outside, are also expected to do all the household chores.

The other factors, which constitute 17 per cent of dowry torture; are alcohol/drug addiction/extra-marital relationship of the husband, birth of a number of girl children and unemployment/underemployment of the husband. These are most prominent in Kalahandi district and finds its lowest manifestation in Cuttack district.

The analysis suggests that it is neither the poverty nor the greed alone that leads to dowry demand and subsequent torture. The dowry given whether willingly or forcibly has a spread effect on the society and leads to more and more of such demand and its resultant torture.

In tribal area, dowry was unheard of in seventies, even in first part of eighties, as revealed from discussion with parents of the victims. Rather, some demand was placed by the parents of the bride at the time of negotiation of marriage, commonly described as "*Kanya Suna*". The dowry in the present form emerged primarily under the influence of the migrated population to these area from the coastal region.



The findings support the hypothesis that social factors play an important role in giving shape to dowry demand and that dowry torture in low economic background is the spread effect of dowry given in high income group.

**Table 2.11**  
**Causes of Torture**

Sl. No.	Districts	a	B	Cuttack	D	E	f
1	Cuttack	37	0	12	16	40	6
2	Khurdha	27	2	15	20	43	12
3	Rayagada	42	10	30	15	30	18
4	Bolangir	70	14	27	13	17	12
5	Kondhamal	86	26	8	4	38	14
6	Kalahandi	36	0	22	0	20	38
Total		298	52	114	68	188	100
		(50)	(9)	(19)	(11)	(31)	(17)

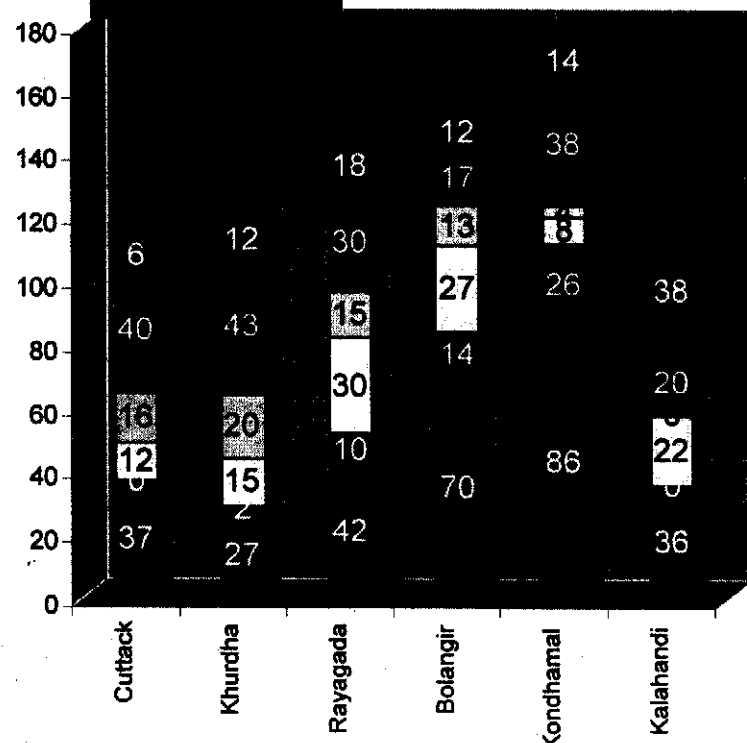
Figures in Parentheses indicate Percentage to Total.  
Source -Field Data

**Index**

- a – Low socio-economic background
- b – Incapable of doing household work
- c – Influence of other family members & neighbours
- d – Unmarried sister-in-law in the house
- e – Greed of in-laws & husband
- f - Any Other.

- Any Other
- Greed of in-laws & husband
- Unmarried sister in law in the house
- Influence of other family members & neighbours
- Incapable of Doing household work
- Low Socio-economic Background

**Figure 2.11**  
**Causes of Torture**



Source: Field Data

**Nature of Torture**

The dowry torture varies from scolding to burning (see Table 2.12 and Figure 2.12). It may be noted that torture assumes more than one form and, therefore, summation of different categories exceeds 100 per cent. Scolding happens to be most common form of torture, constituting 80 per cent. Beating is the next widely practised form of torture (71 per cent). Starving is another important form of torture (39 per cent), with inter-district variation ranging from 60 per cent in Khurda to 6 per cent in Rayagada. Cases of burning, which includes injury through hot iron rods or wood or cigarette, are found mostly in Rayagada and Kondhamal and have least occurrence in Bolangir and Cuttack districts. The other forms of torture includes poisoning leading to death in some cases, forced separation and burnt to death. Inter-district variation is observed to be very high in this category ranging from 60 per cent in Rayagada to 1 per cent in Cuttack. Out of the total 103 cases in this category, 16 have met with deaths. This type of incidence is highest in Rayagada. The analysis suggests that

women continue to live with torture irrespective of their socio-economic background and accept it as part of life. The finding supports the hypothesis that repercussion of mental torture is far reaching than physical torture.

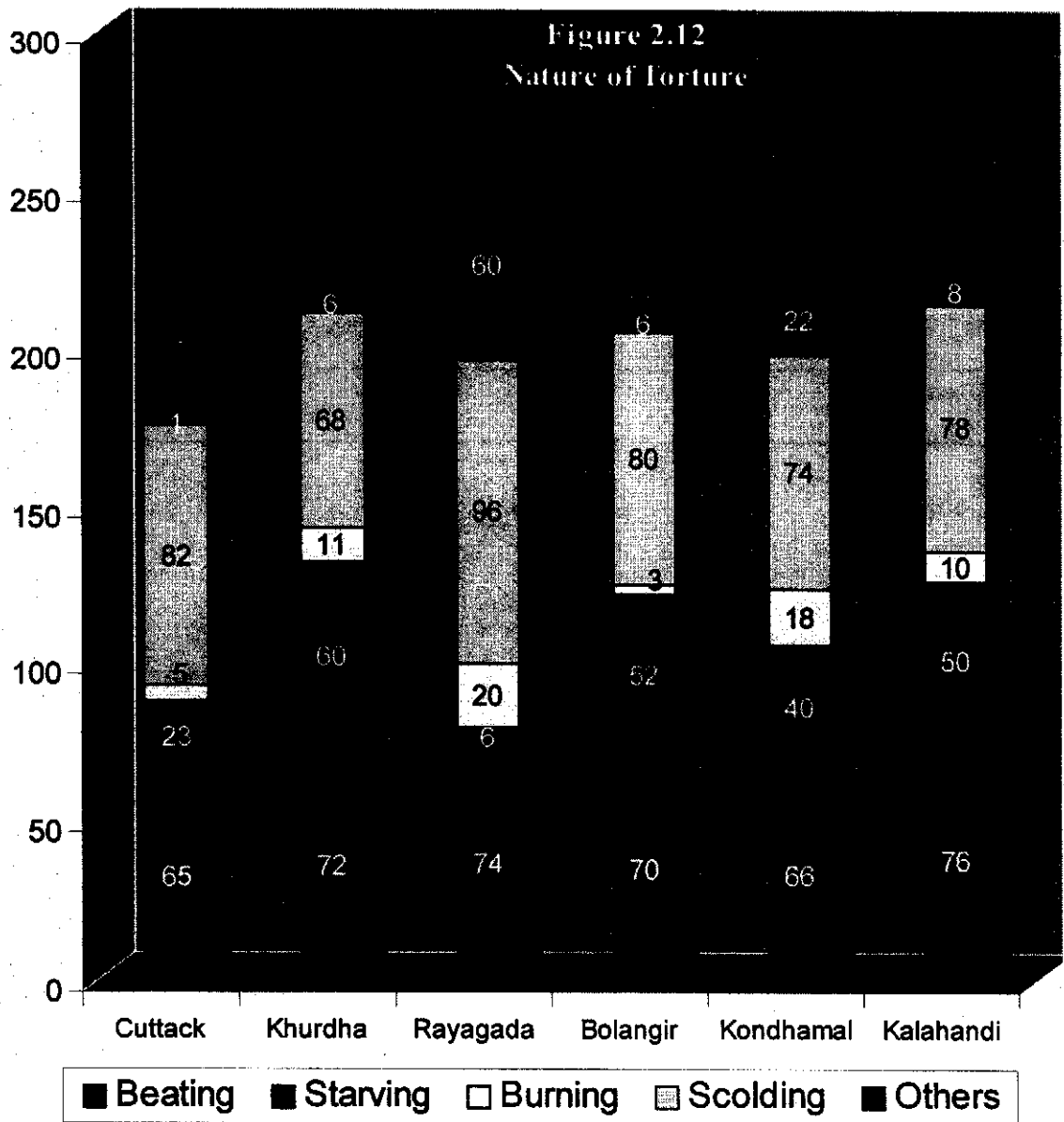
**Table 2.12**  
**Nature of Torture**

Sl. No.	Districts	a	b	C	d	e
1	Cuttack	65	23	5	82	1
2	Khurdha	72	60	11	68	6
3	Rayagada	74	6	20	96	60
4	Bolangir	70	52	3	80	6
5	Kondhamal	66	40	18	74	22
6	Kalahandi	76	50	10	78	8
Total		423	231	67	478	103
		(71)	(39)	(11)	(80)	(17)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total no. of samples.  
Source -Field Data

**Index**

- a Beating
- b Starving
- c Burning
- d Scolding
- e Others



### Frequency of Torture and Categories of Inflictors

Dowry torture happens to be a regular feature in 71 per cent of families (see Table 1.13 and Figure 1.13). The frequency of regular occurrence is most prominent in Rayagada district (92 per cent), followed by Cuttack district (91 per cent). It has lowest frequency rate in Bolangir district. The periodical nature of torture, which constitutes 29 per cent of the frequency of torture, is most prominent in Bolangir district (66 per cent).

In majority of cases (86 per cent), husband happens to be the tormentors, while in 51 per cent cases the inflictors are other family members/in-laws (it may be noted that the inflictors in some cases overlap and, therefore, summation of two different categories exceeds 100 per cent). This negates the commonly held notion that women are at the back of torture of women. Husband's role in such cases are more prominent in the tribal and backward districts of Kandhamal, Kondhamal, Rayagada and Bonlangir. In Cuttack and Khurda districts, other family members. have a larger role in committing and perpetuating torture in comparison to other districts. Broadly, however, it has been observed that in majority of cases, dowry-related torture and crimes are being committed by the husbands in association with other family members.

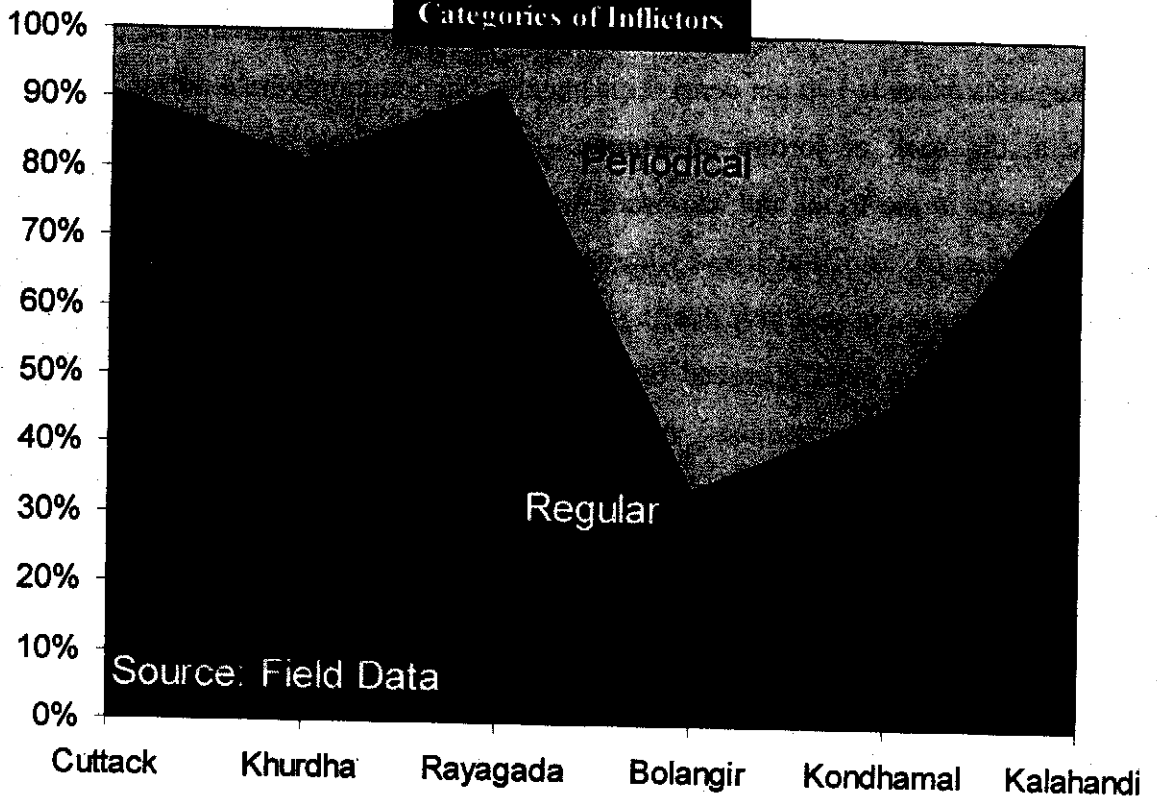
**Table 2.13**  
**Frequency of Torture and Categories of Inflictors**

Sl. No.	Districts	Frequency of Torture		Inflictors	
		Regular	Periodical	Husband	Other Family Members
1	Cuttack	91	9	74	72
2	Khurdha	81	19	73	85
3	Rayagada	92	8	90	44
4	Bolangir	34	66	85	58
5	Kondhamal	46	54	92	24
6	Kalahandi	82	18	100	20
Total		426	174	514	303
		(71)	(29)	(86)	(51)

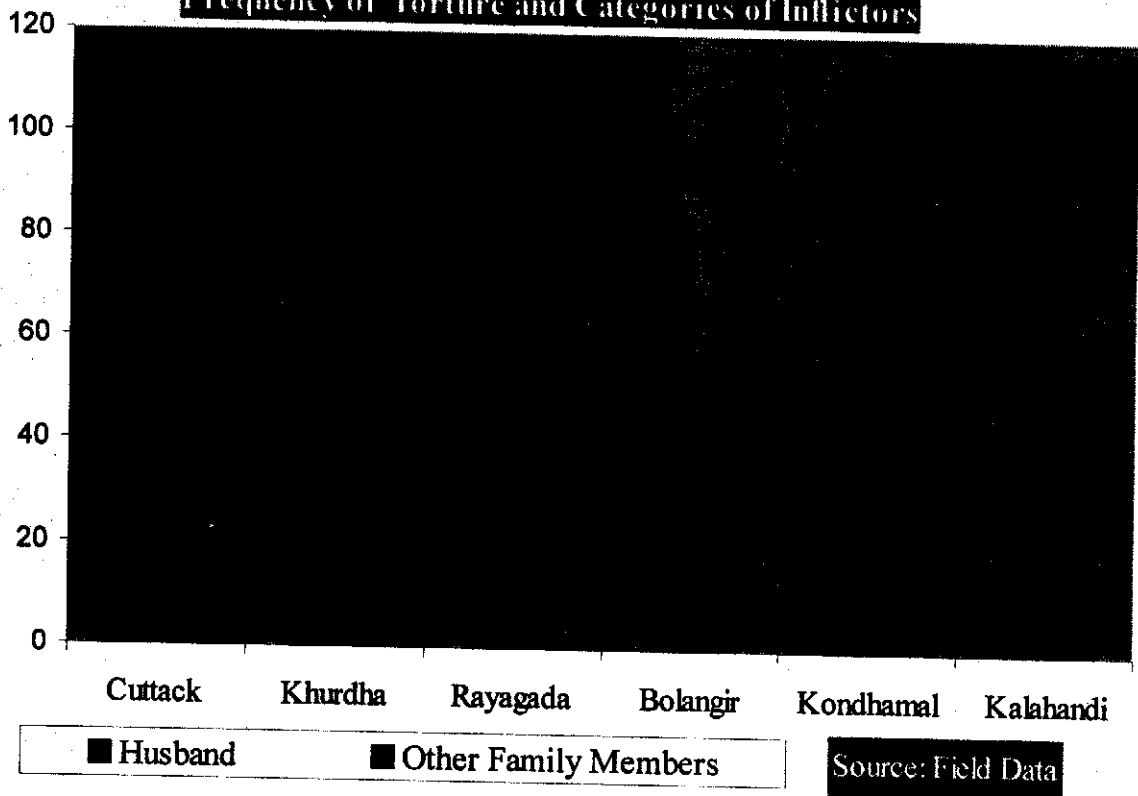
Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total no of samples.

Source -Field Data

**Figure 2.13**  
Frequency of Torture and Categories of Inflictors



**Figure 2.13(Contd..)**  
Frequency of Torture and Categories of Inflictors



## **Nature of Redressal availed by Dowry Victims**

An analysis of the response of the criminal justice system and other available institutional frameworks to prevent and control dowry torture and to provide justice to the victim is pertinent. Most of the dowry-related torture and crimes go unreported. Out of 600 samples, only 261 cases constituting 44 per cent have been reported. Among reported cases, majority (54 per cent) are reported to the police (see table 2.14 and Figure 2.14). This trend is true to all districts except Cuttack and Bolangir where Family Counselling Centres (FCCs) are seen to be performing a relatively more important role. In districts of Rayagada, Kondhamal and Kalahandi; FCCs, on the other hand, is observed to have no role. In fact, this is due to non-existence or marginal presence of FCCs in these districts. The Panchayatiraj Institutions have started to play a definite role in prevention and control of dowry torture. Although, these grass-root level institutions have been reported with only 8 per cent of cases, this is significant as they testify people's new faith in local bodies. The State Commission for Women, Orissa have not won the trust of the dowry victims as only 3 per cent cases have been registered with it. The other institutional mechanisms sought by the victims are short stay homes in Cuttack, Human Rights Protection Cell in Khurda and District-Level Samaj in Bolangir; which seem to be playing more important roles than the State Commission for Women in these districts.

An analysis of institutional-legal mechanisms clearly shows that the role of the State Commission for Women needs to be revitalised to win the confidence of the victims, especially from far-flung districts. Legal aid process also needs further strengthening. Family Counselling Centres; which are non-existent in backward and tribal districts of Kondhamal, Kalahandi, Rayagada and Bolangir; should be opened in these districts to attend to the mental-psychological-emotional trauma of the victims. The Panchayatiraj Institutions should also play a more positive and active role in the eradication of this social evil. However, substantive progress in the prevention of dowry torture, could be attained only after the reforms in the criminal judicial system of the country.

**Table 2.14**

**Nature of Redressal availed by Dowry Victims**

Sl. No.	Districts	Reported Cases	Agencies to whom reported					*FCC	Any Other
			Panchayat		Police	Legal Aid	Women Commission		
			at						
		Col. I	Col. II	Col. III	Col. IV	Col. V	Col. VI	Col. VII	
1	Cuttack	50	3	18	1	0	24	4	
		(100)	(6)	(36)	(2)	(0)	(48)	(8)	
2	Khurdha	58	10	26	0	3	10	9	
		(100)	(17)	(45)	(0)	(5)	(17)	(16)	
3	Rayagada	50	2	44	0	4	0	0	
		(100)	(4)	(88)	(0)	(8)	(0)	(0)	
4	Bolangir	61	3	14	9	2	20	13	
		(100)	(5)	(23)	(15)	(3)	(33)	(21)	
5	Kondhamal	34	0	34	0	0	0	0	
		(100)	(0)	(72)	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)	
6	Kalahandi	8	2	6	0	0	0	0	
		(100)	(25)	(75)	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)	
<b>Total</b>		<b>261</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>26</b>	
		<b>(100)</b>	<b>(8)</b>	<b>(54)</b>	<b>(4)</b>	<b>(3)</b>	<b>(21)</b>	<b>(10)</b>	

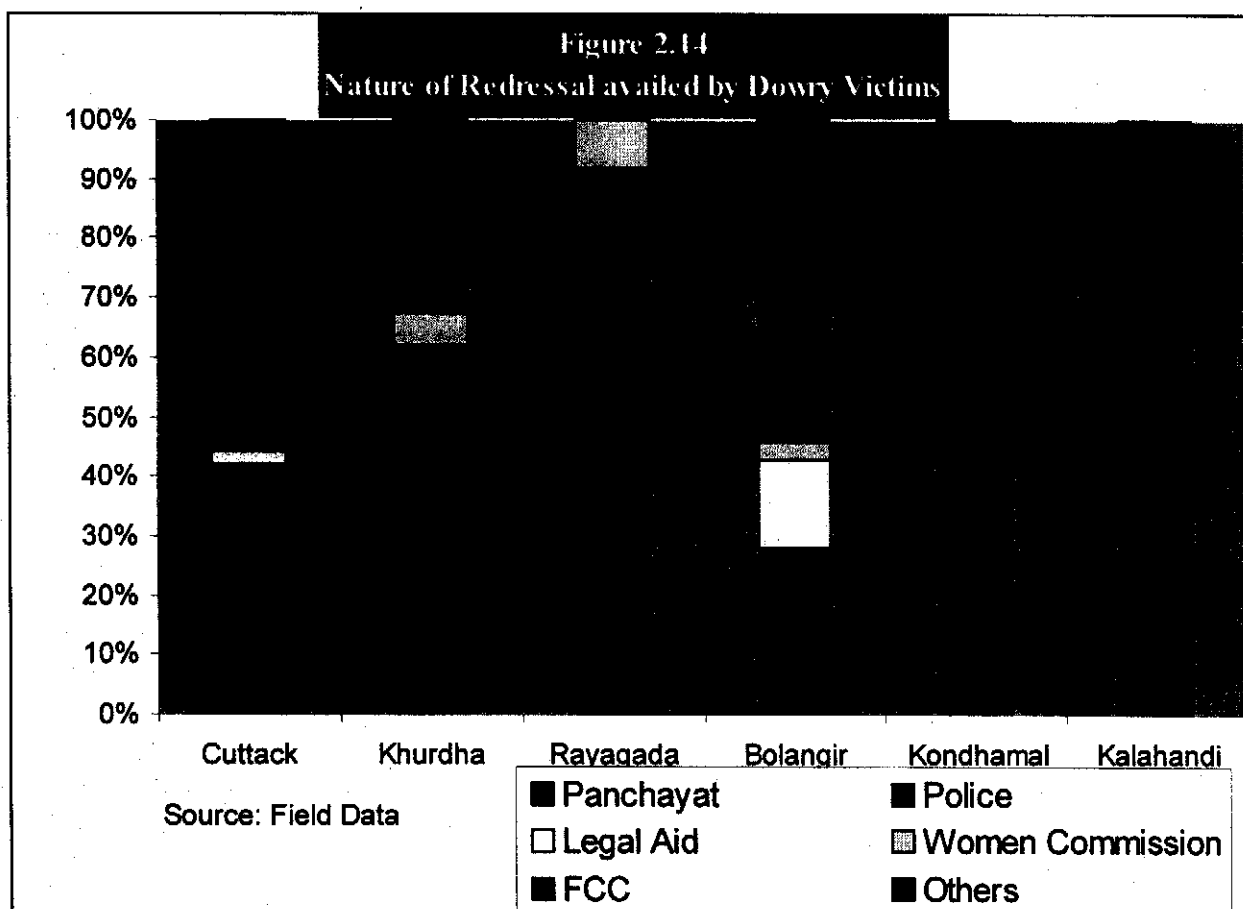
Column II, III, IV, V, VI & VII are shown as % of Col. I.

\* Family Counselling Centre

Figures in Parentheses indicate Percentage to Total No. of Samples.

Source - Field Data





### Causes of non-reporting of Dowry Torture Cases

A varied set of factors are responsible for non-reporting of dowry-related torture and crimes (see Table 2.15 and Figure 2.15). Social stigma, threat to life, ignorance/illiteracy/lack of awareness, expectation of a better relationship and other factors are almost equally responsible for non-reporting of cases. Threat to life is found to be the most restraining factor on the victims (23 per cent) for not divulging and reporting the torture. This factor is most prominent in Khurda and Cuttack districts. Illiteracy and lack of awareness about redressal mechanisms is the second important restrictive factor (22 per cent). This naturally is a deciding factor in backward and tribal districts, where female literacy rate is lower. Social stigma, another limiting factor, accounting 19 per cent; is more prominent in developed districts than the backward ones. Expectation of improvement in relationship with husband and in-laws is a dissuading reason (19 per cent), especially in backward and

tribal districts. There are other tying reasons responsible for non-reporting of 18 per cent of cases. While in Cuttack and Khurda lack of parental support or unwillingness of the victim to be a burden on the parents has deterred them for reporting, in tribal districts support of in-laws' in the face of torture by husband has prevented the victims from reporting in many cases. Poverty has also prevented the victims from approaching different institutions in a number of cases in tribal and backward districts. In Rayagada district particularly a number of victims have refrained from reporting the torture because of their distrust on police and judicial system. Many victims also accept torture as their fate and prefer to reconcile with it.

**Table 2.15**  
**Causes of non-reporting of Dowry Torture Cases**

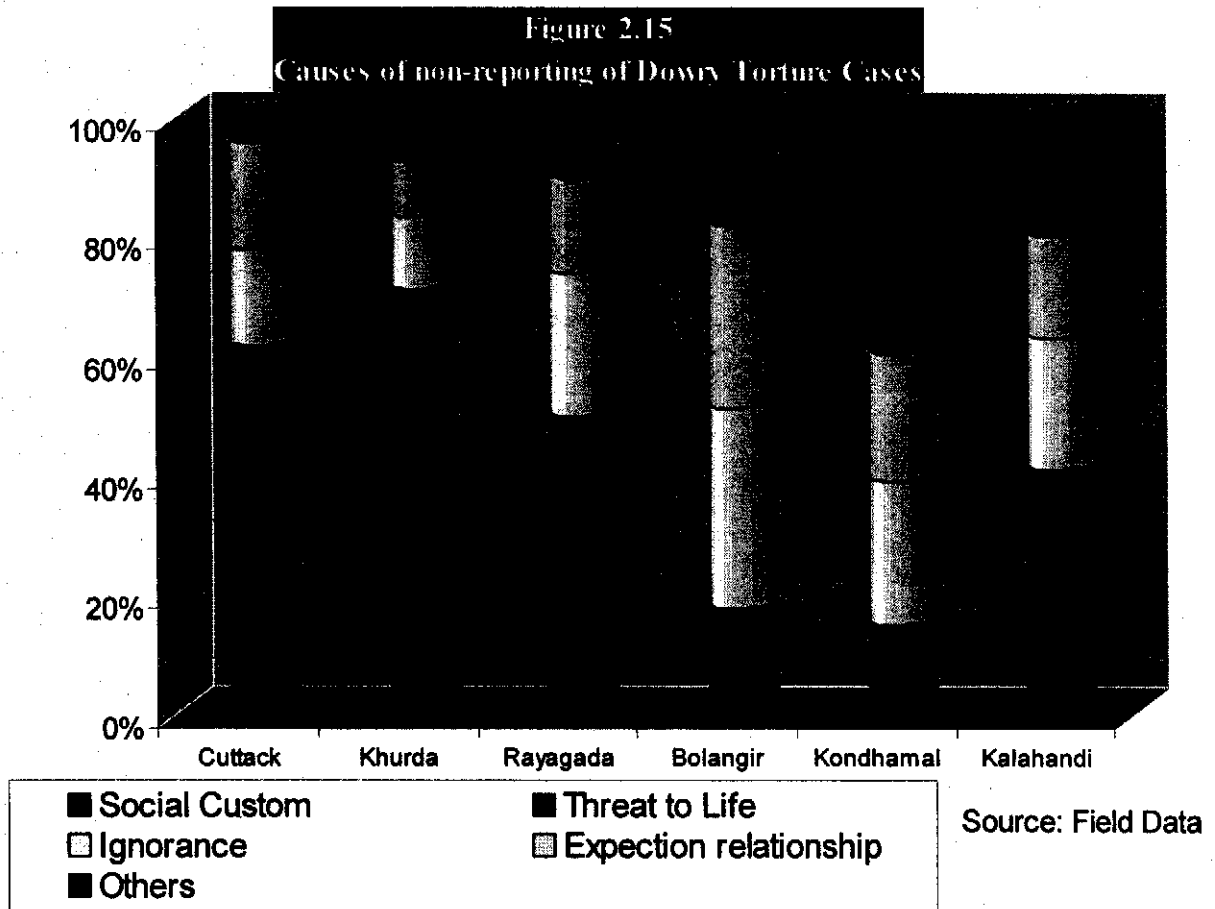
Sl. No.	Districts	Total No. of Cases Not Reported	a	b	c	d	e
1	Cuttack	50	15 (30)	16 (32)	8 (16)	9 (18)	2 (4)
2	Khurda	42	14 (33)	16 (38)	5 (12)	4 (10)	3 (7)
3	Rayagada	50	16 (32)	9 (18)	12 (24)	8 (16)	5 (10)
4	Bolangir	39	2 (5)	5 (13)	13 (33)	12 (31)	7 (18)
5	Kondhamal	66	4 (6)	6 (9)	16 (24)	14 (21)	26 (39)
6	Kalahandi	92	12 (13)	26 (28)	20 (22)	16 (17)	18 (20)
Total		339	63 (19)	78 (23)	74 (22)	63 (19)	61 (18)

Figures in Parentheses indicate Percentage to Total.

Source-Field Data

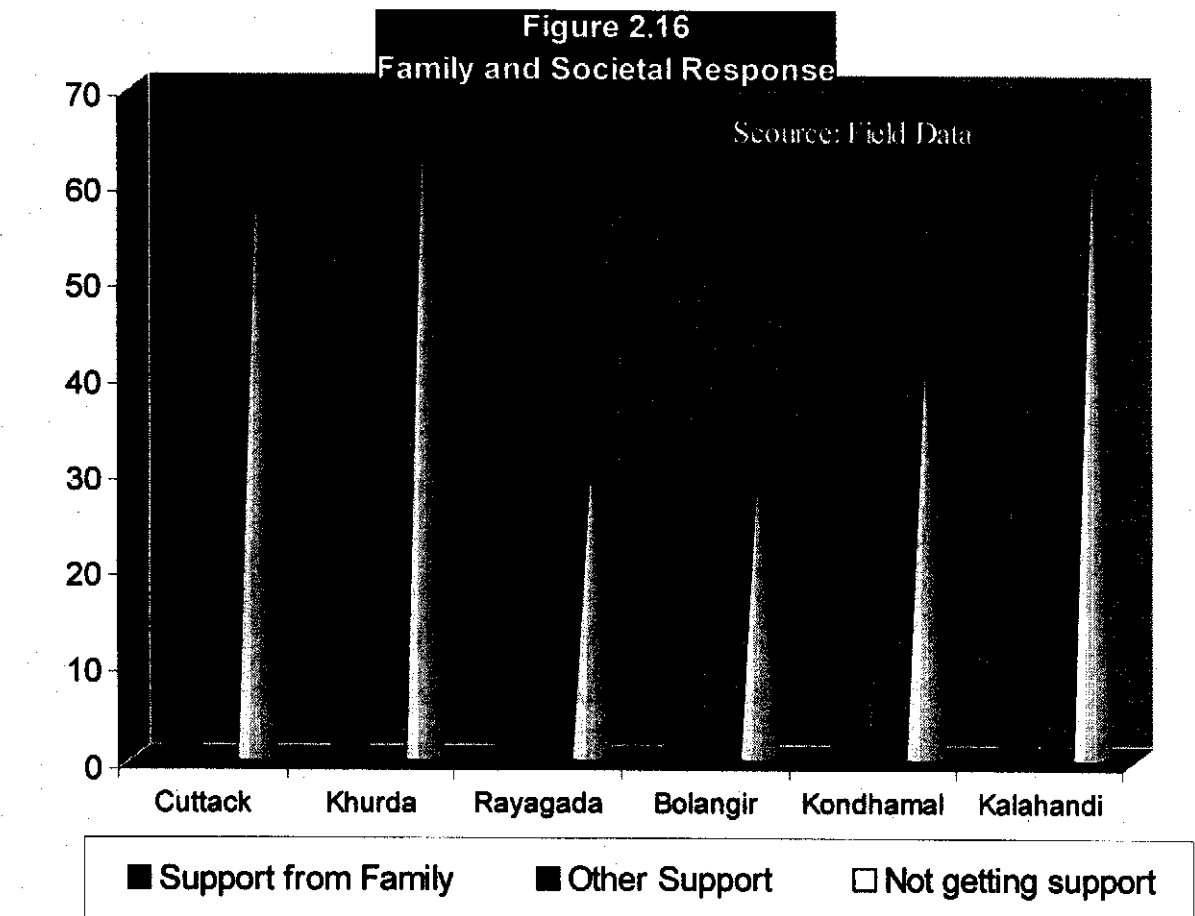
Index

- A Social Restriction/ Social Custom/ Social Outcasting
- B Threat to Life / Fear
- C Ignorance/ Illiteracy/ Lack of awareness
- D Expectation of Improvement in relationship
- E Any Other



**Family and Societal Response**

Only in case of 41 per cent, victims received family support to take recourse to institutional and legal mechanism to get justice (see Table 2.16 and Figure 2.16). Societal response to their torture is rather marginal and only in 8 per cent of the cases, the victims have confirmed of getting any meaningful sympathy from neighbours or relations or members of in-laws' family. Family and societal support are relatively better in the backward and tribal districts in comparison to the developed ones.



### Institutional Response to Dowry Torture

The institutional response to the dowry-related torture and crimes is a great influencing factor in motivating the victims to report the atrocities in order to get justice. An analysis of the response of various institutional agencies to the reported cases is highly dismal (see Table 2.17 and Figure 2.17).

**Table 2.17**

### Institutional Response to Dowry Torture

Sl.	Districts	Total Reported	Panchayat			Police			Legal Aid		
			Initial Help	Follow-up	No Help	Initial Help	Follow-up	No Help	Initial Help	Follow-up	No Help
1	Cuttack	50	3	3	0	11	4	7	1	1	0
2	Khurda	58	7	4	3	17	4	9	0	0	0

3	Rayagada	50	2	1	0	31	16	13	0	0	0
4	Bolangir	61	2	2	1	6	2	8	7	4	2
5	Kondhamal	34	0	0	0	18	4	16	0	0	0
6	Kalahandi	8	2	2	0	4	1	2	0	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>
		(100)	(6)		(1.5)	(33)		(21)	(3)		(0.8)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total.  
Source -Field Data

**Table 2.17 (Contd...)**

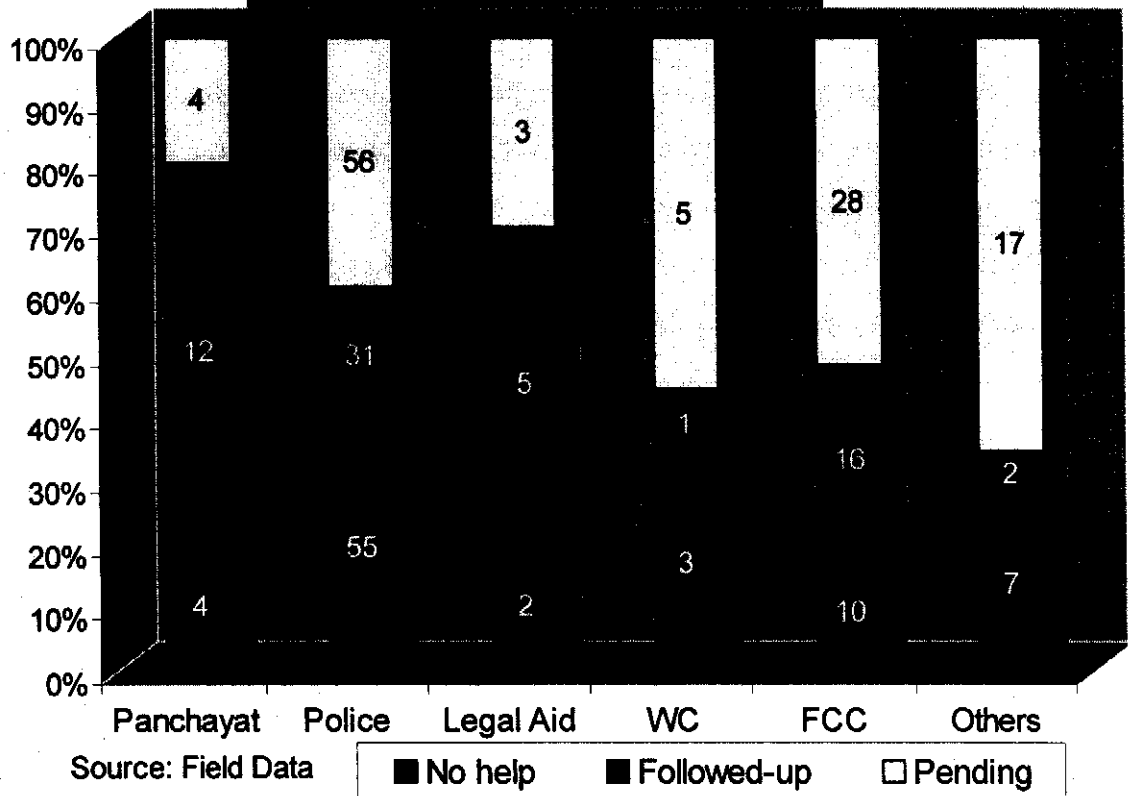
**Institutional Response to Dowry Torture**

Sl.	Districts	Total	*W.C.			**FCC			Any Other		
			Reported	Initial Help	Follow-up	No Help	Initial Help	Follow-up	No Help	Initial Help	Follow-up
1	Cuttack	50	0	0	0	24	7	0	4	2	0
2	Khurda	58	2	0	1	7	2	3	7	0	2
3	Rayagada	50	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	Bolangir	61	1	0	1	13	7	7	8	0	5
5	Kondhamal	34	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	Kalahandi	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>
		(100)		(2.3)	(1.14)	(16.8)	(3.8)	(7.3)			(2.7)

\* State Commission for Women, Orissa

\*\* Family Counselling Centre

**Figure 2.17**  
**Institutional Response to Dowry Torture**



It is observed that although police received maximum number of reported cases (142), it has provided no help in 38.73 per cent of the cases. The State Commission for Women has equally failed in providing any help to one-third of the victims, who have reported the torture. Gram Panchayats and Legal Aid have recorded a failure rate of 20.00 per cent, while Family Counselling Centres has failed in 18.52 per cent of cases.

Corollary to the failures of the institutional agencies in providing any help to the reported cases, the trend of the follow-up in dowry torture cases is highly discouraging. Police and the State Commission for Women are found to be the most inactive institutional fora in this regard. Their follow-up rate is 21.83 and 11.11 per cent respectively. On the contrary, the performance of Gram Panchayats, Legal Aid, Family Counselling Centres in following up the reported cases is found to be better. Their follow-up rates are 60.00, 50.00 and 29.63 per cent respectively. computational

The analysis underlines the volume of ineffective performance of the institutional agencies, which is the main dissuading factor in filing cases by the dowry victims. They prefer to accept the torture as ordained by destiny rather than attempting to get justice. The trust on police, it has been observed, is gradually declining and the victims have started accusing police of taking advantage of their harassment and torture. The outreach and redressal system of the State Commission for Women are the weakest ones. Thus, the hypothesis that institutional response to violence against women is far from satisfactory has been found to be correct.

## Chapter Three

# Findings of the Study- Sexual Violence



## Findings of the Study-Sexual Violence

Sexual violence broadly includes crimes against women like molestation, eve teasing, false promise of marriage, harassment in the workplace, kidnapping and abduction, attempt to rape and rape. These heinous crimes are gradually pervading the society; reflecting the degeneration of cultural, moral and social values. The rise in the incidence and rate of sexual violence also underlines urgent need for reforms in criminal justice system to provide effective legal protections and safeguards to the victims. In this section; an attempt is made to critically analyse the causes, nature and extent of sexual violence in the sample districts.

### Age Variations of the Sexual Violence Victims

Sexual violence is perpetuated irrespective of the age of the victim (see Table 3.1 and Figure 3.1). The most vulnerable group is the minor/teen-aged girls. They undergo various types of violence without knowing much about the same at their tender age. However, it is observed that, the average age of the victims is 26. The age variation ranges from 7 to 52. The victims of tender age are the maximum in Khurda district.

### Caste Configurations of Sexual Violence Victims

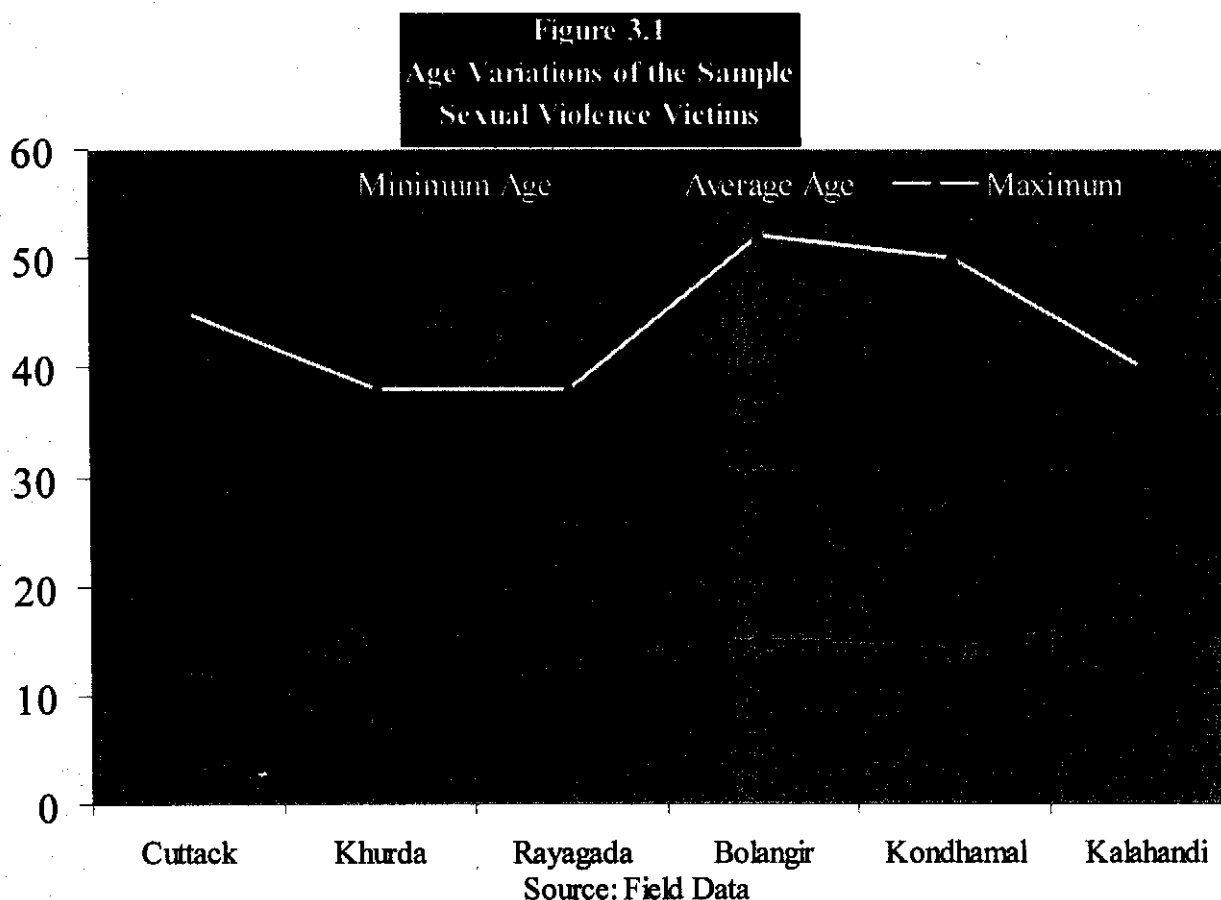
Sexual violence pervades all castes (see Table 3.2 and Figure 3.2). It is observed that it is highest among the general category (31 per cent), closely followed by the scheduled tribes (30 per cent). The Other Backward Caste (OBC) and Scheduled Caste victims constitute 22 and 17 per cent of the total victims respectively. The victims in general categories are in majority in the developed districts of Cuttack and Khurda and are lowest in the tribal districts of Kondhamal and Kalahandi. OBC victims are highest in number in Bolangir district and lowest in Kondhamal district. Bolangir again records highest number of scheduled caste victims with lowest in Cuttack district. Scheduled tribes victims are highest in Kondhamal district with zero

reporting in Cuttack district. The higher percentage of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe victims in the tribal and backward districts is correlated to higher percentage of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe population in these districts.

**Table 3.1**  
**Age Variations of the Sample Sexual Violence Victims**

Sl.No.	Districts	Average Age	Age Variation	Total
1	Cuttack	24	13 – 45	100
2	Khurda	26	7 – 38	100
3	Rayagada	25	13 – 38	100
4	Bolangir	30	15 – 52	100
5	Kondhamal	27	14 – 50	100
6	Kalahandi	28	17 – 40	100
Aggregate		26	7 – 52	600

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage total, Source: Field Data

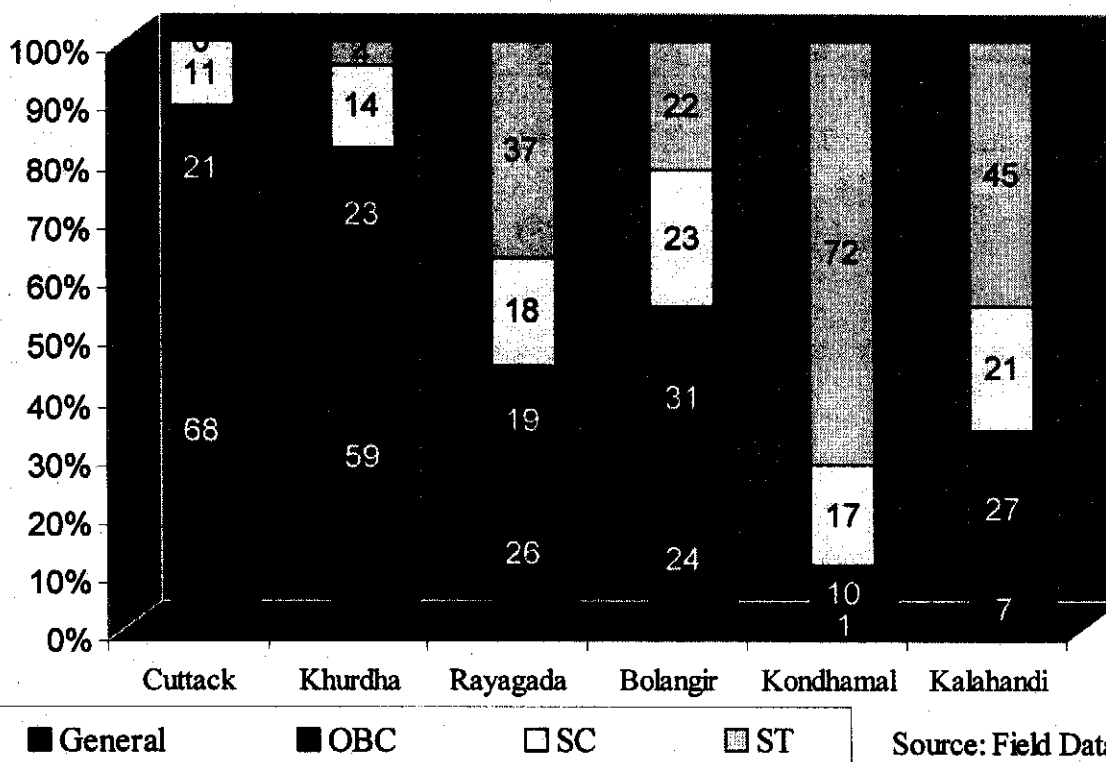


**Table 3.2**  
**Caste Configurations of Sample Sexual Violence Victims**

Sl.No.	Districts	General	OBC	SC	ST	Total
1	Cuttack	68	21	11	0	100
2	Khurdha	59	23	14	4	100
3	Rayagada	26	19	18	37	100
4	Bolangir	24	31	23	22	100
5	Kondhamal	1	10	17	72	100
6	Kalahandi	7	27	21	45	100
Total		185 (31)	131 (22)	104 (17)	180 (30)	600 (100)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage total.  
Source- Field Data

**Figure 3.2**  
**Caste Configurations of Sample Sexual Violence Victims**



### Educational Background of Sexual Violence Victims

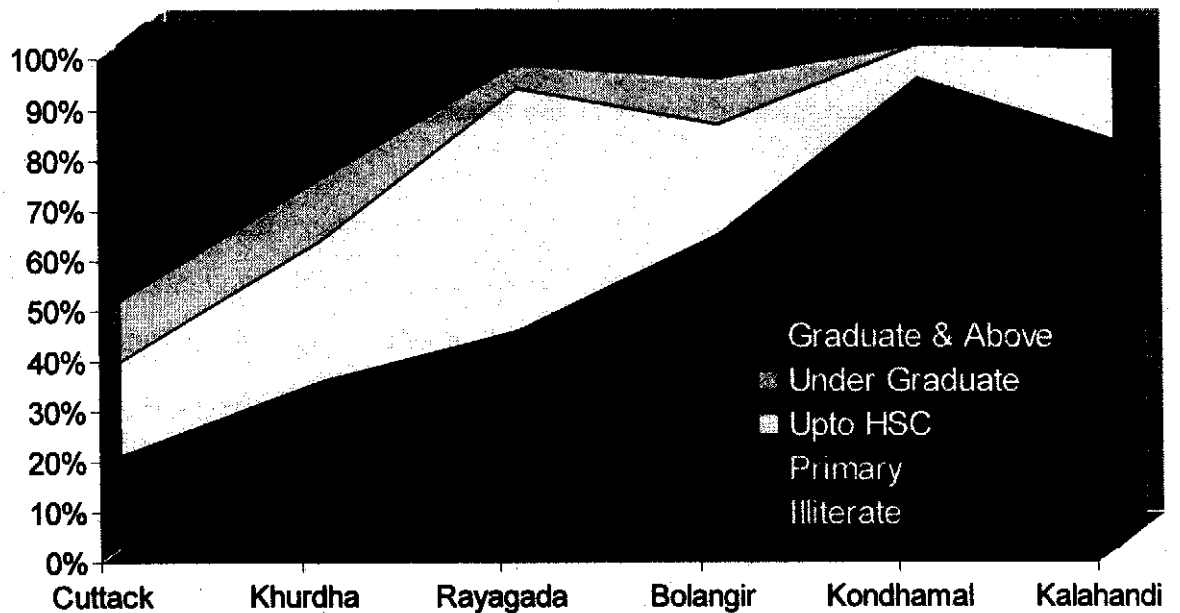
The educational background of the sample sexual violence victims is projected in Table 3.3 and Figure 3.3 in order to analyse the deterrent effect of education on sexual violence against women.

**Table 3.3**  
**Educational Background of Sample Sexual Violence Victims**

Sl.No.	Districts	Illiterate	Primary	Up to HSC	Under Graduate	Graduate & Above	Total
1	Cuttack	8	10	19	12	51	100
2	Khurdha	18	15	28	12	27	100
3	Rayagada	19	24	48	5	4	100
4	Bolangir	44	18	22	9	7	100
5	Kondhamal	87	6	7	0	0	100
6	Kalahandi	63	17	18	1	0	100
	Total	239	90	142	37	89	600
		(40)	(15)	(24)	(6)	(15)	(100)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total.  
Source- Field Data

**Figure 3.3**  
**Educational Background of**  
**Sample Sexual Violence Victims**



Source: Field Data

It is observed that, the majority of the victims (40 per cent) are illiterate. If the literacy rate is stretched to primary level, the percentage of victims widens to 55 per cent. Victims, who have their educational upto HSC level and under graduate and above, constitute 24 and 21 per cent of total victims respectively.

The tribal districts of Kondhamal and Kalahandi record maximum number of victims in illiteracy category, which has a minimal presence in the developed districts of Cuttack and Khurda. This suggests that perhaps with improvement in the level of education, susceptibility to violence decreases. However, if one analyses the inter-district variation, it is observed that though this trend holds good in case of tribal districts and to some extent in case of backward districts, the developed districts provide a different interpretation. In Cuttack, and Khurda 51 and 27 per cent of the victims respectively are found in the category of the highest level of education.

The analysis suggests that vulnerability to sexual violence is perhaps influenced by many factors and education alone cannot give protection to women against such violence.

The analysis suggests that vulnerability to sexual violence is perhaps influenced by many factors and education alone cannot give protection to women against such violence.

### **Occupational Status of the Sexual Violence Victims**

Women's economic status is an indicator to judge her vulnerability/acceptance/resistance to sexual atrocities. Women having economic independence are supposed to be less susceptible to all sorts of violence in contrast to the women who are solely dependent on their husbands/in-laws. However, an analysis of the occupational status of the victims (see Table 3.4 and Figure 3.4) provides a different scenario. In fact, 68 per cent victims have been engaged in income-generating activities outside their families. 32 per cent of victims are housewives. A better economic status, therefore, does not provide a guarantee against sexual violence. However, a distinction can be made in the incidences of sexual violence against women serving in organised and unorganised sectors. Only 14 per cent victims are in the organised sector in comparison to 54 per cent victims engaged in unorganised activities. The analysis suggests that housewives and those working in the organised sector are better protected against sexual violence than those working in the unorganised sector.

**Table 3.4**  
**Occupational Status of the Sample Sexual Violence Victims**

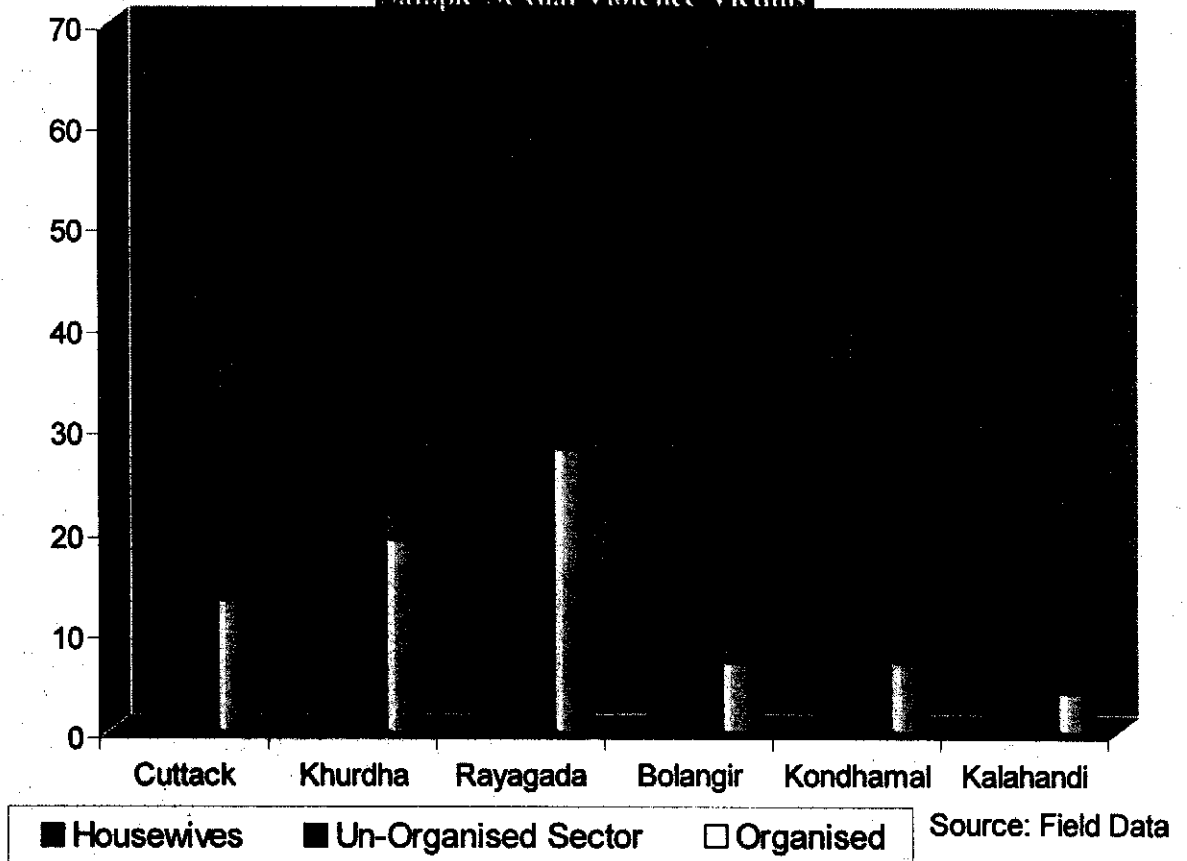
Sl.No.	Districts	Housewives	Unorganised Sector	Organised	Total
1	Cuttack	46	41	13	100
2	Khurdha	25	56	19	100
3	Rayagada	15	57	28	100
4	Bolangir	27	66	7	100

Total	190	331	79	600
	(32)	(54)	(14)	(100)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total.

Source - Field Data

Figure 3.4  
Occupational Status of the  
Sample Sexual Violence Victims



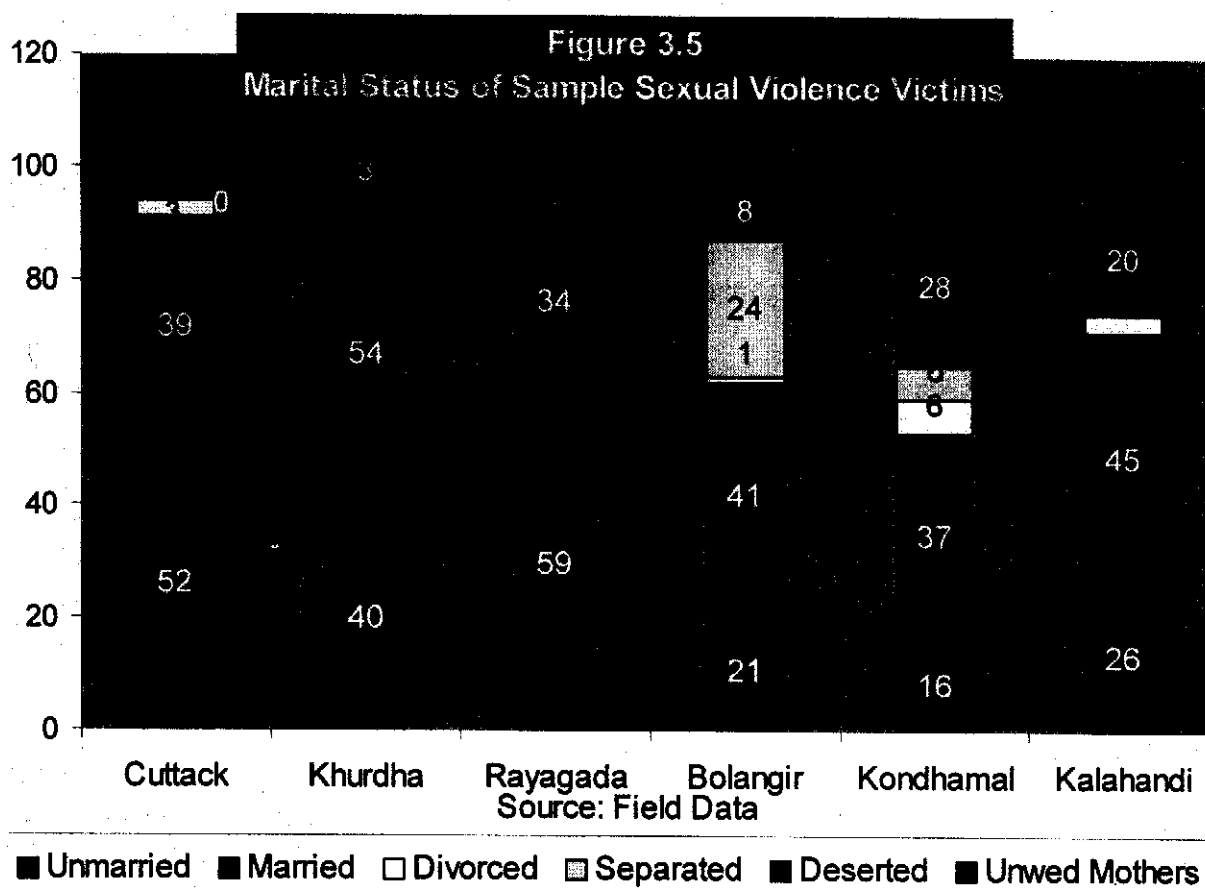
### Marital Status and Sexual Violence

Marriage, as an institution, provides some sort of protection to women and, therefore, chances of sexual violence could be more among unmarried girls. With this hypothesis, an analysis of the co-relationship between the marital status and sexual violence is provided in Table 3.5 and Figure 3.5.

**Table 3.5**  
**Marital Status of Sample Sexual Violence Victims**

Sl.	Districts	Unmarried	Married	Divorced	Separated	Deserted	Unwed Mothers	Total
1	Cuttack	52	39	3	0	0	6	100
2	Khurdha	40	54	0	0	3	3	100
3	Rayagada	59	34	0	1	0	6	100
4	Bolangir	21	41	1	24	8	5	100
5	Kondhamal	16	37	6	6	28	7	100
6	Kalahandi	26	45	3	0	20	6	100
Total		214 (36)	250 (42)	13 (2)	31 (5)	59 (10)	33 (5)	600 (100)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total, Source: Field Data





It is observed that sexual violence is rather rampant among the married women than the unmarried. 36 per cent of victims are found to be unmarried and 5 per cent have turned into unwed mothers. 2 per cent of the victims are divorcees, 5 per cent are not divorced but living separate and 10 per cent of victims are deserted. If the above three categories are included under the married group, the percentage of victims in married category becomes 59 per cent in contrast to 41 per cent in unmarried category.

With exception to Cuttack and Rayagada districts, where sexual violence is observed more among the unmarried women, the atrocities are more prevalent among married women. Khurda and Kalahandi districts account for majority of violence against married women. Atrocities in divorced, deserted and unwed categories are highest in Kondhamal district, while Bolangir tops the separated category. Violence against divorced, separated, deserted and unwed categories; which constitute 22 per cent of victims are more in backward and tribal districts in comparison to the developed districts.

#### **Educational background of the Heads of Parents' families and incidence Sexual Violence**

The impact of the educational status of parents on the incidence of sexual violence is assessed in Table 3.6 and Figure 3.6.

It is found that majority of the sexual violence victims hail from illiterate family background (52 per cent), with Kondhamal and Kalahandi districts accounting the substantial chunk. If the educational background of the heads of the parents' families is extended to primary level (inclusive of illiteracy category), the percentage of victims ascends to 70 per cent. The victims constitute 18 per cent where the educational background is upto HSC level. The under-graduate category accounts minimum number of victims of 2 per cent. Graduate and above levels, however, does not lessen the incidence of violence as it constitutes 10 per cent of victims. While illiteracy of the parents contributes to a higher incidence and rate of sexual violence, higher educational status of the parents does not equally provide a protection against

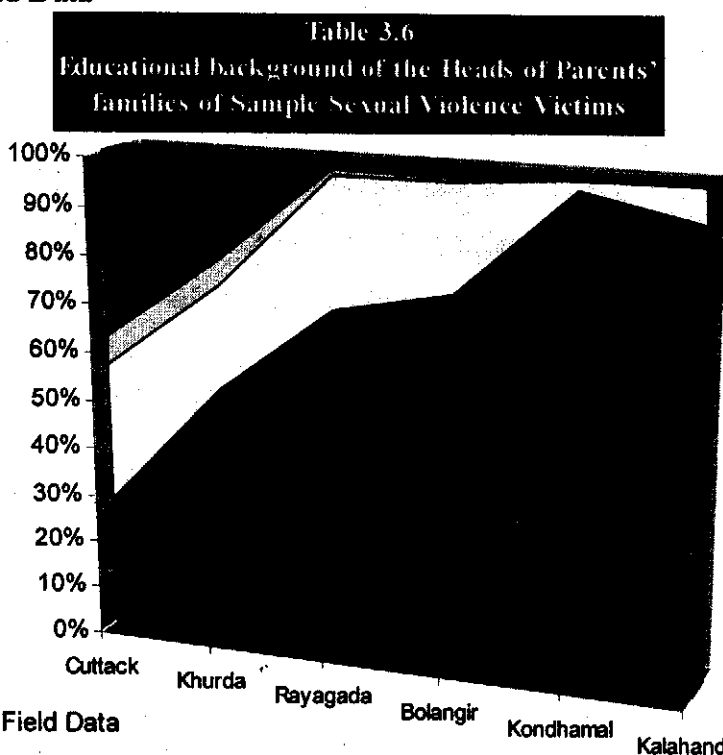
such atrocities. In fact, the developed districts of Cuttack and Khurda report a higher percentage of sexual violence in comparison to the backward and tribal districts, although the parental education in these two districts in post-primary level is higher.

**Table 3.6**  
**Educational background of the Heads of Parents' families**  
**of Sample Sexual Violence Victims**

Sl.No.	Districts	Illiterate	Primary	Up to HSC	Under Graduate	Graduate & Above	Total
1	Cuttack	25	2	29	6	38	100
2	Khurda	38	15	21	5	21	100
3	Rayagada	32	39	27	1	1	100
4	Bolangir	51	25	22	1	1	100
5	Kondhamal	91	7	2	0	0	100
6	Kalahandi	72	21	7	0	0	100
	Total	309	109	108	13	61	600
		(52)	(18)	(18)	(2)	(10)	(100)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total.

Source Field Data



■ Illiterate    ■ Primary    □ Up to HSC    ■ Under Graduate    ■ Graduate & Above

## Occupational Background of Parental Families and incidence of Sexual Violence

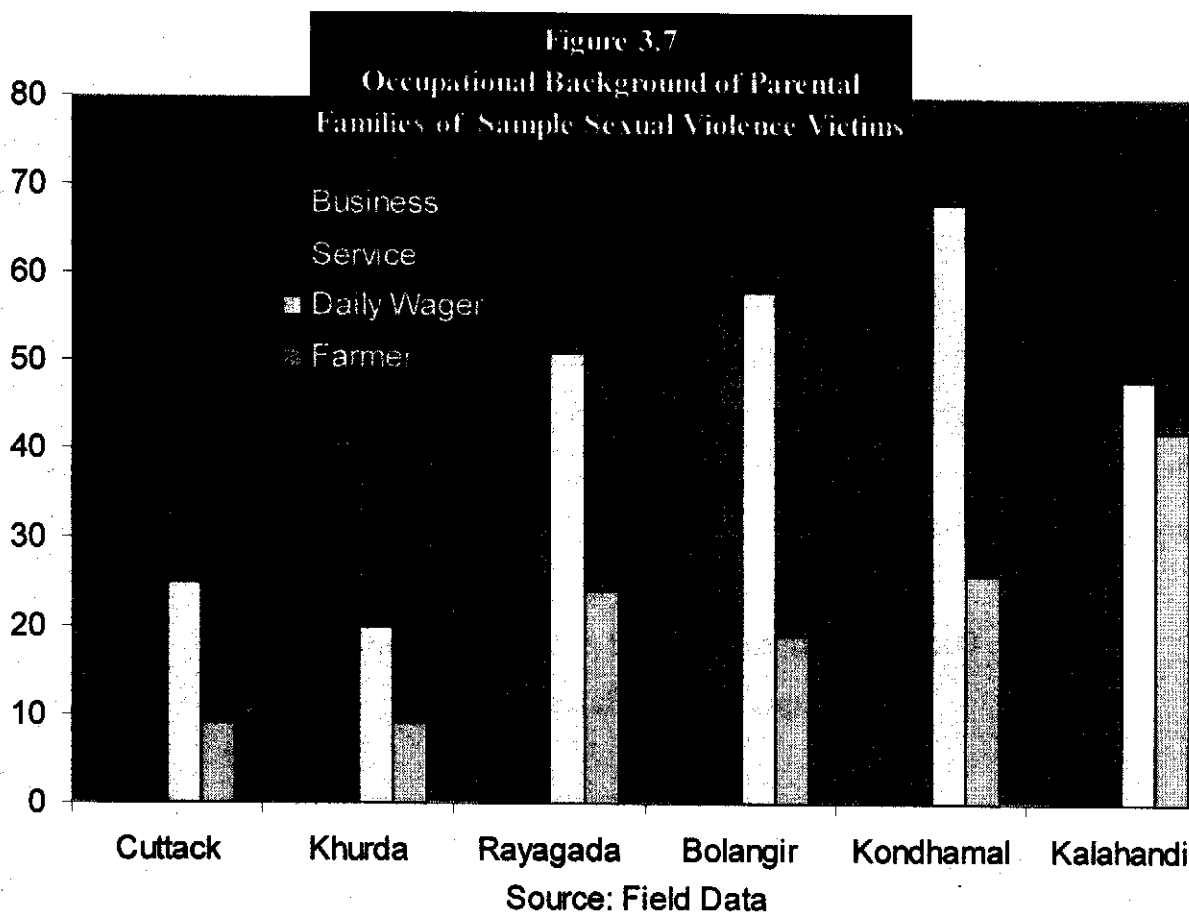
It is observed that the incidence of sexual violence is common to all types of occupational background of victims' parental families (see Table 3.7 and Figure 3.7). However, the rate of sexual violence is more prominent among families of daily-wagers (45 per cent), followed by farmers' families (22 per cent) and those from service sector (21 per cent). Victims whose parents are in business constitute the minimum numbers. The backward and tribal districts have a larger percentage of daily-wage and farming parental background in comparison to the developed districts. The analysis suggests that the low economic background make the women more susceptible to sexual violence.

**Table 3.7**  
**Occupational Background of Parental Families of**  
**Sample Sexual Violence Victims**

Sl.No.	Districts	Business	Service	Daily Wager	Farmer	Total
1	Cuttack	12	54	25	9	100
2	Khurda	31	40	20	9	100
3	Rayagada	12	13	51	24	100
4	Bolangir	13	10	58	19	100
5	Kondhamal	4	2	68	26	100
6	Kalahandi	5	5	48	42	100
Total		77	124	270	129	600
		(13)	(21)	(45)	(22)	(100)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total.

Source Field Data



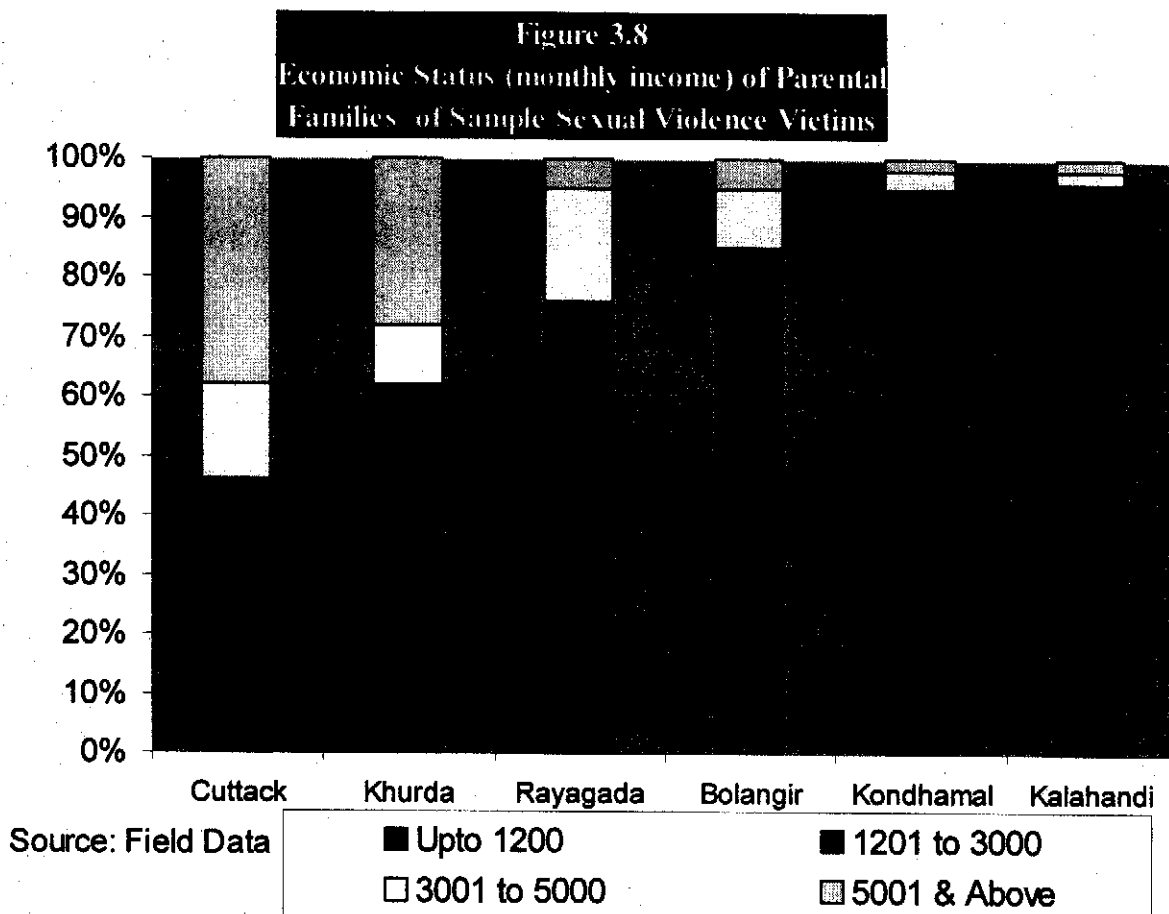
### **Economic Status of Parental Families and incidence of Sexual Violence**

An analysis of the economic background of the sexual violence victims is provided in Table 3.8 and Figure 3.8. It is observed that in case of majority of the victims (49 per cent), the parental monthly income is upto Rupees 1,200. In case of 28 per cent of victims, the parents income ranges from Rupees 1,201 to 3,000. Only 23 per cent of victims accounts for a family income exceeding Rupees 3,000. The majority of the victims with low level of parental income are from Kondhamal and Kalahandi districts. Rayagada records largest number of victims whose parental income falls between 1,201 to 5,000. The victims with most sound parental economic background hail from Cuttack and Khurda districts.

**Table 3.8**  
**Economic Status (monthly income) of Parental Families**  
**of Sample Sexual Violence Victims**

Sl.	Districts	Upto 1200	1201 to 3000	3001 to 5000	5001 & Above	Total
1	Cuttack	23	23	16	38	100
2	Khurda	46	16	10	28	100
3	Rayagada	20	56	19	5	100
4	Bolangir	47	38	10	5	100
5	Kondhamal	87	8	3	2	100
6	Kalahandi	70	26	2	2	100
	<b>Total</b>	<b>293</b> <b>(49)</b>	<b>167</b> <b>(28)</b>	<b>60</b> <b>(10)</b>	<b>80</b> <b>(13)</b>	<b>600</b> <b>(100)</b>

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total  
Source Field Data



## Gender Discrimination and incidence of Sexual Violence

Creation of self-confidence in the girl child is essential to help protecting herself against all sorts of violence in life and in this respect family has an important role to play. Equal treatment to the girl child could infuse a sense of self-respect and self-confidence in her mind. With a hypothesis that gender discrimination develops a sense of inferiority complex in the girl child, makes her introvert and incapable of meeting any untoward incident in life; the sample victims were asked whether they had experienced any gender discrimination in the family as a child or as an adult. 28 per cent of victims said yes in response to the question, while 53 per cent of victims said a clear "No" (see Table 3.9 and Figure 3.9).

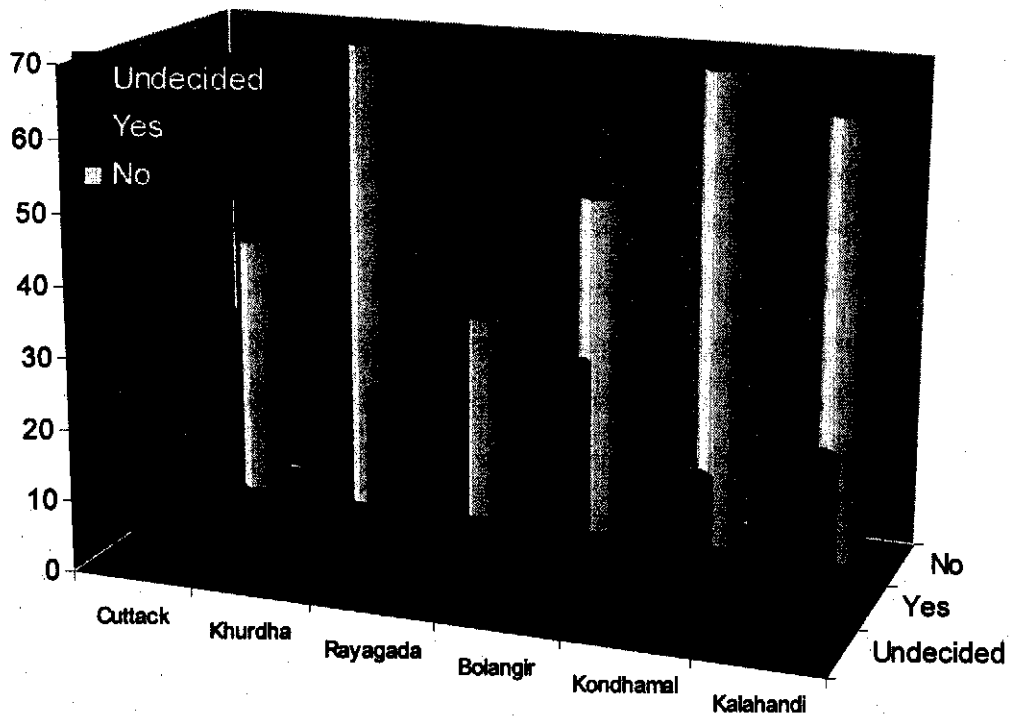
**Table 3.9**  
**Gender Discrimination among Sample Sexual Violence Victims**

Sl.No.	Districts	Yes	No	Undecided	Total
1	Cuttack	31	38	31	100
2	Khurdha	29	68	3	100
3	Rayagada	42	30	28	100
4	Bolangir	29	49	22	100
5	Kondhamal	15	68	17	100
6	Kalahandi	20	63	17	100
	Total	166	316	118	600
		(28)	(53)	(19)	(100)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total.

Source - Field Data

**Figure 3.9**  
**Gender Discrimination among**  
**Sample Sexual Violence Victims**



Source: Field Data

19 per cent of victims were undecided and could not give any definite answer on the issue of the linkage of gender discrimination with occurrence of sexual violence. Even if their indecision is interpreted as lack of awareness among them, suggesting a greater chance of being discriminated, we find almost equal number of victims in both category of discriminated and not discriminated. Thus, no definite conclusion can be drawn about contribution of gender discrimination towards sexual violence in later life. However, it could be observed that although gender discrimination is a deciding factor to judge the status of women, it is not a determining factor in the rise of sexual violence.

## Relationship with Parental Family

Family plays an important role in shaping the personality of the girl child and giving a shape to her aspiration in life. Family which provides equal treatment to the girl child and creates a friendly atmosphere for the child/children, reduces the chance of victimisation of female members within the family as well as acts as a succour to atrocities either in in-law's family or in the workplace. Majority of the victims (80 per cent) continue to have cordial relationship with their families (see Table 3.10 and Figure 3.10). This might be an exaggerated version on the part of the victims as it has been observed that in many cases the victims have refrained from sharing their experience of sexual violence with their parents.

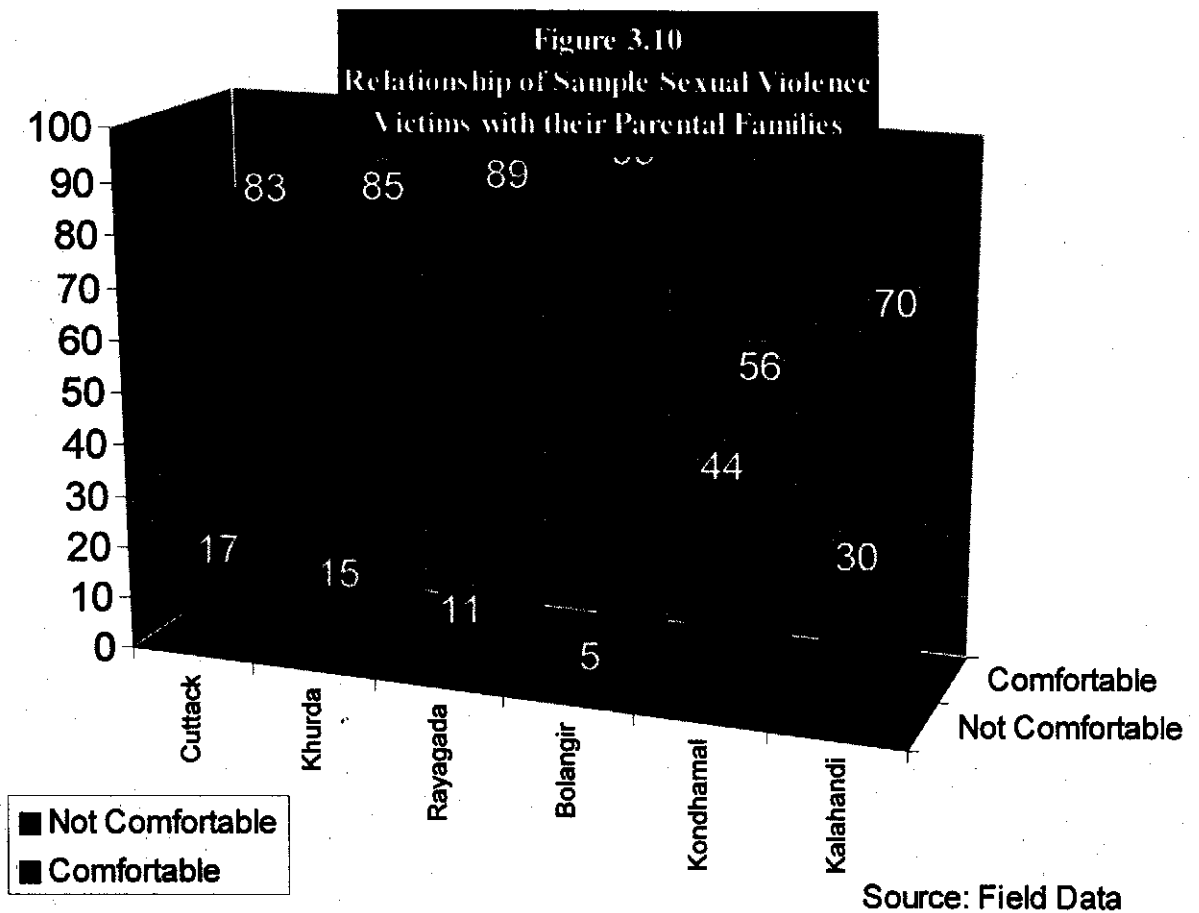
**Table 3.10**  
**Relationship of Sample Sexual Violence Victims with their Parental Families**

Sl.No.	Districts	Comfortable	Not Comfortable	Total
1	Cuttack	83	17	100
2	Khurda	85	15	100
3	Rayagada	89	11	100
4	Bolangir	95	5	100
5	Kondhamal	56	44	100
6	Kalahandi	70	30	100
Total		478	122	600
		(80)	(20)	(100)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total.

Source: Field Data





### Role of Media

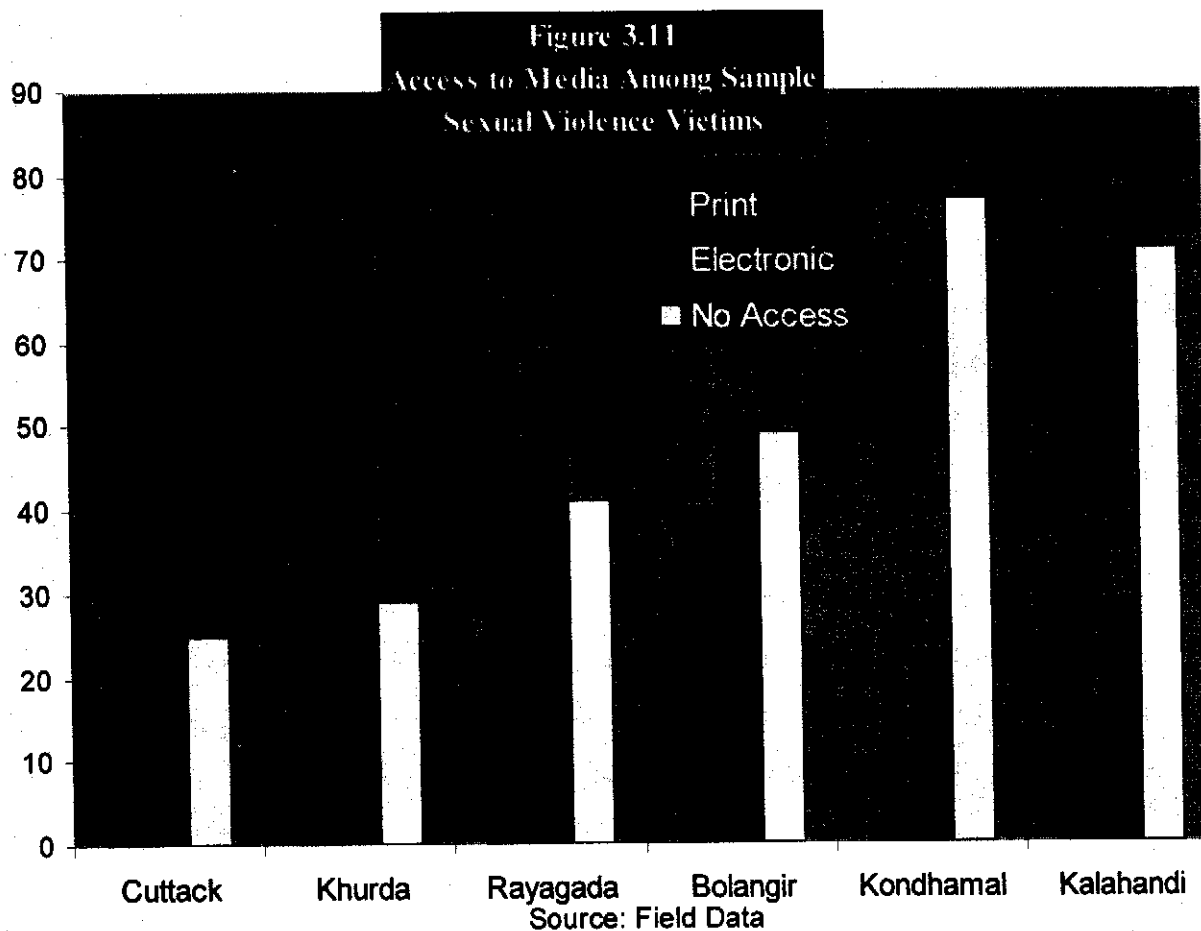
Media plays an important role in focussing on sexual violence. While sometimes it is argued that this has a negative effect of promoting violence in the society, a more sensible argument would be that it makes women aware of happenings around them and thus make them cautious in their approach and behaviour. The access to media among the victims is analysed in Table 3.11 and Figure 3.11.

It is observed that 51 per cent of the victims have access to electronic media, while 35 per cent of the victims avail of the print media. 41 per cent of the victims have no access to any type of media . With the advent of electronic media in the rural area, more and more women are getting exposed to media coverage.

**Table 3.11**  
**Access to Media Among Sample Sexual Violence Victims**

Sl. No.	Districts	Print	Electronic	No Access	Total
1	Cuttack	60	75	25	100
2	Khurda	41	71	29	100
3	Rayagada	48	59	41	100
4	Bolangir	40	51	49	100
5	Kondhamal	3	23	77	100
6	Kalahandi	17	29	71	100
Total		209 (35)	308 (51)	292 (49)	600 (100)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total. Source: Field Data



But in educating women about sexual violence in the society, the role of print media is perhaps more important. Given the level of literacy in the country and level of education among the victims, access to print media is observed to be less. For arresting the spread of sexual violence in the society, it is felt that wide coverage of cases of sexual violence in print media and large scale access to it among the women is essential.

### Inflictors

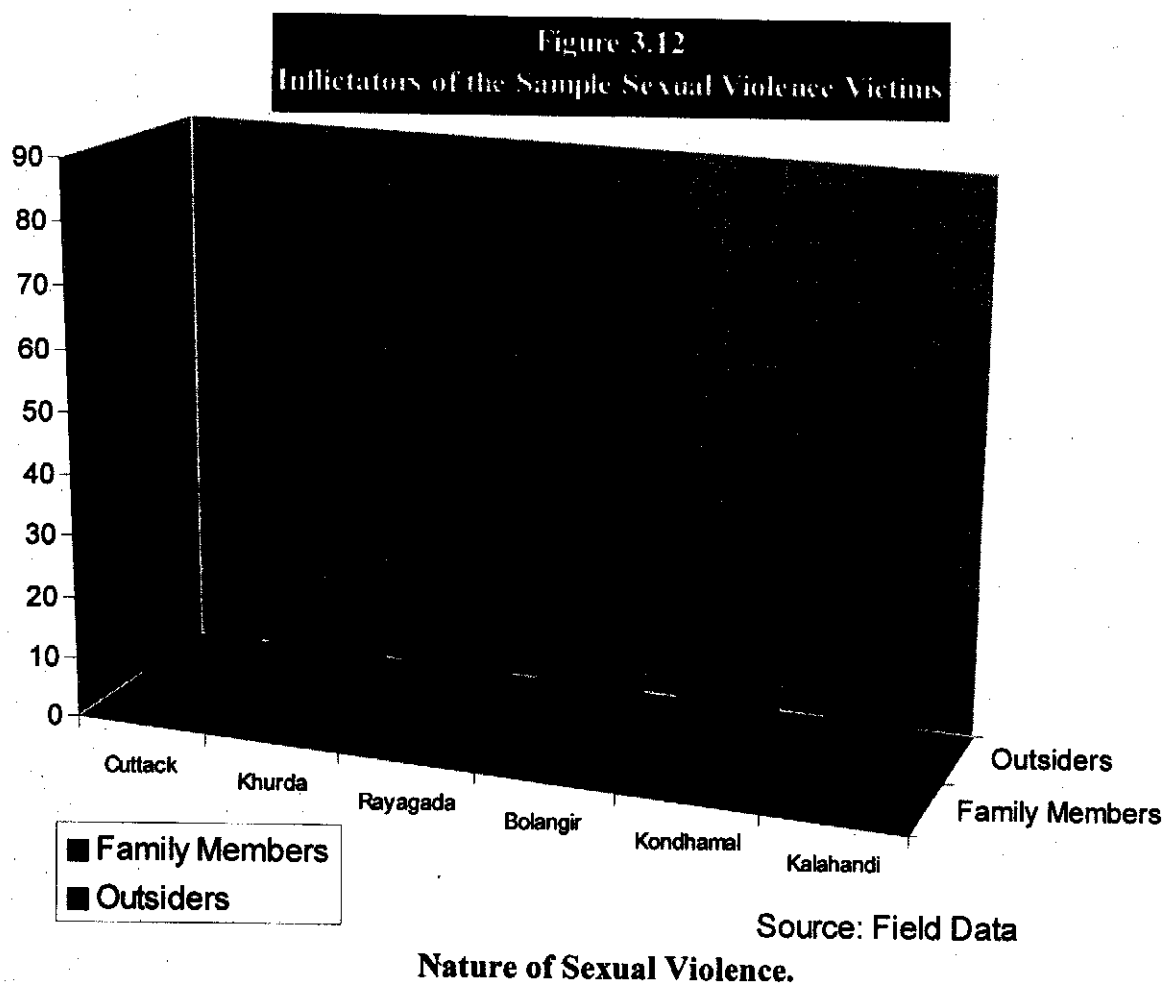
The sexual violence is not only caused by outsiders, but also by the family members (see Table 3.12 and Figure 3.12). It is observed that in 28 per cent of the cases, it is caused by the family members themselves; including father in-law, brother in-law, cousin brothers and uncles; indicating susceptibility to sexual violence in both parental house and in-law's house. This domestic violence is observed to be most prominent in tribal districts of Kondhamal and Kalahandi. The fear that they themselves would be blamed for such reprehensible acts, discourages the victims to report such cases to other members of the families. Social stigma and family obligation are also other restraining factors. 72 per cent of the sexual violence has been caused by the outsiders, specially by the co-workers. Cuttack, Khurda and Rayagada districts account for majority of violence inflicted by outsiders.

**Table 3.12**  
**Inflictors of the Sample Sexual Violence Victims**

Sl. No.	Districts	Inflicted By		Total
		Family Members	*Outsiders	
1	Cuttack	23	77	100
2	Khurda	18	82	100
3	Rayagada	20	80	100
4	Bolangir	24	76	100
5	Kondhamal	42	58	100
6	Kalahandi	40	60	100
Total		167	433	600
		(28)	(72)	(100)

\* Outsiders include Co-workers / Employers / Neighbours

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total Source: Field Data



The nature and types of sexual violence are presented in Table 3.13 and Figure 3.13. It is found that the most common form of sexual violence has been molestation (33 per cent). Molestation in the study includes eve teasing. This kind of violence is observed more prominently in Cuttack and Khurda districts with least occurrences in Kondhamal and Kalahandi districts.

The second important form of sexual violence seems to be harassment at working place and 27 per cent of the victims reported such harassment. Majority of such cases have been reported in Bolangir, Kondhamal and Kalahandi compared to Cuttack and Khurda. Attempt to rape, which constitutes 16 per cent of total sexual crimes, is observed to be more frequent in Khurda, Rayagada and Cuttack than in the other three districts. False promise of marriage associated with sexual abuse and desertion of the victims is found to be more in Kondhamal and Kalahandi districts.

All other types of sexual violence take different forms in different districts. While kidnapping, assault with axe and forced separations are found more in Kalahandi and Kondhamal; rape with murder and physical assault occur more frequently in Rayagada and Bolangir. Out of 600 samples, 6 are observed to have either committed suicide or killed after mass rape.

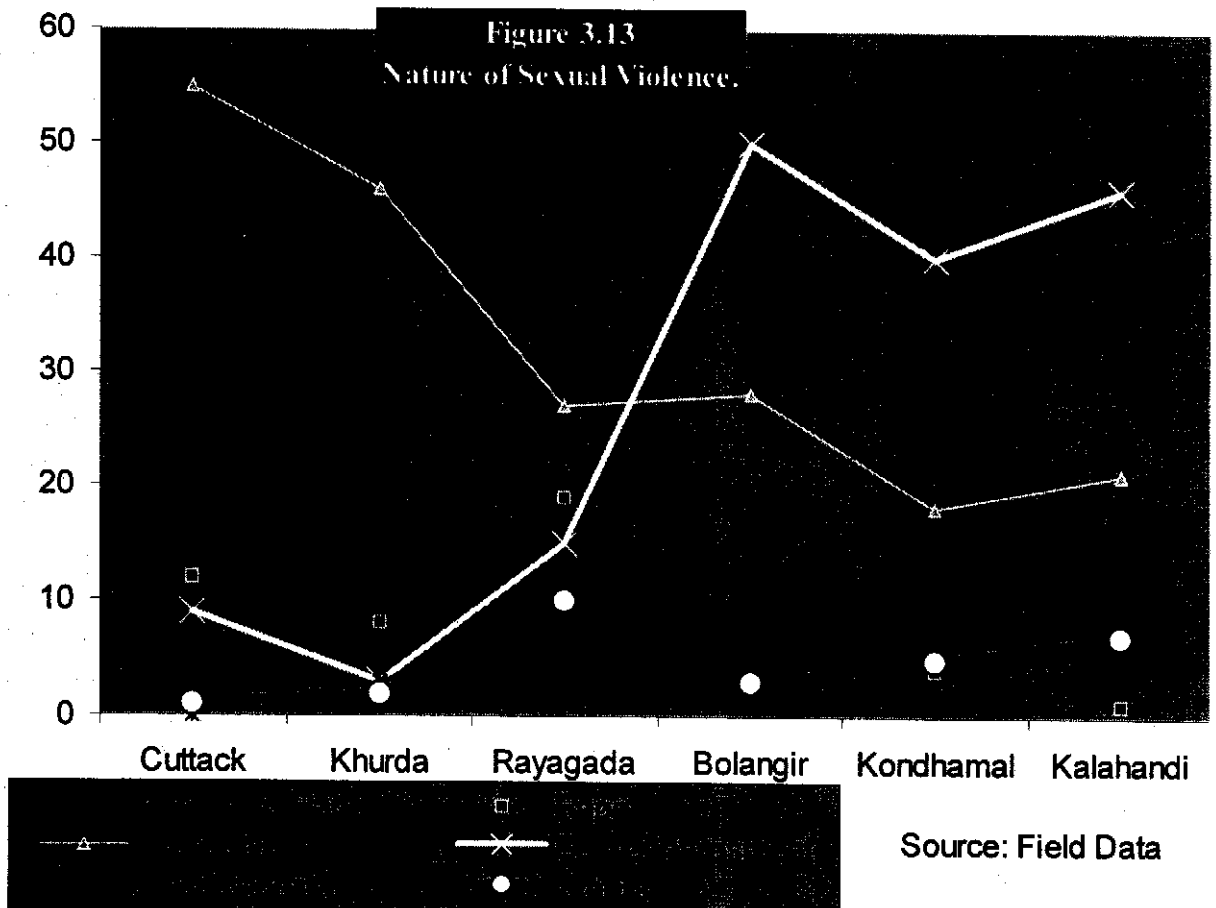
**Table 3.13**  
**Nature of Sexual Violence**

Sl.No.	Districts	a	b	C	d	E	f
1	Cuttack	22	12	55	9	0	1
2	Khurda	38	8	46	3	3	2
3	Rayagada	21	19	27	15	8	10
4	Bolangir	8	3	28	50	10	3
5	Kondhamal	3	4	18	40	33	5
6	Kalahandi	1	1	21	46	31	7
<b>Total</b>		<b>93</b> <b>(16)</b>	<b>47</b> <b>(8)</b>	<b>195</b> <b>(33)</b>	<b>163</b> <b>(27)</b>	<b>85</b> <b>(14)</b>	<b>28</b> <b>(5)</b>

**Index**

- a Attempt to Rape
- b Rape
- c Molestation
- d Sexual harassment at working place
- e False Promise of Marriage/Deserted/Sexual Abuse
- f Others(include Murder, Kidnapping, Abduction, Assault with axe and Forced separation)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total.  
Source Field Data



### Causes of Sexual Violence

The victims have cited a varied set of reasons for infliction of sexual violence against them (see Table 3.14 and Figure 3.14).

In some cases, the victims have assigned more than one reason and, therefore, total percentage is more than one hundred. Surprisingly, it is observed that 42 per cent of victims attributed the sexual violence to the impact of TV and Cinema and 6 per cent of victims to reporting in newspapers. In their opinion Cinema and TV do not help in building up the moral of younger generation but rather work in opposite direction.

**Table 3.14**  
**Causes of Sexual Violence**

Sl.No.	Districts	a	b	C	d	e	f	Any Other
1	Cuttack	40	20	14	8	20	12	20
2	Khurdha	52	15	14	3	14	11	18
3	Rayagada	51	5	8	4	27	8	3
4	Bolangir	66	44	12	13	13	38	2
5	Kondhamal	21	14	4	9	22	5	25
6	Kalahandi	23	12	0	0	26	25	29
	<b>Total</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>97</b>
		(42)	(18)	(8)	(6)	(20)	(16)	(16)

**Index**

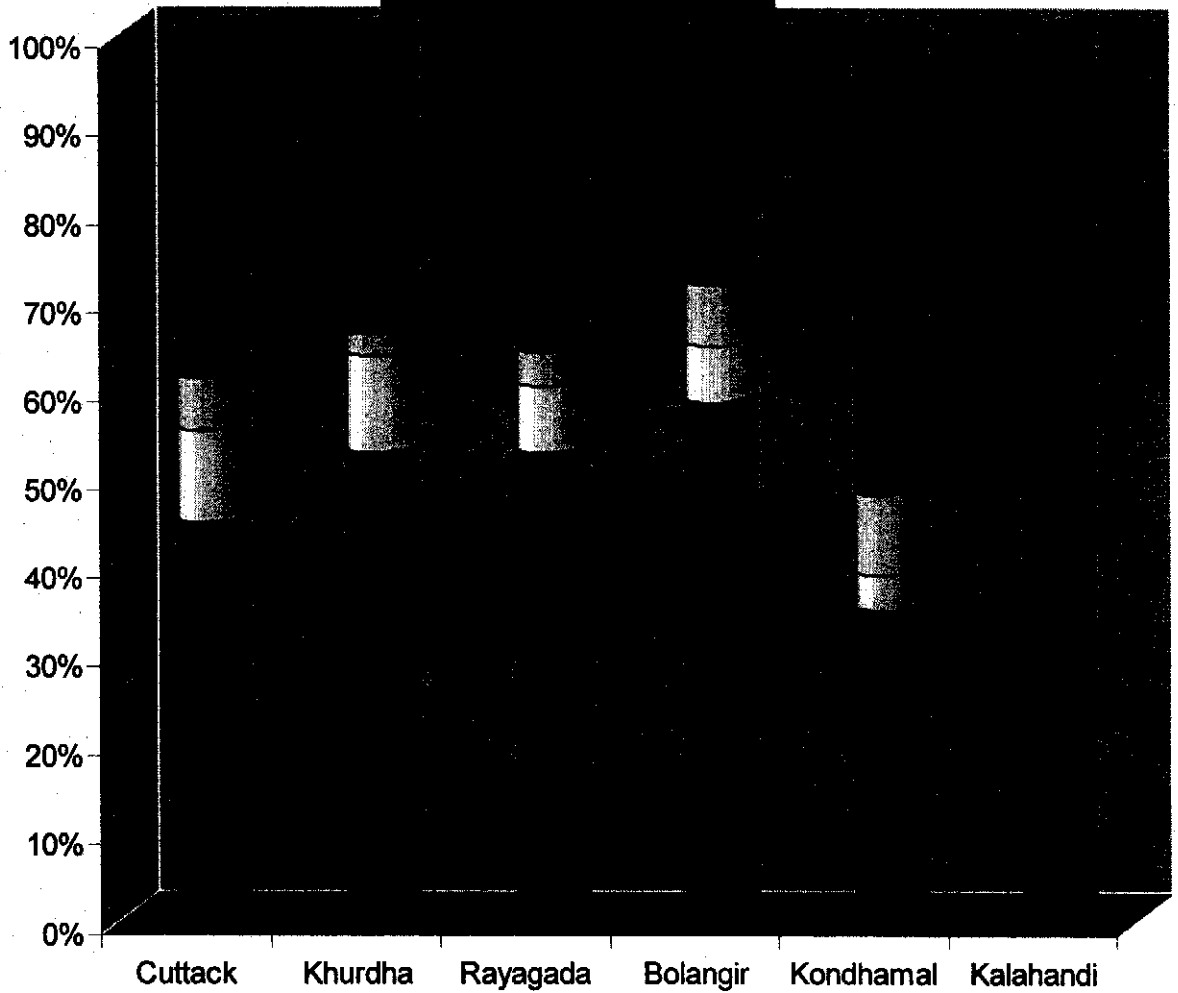
- a TV, Cinema
- b Dress and Conduct of the Girls
- c Pornography
- d Reporting in Newspaper
- e Poverty
- f Unemployment

Other (include Alcohol, Extra-closeness, Extramarital Relation, Cultural Traits, Outside Influence, Superstition, Bigamy etc.)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total number of samples.

Source Field Data

**Figure 3.14**  
**Causes of Sexual Violence**



Source: Field Data

- TV & Cinema
- Pronography
- Poverty
- Others
- Dress & Conduct of Girls
- Reporting in Newspaper
- Unemployment

In 18 per cent of the cases, the victims are seemed to blame themselves and women as a class in as much as they attribute sexual violence to dress and conduct of the girls in public. A great inter-district variation has been observed in this category with 5 per cent of victims in Rayagada accepting this factor in contrast to 44 per cent in Bolangir district. Poverty has been cited as an important cause by 20 per cent of victims. Living under condition of poverty, they easily fall prey to the false promise of marriage by outsiders in many cases and local people in some cases.



Widespread availability of pornography, especially in urban areas, has been mentioned as a factor responsible for sexual violence in 8 per cent of cases. While, this factor is of marginal importance in tribal districts, it plays relatively more important role in developed districts.

In 16 per cent of the cases, the victims' impression has been that it is the lack of engagement for the young that leads them go astray and engage in all sorts of anti-social activities like eve teasing, molestation etc. While maximum number of victims in Bolangir district (38 per cent) have attributed sexual violence to this factor, it has evoked only 5 per cent response in Kondhamal district.

Besides these factors, a number of other causes have been cited for sexual crimes. While extra-closeness and extra-marital relationship have been mentioned as factors responsible for sexual violence in developed districts, alcohol is cited as an important factor in the tribal districts. Cultural traits, bigamy and superstition of Goddess occurring in a woman; have been mentioned as factors responsible for sexual violence and desertion in tribal districts.

#### **Nature of Redressal availed by Sexual Violence Victims**

Out of 600 samples of sexual violence victims, only 157 cases constituting 26 per cent were reported (see Table 3.15 and Figure 3.15). Majority of the reported cases have been filed with police (62 per cent). Next important institutional body, which has commanded confidence of the victims, is found to be Panchayats and 24 per cent of reported cases have been filed with Gram Panchayats. The State Commission for Women and Legal Aid are playing a marginal role and hardly 5 per cent of cases have been lodged with these bodies. In other categories, non-governmental organisations have played an important role and 9 per cent of the reported cases have been taken up by them.

**Table 3.15**  
**Nature of Redressal availed by Sexual Violence Victims**

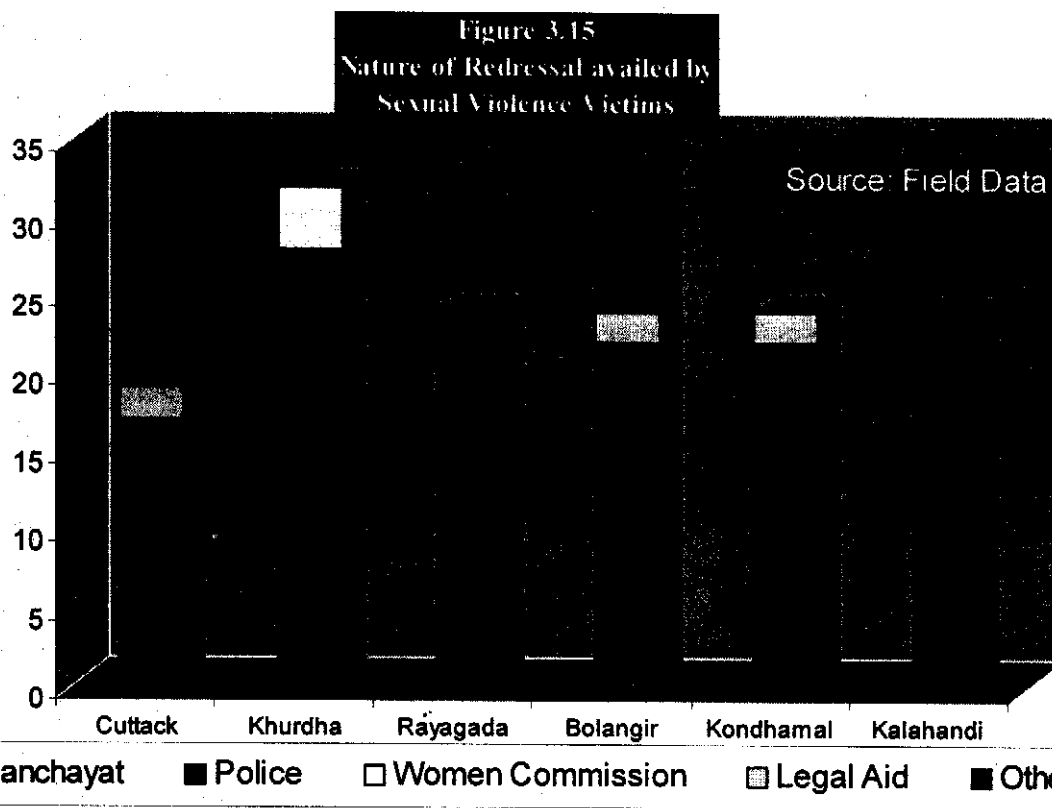
Sl.	Districts	Cases Reported	Agencies to whom reported .				
			Panchayat	Police	*WC	Legal Aid	Others
		Col. I	Col. II	Col. III	Col. IV	Col. V	Col. VI
1	Cuttack	22	6	11	0	2	3
2	Khurdha	32	3	25	4	0	0
3	Rayagada	24	5	18	0	0	1
4	Bolangir	31	11	11	0	2	9
5	Kondhamal	24	10	12	0	2	0
6	Kalahandi	24	3	20	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>157</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>14</b>
		<b>(100)</b>	<b>(24)</b>	<b>(62)</b>	<b>(2)</b>	<b>(3)</b>	<b>(9)</b>

Column II, III, IV, V, & VI are shown as % of Col. I.

\* The State Commission for Women, Orissa

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total.

Source - Field Data



### Causes of non-reporting of Sexual Violence Cases

It is alarming to note that 74 per cent of the cases of sexual violence are not reported to any agency. A varied set of reasons are attributed to non-reporting of the atrocities (see Table 3.16 and Figure 3.16).

**Table 3.16**  
**Causes of non-reporting of Sexual Violence Cases**

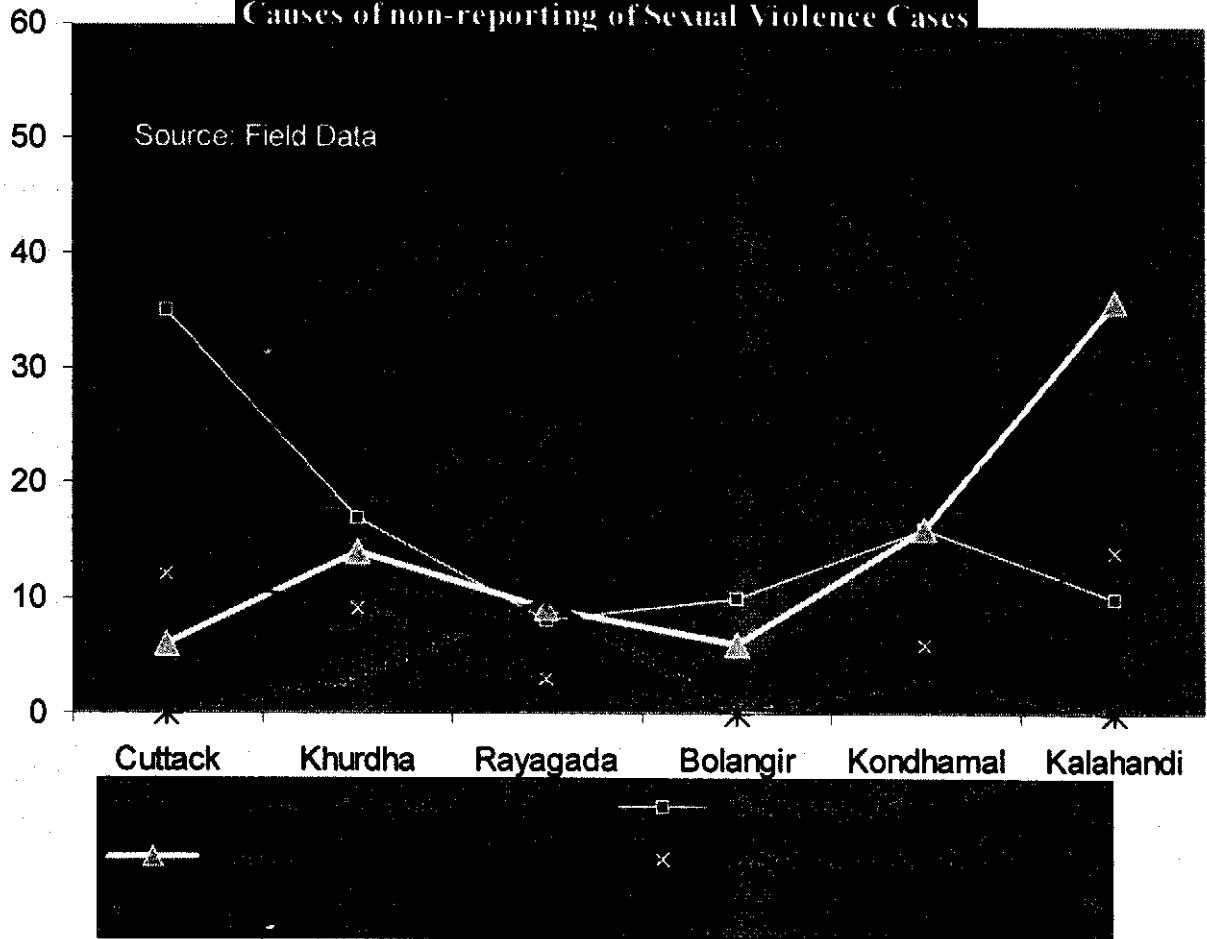
Sl.	Districts	Cases Not Reported	a	B	c	d	e
1	Cuttack	78	25	35	6	12	0
2	Khurdha	68	25	17	14	9	3
3	Rayagada	76	46	8	9	3	10
4	Bolangir	69	53	10	6	0	0
5	Kondhamal	76	35	16	16	6	3
6	Kalahandi	76	16	10	36	14	0
Total		443	200	96	87	44	16
		(74)	(45)	(21)	(20)	(10)	(4)
Index							
a	Social Restriction						
b	Threat to Life / Fear						
c	Illiteracy / Lack of Awareness						
d	Expectation of Improvement in relationship						
e	Other						

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total.

Source : Field Data

Figure 3.16

Causes of non-reporting of Sexual Violence Cases



45 per cent of the victims have said that it is the social stigma that prevents them from. Those who undergo any sexual violence are generally treated as social outcastes, once the cases are reported and publicised. The victims, therefore, prefer to keep it secret rather reporting for justice. The social stigma factor is most prominent in Bolangir and Rayagada districts. It may be noted that in some cases the victim have attributed more than one cause and, therefore, the total percentage is more than one hundred. In 21 per cent of the cases, the victims have said that threat to their lives given by the inflictors or their family members that has prevented them from reporting. This factor is found to be most prominent in Cuttack district. In 20 per cent of the cases (especially in Kalahandi and Kondhamal districts), illiteracy and lack of awareness about institutional help and legal provisions that have contributed towards non-reporting. In case of forced separation and deserting, the victims in many cases have been expecting an improved relationship and, therefore, have not reported the violence committed against them.

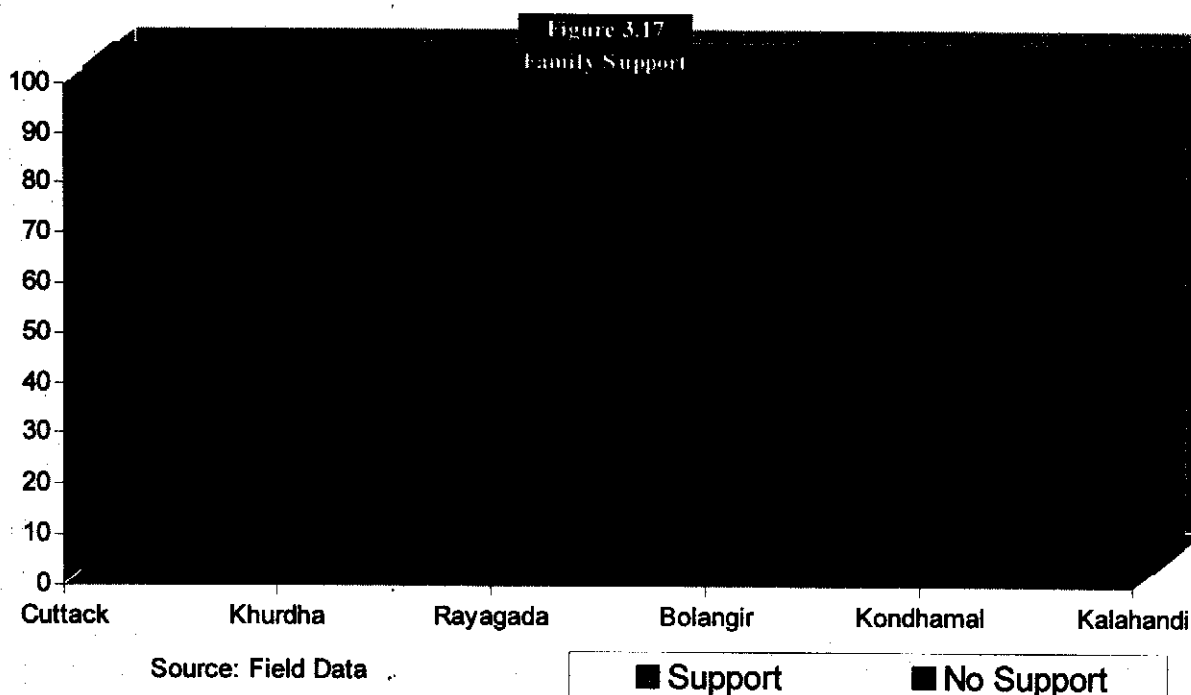
## Family Support

Family support in majority cases of sexual violence were lacking (see Table 3.17 and Figure 3.17). Only 33 per cent of the victims could bank upon family support.

**Table 3.17**  
**Family Support**

Sl.No.	Districts	Support	No Support	Total
1	Cuttack	42	58	100
2	Khurdha	43	57	100
3	Rayagada	7	93	100
4	Bolangir	24	76	100
5	Kondhamal	36	64	100
6	Kalahandi	43	57	100
Total		195 (33)	405 (67)	600 (100)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to total. Source: Field Data



While in the developed districts, social stigma is the overriding restraining factor for the families to extend support to their victimised children to take recourse to legal remedy; in tribal and backward districts, poverty is the tying factor on the family.

The lack of family support is further confounded by the callous and indifferent responses of the institutional agencies. Therefore, majority of the cases of sexual violence gets unreported, debasing the status of women.

# Chapter Four

## Case Studies

**Ms. Anjana Mishra****A victim of dowry torture and sexual violence in Khurda District**

Anjana Mishra, daughter of an engineer in Government sector, was married to an Indian Forest Service officer at the age of 17 when she was a student of +3 degree course. After a married life of almost 10 years, she complained about dowry torture and unhappy married life and filed a case U/s 498 A I.P.C on 29<sup>th</sup> May 1997 against her husband. She stated that she was given electric shock in a private nursing home and admitted to mental hospital at Kanke though she had no mental problem. It is through the intervention of Human Rights Commission that she was rescued and brought to Basundhara, a short stay home at Cuttack.

While the case against her husband was in progress, she was allegedly invited by Advocate General of the State (Orissa) to his official residence to discuss about the case over lunch. She went to his residence along with one employee of Basundhara. The Advocate General after lunch took her to his bedroom for further discussion and after persuading her to compromise with her husband to which she agreed, was alleged to have suddenly got up to congratulate her, caught hold of her hands and forcibly took her to bed and attempted to rape. At that time there was a knock at the door, which distracted his attention; and taking advantage of the situation, Anjana could manage to free herself and came outside the room. The incident took place on July 11<sup>th</sup>, 1997.



Out of shame she remained silent till July 12<sup>th</sup>, 1997 and finally revealed about the incident after persuasion of the women social activists. On the advice of D.I.G and other social activists, she brought it to the notice of the Chief Minister on July 14<sup>th</sup>, 1997. As no action was taken, she filed an F.I.R with police at Cuttack and since the police failed to conduct investigation to her satisfaction, she moved the Hon'ble High Court of Orissa and on the direction of the High Court, CBI took up the investigation. After CBI investigation, the accused was put to trial. Finally the verdict has been given on February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2000 and the Advocate General stands charged for the offence U/s 354/376/511 IPC.

While this case against the Advocate General was in progress and she was under police protection, while on January 9<sup>th</sup>, 1999 night on her way to Cuttack reportedly to meet her legal counselor, she was gang raped. Anjana again filed a case accusing the Advocate General and the Chief Minister for the incident. The case is subjudice.

*Immediately after the reported barbaric act of Anjana Mishra's gang rape, Sankalp has lodged a complaint to the Chairman of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on January 11<sup>th</sup>, 1999, seeking "high-level round-the-clock security" to the victim. Acting on the complaint, the NHRC directed the Director General of Police, Orissa to submit the requisite information and report. "The Commission may proceed to take any action it deems proper in case of default", NHRC said in its order (case no. 402/18/98-99).*

Anjana Mishra 's episode of sexual harassment and dowry torture is a very special case of its kind. Though born to a well-to-do and educated family, there seems to be utter negligence on the part of parents to solve her problems from the beginning. Economic consideration can't be said to have stood in their way. It might be the social stigma. Social activists and women organisations have shown great interest in supporting Anjana to fight the case, which usually doesn't happen in other cases, especially in rural areas. It could be because of Anjana's insistence to seek justice for the crimes committed against her and partly could also be due to the wide publicity/popular support of the incidents.

Anjana filing a case against her husband for dowry torture after 10 years of marriage is also unique in view of our observation that such torture generally occurs in the initial years of marriage. The case is not yet finalised but reportedly the dowry taken by Anjana at the time of marriage has been returned by her husband. The allegation about sexual violence to her in her in-laws' place, has raised many eyebrows. Anjana's case is unique also in the sense that in the judicial history of the country, the Advocate General of a State has for the first time been accused of attempting rape and found guilty.

The response of the public and the media to the case has been overwhelming. But despite the protection provided to her under judicial order that she could be again subjected to gang rape speaks of the loopholes in the functioning of institutional agencies.

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**N. B.:** The case study is prepared from Judgement passed by the court of C.J.M-Cum Assistant Sessions Judge, Khurda and Newspaper reports as direct interview with her couldn't be arranged inspite of our best efforts. The development of issues in Anjana's case speaks of disastrous effect of, lack of understanding in the family on the one hand and insecurity faced by a woman in the present setup of society on the other hand.

Ms Mita Suna

A victim of mass rape in Bolangir District

Mita Suna is a sixteen year old Harijan girl living in Gangasagar village in Patnagarh Block of Bolangir District. Her father is a Government employee and belongs to lower middle income group. Mita had education up to 10<sup>th</sup> class and has been assisting her mother in household chore. She had developed relationship with a Khandayat boy in the local area without the knowledge of her parents and was given the false promise of marriage by the boy. She trusted and when became pregnant, confessed everything before her mother. The parents took the matter to Gram Panchayat and Panchayat decided that they should marry. Neither the boy nor his family members were prepared to accept Mita. When Mita forcibly tried to stay in their house, on the very first day he along with four of his friends in a drunken stage raped the girl and no one in the family protested this barbaric act of their son. Mita's parents again took the matter to Panchayat and Panchayat handed over the culprits to police, but police released the accused persons after a day.

The girl and her family have lost all hope for justice, as the process of caste stratification with its ill-effects has made inroads into the social system of tribal dominated areas of the State. The girl at this tender age has no hope for the future and doesn't know what to do with the child who is to be born. She is passing her days with threat to life every moment. The institutional mechanisms have failed to respond to such atrocities. Even after the persuasive role of the Panchayat, police has failed in its role to book the accused persons and to provide protections to the helpless girl.

The incident is just an example of growing sexual violence by upper caste people on lower caste people. It seems neither the police nor the Panchayat have been effective in overcoming the caste barrier and lower caste girls remain vulnerable to the atrocities of the upper caste people.

## Mital Patro

### A victim of dowry torture driven to suicide in Kondhamal District

Mital Patro, a scheduled caste girl, married at the age of 18. Her father is a marginal farmer with formal education up to class 3 and mother is illiterate. But they have taken care to educate their all the three daughters. Mital had education up to class 5. Her father has great respect for educated persons and when he got a proposal for his daughter from a matriculate in their caste, he readily agreed even though the boy was unemployed and his family was comparatively poorer. At the time of marriage; the boy demanded a bi-cycle, 2 tolas of gold, furniture, radio, wrist watch, utensils etc. and Mital being a conscious girl was not willing for the marriage in the view of the dowry demand. But the parents in their eagerness to get a matriculate as their son-in-law, tried to fulfil all their demands and solemnized the marriage.

In the in-laws' family all were good to Mital, but her husband from the very beginning was not cordial and rather used to insult her in front of others, expressing his displeasure over the quantity of dowry brought by her. He wanted to extract more and more from Mital's father. Mital was coping with all household work to please every one in the family, but that hardly satisfied the husband's greed and the torture by him rather increased day by day. Mital initially kept it a secret from parents because she didn't want to cause further sorrow to them, but when the torture became unbearable she brought it to the notice of her parents.

The parents promised to give some money to the son-in-law every month till he gets some job, obviously to see their daughter happy in in-law's family. But Mital

found that it has not brought an end to her torture and keeping in mind the financial burden imposed on her father, who has two more daughters to give marriage, decided to commit suicide by taking poison, a year after her marriage. The parents are too shocked and depressed to take any follow up action for punishing the son-in-law. Nor there has been any response from the community to the sad incidence.

The case throws light on the fact that dowry which was hardly an issue in tribal community 10/15 years back, has now become a part of the social life of the tribals and the educated boys have started demanding various durable goods at the time of marriage to satisfy the needs of growing consumerism. Education, instead of developing their morality and individuality, has refrained them from physical labour on the one hand and promoted a false sense of ego on the other hand. A case of suicide had been lodged by the police. The parents are not interested to recover the dowry from girl's in-laws.

The incident speaks of the mental agony and helplessness of girls brought up in poverty. When they are neither able to raise their voice against the social traditions nor able to reconcile with it, they try to find a solution to the problem by extinguishing themselves.

## Urmila Sahu

### A victim of attempt to rape in Kalahandi District

Urmila is a widow of 35 years .She lives with her three sons and two daughters at village Truchiri in Madanpur-Rampur block. She has education up to class 8<sup>th</sup>, and after her husband's death through her parents' initiative she could manage a job as Anganwadi worker in the ICDS project .She belongs to the category of very poor with lot of family obligations but at the same time a brave and conscious lady. Her official job has been to supervise the preparation of food supplied by CARE for infants and pregnant mothers and ensuring its fair distribution.

Eversince she joined as Anganwadi worker, she has been facing problems from local inhabitants, who want to pilfer the materials .A college peon of the locality aged about 30 was one among them demanding the CARE food and with great difficulty. Urmila always maintains her dignity and integrity, not succumbing to anyone's pressure. One day finding her alone at home, the college peon entered and bolted the door from inside, shouting, "I will finish you to-day, you can not show your face to any body." He proceeded towards her and holding her tightly tried to strip her. Urmila accumulated strength to push him back, slapped him on his face, opened the door and ran away outside with only petticoat and blouse on her. The saree was in the hands of the peon and he chased her on the road. It was broad daylight around 11A.M and though several people were watching the scene, no one came to her rescue, reportedly because the peon is in good book of a local political leader. It was rather the second wife of that peon who ultimately came to her rescue, providing her with a saree, scolding the villagers who were watching the scene as well as her husband. It



was she who supported Urmila in raising the issue before the village committee and reporting the matter to police. Urmila has also reported the case to the State Commission for Women, but no action has been taken from any quarter so far. According to Urmila, she went to Women's Commission at Bhubaneswar several times but to her utter disappointment couldn't even meet the Chairperson. The culprit now moves freely in the village and Urmila is very apprehensive of her own security as well as the security of her daughters. She has become so much disgusted with the institutional set up for providing protection that she frowns at the utterance of any such organisation to her.

The incidence speaks of societal as well as institutional callousness to the atrocities against women. No matter how conscious and alert a woman is, and how many organisations are set up for providing justice to her, the woman cannot live with dignity unless and until the society learns to respect her as an individual and allows her to perform her duty. Urmila is courageous and has taken up the challenge but disgusted with institutional and societal response to the sexual violence and humiliation caused to self, no wonder that a victim in similar case may take extreme step one day to put an end to all her miseries.

## Chapter Five

# Conclusions

In the context of constant rise in the crimes against women in the country and also in Orissa, it was proposed to undertake a study on Atrocities against Women, with special reference to Dowry Torture and Sexual Violence in the State of Orissa to come out with an integrated set of findings and recommendations with an pan-Indian perspective to prevent and control atrocities against women.

### **Objectives**

The review of the existing work on dowry torture and sexual violence against women in India and covering the State of Orissa; reveals a vacuum in the analysis of such incidents in a larger integrated social perspective like their relationships with the status of women, urbanisation and industrialisation and legal redressal mechanism.

The main objectives of the study were as follows:

- ◆ to study the genesis, nature and extent of dowry related torture and death as well as sexual violence in Orissa;
- ◆ the causes of dowry demands and sexual harassment;
- ◆ the physical-mental-psychological-emotional impact of such violence perpetuated on women;
- ◆ the individual (victim's), family and societal responses to such violence;
- ◆ effectiveness of legal redressal mechanism to prevent and control such crimes;
- ◆ existence and impact of stress management system, including counselling;

- ◆ the effects of urbanisation and industrialisation on the increase of dowry torture and sexual violence, including those related to working women;
- ◆ linkages between crime against women, urban crime and crime against weaker sections of the society in areas of dowry cruelty and sexual violence;
- ◆ the relationship between incidence of violence in the areas of dowry torture and sexual violence as well as the status of women;
- ◆ examine the institutional responses, role of judiciary and police and also knowledge about different laws;

The study was also aimed at suggesting a sustainable engendered development paradigm for gender equity to prevent dowry torture and sexual violence.

### **Hypotheses**

The study was based on the following hypotheses:

- Dowry torture is prevalent at all levels of socio-economic strata
- Dowry torture is a continuous process leading to dowry murder and dowry suicide
- Education and economic independence (more broadly women's emancipation and empowerment) lowers the incidence of dowry torture
- Dowry torture in low economic background is a spread effect of dowry given by high-income group
- Dowry, which is a social evil, has been accepted as a social practice with most families trying to accommodate the demands at the time of marriage and also afterwards
- Social factors play an important role in giving shape to dowry demand

- The most socio-economically deprived sections are the most victimised group in incidence of dowry torture
- Sexual violence pervades all age groups, caste and social strata, the minor/teenaged girls as well as the economically disadvantaged sections being the most vulnerable group
- A rise in the educational and economic status of women lessens incidence of sexual violence
- Sexual violence is widely prevalent in workplace
- Gender discrimination at home is a contributing factor of sexual violence
- A sizeable segment of sexual violence is committed by family members
- The impact of dowry torture and sexual violence has a deeper mental, psychological and emotional impact in comparison to the physical aspects
- Urbanisation and industrialisation; which have led to the changing socio-cultural ethos with premium on competitiveness, aggressiveness and violent attitudes; have contributed to the rise of atrocities (dowry torture and sexual violence) against women
- Such atrocities are also rising in rural, backward and inaccessible areas; which are in a process of transitional development and are being mainstreamed for urbanisation and industrialisation
- Victims and their families in most cases accept the torture and violence rather than protest or seek legal remedy and majority of crimes, therefore, go unreported
- Societal response to such incidents is very poor and enforces the need for attitudinal changes for elimination of discrimination and violence against women
- Family response to such atrocities is highly peripheral because of social pressures and stigma as well as poor economic status

- Legal redressal mechanism to prevent and control such crime have failed to adequately respond as the rate of settlements is very poor
- Conviction rates in such crimes are very low in comparison to the acquittal rates, which is a critical commentary on the investigating mechanism
- The existing stress management mechanism, including counselling services, is utterly inadequate and even non-existent in backward and inaccessible areas to cope up with the situation
- Multi-pronged integrated uninterrupted efforts; comprising of vigorous social campaign to bring attitudinal change to prevent and control discrimination and atrocities against women, raising the social and educational status of women, economic empowerment of women as well as safeguards and reforms in the criminal justice system are needed to control the crime against women

### **Methodology**

The study is mainly based on primary data collected by a team of Project Co-ordinator, Research Officer and Investigators under the guidance and supervision of the Project Director as well as with inputs from a group of experts, activists and officials through a process of participatory observation. Two sets of schedules - one on dowry torture and the other on sexual violence - were prepared and pretested before collection of data from the field. Primary data collected has been supplemented by data collected from Home Department, Government of Orissa; Women and Child Development Department, Government of Orissa; State Commission for Women, Orissa and enriched through a process of consultations with various non-governmental organisations, social activists working in the field and experts doing research work on crime against women.

A three-stage stratified sampling procedure has been followed in the selection of samples for the purpose of the study. In the first stage, districts have been selected on the basis of level of development. Accordingly, Cuttack and Khurda have been selected to represent developed districts; Bolangir and Rayagada to represent

backward districts; and Kondhamal and Kalahandi as tribal dominated districts. In the second stage, two blocks from each district have been chosen to represent urban and rural background of the samples. In the third stage, 100 samples each of victims of dowry torture and sexual violence have been selected from each district to test the hypotheses, formulated in accordance with the objectives of the study. The total 1,200 samples have also been distributed to provide a close proportionate rural and urban representation to the dowry torture and sexual violence victims in ratio of urban and rural population of the districts.

### **Growth in Dowry Torture and Sexual Violence**

An analysis of the most authoritative official data of the Government of India (Crime in India Reports, National Crime Record Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs) and the Government of Orissa (White Papers on Police Administration, Home Department) has testified that the atrocities against women in the country as well as in the State of Orissa is rising at an alarming rate.

The growth rate of crimes against women in India shows 8.31 per cent rise in the reported crimes in 1998 over 1997. However, the ascendancy rate is 77.19 per cent over 1991. The All-India crime rate, i.e. number of crimes per lakh population for crimes against women reported to the police worked out to be 13.5 during 1998. However, when estimated with reference to female population, this rate almost doubles to 28.1 per lakh female population. Equally dismaying is the poor disposal of cases of crime against women by the courts. The disposal rates in cases of Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Special Laws (SLL) crimes at the national level in 1998 are as low as 19.0 and 52.1 per cent respectively.

The total reported cases of crimes against women in Orissa also has registered a steep increase of 101.1 per cent from 1994 to 1998. In 1994, the total number of reported cases were 2,213; which increased to 4,450 in 1998. Rape, dowry death, molestation and eve-teasing cases in Orissa have gone up by 86.5, 42.0, 66.1 and 91.8 per cent, respectively between 1994 to 1998. Cruelty by husband and relatives, which may include dowry torture, has increased by 159.0 per cent in these years.

The dowry-related crimes in Orissa have been increasing substantially over the years. While the total number of 796 dowry-related crimes were reported in 1994, the same had increased to 1,343 in 1998, registering a growth of 59.27 per cent. In comparison to the rise in dowry-related crimes, the settlements are quite low. While a total number of 5,263 dowry-related crimes were reported between 1994 to 1998; only 245 cases or 4.66 per cent were settled (48 convicted and 197 acquitted). The conviction rate is quite dismal in comparison to the acquittals. Between 1994 to 1998, the conviction rate was 19.60 per cent in contrast to the acquittal rate of 80.40 per cent. . The most gruesome aspect of dowry-related crimes is dowry-related murder, which has gone up from 265 cases in 1994 to 387 in 1998.

Rape cases in Orissa have also been increasing over the years. The number of rape victims has increased from 617 in 1996 to 796 in 1998, representing an increase of 22.48 per cent. On the contrary, the percentage of cases settled over reported ones has decreased from 3.4 in 1996 to 0.6 in 1998. The rate of conviction is also quite meagre in comparison to the acquittals. Between 1996 to 1998, while 30 accused were acquitted, only 8 accused were convicted.

The rise in rape cases has also affected all age groups. Between 1995 to 1998, the increase is most prominent (175 per cent) in case of rape victims below 10 years. The rape victims between 16 to 30 years age-group continues to be the largest segment.

If the growth rate in the incidence of dowry-related crimes and rape cases in Orissa is calculated over a longer period, the findings that emerge sound quite disturbing. Between 1986 to 1998, there has been 500 per cent increase in dowry related cases, while the rape cases registered a 332 per cent rise. Both dowry-related and rape cases have registered a 440 per cent rise in these years. The rise is observed to be more prominent after 1990. While both dowry and rape cases record a growth of 45 per cent during 1986 to 1990, the respective growth in dowry and rape cases during 1991 to 1998 is observed to be 251 per cent and 315 per cent respectively.



This rate of crime is highly disturbing as a sizeable number of crimes against women go unreported due to social and family pressures and stigmas attached to them.

### **Main Findings on Dowry Torture**

1. Dowry is not caste specific, it pervades all caste groups/sub-groups.
2. Dowry torture is more prevalent in the initial years of marriage and the same gets less manifested in the later part of life. The reasons for such decline in the incidence of dowry torture are accommodation of the demands of the in-laws by the parents in the initial years of marriage, development of a positive understanding between the victim and husband/in-laws, non-reporting of the torture by the victim and changing family environment because of the responsibility of the offspring(s).
3. Maximum numbers of dowry victims (48 per cent) are either without any education or with education upto primary level. The higher level of education of the women ensures low incidence of dowry torture. This trend is also reflected in the educational background of in-laws families. The incidence is less where the heads of the in-laws' families have better education and is more acute where they are illiterate. However, education is not a restraining factor in the developed districts where despite the higher educational background of the victims and the in-laws' families, such incidence continues to grow.
4. The economic independence of women has lessened the incidence of dowry torture (with only 37 per cent of victims being engaged in economic activities outside the home in contrast to 63 per cent victims who are housewives), although it has not provided a full protection.
5. Majority of girls are aware of dowry demand and related problems. However, this awareness does not elicit any response against such

practice from them as they mainly abide by the decisions of the parents on this matter.

6. Contrary to the popular perception that mother-in-laws are the decision-makers regarding dowry demand, decisions in majority cases (84 per cent) are taken by the male members, with male hegemony touching almost cent per cent in tribal and backward areas.
7. Dowry torture is more rampant where the in-laws' families have a poor economic status. In fact, 85 per cent dowry tortures have taken place in families where the monthly income of the in-law's family is Rupees 3,000 or less as opposed to 15 per cent where monthly income of in-law's family is Rupees 3001 and above. However, in developed districts, higher economic status of in-laws has not restrained dowry torture.
8. Maximum numbers of families (67 per cent) demand dowry in kinds, followed by cash (52 per cent) and gold (23 per cent).
9. The tribal areas show a lower acceptance rate of brides by in-laws' families and a lower adaptation level of parents' families (coping with dowry demand) in comparison to developed region.
10. The most important cause (50 per cent) of dowry torture is the low socio-economic background of the victims. Low level of education, poverty of the parents and in-laws' as well as lack of earning capacity of the victims; are prime contributing factors of dowry torture. The socio-economic deprivation has the most disadvantaged effects in tribal and backward areas. The second important contributing factor (31 per cent) is the continuous greed of husband and in-laws, who persist in demanding additional dowry. The bride is tortured to put pressure on her parents to extract more benefits. Developed areas account for highest number of such incidence. Influence of other members of the family as well as neighbours constitutes the third important cause (19 per cent) of the dowry torture. This is more prominent in backward and tribal areas. The

presence of unmarried sister-in-law(s) and the resultant need to give them dowry generates more demands and resultant torture. This segment, constituting 11 per cent of dowry torture, is more prominent in developed areas. Incapability to cope with household work has also been cited as a factor responsible for dowry torture (9 per cent). The victims have stated that though dowry has not been an issue initially, their failure to cope with the household work expected from them has led to more dowry demand and resultant torture in subsequent years. This has been found to be a typical feature of tribal areas, where women who work mostly outside, are also expected to do all the household chores. The other factors, which constitute 17 per cent of dowry torture; are alcohol/ drug addiction/extra-marital relationship of the husband, birth of a number of girl children and unemployment/underemployment of the husband.

11. It is, therefore, neither the poverty nor the greed alone that leads to dowry demand and subsequent torture. The dowry given whether willingly or forcibly has a spread effect on the society and leads to more and more of such demand and its resultant torture.
12. In tribal areas, dowry has come into practice in the later part of eighties, primarily because of the influences of the migrated population from the coastal areas.
13. The dowry torture varies from scolding to burning. The torture assumes more than one form in the majority of cases. Scolding happens to be most common form of torture, constituting 80 per cent. Beating is the next widely practised form of torture (71 per cent). Starving is another important form of torture (39 per cent). Cases of burning, which includes injury through hot iron rods or wood or cigarette, constitute 11 per cent of torture. The other forms of torture include poisoning leading to death in some cases, forced separation and burnt to death. The women continue to live with torture irrespective of their socio-economic background and accept it as part of life.

14. The dowry-related torture creates more mental-psychological-emotional repercussion with sustained stress and strain on the victims.
15. The frequency of dowry torture in majority of cases (71 per cent) is regular as opposed to the periodical ones (29 per cent).
16. In 86 per cent of the cases, the torture is caused by husband himself.
17. Most of the dowry-related torture and crimes go unreported (out of 600 samples only 261, representing 44 per cent have reported the torture committed against them). A varied set of factors are responsible for non-reporting of dowry-related torture and crimes. Social stigma, threat to life, ignorance/illiteracy/lack of awareness, expectation of a better relationship and other factors are almost equally responsible for non-reporting of cases. Threat to life is found to be the most restraining factor on the victims (23 per cent) for not divulging and reporting the torture. This factor is most prominent in developed areas. Illiteracy and lack of awareness about redressal mechanisms is the second important restrictive factor (22 per cent). This naturally is a deciding factor in backward and tribal districts, where female literacy rate is lower. Social stigma; another limiting factor, accounting 19 per cent, is more prominent in developed districts than the backward ones. Expectation of improvement in relationship with husband and in-laws is a dissuading reason (19 per cent), especially in backward and tribal districts. There are other tying reasons responsible for non-reporting of 18 per cent of cases. While in developed region, the lack of parental support or unwillingness of the victim to be a burden on the parents has deterred them from reporting, in tribal districts support of in-laws' in the face of torture by husband has prevented the victims from reporting in many cases. Poverty has also prevented the victims from approaching different institutions in a number of cases in tribal and backward districts. The victims have also refrained from reporting the torture because of their distrust of police and judicial system. Many victims have accepted torture as their fate and prefer to live with it.

18. Role of redressal agencies in responding to the dowry torture is far from satisfactory. Police gets maximum numbers of (54 per cent) of reported cases, followed by Family Counselling Centres (21 per cent) and other intervention agencies (including women's and non-governmental organisations) accounting 10 per cent. Gram Panchayats and Legal Aid have received 8 and 4 per cent of reported cases respectively. The State Women's Commission has evoked minimal response (3 per cent) from the victims. In fact, in backward and tribal areas the Commission has the poorest rating among the victims, who are most sceptical about its role and contribution.
19. Parent's support to dowry victims in providing help to the daughter(s) in seeking legal remedy is absent in majority of the cases and the main factor behind this lack of support is poverty. Societal response to arranging institutional response to the dowry torture is minimal.
20. The follow-up by the institutional agencies in dowry torture cases filed with them is highly discouraging. Police and the State Commission for Women are found to be the most inactive institutional fora in this regard. Their follow-up rate is 21.83 and 11.11 per cent respectively. On the contrary, the performance of Gram Panchayats, Legal Aid, Family Counselling Centres in following up the reported cases is found to be better. Their success rates are 60.00, 50.00 and 29.63 per cent respectively.

### **Main Findings on Sexual Violence**

1. Sexual violence is inflicted irrespective of the age of the victim, the most vulnerable group being the minor/teenaged girls.
2. Sexual violence pervades all caste groups and sub-groups.
3. Marriage, as an institution, does not protect women against sexual violence and such violence is found more (42 per cent) among married women than unmarried women (36 per cent).

4. Sexual violence is less among educated in tribal and backward districts but not in the developed districts.
5. Working women are more susceptible to such violence than housewives and among the working women those working in unorganised sector become victims of such violence to a large extent.
6. Irrespective of whether the girl child is brought up equally with her male counterpart or not, she becomes vulnerable to sexual violence. The discriminatory treatment to the girl child at home has nothing to do with sexual violence in later life.
7. Sexual violence is more frequent in families of low-income category. 49 per cent of the victims have parental monthly family income upto Rupees 1,200. Developed districts, however, reveal a different picture, and in majority of the cases, the sexual violence victims are from high-income group.
8. Occupationally, sexual violence is more prominent among families of daily-wagers (45 per cent), followed by farmers' families (22 per cent) and those from service sector (21 per cent). Victims whose parents are in business constitute the minimum numbers. The backward and tribal districts have a larger percentage of daily wage and farming parental background in comparison to the developed districts. This reconfirms that the low economic background makes the women more susceptible to sexual violence.
9. In 28 per cent of cases, the sexual violence is inflicted by family members and in remaining 72 per cent, outsiders are involved.
10. In majority of cases (80 per cent), the sexual violence victims have comfortable relationship with their parental families. However, they get minimal support (33 per cent) from their families to respond to the violence.

11. The most common form of sexual violence has been molestation (33 per cent). Molestation in the study includes eve teasing. This kind of violence is observed more prominently in developed districts with least occurrences in tribal districts. The second important form of sexual violence (27 per cent) seems to be harassment at working place. Majority of such cases have been reported in backward and tribal districts compared to developed ones. Attempt to rape constitutes 16 per cent of total sexual crimes, while rape constitutes 8 per cent. False promise of marriage associated with sexual abuse and desertion of the victims (14 per cent) is found to be more in tribal areas. The other types of sexual violence include kidnapping, assault with axe, forced separations, rape with murder, gang rape and physical assault. These forms of violence are more frequent in backward areas.
  
12. Majority of victims (42 per cent) attribute sexual violence to the impact of TV and Cinema, while 6 per cent of victims to reporting in newspapers. In their opinion Cinema and TV do not help in building up the moral of younger generation but rather work in opposite direction. Poverty has been cited as an important cause by 20 per cent of victims. Living under condition of poverty, they easily fall prey to the false promise of marriage by outsiders in many cases and local people in some cases. In 18 per cent of the cases, the victims seem to blame themselves and women as a class in as much as they attribute sexual violence to dress and conduct of the girls in public. Widespread availability of pornography, especially in urban areas, has been mentioned as a factor responsible for sexual violence in 8 per cent of cases. While this factor is of marginal importance in tribal districts, it plays relatively more important role in developed districts. In 16 per cent of the cases, the victims' impression has been that it is the lack of engagement for the young that leads them go astray and involve in all sorts of anti-social activities like eve teasing, molestation, etc. Besides these factors, a number of other causes were cited for sexual crimes. While extra-closeness and extra-marital relationship have been mentioned as factors

responsible for sexual violence in developed districts, alcohol is cited as an important factor in the tribal districts. Cultural traits, bigamy and superstition of Goddess occurring in a woman; have been mentioned as factors responsible for sexual violence and desertion in tribal districts.

13. 74 per cent of the cases of sexual violence are not reported to any agency (out of 600 samples of sexual violence victims, only 157 cases constituting 26 per cent have been reported). Social stigma constitutes the most tying factor (45 %) that prevents the victims from reporting. Those who undergo any sexual violence are generally treated as social outcastes, once the cases are reported and publicised. The victims, therefore, prefer to keep it secret rather reporting for justice. The social stigma factor is most prominent in backward districts. In 21 per cent of the cases, the victims have said that threat to their lives given by the inflictors or their family members has prevented them from reporting. This factor is found to be most prominent in developed districts. In 20 per cent of the cases (especially in tribal areas), illiteracy and lack of awareness about institutional help and legal provisions that have contributed towards non-reporting. In case of forced separation and deserting, the victims in many cases have been expecting an improved relationship and, therefore, have not reported the violence committed against them.
14. Out of the very few cases (26 per cent) of sexual violence crimes that has been reported, majority like dowry torture cases have been filed with police (62 per cent). Next important institutional body, which has commanded confidence of the victims, is found to be Panchayats (24 per cent). The State Commission for Women and Legal Aid are playing a marginal role and the least number of cases (2 per cent) has been filed with the former. In other categories, non-governmental organisations have played an important role and 9 per cent of the reported cases have been filed with them. The Women's Commission, like the dowry-related torture cases, is the most de-rated body among the sexual violence victims, especially in far-flung areas.



## Suggestions

1. Concerted efforts should be made to bring about attitudinal changes in the family and society to eradicate the evil of dowry practice. The unmarried girls should be made aware of the ill-effects of dowry so that they themselves protest against marriage when dowry is demanded. The awareness programme could form a part of co-curricular activities in the school education or at Non-Formal Education (NFE) centres.
2. The level of girl's education should be further raised, especially in the backward and tribal areas, as women's education will help in women's emancipation and in resisting dowry torture and sexual violence as well as in seeking justice in case of such victimisation.
3. Efforts should be made to provide economic independence to women. More income-generating avenues should be opened for women in the backward areas by imparting necessary training and providing necessary financial support. Economic empowerment does not prevent dowry torture and sexual violence, but definitely minimises such crimes.
4. The institutional response mechanisms should be further strengthened and made accountable for non-follow-up of the reported cases filed with them. Since the failure to deliver justice is highest with police and the State Commission for Women, both the bodies need revitalisation. More women police personnel should be recruited and deployed, especially in backward and tribal areas to win the confidence of the victims. A system of involvement of district police chief and district magistrate in attending to the cases which have not been properly handled by the police at the lower level should be evolved.
5. The State Commission for Women needs a total overhauling of its approach and methodology of functioning to win the confidence of the victims, particularly in the backward regions where the victim's distrust of the Commission is almost total. The Commission should hold more

- circuit/camp courts in the far-flung areas and its officials should make themselves available at State Capital when the victims visit its office as a common complaint of the victims is that they remain unattended during their visits.
6. Family Counselling Centres, which are playing an effective role in redressal/solacing of the dowry-related cases in developed districts, should be opened in the backward and tribal districts, where they are non-existent.
  7. Panchayatiraj Institutions (PRIs), particularly the Gram Panchayats, which have started playing an increasing role in getting justice to the victims should be encouraged in their efforts by the community and the local government.
  8. The legal aid provisions should be further broadened and made extensively operational at the district level.
  9. A better co-ordination between the redressal agencies should be ensured to provide optimal benefit to the victims to avail of the justice.
  10. Legal Literacy Programmes for women should be organised at the grass-root level to make them aware of the legal provisions and protections.
  11. The non-governmental and women's organisations should play a more effective role in getting justice to the victims, particularly those from socially and economically vulnerable groups.
  12. Mass media, particularly the electronic media, should be restrained from displaying indecent exhibition of women in the advertisements. In stead, real stories of the victims may be shown to generate public consciousness.
  13. Family and societal support should be provided to the victims to report the cases of atrocities.

14. Girls should be trained in self-defence to defend themselves against sexual violence and the process could be made a part of school/college co-curricular activities.
15. Urgent reforms in criminal justice system in the country have to be introduced to develop a quick judicial response and to provide more tangible legal protections to the victims.

# Appendixes

**Schedule-A**  
**(For the Dowry Victim/her Relation)**

**1. Name -**

- (a) Caste -                      (b) Religion -                      (c) Educational Qualification -  
(d) Village./ Town -      (e) G.P. -                      (f) Block -  
(g) Dist. -

**2. Family Particulars :-**

**(a) Parent's Family**

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Sl. No.	Name	Relationship	Age	Educational Qualification	Occupation	Earning (P.M.)
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**(b) In - laws Family (including your own children)**

Sl. No.	Name	Relationship	Age	Educational Qualification	Occupation	Earning (P.M.)
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**3. Who plays decisive role in both the families :-**

**4. Marriage Particulars :-**

- (a) Age at Marriage -
- (b) Arranged or Love Marriage. -
- (c) If arranged, with consent of self or not -
- (d) If love marriage, with consent of parents of both sides or not -
- (e) Procedure of Marriage-Traditional/ Court / Temple / Customary -  
(In case of tribal community detailed procedure may be recorded)
- (f) Marriage within caste / inter caste / inter religion -
- (g) Any third party involved in marriage and its role --

**5. Particulars of Dowry Demand :-**

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Items Demanded	Items Promised	Items Given
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6. **Were you aware of dowry demands and gifts by your parents?**
7. **If yes, what was your reaction to this?**
8. **What are the factors leading to increasing dowry demand?**
9. **Did you want to marry despite dowry demand or it was imposed on you.**
10. **In case of no demand from in - law's side, what was given to you at the time of marriage?**
11. **What was your response? Satisfied / Felt neglected / Aggrieved for inadequacy / Felt sorry for parents?**
12. **Did your parents' family visit you frequently? If not reasons -**

13. How were you accepted by your in-law's family?

14. Type of works expected of you in in-law's family?

15. Were you able to cope with it? If not reasons -

16. After how many days of marriage you felt that you are being ill treated (demanding more dowry)?

17. Nature of Torture:-

Severe Beating = a

Starving = b

Burning = c

Mental Cruelty (Scolding) = d

Abnormal Sex = e

Any other (Specify) = f

Person giving torture	Relationship	Type of Torture	Frequency of Torture Regular / Periodical	Place Isolation / Before others	Extent of Injury	After care if any
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**18. What was your response to the torture?**

- (a) Wanted to convince your husband first -
- (b) Brought it to the notice of parents -
- (c) Confided with your friends -
- (d) Retorted to the persons giving you torture and thought of solving it by self-
- (e) Any other (Specify)

**19. What are the reasons for torture according to you?**

- a) Is it because you come from a comparatively low economic background ?

- b) Is it because you are not educated or not working ?
- c) Is it because you are incapable of doing household work ?
- d) Is it because your other sister- in- law are more beautiful and brought more dowry ?
- e) Is it because your husband has unmarried sisters for whose marriage they have to give dowry ?
- f) Is it the greed of in-laws ?
- g) Any other -

**20. What was the response of others whose attention you tried to attract ?**

**21. Was there any one in in-law's family who sided with you ? If so, what was his/her response ?**

**22. When did you decide to report the matter to police or women's commission or any other counselling agency ? If no, give reasons -**

**23. If yes, was it your decision or imposed on you ? If so, whom ?**

**24. Are you satisfied with institutional help ?**

If yes, nature of help extended -

If not, the reason for failure of the institution -

**25. Have the institution whom you approached enlightened you about your entitlements from legal point of view ?**

**26. How do you think this dowry torture can be eliminated from society ? If so, how ?**

**27. Is it possible to completely eradicate dowry from society ?**

**28. Whom do you blame more for the torture ?**

a) Your parents

b) Brothers

c) Mother- in - law / Father- in -law

d) Husband

e) Sister-in-law

f) Your self

**29. Observation of Investigator -**

**P.S. In case a person other than victim reporting, his / her relationship with victim may be recorded.**

**Schedule 'B'**  
**(Victim of Sexual Violence/her relation)**

1. (a) Name (b) Age (c) Educational Qualification
- (d) Caste (e) Religion (f) Village
- (g) G.P. (h) Block (i) District

2. **Marital Status** - a) Married  
b) Unmarried  
c) Divorcee/Deserted/Separated

3. **In case of (a) or (c) number of children.**

Boys \_\_\_\_\_ Girls \_\_\_\_\_

4. **Working Status.**

Household Activities	Outside Activities	Paid/or Not Paid if paid income p.m.
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**5. Family Particulars. -**

Parent's Family			In -laws Family		
No. of numbers	Working Members	Approx. income p.m.	No. of Members	Working Members	Approx. income p.m.

**6. How is your income spent ?**

- i) Towards Family needs.
- ii) On self.
- iii) On husbands' need.

- iv) On children.
- v) Savings.
- vi) Others (Specify)

**7. Who decides how your income is spent?**

**8. Who decides the following matters in the family?**

- i) Children's Education.
- ii) Recreation / Entertainment of Family members.
- iii) Sale / Purchase of Property.
- iv) Ceremonies
- v) Marriage
- vi) Legal matters.

**9. Are you consulted on important matters?**

- i) Always    ii) Often    iii) Sometimes    iv) Rarely    v) Never

**10. Do you read News- paper?**

- i) Always      ii) Often      iii) Sometimes      iv) Rarely      v) Never

**11. Do you watch Television?**

- i) Always      ii) Often      iii) Sometimes      iv) Rarely      v) Never

**12. Do you visit Cinema?**

- i) Always      ii) Often      iii) Sometimes      iv) Rarely      v) Never

**13. Are / were you treated at par with your brothers?**

- i) Yes                      ii) No                      iii) Undecided

**14. Do you feel a change in your status after marriage? If so, how?**

15. If you feel discriminated, give some instances to justify.

16. In case of personal problems, whom do you confide most in the family?

17. As a child were you free in discussing with your parents / others in the family? If not, reasons. -

18. Particulars of Sexual Violence. \_

Type	Since when	Frequency	Name of the Person	Relationship	Age	Educational Qualification	Occupation

19. What was your reaction?

- a) Immediately discussed with friends / mother / father / others in the family.
- b) Reported to Panchayat / Police Station / Legal Aid / Women Commission.



c) Kept quiet.

**20. In case of (c) what are the reasons?**

(a) Fear of Social outcasting / social stigma.

(b) Shyness.

(c) Threat to life.

(d) Any other (specify).

**21. In case of (a) or (b) what was the response?**

**22. How do you feel after being subjected to sexual violence?**

a. Society's reaction. -

b. Your own family member's reaction. -

**23. Are you satisfied with help rendered by Police / Any other agencies approached -**

If yes. How ?

If not. Why ?

**24. What could be the possible factors leading to such violence ? (Rank them)**

- a. TV, Cinema.
- b. Modern dresses of girls.
- c. Availability of Pornography.
- d. Reporting of such violence in News - papers.
- e. Poverty of Girls.
- f. Frustration among boys (Unemployment)
- g. Any other (specify).

**25. Your suggestion for eliminating / checking Sexual Violence.**

**26. Observation of the Investigator.**

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