

**GENDER RELATED CRIMES IN GREATER  
GUWAHATI URBAN AREA**

**ABSTRACT**

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**THESIS  
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## **1. Introduction:**

Human history is replete with violence against its own kind. However, violence based on gender within the confines of the community and home is perhaps the most degrading of all other forms of violence. Crimes against women are as old as civilisation and equally ancient are the efforts to combat and arrest them. These efforts have not succeeded and crimes persist. The overall picture, as presented through an information sheet brought out in data on violence against women in India by the Union Government is as follows: '... a woman is subjected to criminal assault every 54 minutes, a molestation takes place every 26 minutes, a dowry death every 102 minutes, kidnapping and abduction every 43 minutes, an act of eve teasing every 51 minutes and an act of cruelty on a women is perpetrated every 33 minutes (Indian Express, 1994: September 21). Based on the crime rate at the national level, State/U.T, have been categorised as "more crime prone" and "less crime prone" areas for crimes that are perpetrated against women. Though Assam was categorised as 'less crime prone" area, its all India rank has gone up from twenty-first in 1992 to tenth in 1995, a great change indeed (National Crime Record Bureau: 1995). Greater Guwahati registered the highest numbers of crimes against women of *all the urban centres of Assam* (Crime Branch, Guwahati City S.P. Office: Records).

## **2. Statement of the Problem:**

Is woman specially disadvantaged because of her gender? It does not seem to be so biologically or physically. However, social and cultural specificities have given her the age old disadvantaged position, so also the economic structure where the role of women in the economic activities was undermined; therefore, her economic position of dependence on man. The former two create a conducive basis of her psychological undermining; thus both, perception as well as a sense of 'insecurity' in women play a role in home or in larger social life.

Crime against women that arise because of her socio-cultural, economic and psychological insecurities is a fact in both the developing and the developed world. This, of course, is despicable and must be rooted out from all societies and they must reach an equal footing as those of men, in all spheres of life. However, do crimes against women have cultural specificities? Are there variations along ethnic boundaries? Do crimes take specific forms between the rural and the urban spheres? Does modernity or even 'development' take its pound of flesh on gender crimes? How much of the crimes committed against women relate to their lower economic and social status and how much,

because they are women? These are some questions one would like to investigate in the proposed study.

Urban areas do provide better economic and social opportunities to women as compared to the rural areas because it allows women to pursue different professions. They are also relatively more gender-equal. However, such opportunities create also opportunities of specific crimes, like eve teasing, sexual harassment at work place and greater number of rapes. Urban areas also have a larger number of nuclear families than the rural areas. Nuclear families are also replete with domestic violence--in great prevalence in developed countries. In urban areas also the ethnic boundaries are often distinct and take specific spatial locations, so also those of the economic classes (residential segregation). It would be interesting to study spatial variation in types of crimes along ethnic and economic classes and explain such variations.

As compared to the all India situation where one of the most important crimes against women is dowry related, in Assam this is not the case, because cultural specificity of the Assamese society where dowry is not a prevalent custom in marriages. However, modernisation of the society also brings in new values and imitations from other cultures. It would be also interesting to study if dowry related crimes are emerging in the Assamese society or not? There are also other forms of *crimes that are development related*, like domestic stress related ones. They are the best observed in the urban situation. It would also be interesting to analyse their extent and causes.

### **3. Objectives:**

The primary aspects investigated in the present study are:

1. To study the types and patterns of crimes against women in Greater Guwahati Urban Area;
2. To identify specific social areas in respect of locations of diverse ethnicities in the city and to identify crimes against women those are in general or those specific to ethnic background of the communities;
3. To identify areas of broad economic classes as expressed in their location and to study specificities of gender crimes along economic strata;
4. To examine if crimes against women are growing? If so, what types of crimes and etc; explain for what reasons?
5. To examine if the crime against women has relation with modernising forces, i.e. rise in income levels and material comforts or conversely, deprivation, unemployment have anything to do with crimes against women;

6. To examine connections between crimes against women have and the levels of literary and education of women?; (Therefore, the objective would also to study the relationship of educational level with type and intensity of crimes.) and
7. To examine the relation between crimes in general in a society and those gender related, (in the sense, what happens to CAW in response to increase or decrease of crime in general.)

#### **4. Hypotheses:**

The following hypotheses are tested in the study:

1. Hypothesis one:

*"Crimes against women tend to increase or decrease in response to changes in overall crime rates in a society".*

2. Hypothesis two:

*"Crime rates and types vary across economic classes".*

3. Hypothesis three:

*"Types of crimes against women vary along ethnic diversities".*

4. Hypothesis four:

*"Modernisation of society influences intensifies and types of crimes against women".*

#### **5. Data Base and Methodology:**

##### **A: Data Base and Sources:**

Data and information from both secondary and primary sources are obtained for this study.

##### **Sources of Secondary Data:**

Information regarding the study area and the socio- economic environment of Greater Guwahati have been collected from secondary sources: census report of 1971, 1991 and 2001 and through intensive consultations of library materials and publications. Another set of secondary data regarding the incidences of crimes against women in Assam is collected from the records of National Crime Record Bureau, Government of India, New Delhi.

**Sources of Primary Data:**

There are four sources of primary data. They are the following: (a) records of the office of the City Superintendent of Police, Guwahati, (b) Legal Aid Cell, Guwahati Club, Guwahati, (c) State Women's Commission, Assam, Guwahati and (d) Interviews of Victims of Violence by the researcher.

**Crime Branch (City), Superintendent of Police Office, Guwahati:**

This set of primary data on crimes against women as well as overall crimes in Guwahati (reported crimes) is collected from the Crime Branch, City S. P. Office, Guwahati. They are the "reported" crimes which are recorded by the crime administering authorities. The data compiled on yearly basis for 14 years has been used for this study (1990-2003). The total numbers of general crimes on the basis of police stations for the year from 1994 to 2003 have also been obtained from the same source.

**Legal Aids Cell, Guwahati:**

L.A.C. is one of the wings of the Mitali Sangha, an NGO run by eminent women activist of Guwahati where free legal advices are provided to the victims and also cases fought (without fee) for the poor victims. They keep record of cases that they intercept of women in distress. Only the case of domestic violence and the case related with crimes against women are taken into account for this study. Data from 1990 to 2003 is collected from this source. Those cases which are referred to the All Women Cell, at Panbazar police station, or to any police stations, or the victim have reported to any police station are not taken into account to avoid repetition. The same is also done while collecting data from State Women Commission.

**State Women Commission, Guwahati:**

The records of different forms of crimes against women under the following heads; atrocity by husband and in-laws, dowry harassment, murder, rape, sexual harassment at work place, kidnapping and immoral trafficking of women are taken from this source (1994 to 2003)

**Primary Sample Survey of Victims of Violence against Women:**

Primary data was collected through a purposive sample survey of individual victims of domestic violence or those affected by sexual harassment outside the homes in respect of their social backgrounds and economic characteristics as well as the interview based surveys of housewives and

adult women in the households to study the nature and types of domestic violence, attitude of women, causes and frequency of occurrences and possible solution put forth by the victims.

The sample design is as follows:

- (a) Since it was not possible to carry out a door-to-door survey, even on a sample basis on such a sensitive social issue, it was considered to approach individual victims identified by the police, LAC and SWC sources, as well as other personal channels. It was considered adequate to take about 60 cases of domestic violence, approximately covering the six-types of localities outlined, three on income criteria and three on ethnicity background.
- (b) The survey though was based on a structured questionnaire, the aim was to meet each victim a number of times to gain confidence and access truth, as far as possible from the victims perspective without being either intrusive or judgemental.
- (c) The violence against women outside their homes was taken up separately, since most of these are of sexual nature and mostly young women are the victims. The common crimes are (i) eve-teasing, (ii) molestation, (iii) work-place harassment and on a severity scale, (iv) trafficking in women, (v) rapes or (vi) murder. The focus in this study was on the non-reported types (i to iii) and separate questionnaire was administered in a few tertiary educational institutions, working women hostels and offices—a total numbering 20 victims.
- (d) The questionnaire on domestic violence contains the following sets of queries from the selected victims: (i) Identification information and socio-economic background of the victims including education etc; (ii) nature and frequency of crimes, the perpetrators and current status of the victim; and (iii) nature of current coping and opinion on possible solutions as perceived by the victim.

## **B. Methodology:**

### **Conceptual Frame of the Study:**

The study is conceived on the basis government data that there is considerable increase in violence against women in Assam in recent times. It is also perceived that Assamese society more liberal in regards to the status of women; e.g. dowry was unheard of, a few decades earlier. Assam also contains a myriad of communities and amalgamation of a variety of cultures and practices, many religions and a Vaishnabite Hinduism (anti-ritualistic) popularised by the great 16<sup>th</sup> century saint-poet, Sankar Dev. It also helped in harmonising the diverse people and cultures in a manner, unheard of the rest of India.

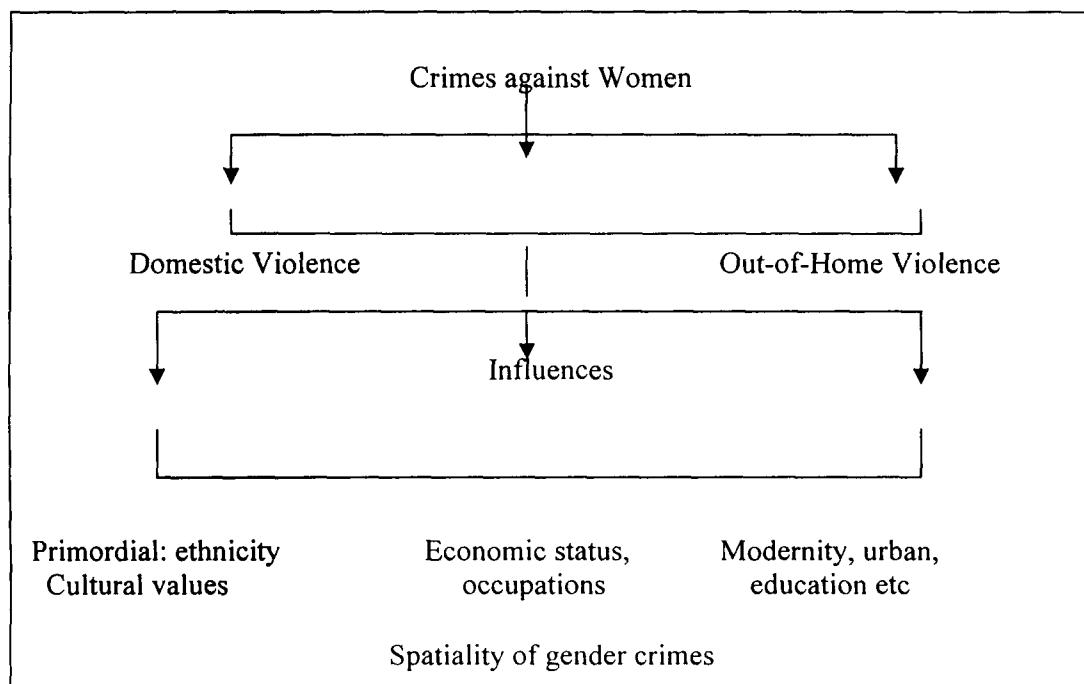
However, exposure to other cultures (in India), influences of modernity like economic stratification, urbanisation, changes in occupations, and migrations from rural to urban centres could influence changes in cultural and behavioural spheres. Money income and liberties of urban existence break the social restrictions—undoubtedly an important source of marital discord and violence against women.

The institution of family is perhaps the oldest and most durable of human institution and is considered foundation of all societies. It is family that provides psychological, moral and physical security to all members within which the role of women is fundamental. Therefore domestic violence against women is the very negation of the institution of family—it brings destruction to the family even before it is constructed.

Gender violence of different forms connected with the spatiality of the woman's existence, i.e. her positioning in economic segregation in urban areas (her class background), her ethnic background that provides cultural meaning to her position after marriage or even at her parental home, her educational background and occupational pursuits that allows her to interact with the larger society. The objective of the study is to understand both domestic and out-of-home violence against women in general, but also to see if it has spatial connotations.

The Research Frame Work is represented in the flow chart,

**Fig. 2.1: Research Frame-work**



### **Selection of the Sample Areas:**

The first set of samples is decided on the basis of localities that are crime-prone in general, from reported/registered crimes in police records and in the other two sources. As stated earlier, the data collected from the Crime Branch, City, S. P. Office, have been arranged on the basis of police stations. Those data collected from the other two sources are subsequently arranged according to the police stations by noting the place of occurrence of these crimes from the records. The total numbers of crimes that are registered from 1990 to 2003 (as for State Women Commission the data are from 1994-2003) are then summed up as per the police stations and the six most crime prone areas are selected as the sample areas; Dispur, Chandmari, Jalukbari, Paltanbazar, Fatasil Ambari and Noonmati. Care is taken that these are well spread out over the entire Greater Guwahati area. From these sample areas, three such localities are identified keeping the ethnic character of these localities in mind: Jalukbari predominantly Assamese; Fatasil Ambari is taken as a mixed community area consisting women from Scheduled Tribes, Hindi speaking community, Bengali etc and Sijubari of Dispur is identified as Bengali speaking Muslim community locality.

Three more localities are selected on the basis of income classes. Since there was no economic data at the city level, through intensive discussions with the development and planning authorities and personal experiences the income clusters are identified. Chandmari as well as Dispur is considered as the high income locality, Noonmati is identified as the middle income locality and the slum area of Paltanbazar is identified as the low income locality. Therefore the total localities are six in all.

### **6. Summary of Findings:**

The findings of the study have been summarised objective-wise as follows:

#### *(i) Objective one:*

Dispur, Chandmari and Jalukbari are the areas of high occurrences of *atrocities by husband and in-laws (498-A IPC)*. In each of these areas, there are certain pockets inhabited by lower and lower and middle-income families, like Sijubari in Dispur area, Bamunimaidan in Chandmari area, Pandu and Maligaon in Jalukbari area. It was also noticed during the field study that women belonging to this class are comparatively less hesitant to register their cases of *atrocities by husbands and in-laws*. High concentration of *dowry death and dowry related harassment (304-B IPC)* have taken place in Fatasil Ambari, Jalukbari and Chandmari during the study period (1990-2003). Dispur and Jalukbari records

the highest cases of *rapes*. *Molestation and sexual harassment* tends to occur more in densely populated areas like, Ganeshguri area of Dispur, Chandmari and Maligaon area of Jalukbari that remain densely inhabited--which may be one of the reasons of frequent occurrences of these crimes in these areas. Dispur, Geetanagar and Paltanbazar show the highest concentration of *trafficking in women*. Dispur, Jalukbari, Paltanbazar and Chandmari recorded the highest cases of *kidnappings and abductions*. There are more reports of *eve teasing* in Noonmati, Paltanbazar and Fatasil Ambari (on the basis of data from the City, S.P. Office). *Others* forms of crimes include murder cases, which have taken place in varied circumstances, are concentrated in areas like Dispur, Fatasil Ambari and Jalukbari. In case of Jalukbari and Fatasil Ambari, dowry can be attributed as a major cause of murder of women.

*(ii) Objective Two:*

Jalukbari is considered predominantly an Assamese community residential area, Fatasil Ambari, as a mixed community residential area inhabited by Scheduled Tribes, a variety of Hindi speakers and Bengali speaking communities and Sijubari of Dispur is known as predominantly Bengali speaking (Muslim community) locality. Religion, linguistic and caste/community background of the women and their connections with the domestic violence (Chapter IV) are as follows:

- (a) All forms of physical as well as mental violence by husbands and in-laws are high among the Muslims followed by the Hindus. Among the Hindu women, attempt to murder both by the husband and the in-laws are high. Sexual abuse (in the form of initiating/forcing wives into prostitution and trafficking!) by husbands is more among the low income Muslim families. The Hindu women are harassed on all occasions, especially due to dowry or due to illicit relationships of the husbands with other women and the Muslim women (low income families), harassed more due to grabbing away the earnings of the wife by the husband, marital infidelity by the husbands as well as dowry. The Muslim women are more ready to compromise with their situation<sup>1</sup>. But the Hindu women prefer to live a separated life or study further to be economically independent.

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<sup>1</sup> It must be noted that the women referred to from the Muslim community are invariably from very low income families and therefore, the findings are related to poor families from the community. For these women, the desperate economic situation does not permit them to live a separated life. Moreover, the nature marriage among the Muslims is quite different and a divorce could be quite easy, at least among the low income families, since it is based on a contract, (though the 'triple Talaak' has been discouraged by All Indian Muslim Law Board in its recent pronouncement)—thus the struggle to keep the marriage in tact than breaking away, as among the Hindus and other communities.

(b) Atrocities of all forms both mental and physical by the husband and in-laws are also high among ethnicities, like the Bengalis followed by Assamese. But attempt to burn and murder married women for dowry or other reasons are high among the other linguistic groups (Telugu, Punjabi etc., *non-East Indian* communities: NEIC). Atrocities due to alcoholism are more prevalent among the Assamese and other linguistic groups (NEIC). Dowry related violence and bigamy/ spousal infidelity are more among the Bengalis and NEIC. Around 50 percent of the Bengali respondents (both Hindus and Muslims) prefer to live with the situation (compromise), whereas the Assamese women prefer to live a separated life.

All forms of violence by husband are high among the Scheduled Castes and low among the Scheduled Tribes couples. Sexual violence by the husbands are common to general castes/communities; however, violence by in-laws are more common to Other Backward Castes (OBC) and Scheduled Tribes (particularly, in cases of ST women married to non Scheduled Tribe husbands) and are conversely, less among couples from the Scheduled Castes and general population.

*(iii) Objective Three:*

Among the localities within the limits of Greater Guwahati Urban area, Chandmari and Dispur are considered as the high income localities, Noonmati, middle income locality and the slum areas of Paltanbazar, low income localities. Study of employment status, occupational status and economic background of the families in relation to gender crimes indicate the following (Chapter V):

(a) Physical and mental violence both by the husband and the in-laws are high among the employed women. The women are generally abused for not being able to perform dual duties of a house-keeper (*home-maker!*) and as a working woman--her sense of freedom is envied by the in-laws, the husband, suspicious of illicit relationships at work-place and no less, the harassments on the way to work or at work place, if you are young and attractive as a person (!). Sexual violence by husbands is high among the housewives (unemployed with no source of independent incomes). The housewives are harassed more on all occasions or when they go against the will of the husbands/in-laws because of constant dowry demands. A large section of the housewives compromise to the circumstances (especially, women with low level of education) since choices before them are limited—a separated life is fraught with economic and physical insecurity with little long-term

support from the parental families, especially that there is no social security system in the country against penury. However, many women with education wish to lead a separated and independent life. One-third of the women want to study further, get a job and become economically independent. Majority of the employed women want to lead an independent life.

- (b) Physical and mental tortures by the husbands are high and of extreme severity (breaking limbs, abortions, damaged hearing etc.) among low income self-employed or wage workers (vendors, wage-workers and the sales-women), and is low among, expectedly, the educated professionals. Physical violence by the in-laws is common to the former; whereas, mental violence by the in-laws (ignorance, passing sarcastic comments, use of abusive languages etc.) is high with the latter, especially when they oppose the in-laws. Daily-wager women suffer their husbands' financial profligacy and illicit relations with other women, so also, among other small-time self-employed women (vendors and the small business women), who suffer at hands of their drunken and polygamous husbands. Among the office goers, the causes are varied: work-stress, exertion, professional frustrations etc. Majority of the daily-wagers, sales women and small business women prefer to compromise due to the social security provided by the marriage and also for the security of their children. On the other hand, the vendors, office goers and the business women prefer to live a separated life.
- (c) Physical and mental violence by the husbands are high in the low-income families (Rs 24001-50000) and lower middle-income families (Rs 50001-100000); but among the very poor households (below Rs 24000) as well as the high income families (above Rs. 100000/year) sexual violence are nearly non-existent. Mental violence by the in-laws is high in the middle income families and physical violence among the low economic families. Atrocity due to alcoholism increases with towards of respondents with low incomes, whereas atrocity due to dowry increases among respondents in families with middle incomes of the family but not among the high income families

(iv) *Objective Four:*

As evident from Table 3.15, crimes against women have increased in all the areas of the city except Geetanagar, whereas growth is the highest in Noonmati. The rapid growth of population in this area during the recent period can be attributed as one of the causes. The lowest growth is in Panbazar area

because this is largely a business area and resided only by business communities (Marwadis, e.g.), largely upper income class.

The growth of crimes against women (by types) (from 1990 to 2003) is as follows:

(a) *Atrocity by husband and in-laws*: Reported crimes of this nature show growth in all areas of the city except Geetanagar. The highest growth is reported from Jalukbari (220.83%) and very high growth in Fatasil Ambari, Azara, Noonmati and Pragjyotishpur areas which reported very low crime earlier years. Overall, this crime grew by 40.48 percent in Greater Guwahati.

(b) *Dowry death*: There appears to be a spurt in dowry related deaths in all the areas, which earlier reported practically none except in two areas; Fatasil Ambari (8.33%) and Latasil. This is a serious concern and appears the city is falling into the trap of “Indian Mainstream” an epithet for many terrible practices.

(c) *Rape*: Noonmati area shows a very high growth (166.66%) of reported rape cases. The overall growth rate of rape in Greater Guwahati is 11.31 percent.

(d) *Kidnappings*: Very high growth rates have been observed in kidnappings in areas like Paltanbazar, Azara and Basistha. The average growth rate for Greater Guwahati is 4.91 percent.

(e) *Molestation*: Except Geetanagar, Pragjyotishpur, Jalukbari and all the other places are showing very high growth of molestation.

(f) *Immoral Trafficking of Women*: Jalukbari, Chandmari, Paltanbazar and Dispur appear the principal areas high growth of this crime.

(g) *Others*: They are the cases of murder of women under different circumstances. There is substantial growth of murder of women in the city, 45.83 percent, the highest of all the crimes.

(v) *Objective Five*:

The relation of violence against women arising due to modernising forces such as migration from rural to urban areas, employment status of women, nature of families (nuclear or joint) and sexual harassment outside home have been considered and the implications are as follows (Chapter V, VI and VII):

(a) When crimes against women are studied on the basis of the personal incomes of the women respondents it is observed that physical and mental violence by the husbands and

the in-laws as well as sexual abuse are high among the low and middle income women (Rs 1201-2400). Drunkenness, dowry and constant financial harassment by husbands are common to these women. All forms of violence are low among the lower income women (< Rs 600) as well as the high income women (Rs 8000).

- (b) Physical violence by the husband is more in the nuclear families and mental violence among the extended families. Physical violence (in lower proportion) and mental violence by the in-laws (more) are reported among the joint families. Atrocities by husbands due to work-related stresses, exertion and frustration are more prevalent in the nuclear families. The women staying in the joint families usually prefer compromises with their situations but majority of the women staying in the joint and the nuclear families want to be economically independent and live a separate life.
- (c) Attempt to murder (by the husband) appears quite frequent as reported by the respondents, those are non-migrants (residents of Guwahati), whereas mental violence is more common among the women who migrated from villages. There are cases, where husbands apparently brought the wives in some guise from village for the motive of making a living by engaging these hapless women in prostitution rackets.
- (d) The frequency of occurrences of sexual harassment outside home decreases with the increase of the age of the women. The unmarried women are more susceptible to sexual harassment in all places and situations, and at the same time, are frequently harassed. Women belonging to lower income families are sexually harassed more both in the public places and workplaces.

*(vi) Objective Six:*

Education among women evidently appears to be an important factor for safety in the home environment. Physical violence by the husbands are high among less educated women (metric or below metric), but less among the highly educated (graduates and professionals), as well as illiterates! Physical violence by the in-laws also decreases with the increase in the educational level of the women but is the vice versa for mental violence. Atrocities due to stress and frustration increases with the educational status of the women and though it is not a professional factor. Spousal violence decreases with the higher educational level of the women, related to drunkenness or infidelity, which is common among spouses of low education and low incomes. However, irrespective of their educational status, women are invariably targets of sexual harassment in the

public transport and public places, due to poor law enforcement system, especially the lower rung of police functionaries, who consider eve-teasing, or making sexual gestures to young women is “perfectly legal” in the country and is no business of the law enforcement authority. Sexual harassment at workplaces and the frequency of occurrences declines with the increase of the educational status of the women because education makes them confident to confront the unsolicited “Romeos”.

*(vii) Objective Seven:*

There appears to be a strong relationship between the occurrences of general crimes and crimes against women, when one observes this phenomenon on the basis of number of cases registered in each of these police stations. Dispur records the highest cases of general crimes, at the same time the CAW are also the highest in Dispur (the Capital Township of Assam!). Such association of general crimes and CAW in Paltanbazar, Jalukbari and Chandmari are more or less the same. Though intended, statistical association between the two was not carried forward due to a number of factors related with the data base, but there is no doubt that the two are strongly related.

## **7. Testing of Hypotheses:**

As per the testing of the hypothesis are concerned they were not subjected to testing in a statistical sense, due to the limitation and characteristics of the data, i.e., the total number of respondents for domestic violence are 60 and for violence outside home, 20. Therefore, the approach adopted for verification of the stated four hypotheses was through cross tables and association of different indicators.

### **7.1 Hypothesis One:**

*"Crimes against women tend to increase or decrease in response to changes in overall crime rates in a society".*

This hypothesis stands vindicated when the relationship of occurrences of general crimes and crimes against women are taken into account, data on police station-wise. The areas where the general crimes are high are also record higher levels of crimes against women. Dispur police station registered the highest cases of general crimes as well as crimes against women (CAW) during the study period (1991-2003). Paltanbazar recorded the second highest number cases general cases and ranked third in respect of crimes against women. The relation between the two (general crimes and

crimes against women) in Panbazar area is not very strong (rank of general crimes -3 and CAW-6). The cause for showing low registration of CAW in this area is because the All Women Cell (combine reporting) is located within Panbazar PS premises. But again Jalukbari area has a strong relation between the two, general crimes 4<sup>th</sup> and CWA 2<sup>nd</sup>.

When we associate the two at the lower end, it is observed that North Guwahati, Pragjyotishpur and Latasil are less crime prone, both general and crimes against women.

## **7.2 Hypothesis two:**

*"Crime rates and types vary across economic classes".*

There are variations of violence against the women across economic classes both in types and extent. Physical and mental violence by the husband are substantially high among the lower middle class families (Rs 24001-50000) and low among the women in high economic class (> Rs 100000). Sexual violence by the husbands is high among the middle class families (Rs 50001-100000). Physical violence by the in-laws is high among the low income women, whereas it is non-existent among the high income families. But mental violence by the in-laws shows somewhat a different picture. Mental violence is high among the middle income families, but is less among the lower middle class families.

In situation where women have independent incomes, all forms of violence by the husbands (physical, mental and sexual) are high among the lower middle income respondents (Rs. 1201-2500/month). Physical violence by the husband is low among the very low (monthly income less than Rs 600) and the high income women (+ Rs 8000). On the other hand, mental tortures by husbands are less among the very low income women. Sexual violence by the husband does not exist among the very low and lower income women. Physical and mental violence by the in-laws are high among the lower (middle-class) income women and is the least among the very low income women. Battery by the husband exists among all the income groups but the frequency of occurrences gradually decreases with the income of the women.

Both physical and mental violence by husbands and the in-laws are high among the employed women. Violent forms of physical tortures by husbands are high among the wage workers, vendors and small business women. Battery by the husband exists among the entire occupational

groups but the frequency of occurrence decreases with the increase in the occupational status. Physical and mental violence by husband of all forms are lower among the high professionals.

### **7.3 Hypothesis three:**

*"Types of crimes against women vary along ethnic diversities".*

All forms of atrocities (physical, mental and sexual) by the husbands and in-laws are high among the Muslims than the Hindus. But attempts to murder by the husbands and in-laws are higher among the Hindus respondents.

Physical and mental violence (husband and in-laws) are high among the Bengali speaking community and it is like a daily affair for majority of them. Atrocities by the husbands are low among the North-Indian (Hindustani) speaking communities. Sexual violence by husband is more among the Muslims (forced prostitution and trafficking), though among the Hindus it represents other forms.

Among the Scheduled Castes all forms of physical violence as well as mental violence by husbands are high, whereas, it is expectedly low among the Scheduled Tribes. Very few cases of domestic violence among the Scheduled Tribes were reported in the study. On the other hand, there were innumerable cases of atrocities among the Scheduled Castes and the general caste populations. Physical and mental violence by in-laws are high among the Other Backward Castes and low among the Scheduled Castes.

Therefore, there appears to be strong association of ethnicity, culture and pattern of crimes against women; e.g., whereas there are reported dowry cases among the North-Indian communities (Biharis, U.P.ites, Rajasthanis and Punjabis), it is not a prominent factor among the Assamese and Bengali communities, in which case marital infidelity and bigamy emerge as more important factors in spousal discords.

### **7.4 Hypothesis four:**

*"Modernisation of society influences intensifies and types of crimes against women".*

Education of the women is an important component of the process of modernisation. It was observed during the study that though physical and mental violence by the husbands occurs among all the educational groups but the types and frequency of atrocities vary substantially by educational level. Violence decidedly decreases with the increase of the educational level of the women and also the frequency of occurrences. Except a few exceptions, atrocity by the in-laws also shows a similar

trends and it is nearly absent among the high professionals (physical violence). But mental violence apparently, increases with the educational status of the women. Whereas education at one level, opens of economic and social opportunities for women and drastically improves her quality of life (even that of the family), it has to be admitted that it also exposes her, ironically, to sexual harassment in the workplace and also outside the home environment in general. It is not to argue that education is to blame, rather it is failure of the society and polity to protect women who become partners of progress for the entire society.

As compared to rural areas, the urban, fragments the old family structure into nuclear families by necessity, which produces its own ethos of spousal discord, stresses and strains that at times spills over to violence, with no one to help in mending fences. Physical and mental violence (both by husbands and in-laws) are high in the joint families but in the nuclear families the spousal violence is often extreme. Torture or newly wed women is common to joint families due to dowry demand, whereas in nuclear families husbands exposure to liquor and other women, loneliness and frustrations of the urban existence are important factors.

Physical and mental violence by the husband and physical atrocities by the in-laws are high among the migrants, especially women migrants from villages. They generally are not confident enough to retaliate and thus, suffer and compromise with violent husbands and atrocious in-laws—suffering often is accepted fact of the urban existence—situation dictated by fate. On the other hand, women who grew up in Guwahati suffer from mental violence by the in-laws, because they are more outgoing in nature; seek for more private space and time, less leaning towards traditional values and way of life etc.

Therefore, no doubt, whereas modernity has positive influences over the woman's life, access to economic opportunities, education, occupations, independence, but it also adds to the dual roles they have to play now, at workplace and at home; stresses and harassments at work and on the way, especially that often the state and the society is blind to their plight; even within the walls of their own homes.

#### **8. Future areas of Research Work:**

The following are the potential areas for further study in this field, which due to limitations of scope and time could not be carried out during this study itself:

- (i) As stated earlier, in-depth investigation of the causes of higher concentration of certain crimes against women in certain localities (area specific) can lead to better understanding of the genesis of the crime against women.
- (ii) It will also be challenging to study specifically problems connected with working women (across social and economic classes).
- (iii) Spatial variation of status of women can also be studied on the basis of urban, semi-urban and rural women and its relation with crimes against women.
- (iv) It must be admitted that the current study was designed to study crimes against women from the “women’s perspective” alone with no intention whatsoever to sit over judgement who is right or wrong. It is clear from most studies from all over the world that the victims whether at home or at work place or outside, in variably are women, though theoretically one cannot discount spousal cruelties perpetrated on men also. Thus, another area that can be explored is the views of family and husbands in cases of separated families not with the intention of coming to a judgement but to understand aspects that may not be reflected from women’s perspective alone.

**GENDER RELATED CRIMES IN GREATER  
GUWAHATI URBAN AREA**

**POLLY VAUQUINE**

**THESIS  
SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENT OF THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN GEOGRAPHY**

**DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY  
SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES  
NORTH-EASTERN HILL UNIVERSITY  
SHILLONG-793022**

**JUNE 2006**

**GENDER RELATED CRIMES IN GREATER  
GUWAHATI URBAN AREA**

*Submitted by*  
**POLLY VAUQUINE**

*Supervisor*  
**Prof. A. C. Mohapatra**

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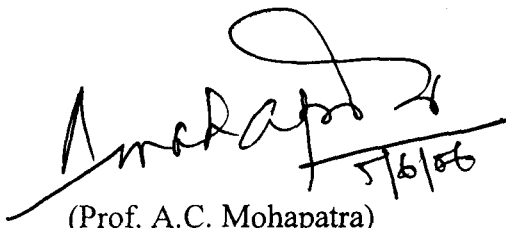
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# NORTH-EASTERN HILL UNIVERSITY

June, 2006

I, Polly Vauqueline, hereby declare that the subject matter of this thesis is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this thesis did not form basis of the award of my previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any other research degree in any other University/Institute.

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SHILLONG (India)

*Polly Vauqueline*  
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## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Introduction:

Violence against women is age-old. Human history is replete with violence against its own kind. Nationality, ethnicity and gender have been the cornerstones of discrimination and violence between man and man. However, violence based on gender within the confines of the community and home is perhaps the most degrading of all other forms of violence. However, the increase in reported incidences of violence against women over the past several decades has firmly established the issue of concern for the women's movement globally. The need for protection of the rights of women gained global recognition during the International Decade of Women (1975-1985) and was steadily gaining momentum since then. This recognition became international law in 1979, when the UN General Assembly adopted the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW). India became signatory to the Convention in 1993 and ratified CEDAW and committed itself to work for the elimination of all types of discrimination against women. The most painful of discrimination of women is the physical, mental and psychological violence perpetrated on them. The threat of violence on women manifests right before their life begins, continues to scar the early life, follows in the married life as domestic violence, endangers them as victims of rape and worse still, in murders and engenders suicides in other cases.

First, it is important to define and identify the different forms of violence against women. Whereas definition of violence itself is often contested, it is clear that there are several forms of violence that constitute clear violation of the rights of women to live with dignity and respect (Subrahmanian, 1995: 146). It is also clear that the generic "gender-blind use of the term violence" obscures the gender specific forms of cruelty and attacks experienced by the woman alone. The definition of violence also includes all forms of mental torture and other acts that have the same effects as physical violence on women. Violence against women includes rape (including marital and custodial rape), domestic violence, 'widow burning' (*sati*), female infanticide and foeticide (amino-cintosis through ultra-sound techniques—that is legally a criminal offence in India now), trafficking of women and minors, sexual harassment and molestation and 'eve-teasing', witch-hunting, dowry death, (Krishnaraj, 1991:4), and overt assault on the dignity of women and other forms of social ostracism.

Although women maybe victims in any of the crimes, be it 'murder', 'robbery' or any other, the crimes in which women are the victims and which are directed specifically against women as "women" are denoted as "Crimes Against Women". They are broadly classified under two categories: crimes identified under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and crimes identified under Special Laws (SLL) (National Crimes Record Bureau, Govt. of India: 1997).

Crimes against women are as old as civilisation and equally ancient are the efforts to combat and arrest them. These efforts have not succeeded and crimes persist. The overall picture, as presented through an information sheet brought out in data on violence

against women in India by the Union Government is as follows: ‘... a woman is subjected to criminal assault every 54 minutes, a molestation takes place every 26 minutes, a dowry death every 102 minutes, kidnapping and abduction every 43 minutes, an act of eve teasing every 51 minutes and an act of cruelty on a women is perpetrated every 33 minutes (Indian Express, 1994: September 21). The All India crimes rate for the recorded crimes against women during 1995 was 11.6. Based on the crime rate at national level, State/U.T, have been categorised as "more crime prone" and "less crime prone" areas for crimes that are perpetrated against women. Though Assam was categorised as "less crime prone" area, its all India rank has gone up from twenty-first in 1992 to tenth in 1995, a great change indeed. Greater Guwahati registered the highest numbers of crimes against women of *all the urban centres of Assam* (Crime Branch, Guwahati City S.P. Office: Records).

## **1.2 Review of Literature:**

### **1.2.1 Changing Status of Women from Vedic to the Recent Time:**

Women’s studies have moved from being a vague extra-disciplinary status to an interdisciplinary subject discussed in the universities of most countries. The compelling reasons for this shift is the conviction held by the sociologists that women in the society have been relegated to an inferior position and have been victims of different forms of violence. In a world inhabited largely by more women than men, this is unethical, to say the least. To study the reasons for this situation in depth, it is important to look at the very beginning of social practices that discriminates and ostracises women.

It is evident from all available accounts that in the early *Vedic* society (in India, 1500 BC); women occupied the same position as men. Reference to complete gender equality is found in all parts of *Vedic* literature (Upadhaya, 1942: 123). Women reached high standard of learning and culture, and made all-round progress. *Sati* (live cremation of widowed women, a tradition of medieval times in North-western India and was subsequently banned by the British) did not exist in the *Vedic Age*. Women had absolute control over their *parinaya* (gifts and property received at the time of their marriage), and it was considered a sin if relatives took away the *stridhana* (property exclusively belonging to the wife) (Banerjee 1944: 180).

During the period of the *Smriti* (*Manu*, 1<sup>st</sup> Cen. A.D.) ---the period of codification of social laws---women got bracketed with '*Sudras*'(the 'untouchables') and were denied the right to study the *Vedas*. This pivotal transformation in women's position within the span of a millennium is baffling. Historians and sociologists attribute this to the emergence of 'private property' (specific feature of Maurian period, 3<sup>rd</sup> Cen. B.B.) and equation of women with "artha" (wealth). The fertility of woman was monopolised by a vigorous patriarchal system in an emerging prosperous agrarian society where "sons" produced wealth and provided protection to family and the clan, key to which was the women, the mother—a manner of ownership of the womb. Marriage or domestic life was the only goal in life for women and unquestioning devotion to, and self-effacing service of their husbands and family, their only duty. Women, of course, were protected at home and in society (Altekar, 1956: 69).

The contact with Islam in 11<sup>th</sup> century further aggravated the already worsening situation of women in India. The culture of an overtly patriarchal society of warlike nomads from the west, led to a series of new forms of fetters for women like the *pardah* and the child marriage. The horrid act like female infanticides had to be performed for self preservation, and even a marriage had to be celebrated secretly at the dead hours of the night to pre-empt the new bride on the way to her new home from being abducted by alien rulers and war-lords (Sood, 1991: 35).

During the British Raj, initially the East India Company and then, the Government were pressurised to accept views of social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Swami Dayanand and enacted several laws to improve the position of women. Some of these enactments were the Act prohibiting the practise of *Sati*, (1850), Caste Disabilities Removal Act, 1850, the Hindu Widow Remarriage Act, 1856, the Special Marriage Act III of 1872, the Married Women's Property Act, 1874, the Child Marriage Act, 1929, the Hindu Gains of Earning Act, 1930, the Hindu Women's Right to Property, 1937, the Christian Marriage Act, 1872 etc. The acts in themselves were very good but, since there was no matching enforcement, they were largely on paper and were not reflected in the actual society at large. During the British period women's education was ignored and so mass illiteracy among the female population was common (Sood, 1991:42).

With the emergence of national freedom movement, a number of women decided to join it. Mahatma Gandhi did tremendous work for women emancipation and vigorously canvassed for women's education. He linked women's participation in the freedom movement with economic rehabilitation and the social reforms, which gave much force to

their participation. Mass participation under Gandhiji's leadership gave women a sense of equality with man--equality unheard of in the tradition-bound Indian society. Gandhi catapulted women to a greater visibility more quickly than any other leader of the time. He supported women's induction into public life, while also asking that their domestic role be fully honoured and valued. His tool of mass agitation policies served him well in getting women out of their private into public life (Sharma, 1981:47).

The Constitution of India guarantees equality, freedom, opportunity and protection to women and various social legislations gives them several exclusive rights. Yet they enjoy an unequal status. This may be due to the social conditions in our society like illiteracy, poverty, social customs, ignorance and lack of awareness of rights, while others are related to their personality characteristics like feeling of helplessness, inferiority complex, poor self-image, lack of self-confidence, self-reliance and resourcefulness. Added to these is their unrecognised output in domestic sphere and help to male family members in their economic pursuits.

Recently, incidents of violence against women are reported to be escalating alarmingly in our country, and on the other hand, awareness of rights among women has increased, leading to the rise of feminist movement, resulting in a new sensitivity to all forms of subjugation of woman. Rise in the rate of crimes against women have been reported in all types of crimes (National Crimes Record Bureau, Govt. of India, 1992-2003). The numbers of registered cases have spiralled alarmingly in the past few years; the actual number of cases unreported is estimated to be many times more than the number registered and this in itself is a sufficient cause of concern ( Kohal, 2003: 61)

### 1.2.2 Feminist movement:

"Feminism" as a term gained widespread usage in the western world in the 1890's. It emerged at the time as a way to identify individuals who supported not merely an increased public role for women but also women's right to define themselves as 'autonomous beings'. However, throughout the past century, as women's private and public role have expanded and altered, the definition of feminism has also broadened to include political, cultural, economic, sexual, racial, and ethical dimensions (Elliot 1995:4).

A full understanding of the ideological bases of women's organisation necessitates an identification of the conditions under which women's movements occur and their connection with the wider processes of social change and with other social movements. Women's movements are those which raise conscious, organised efforts of groups of women to change this system of economic, cultural and political inequities. Their efforts often centre on connections and/or replacement of existing social, economic and political institutions in order to serve the needs of their new perspectives and priorities. The importance of pre-movement phenomena lies in the fact that, though not explicitly armed at goals of equality or liberation, they reveal the power of women as a force in society; allow women opportunity to bring forward their own needs (Mathew 1986: 5).

From the first, then, the rights of women were refracted not merely through political claims but also through domestic analyses. And from the first too, the long debate about *equal or different* emerged. The period before the suffrage movement (in the USA) saw feminist campaigns that were premised on women's difference--women's moral superiority. It was, thus comparatively easy for women to use their presumed virtues as

'leave pass' to go beyond the house--to the slums, to the settlements and even to the social purity campaigns. However, in this fulfilment of their specific mission, women learned organisation, skills and battled with men to establish their own 'space for public life'--"Women's sphere". This adaptation of the ideology of female virtue encouraged to develop feminism, a sense of women's shared humanity, that later allowed and provoked them to struggle for 'women's right', demands that were measured against the privileges of men. (Bulbeck, 1988:7).

Just as women do not form a homogenous group, the women's movement in India is also not homogeneous and within the movement there are different perceptions, ideologies and politics. However, in the course of work among women of all sections in India, these different trends have also increasingly found common ground and a framework within which wider united actions have been possible. While accepting that differences do exist, sometimes expressed sharply, the Indian women's movement has been able to work out a common approach on many of the critical challenges facing Indian women. It is also worth noting that the common ground extends to the movement's critiques of macro-policies as well as to the diverse issues (like, e.g. the "chipko" movement in Garhwal, Uttaranchal). This process of working towards a consensus on issue based struggles has been an on-going one for the last decade and a half.

### **1.2.3 Crimes against Women: Types and Causes**

In the Indian context, it is essential to appreciate the term crime, as a changing concept and as is specified by legislation that change from time to time, according to the changing

needs of the society. In ancient times, crime was considered as a violation of the code of *Dharma* and morals, and till the time of the famous jurist Manu, justice was linked with religious 'Sin' (sacrilege) in criminal justice system (Tripathy, 2000:242). "Sociologically, crime is the infraction or violation of established or codified custom or public opinion at a given time" (Pandey, 1982:29). Crime against women can be classified as: (1) social offences, (2) sexual offences, (3) offences under IPC, (4) tortures (both mental and physical) etc. In the modern classification of crimes against women, it is divided as (1) physical, (2) mental and (3) sexual crimes (Tripathy, 2000:243).

Debates continue about the extent to which indecent representation of women in the media, pornography and prostitution can be uniformly considered to constitute crimes against women (Subrahmanian, 1995:147). It has taken years of struggle to visualise domestic violence and battery (of women) within the family as specific form of crime against women. This visibility has also exposed a variety of forms of violence that have traditionally been hidden within the four-walls of the home including physical abuse, especially battery as defined by the UN (like, kicking, spitting, beating with hands or objects like bottles, pulling hair, throwing acid or boiling water, shooting, strangulation, burning with cigarettes or other objects, pushing and pinching as well as verbal abuse and mental torture and cruelty (United Nations, 1989: 13). It is an established fact that woman's life is often in the greatest threat within the home (Subrahmanian, 1995:147).

Crimes against women can again be broadly divided as two types.

**(i) Crimes Occurring Inside Home:**

*Atrocity by Husband and In-laws:* Both modern and ancient history is replete with a generalised domination of women by men. Husbands were always allowed to beat, torture, and even kill their wives (Martin, 1976: 66). Though no clear definition of spousal abuse exists but different authorities have established levels of spousal abuse. Spousal abuse maybe classified as physical, sexual or emotional abuse. Physical aggression may take the form of minor acts that escalate over time. It may begin with an arm being grabbed, a dish thrown, or a slap to the arm or face. Emotional abuse is far more than a husband simply calling his wife degrading names. This form of spousal abuse has far-reaching consequences for the victim and leaves scars that require long term treatment. Emotional abuses include many different acts that all contribute to a feeling of helplessness and inability (Douglas, 1982: 105). Instances like persistent denial of food, insistence of perverse sexual conduct, locking a woman out of the house, repeated physical violence, taunting her infertility or her producing only female children, are pointed as acts of mental abuse (Gandhi, 1998: 9).

Though women in general and more so Indian women in particular have a tendency not to report crime in the police for the fear of spoiling the family name, there is an evidence of increase in the number of reported crimes.

*Dowry Death and Dowry Harassment:* Dowry practices were prevalent amongst the different communities in India as well as in the other parts of the world from a very ancient time. It was the custom of giving presents to the groom's family or vice versa. In certain communities there is exchange of presents between the two families. They gave

what ever they could, rather what their economic status permits. This custom gradually took the shape of an offence once the groom's family started demanding for the gifts which could be in the form of cash or kind. Subsequently, this custom turned out to be a severe crime when a bride who fails to bring an adequate or promised dowry is subjected to beatings or even death. The payment of money and gifts to the bride-groom's family has been made illegal in many countries, but the practice continues. Dowry practices have been linked to violence against women in India and other countries including Bangladesh, China and Papua New Guinea (Barua and Singh, 1999). As has been established by numerous studies, as well as elsewhere, that the incidence of the crime has continued to rise, despite consistent campaign against it.

**(ii) Crimes Occurring Outside Home:**

*Rapes:* There are certain types of acts of actions that are specific to women and contribute to violence against women both within and outside the family. They are very distinctive and important. Rapes are abusive actions perpetrated by strangers as well as by the persons with whom women have professional rather than personal relationship. Still others involve forced sexual activities either by a stranger or a person known to the women.

Sexual violence against women traditionally has been viewed as stranger rape, a violent forceful sexual assault on a female. A legal definition of sexual violence focuses on certain conduct that is prohibited and strictly defined. A medical definition views sexual violence as injury to the body. A psychological evaluation of sexual violence examines the effect on the mind and the emotions of the victim. Each of these approaches has certain

strengths and weakness (Brownmiller, 1975: 123). Sexual violence can take the form of a single act or a long and protracted series of incidents. It is an intentional act or omission that results in physical and emotional injury to women.

Rape is defined as penile-vaginal penetration (Bienen, 1981: 171-213). Black's Law Dictionary defines carnal knowledge as "Coitus; Copulation: the act of a man having sexual bodily connections with a women; sexual intercourse" (Black, 1990: 213). Many statutes now provide that the crime of rape is defined as "an unlawful act of sexual intercourse with another person against that person's will by force, fear or trick" (Wallace and Robinson, 1994: 187). The expanded definition is that "rape is not a sexual crime rather it a violent assault on the victim (Koss, 1993:198).

#### *Molestation and Sexual Harassment:*

A number of definitions of sexual harassment exist. From a traditional perspective, sexual harassment is a demand that a subordinate, usually a woman, grant sexual favour to retain a job benefit (Lindemann and Kadue, 1992: 54-56). A more encompassing definition defines sexual harassment as the imposition of any unwanted condition on any person's employment because of the person's sex. Under this definition, harassment included jokes, direct taunting, disruption of work, vandalism or destruction of property, and physical attack (Tangri, Burt and Johnson, 1982: 33-54). Sexual harassment occurs in a wide variety of forms including rape, pressure for sexual favours, sexual touching, suggestive looks or gestures, sexual joking or teasing, and the display of unwanted sexual material.

Sexual harassment may occur in either of two forms. The first form of harassment occurs when an agent or supervisor of the employer uses his position to induce a female employee to grant him sexual favours. It is an exchange of continued employment or job benefit for sex. The second form is when unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature creates a hostile working environment. Here an individual is forced to work in an environment that although not causes direct economic detriment, results in psychological or emotional harm or humiliation (Tangri, Burt and Johnson, 1982: 33-54).

Sexual harassment does not always exist in the workplace. Some professors and teachers have used their positions of power to obtain sexual favour from students. Dziech and Weiner list the following actions that they consider as inappropriate behaviour by professors:

- staring, leering, ogling;
- frequently commenting on he personal appearance of the student;
- touching out of context;
- excessive flattery and praise for the student;
- injecting a male versus female tone into discussion with the students;
- persistently emphasising sexuality in all contexts (Dziech and Weiner, 1993: 323-327).

### *Trafficking in women*

The term trafficking, appeared as early as 1885 in Paris at the first international conference on the prevention of trafficking in women (Marion and Chew: 1977). The 1949

Convention for the Suppression of the Trafficking in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others combines trafficking as procurement with prostitution as exploitation. However, consensus is lacking on the precise definition of trafficking. The expression in 1994 United Nation General Assembly is widely used: "The illicit and clandestine movement of persons across national borders, largely from developing countries and some countries with economics in transition, with the end goal of forcing women and girl children into sexually and economically oppressive and exploitative situations for profits of recruiters, traffickers and crime syndicates, as well as other illegal activities related to trafficking such as forced domestic labourer, false marriage, clandestine employment and false adoption".

Trafficking and prostitution are analytically two different concepts. However, since trafficking usually leads to prostitution, trafficking is dealt with close relation to prostitution. Moreover domestic prostitution is no longer limited in their national boundary. Foreign female labourers are continuously moving around by the illegal mediating channels. Trafficking of women and children are conducted through a worldwide network (Park, 1999).

#### *Kidnappings and Abductions:*

The causes and purposes of kidnapping and abduction are to take ransom or revenge, to murder, terrorise, get release the persons from the government, for some gain, sexual purposes, marriage, prostitution, sale, begging etc. The mode of operation of kidnapping and abduction is basically forcefully, false promise like to give job, for marriage, or real

promise for marriage, stimulating the children on the point of knife or gun, by instinctive. (Bhushan: 1995).

### *Eve Teasing*

Eve teasing may not be considered as a serious offence, but sometime turn out to be a serious one. This type of crime usually goes unregistered.

#### **1.2.4 Research on Gender Issues:**

Social scientists and especially geographers are interested to know the pattern and trend of crime as well as the bases of their occurrences (Bhushan, 1995:15), as it varies over space on ethnic or economic lines. Many studies on the history of women exist in the western literature. In India, as well, there have been a good number of studies conducted on crimes against women. Much has already been written on women and a mass of literature is being produced in the form of books, articles, research papers, newspaper reports, comments and criticisms. The debate on gender based crimes has been raging almost over the last few decades. A large volume of books have appeared making in-depth study on various crimes against women (Chakraborty, 1999:2). Currently, child marriages, denial of widow remarriages, caste based discrimination in marriages, *Sati*, *Devadasi* systems, denial of equal wages to women, dowry system, torture of women, infanticides/ foeticides (of female child), immoral trafficking of women are the most important forms of crime against women in India (Tripathy, 2000:224). Although women are the victims of any of the above crimes, the crimes in which women are specifically victims because of their gender, and

which are especially against women are denoted as "crimes against women" (National Crimes Record Bureau, 1997: 201).

A number of studies have been carried out on the factors responsible for the occurrences of various crimes. Such studies vary from topical to regional and from macro- to micro-levels (Bhushan, 1995:15). Victims of crimes against women, as pointed out by Aiyisha (1988) is due to a variety of factors such as historical, cultural, social, political and economic. Crimes are caused by a combination of factors, interrelated with and supplementing each other. Likewise, a social environment conducive to such crimes is important and also perpetrators of such crimes may suffer from some weaknesses of mind or lack of organisation of personality in such environments. It is a complex mixture of social, economic, cultural, and legal factors that account for the crimes against women. These crimes can be studied under three clusters: social, personal, psychological and legal (Saxena, 1999:23). In India, women are guaranteed equality, freedom, opportunity and protection by the Constitution and several progressive and "affirmative" legislations. Nonetheless, women continue to be victims of domestic violence, violence in the community and at work place. Illiteracy, ignorance, lack of awareness, poverty, combined with traditional oppressive customs, places Indian women in specific disadvantages.

Extensive research on women has been carried out by various disciplines in social sciences. Geography has lagged far behind other social sciences in its appreciation of the importance of gender. Zelinsky, Monk and Hanson (1982) suggest two reasons for this, both related to the nature of the subject. Much of the research on women is done by women scholars, and the proportion of women in geography is rather low and more akin to

the situation in the physical geography than in the social sciences and humanities (Henshall and Momsen, 1980). Second, many geographers work in cartography and physical geography where they are unlikely to come face to face with women's issues in their research. Women remain invisible to geography until very recently. But "once our perspective shifts away from a preoccupation with spatial structures to a focus on process in society, the political economy and the ecosystem then, rather magically, great new vistas of unexplored territory open up" (Zelinsky, Monk and Hanson, 1982). For most of the components of physical well-being that are specific to women, it seems that international data simply do not exist. Violence against women is a central feminist theme and appears to vary geographically in form and incidence, being clearly a fundamental aspect of culture (Townsend and Momsen, 1982:35).

Despite a flurry of researches in the area of 'gender geography' in recent times, the aerial perspective that geography provides to events and processes to some extent hinders in viewing woman that is at the 'individual perspective'. But once this theoretical bottleneck is overcome a 'gendered' geographical perspective of the society can emerge. The position of women can be viewed, (a) by their physical location in the society, i.e. rural or urban, (b) their location in the family structure, (c) their ethnic background, which provides a cultural perspective to their situation and which necessarily has a spatial connotation and (d) finally, their economic position, skills, occupations, work and earning—which undoubtedly can provide possibilities of economic independence. The conceptualisation of crimes against women therefore, from the perspective of geography, in some way has to accommodate the above positions.

The social situation the woman is placed in a village is quite different than when they are placed in the urban situation. In a typical Indian village the women is relatively more secured physically, unless there is unease at home—but more in-secured economically since there is restrictions on women's participation in economic work or at least discouragement to that effect. A village sociologically a consanguine unit, families related by blood—a face-to-face community where everyone knows everyone else. With modernity and rapid urbanisation, many women migrate to the cities with their families for better economic opportunities. But the city breaks down the social order of the village, from blood based network to work/ profession based networks. The new migrant families will, necessarily may be subjected to the negative effects of change in the social organisation, till the time the new social associations emerge, invariably that takes a generation. Exposure of women to work/ occupation outside home may also expose many of them vicissitudes of city life, crimes, drunkenness etc. and therefore to forces of social misdemeanours as against the social security that the village community provided. The aim in the current study to understand the position of crime against women in the Greater Guwahati Urban area is towards that direction.

Second, ethnicity can create differentiation in types of crimes against women because of values attributed to women from differences in cultural perspectives. For example, it is generally observed that tribal societies are more egalitarian in gender terms, also arising from the fact there is greater work participation of women, thus greater economic independence of women. The marital relationship could be more flexible; also the responsibility of the children that essentially lies with women, irrespective of the fact

whether the community practises patriarchy or matriarchy. In the urban areas, particularly in big cities, people with similar ethnic and cultural backgrounds are likely to live in close proximity for social and psychological security, especially in multi-ethnic societies (Bronx and Brooklyn in New York: Italian and Iris neighbourhoods, Chittaranjan Park in New Delhi: Bengali neighbourhood etc.). Thus, crime against women that can have a cultural meaning also at the same time may express itself in spatial patterns.

Third, residential segregation on economic and professional lines has been well-known in all modern cities, both in developed as well as in developing societies. At one level, different income classes may obtain different attitudes and behaviours towards the women, whereas on the other, women of different income classes may have different educational and financial background that might enable them with different options under adverse marital situation. For example, women in the lowest economic class (daily-wagers and slum-dwellers) mostly work in informal activities and participate in the workforce and suffer the least inhibitions about the drunken husband or abusive in-laws. The marital relations could be flexible, the woman or the man may leave at a short notice out of a failed marriage. On the other hand, the middle-class is the most conservative, low income, non-participation of women in workforce and fear of social ostracism, may add to the woes of a suffering woman but with little options to move out of the marriage, especially in traditional societies like in India or Asian countries. The rich have different attitudes and different options available. Since, residential segregation is a fact of life in most large cities, the type and quality of crimes against women may also vary over these localities.

### **1.3 Legal Provisions under Indian Law:**

#### **1.3.1 Indian Penal Code (IPC):**

(1) Rape (376 IPC), (2) Kidnapping and Abduction for different purposes (366-366A IPC), (3) Homicides for Dowry, Dowry Death or their attempts (304 B IPC), (4) Torture, both mental and physical (498-A IPC), (5) Molestation (354 IPC), (6) Sexual Harassment (309 IPC) and (7) Importation of girls (up to 21 years of age) (366-B IPC).

#### **1.3.2 The crimes identified under Special Laws (SLL):**

(1) Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, (2) Dowry Prohibition Act, (3) Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act and (4) Indecent Representation of women (Prohibition) Act.

For details of IPC and SLL see Appendix A.

### **1.4 Statement of the Problem:**

Is woman specially disadvantaged because of her gender? It does not seem to be so biologically or physically. However, social and cultural specificities have given her the age old disadvantaged position, so also the economic structure where the role of women in the economic activities was undermined; therefore, her economic position of dependence on man. The former two create a conducive basis of her psychological undermining; thus both, perception as well as a sense of 'insecurity' in women play a role in home or in larger social life.

Crime against women that arise because of her socio-cultural, economic and psychological insecurities is a fact in both the developing and the developed world. This, of course, is despicable and must be rooted out from all societies and they must reach an

equal footing as those of men, in all spheres of life. However, do crimes against women have cultural specificities? Are there variations along ethnic boundaries? Do crimes take specific forms between the rural and the urban spheres? Does modernity or even 'development' take its pound of flesh on gender crimes? How much of the crimes committed against women relate to their lower economic and social status and how much, because they are women? These are some questions one would like to investigate in the proposed study.

Urban areas do provide better economic and social opportunities to women as compared to the rural areas because it allows women to pursue different professions. They are also relatively more gender-equal. However, such opportunities create also opportunities of specific crimes, like eve teasing, sexual harassment at work place and greater number of rapes. Urban areas also have a larger number of nuclear families than the rural areas. Nuclear families are also replete with domestic violence--in great prevalence in developed countries. In urban areas also the ethnic boundaries are often distinct and take specific spatial locations, so also those of the economic classes (residential segregation). It would be interesting to study spatial variation in types of crimes along ethnic and economic classes and explain such variations.

As compared to the all India situation where one of the most important crimes against women is dowry related, in Assam this is not the case, because cultural specificity of the Assamese society where dowry is not a prevalent custom in marriages. However, modernisation of the society also brings in new values and imitations from other cultures. It would be also interesting to study if dowry related crimes are emerging in the Assamese

society or not? There are also other forms of *crimes that are development related*, like domestic stress related ones. They are the best observed in the urban situation. It would also be interesting to analyse their extent and causes.

### **1.5 Objectives:**

The primary aspects to be investigated in the present study are:

1. To study the types and patterns of crimes against women in Greater Guwahati Urban Area;
2. To identify specific social areas in respect of locations of diverse ethnicities in the city and to identify crimes against women those are in general or those specific to ethnic background of the communities;
3. To identify areas of broad economic classes as expressed in their location and to study specificities of gender crimes along economic strata;
4. To examine if crimes against women are growing? If so, what types of crimes and etc; explain for what reasons?
5. To examine if the crime against women has relation with modernising forces, i.e. rise in income levels and material comforts or conversely, deprivation, unemployment have anything to do with crimes against women;
6. To examine connections between crimes against women have and the levels of literary and education of women?; (Therefore, the objective would also to study the relationship of educational level with type and intensity of crimes.) and

7. To examine the relation between crimes in general in a society and those gender related, (in the sense, what happens to CAW in response to increase or decrease of crime in general.)

### 1.6 Hypotheses:

The following hypotheses are tested in the study:

1. Hypothesis one:

*"Crimes against women tend to increase or decrease in response to changes in overall crime rates in a society"*.

Justification: International experiences indicate that in societies where overall crime rates are higher tend register more crimes against women (the US) and conversely, in societies where overall crime rates are lower incidence of gender crimes too are lower (the Scandinavian countries). The logic is that men who in general are prone to more vicious crimes could carry the same to their homes. Alcoholism, drug abuse or other social deviances correlate well with general crime profile of a society and these do correlate with crimes perpetrated at home, against women and children.

2. Hypothesis two:

*"Crime rates and types vary across economic classes"*.

Justification: Contrary to the general belief crime is not need driven, rather is value and habit driven. Along the economic spectrum, the lowest economic classes may not value moral and legal behaviour either because of lack of awareness or because

"rejection" of values of the society that has failed to provide economic and social security to them. On the other hand, the highest income classes may while be aware of legal behaviour, lack morality boosted by their ability to circumvent law. It is the middle-class - that generally would be more restrained in their social behaviour, relative insecurity and of course, the fear of God and the State. They would be expected to be less crime-prone. However, the nature of crimes could vary over the income classes. It would be interesting to study if crime against women remains uniformly similar against variations in types and intensifies of crimes across income classes.

### 3. Hypothesis three:

*"Types of crimes against women vary along ethnic diversities".*

Justification: Different linguistic and cultural groups do obtain different value systems that may influence the behaviour in public or in private-public or private moralities. Differences in faiths may also influence the individuals' decision of what is wrong or right - say about monogamy or polygamy. Therefore, there is justifiable reason to view that crimes against women could vary (in types) between such ethnic or cultural groups and communities. In a large city like Guwahati where many such cultural groups live and also live in identifiable localities it may be feasible to test the hypothesis in respect of crimes against women along the areas/localities representing the ethnic or cultural groupings.

#### 4. Hypothesis four:

*"Modernisation of society influences intensifies and types of crimes against women".*

Justification: At least for the time being, one could choose four indicators of modernisation, (a) urbanisation, (b) rise in incomes and affluence, (c) change in activity pattern of people-occupations, and (d) the rise of nuclear families. Urbanisation changes the value system of the individual in terms of (a) a new view of life as "progress" and (b) in breakdown of the social network and security and rise of the "individual". Changes in income do follow at least in form of cash income and access to habits and behaviours that otherwise a rural life (traditional) would not allow. The occupational changes follow, i.e. both for the man and also the women in form of participation in organised or informal non rural pursuits that could give rise to occupation related crimes against women, like sexual harassment at work-place. The family structure also changes from a joint-family or extended family framework to nuclear families with little scope of moderating influence of family and relations on domestic violence that in general is found to be more common in nuclear families.

#### **1.7 Justification of Greater Guwahati Urban Area for the Study:**

Guwahati is located on the crescent shaped south bank of river Brahmaputra in the Kamrup district, Assam. Greater Guwahati covering an area of 298 sq. km. has been selected as the study area for this study. The city is located by 91<sup>0</sup>34' E to 91<sup>0</sup>51' E longitudes and 26<sup>0</sup>5' N to 26<sup>0</sup>12' N latitudes. As per the 1991 census, the city had a population of 584342 persons.

During the Census of 2001 the population size of Guwahati has gone up to 811905 persons.

Guwahati holds a commanding position in the form of the gateway of the North East India. Guwahati as an administrative and commercial city occupies a unique position in the capital cities of the region. It has been performing the functions of the largest urban centre in the region and has been attracting people from the surrounding areas. Guwahati, as an urban centre, provides better economic and social opportunities as compared to the surrounding rural areas. On the contrary such opportunities also create opportunities to specific crimes specific to urban areas. The justifications of the selection of Greater Guwahati for the study arise as follows:

- (1) A large city like Guwahati attracts people of many faiths, ethnic background and also these social diversities are manifest in various social areas and localities specific to ethnic affinities or diversities.
- (2) On another plane, a large city has clear economic stratification of population especially as expressed in slums and poor neighbourhoods, middle-class localities and upper-class neighbourhoods. This may not be clearly discernible in smaller towns and cities. This provides an opportunity in studying gender crimes in respect of economic classes and ethnic divides. For example the questions like, are gender crimes specific to some ethnic groups? Or are there specificities along economic classes?
- (3) In rural settlements and villages extended or joint families are relatively common. Such family structures have salutary effect on married couples. In urban areas,

nuclear family is the most common feature. In nuclear families domestic violence are more common than in joint and extended family structures. Therefore, the urban situation provides a better opportunity in studying domestic violence as a gender crime against women.

- (4) In the urban situation there are other forms of crimes that are development related, like domestic stress related ones and those related to the workplace (sexual harassment). These are new features in societies are quickly modernising with increased impetus on female work participation in organised sectors of the economy. Study of such crimes can only be done in the context of urban areas.
- (5) It is also reported that the overall reported crime rate (gender related) has increased phenomenally in Assam within recent years. This further justifies selection of the premier city of the state, Guwahati.

## Appendix A

### I. Legal Provisions under Indian Penal Code:

#### 1. Rape (Section 375 IPC):

“A man is said to commit “Rape” who except in the case hereinafter excepted, has sexual intercourse with a women under circumstances falling under any of the six following description:

1. against her will;
2. without her consent;
3. with her consent, when her consent has been obtained by putting her or any person in whom she is interested in fear of death or of hurt;
4. with her consent, when, the man knows that he is not her husband, and that her consent is given because she believes that he is another man to whom she is or believes herself to be lawfully married,
5. with her consent, when, at the time of giving such consent, by reasons of unsoundness of mind or intoxication or the administration by him personally or through another of any stupefying or unwholesome substance, she is unable to understand the nature and consequences of that to which she gives consent, and
6. with or without her consent, when she is under 16 years of age” (Chandrachud, 2005: 678-679).

## **2. Kidnapping and Abduction for different purposes (Section 366-366A IPC):**

The Section 366 requires:-

1. Kidnapping or abduction of any woman:
2. “Such a kidnapping or abduction must be-
  - (i) with intent that she may be compelled or knowing it to be likely that she will be compelled to marry any person against her will; or
  - (ii) in order that she may be forced or seduced to illicit intercourse, or knowing it to be likely that she will be forced or seduced to illicit intercourse; or
  - (iii) by means of criminal intimidation or otherwise by inducing any woman to go from any place with intent that she may be, or knowing that she will be forced or seduced to illicit intercourse” (Chandrachud, 2005: 664).

The Section 366A states:

“Whoever, by any means whatsoever, induces any minor girl under the age of 18 years to go from any place or to do any act with intent that such girl maybe, or knowing that it is likely that she maybe, forces or seduced to illicit intercourse with another person shall be punishable with imprisonment which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine” (Chandrachud, 2005: 670).

## **3. Homicides for Dowry, Dowry Death or their attempts (Section 304B IPC):**

Section 304-B in the IPC relating to dowry death has the following essential ingredients.

1. "The death of the women should be caused by burns or bodily injury or otherwise than under normal circumstances;
2. Such death should have occurred within seven years of their marriages;
3. She must have been subjected to cruelty or harassment by her husband or any relatives of her husband soon before her death;
4. Such cruelty or harassment should be for or in connection with the demand for dowry; and
5. Such husband or relative shall be deemed to have caused her death" (Chandrachud, 2005: 557).

#### **4. Torture, both mental and physical (498A IPC):**

According to Section 498-A:

"Whoever, being the husband or the relative of the husband of a women, subjects such woman to cruelty shall be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years and shall be liable to fine. For the purpose of this section 'cruelty' mean-

1. any will-full conduct which is of such a nature or is likely to drive the women to commit suicide or cause grave injury or danger to life, limb or death (either mental or physical) of the women; or
2. harassment of the women where such harassment is with a view to coercing her or any person related to her to meet any unlawful demand for any property or valuable security or is on account of failure by her or any person related to her to meet such demand."

Section 498 A, till date, remains the only provision which abused women can take refuge to. The offence under this section is cognisable and non-bailable. Further, the onus lies on the man and his relatives to prove that they are not guilty (Gandhi, 1998:9).

#### **5. Molestation (Section 354 IPC):**

According to this section molestation means: “Whoever assaults or uses criminal force to any women, intending to outrage or knowing to be likely that he will thereby outrage her modesty, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years, or with fine, or with both” (Gaur, 2005:550).

#### **6. Sexual Harassment and Eve Teasing (Section 509 IPC):**

Section 509 states: “Whoever, intending to insult the modesty of any women, utters any word, makes any sound or gesture, or exhibits any object, intending that such word or sound shall be heard, or that such gesture or object shall be seen, by any such women, or intrudes upon the privacy of such women, shall be punished with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year, or with fine or both” (Chandrachud, 2005: 971).

#### **7. Importation of girls (up to 21 years of age) (Section 366-B IPC):**

The Section 366-B states: “Whoever imports into India from any country outside India or from the state of Jammu and Kashmir any girls under the age of 21 years with intent that she may be, or knowing it to be likely that she will be, forced or seduced to illicit

intercourse with another person, shall be punishable with imprisonment and shall be liable to fine” (Chandrachud, 2005: 670).

## **II. Legal Provisions under Special Laws (SLL):**

### **1. Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987:**

It is an act to provide for the more effective prevention of the commission of *Sati* and its glorification and for matters connected herewith or incidental thereto.

**Definitions:** - In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,

- a) '*Code*' means the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (2 of 1974);
- b) '*Glorification*', in relation to *sati*, whether such *sati*, includes, among other things,-
  - (i) The observance of any ceremony or the taking out of a procession in connection with the commission of *sati*; or
  - (ii) The supporting, justifying or propagating the practise of *sati* in any manner; or
  - (iii) The arranging of any function to eulogise the person, who has committed *sati*, or
  - (iv) The creation of a trust, or the collection of funds, or the construction of a temple or other structure or the carrying on of any form of worship or the performance of any ceremony thereat, with a view to perpetuate the honour of, or to preserve the memory of, a person, who has committed *sati*;
- c) '*Sati*' means the burning or burying alive of,-

- (i) Any widow along with the body of her deceased husband or any other relatives or with any article, object or thing associated with the husband or such relatives; or
  - (ii) Any woman along with the body of any of her relatives, irrespective of whether such burning or burying is claimed to be voluntary on the part of the widow or the woman or otherwise;
- d) "*Special Court*" means a specially constituted Court under Section 9;
- e) "*Temple*" includes any building or other structure, whether roofed or not, constructed or made to preserve the memory of a person in respect of whom sati has been committed or used or intended to be used for the carrying on any form of worship or for the observance of any ceremony in connection with such commission (Awasthi, 2005: 1249-1250).

## **2. Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961:**

The first attempt by the Government of India to recognise dowry as a social evil and to curb its practise is the Dowry Prohibition Act of 1961. The Act was modified with the Dowry Prohibition (Amendment) Act of 1984 and 1986.

The 1961 Act defines dowry and makes the practice of the both giving and taking dowry, a punishable offence. Any agreement on dowry is void. If it is given at all, it will be the women's property.

The Dowry Prohibition (Amendment) Act, 1984 makes the offence cognisable by enlarging the meaning of the term 'Dowry'. The 1984 amendment however makes it a

cognisable offence and empowers recognised welfare institution or organisations to take cognisance of the offence.

The main features of the Amendment Act are as follows:

Any property given or agreed to be given, directly or indirectly, in connection with a marriage to the bride or bridegroom or any other person is considered as dowry.

Any person giving or taking dowry or arbitering the giving or taking of dowry is also punishable with imprisonment which is not less than six month, but which may extent to Rs 10,000 or amount of the value of the dowry whichever is higher.

Neither the bride nor the persons giving presents to her at the time of marriage is liable for punishment if the presents have been given to her without any demand on that behalf and the presents are entered in the list maintained in accordance with the rules (Kahol, 2003: 132-133).

### **3. Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956:**

The Act states:

Detaining a person in premises where prostitution is carried on-

- (1) Any person who detains (any other person, whether with or without her consent),
  - a) in any brothel, or
  - b) in or upon any premises with (that such person may have sexual intercourse with a person who is not the spouse of such person) shall be punishable.

- (2) Where any person is found with a child in a brothel, it shall be presumed, unless the contrary is proved, that has committed an offence under subsection (1).

[ (2 A) Where any person is found with a child in a brothel is on medical examination, detected to have been sexually abused, it shall be presumed unless the contrary is proved, that the child or minor has been detained for purposes of prostitution or, as the case maybe, has been sexually exploited for commercial purposes.]

- (3) A person shall be presumed to detain a woman or girl in a brothel or in or upon any premises of sexual intercourse with a man other than her lawful husband, if such person, with intent to compel or induce her to remain there-
- a) withholds from her jewellery, wearing apparel, money or other property belonging to her, or
  - b) threatens her with her legal proceedings, if she takes away with her any jewellery, wearing apparel, money or other property lent or supplied to her by or by the direction of such person.
- (4) Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, no suit, prosecution or other legal proceeding shall lie against such women or girl at the instances of the person by whom she is detained, for the recovery of any jewellery, wearing apparel or other property alleged to have been lent or supplied to or for such woman or girl or have been pledged by such woman or girl or the recovery of any money alleged to be payable by such woman or girl

([www.socialwelfare.delhigovt.nic.in](http://www.socialwelfare.delhigovt.nic.in))

#### **4. Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986:**

It is an act to prohibit indecent representation of women through advertisement or in publication, writing, printing, figures or in any manner and for matters connected therewith or incidental there to.

Definition of this act:-

*'advertisement'* includes any notice, circular, label, wrapper or other documents and also includes any visible representation made by the means of any light, sound, smoke or gas;

*'distribution'* includes distribution by way of samples whether free or otherwise;

*'indecent representation of women'* means the depiction of any manner of the figure of a women; her form or body or any part thereof in such a way as to have the effect of being indecent, or derogatory to, or denigration women or is likely to deprave, corrupt or injure the public morality or morals;

*'label'* means any written, marked, stamped, printed or graphic, matter, affixed to, or appearing upon, any package;

*'package'* includes a box, a carton, tin or other container;

*'prescribed'* means prescribed by rules made under this Act.

([www.socialwelfare.delhigovt.nic.in](http://www.socialwelfare.delhigovt.nic.in))

## **Chapter II**

### **DATA BASE AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **2. Introduction:**

In this chapter the sources of the primary and the secondary data, the procedure of the data collection and their classification as per the need of the study have been discussed in detail. The selection of the sample areas, the bases of their selection and the methods and techniques applied for analyses are also outlined.

#### **2.1 Data Base:**

Data and information from both secondary and primary sources are obtained for this study.

##### **2.1.1 Sources of Secondary Data:**

Information regarding the study area and the data of the socio economic environment of Greater Guwahati has been obtained from secondary sources. For data on population of Greater Guwahati urban area, census report from 1971, 1991 and 2001 have been consulted. Information regarding the Guwahati is collected from the special survey report on Guwahati by Census of India (1971), and through intensive consultations of library materials and publications. Library materials of Jamia Millia and Islamia, Delhi; Administrative Staff College, Guwahati; ICSSR, Shillong; Gauhati University Central Library and NEHU Central Library, Shillong have been used. Another set of secondary

data regarding the incidences of crimes against women in Assam is collected from the records of National Crime Record Bureau, Government of India, New Delhi.

### **2.1.2 Sources of Primary Data:**

There are four sources of primary data. They are the following: (a) records of the office of the City Superintendent of Police, Guwahati (C.S.P.O.), (b) Legal Aids Cell (L.A.C.), Guwahati Club, Guwahati, (c) State Women's Commission (S.W.C.), Assam, Guwahati and (d) Interviews of Victims of Violence by the researcher. The details of methods and procedures of collection of primary data are provided as follows:

### **2.1.3 Crime Branch (City), Office of the Superintendent Police, Guwahati:**

This set of primary data on crimes against women as well as overall crimes in Guwahati (reported crimes) is collected from the Crime Branch, C.S.P.O., Guwahati. However, the crime data is based on the occurrence of the offences reported in the Police Stations of Guwahati. They are the "reported" crimes which are recorded by the crime administrating authorities. The Crime Branch receives the data and details of the reported crimes from the police stations and is compiled at weekly, monthly, half yearly and yearly basis. The data compiled on yearly basis for 14 years has been used for this study (1990-2003). The total numbers of general crimes on the basis of police stations for the year from 1994 to 2003 have also been obtained from the same source.

This is the main source of data of general crimes and crimes against women in Guwahati. Under C.S.P.O. there are four divisions, and sixteen police stations. For this

study only 15 police stations are taken into consideration. It is so because Khetri police station does not fall under Greater Guwahati area and thereby it is excluded.

The records of crimes of the C.S.P.O. are maintained meticulously. The Crime Branch categorizes the crimes against women under the following heads; rape (376 IPC), atrocity by husband and in-laws (498A IPC), dowry death (304B IPC), murder (302 IPC), kidnapping (366 IPC), kidnapping of minor (366A IPC), molestation (354 IPC), Immoral Trafficking Prevention Act (1/2/3/4/5/8), and eve teasing (509 IPC). These nine (9) different forms of crimes against women have been taken into account for this study from this source.

The records of crimes against women are maintained on the basis of police stations till September, 1998. There is a change in the format of maintaining the records now where only the total numbers of types of crimes in a year are tallied. To collect data of crimes against women on the basis of police stations from October, 1998 to 2003, the Case Register of the 15 police stations have been used.

***Data Limitation:***

Even though the records of the cases are well maintained in the Crime Branch of C.S.P.O., it has got certain limitations. They are as follows:

- i) Those cases which are very serious in nature are the ones registered.
- ii) Police personnel are usually hesitant to register cases. Many a times the complaints of the victims are not openly welcomed by the police personnel. They try to settle the matter without registering the case, particularly the poorer

sections of the people. When cases of domestic violence come up, they usually call the husband, warn him and let him go. The major limitation of the police registered cases is that more than 90% of the crimes against women go unregistered. Instead of considering the registration of the case in the police station as a convenience, the victims consider it as a hassle (as stated by the victims). Therefore, though police record is a good source that indicates nature of crimes, it does not indicate the extent of the crimes committed against women.

#### **2.1.4 Legal Aids Cell, Guwahati:**

L.A.C. is one of the wings of the Mitali Sangha, an NGO run by eminent women activist of Guwahati. It is located at the heart of the city, Guwahati Club. L.A.C. functions every Tuesday and Friday from 2.00 pm to 4.00 pm. Here, few well-known advocates render their voluntary service by providing legal advices to the victims and also run their cases (without fee) if they are from poor families.

They keep a record of every case that they intercept of women in distress. Cases of various types are dealt by them such as domestic violence, family disputes, land disputes, maintenance cases, etc. Only the case of domestic violence and the case related with crimes against women are taken into account for this study. Data from 1990 to 2003 is collected from this source. Those cases which are referred to the All Women Cell, at Panbazar police station, or to any police stations, or the victim have reported to any police

station are not taken into account to avoid repetition. The same is also done while collecting data from State Women Commission.

Here, various forms of crimes such as physical violence by husbands and in-laws, dowry deaths, bigamy, polygamy and illicit relations, rapes, sexual harassment at work place, eves-teasing etc. are reported. But most of the cases are of domestic violence. It maybe because the victims feel more comfortable to speak out their sufferings and problems because the legal advisers gives a patient hearing to what they have to say and more so because the listeners are their fellow beings (women).

***Limitations:***

Even though they have records of data for the past 15 years and more, there are certain drawbacks in this source:

- i) The registers are not properly maintained as it is handled by different persons at different time, as well as by untrained workers.
- ii) A large number of cases are incomplete.
- iii) A number of cases do not have the names and the address of the complainants, for which the place of occurrence of the crime cannot be located and thereby not taken into account.

**2.1.5 State Women Commission (Assam), Guwahati:**

The third source of data is the State Women's Commission located at Guwahati. This source of data is to complement those that are not recorded in the police stations. The

S.W.C. was established at 1994. It has the records of crimes against women of the entire Kamrup district. Only those cases which have occurred at Greater Guwahati are collected from this source. They have recorded the different forms of crimes against women under the following heads; atrocity by husband and in-laws, dowry harassment, murder, rape, sexual harassment at work place, kidnapping and immoral trafficking of women.

***Limitations:***

The limitations of this source are the following:

- i) The records are maintained in a very systematic manner, but the procurement of the data is quite cumbersome for a researcher. The process of getting permission to collect the data goes through a time taking departmental procedure.
- ii) The office bearers are reluctant to give the details of the cases to maintain confidentiality of identity of the victims.
- iii) In a number of cases the place of occurrence of the crimes are not recorded.

**2.1.6 Primary Sample Survey:**

Primary data was collected through a purposive sample survey of individual victims of domestic violence or those affected by sexual harassment outside the homes in respect of their social backgrounds and economic characteristics as well as the interview based surveys of housewives and adult women in the households to study the nature and types of

domestic violence, attitude of women, causes and frequency of occurrences and possible solution put forth by the victims.

The sample design is as follows:

- (a) Since it was not possible to carry out a door-to-door survey, even on a sample basis on such a sensitive social issue, it was considered to approach individual victims identified by the police, L.A.C. and S.W.C. sources, as well as other personal channels. It was considered adequate to take about 60 cases of domestic violence, approximately covering the six-types of localities outlined, three on income criteria and three on ethnicity background.
- (b) The survey though was based on structured scheduled; the aim was to meet each victim a number of times to gain confidence and access truth, as far as possible from the victims' perspective without being either intrusive or judgemental.
- (c) The violence against women outside their homes was taken up separately, since most of these are of sexual nature and mostly young women are the victims. The common crimes are (i) eve-teasing, (ii) molestation, (iii) work-place harassment and on a severity scale, (iv) trafficking in women, (v) rapes or/and (vi) murder. The first types are rarely reported to law-enforcement authorities; trafficking is often discovered in police raids and rape and murders are invariably registered, at least in urban areas. The focus in this study was on the non-reported types (i to iii) and separate schedule was administered in a few tertiary educational institutions, working women hostels and offices—a total numbering 20 victims.

(d) The questionnaire<sup>1</sup>/schedule on domestic violence contains the following sets of queries from the selected victims: (i) Identification information and socio-economic background of the victims including education etc; (ii) nature and frequency of crimes, the perpetrators and current status of the victim; and (iii) nature of current coping and opinion on possible solutions as perceived by the victim. The detailed questionnaires/schedules are appended in Appendix-B and C at the end of the chapter.

## **2.2 Sources of Maps:**

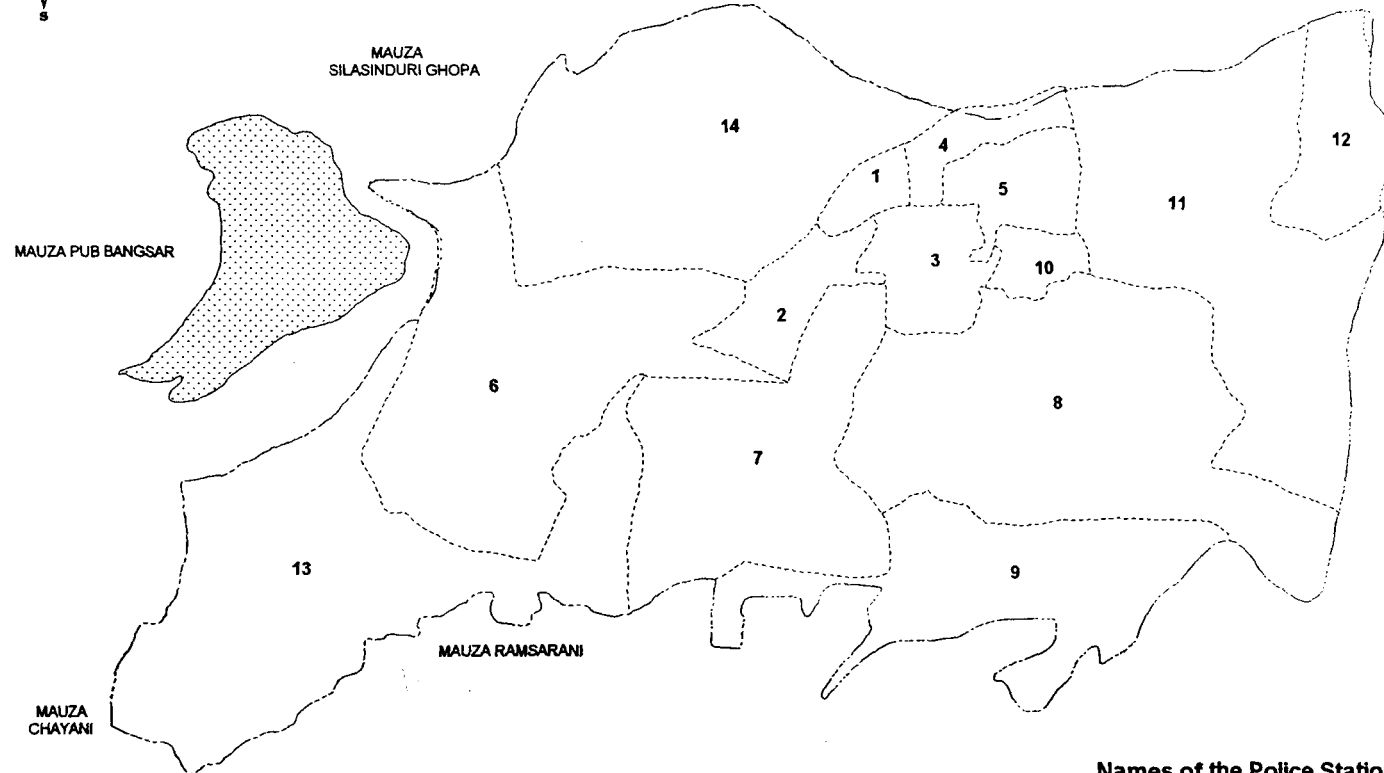
The map of the greater Guwahati is obtained from the Town and Country Planning Department, Guwahati, along with its ward demarcation of 1991 and 2001. Greater Guwahati Urban area is also known as the Guwahati Development Authority (GDA) area.

Map demarcating the police stations jurisdiction could not be provided by the concerned department (Office of the City SP, Guwahati). The jurisdiction of the police stations was demarcated by the divisional Deputy Superintendent of Police of the concerned division on the Traffic Map, which has all the roads of the city. The individual police station map (not up to scale) along with the traffic map was provided to the Town and Country Planning Department, Guwahati for the preparation of the map showing the police stations of Guwahati (Map no 2.1).

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<sup>1</sup> Though technically a schedule was used and not a questionnaire, it may be noted that it was a multiple session survey on each respondent unlike a regular schedule. Second, in practice the strict distinction between the two is rarely adhered to.

# GREATER GUWAHATI ADMINISTRATIVE JURISDICTIONS OF THE POLICE STATIONS



### Names of the Police Stations

- |                 |                   |                    |
|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Pan Bazar    | 5. Chandmari      | 10. Gitanagar      |
| 2. Bharalu Mukh | 6. Jalukbari      | 11. Noonmati       |
| 3. Paltan Bazar | 7. Fatasil Ambari | 12. Pragjyotishpur |
| 4. Lataasil     | 8. Dispur         | 13. Ajara          |
|                 | 9. Basistha       | 14. North Guwahati |

**Master Plan Boundary**      ————  
**Police Station Boundary**    - - - - -  
**Ward Boundary**                \_\_\_\_\_

Source: Directorate of Town and Country Planning, Assam

The land use map of Guwahati was obtained (courtesy) from the Assam State Remote Sensing Application Centre, Guwahati, which is based on recent satellite images, IRS-III and their help in this regard is acknowledged.

## **2.3 Methodology:**

### **2.3.1 Conceptual Frame of the Study:**

The study is conceived on the basis government data that there is considerable increase in violence against women in Assam in recent times. It is also perceived that Assamese society more liberal in regards to the status of women; e.g. dowry was unheard of, a few decades earlier. Assam also contains a myriad of communities and amalgamation of a variety of cultures and practices, many religions and a Vaishnabite Hinduism (anti-ritualistic) popularised by the great 16<sup>th</sup> century saint-poet, Sankar Dev. It also helped in harmonising the diverse people and cultures in a manner, unheard of the rest of India.

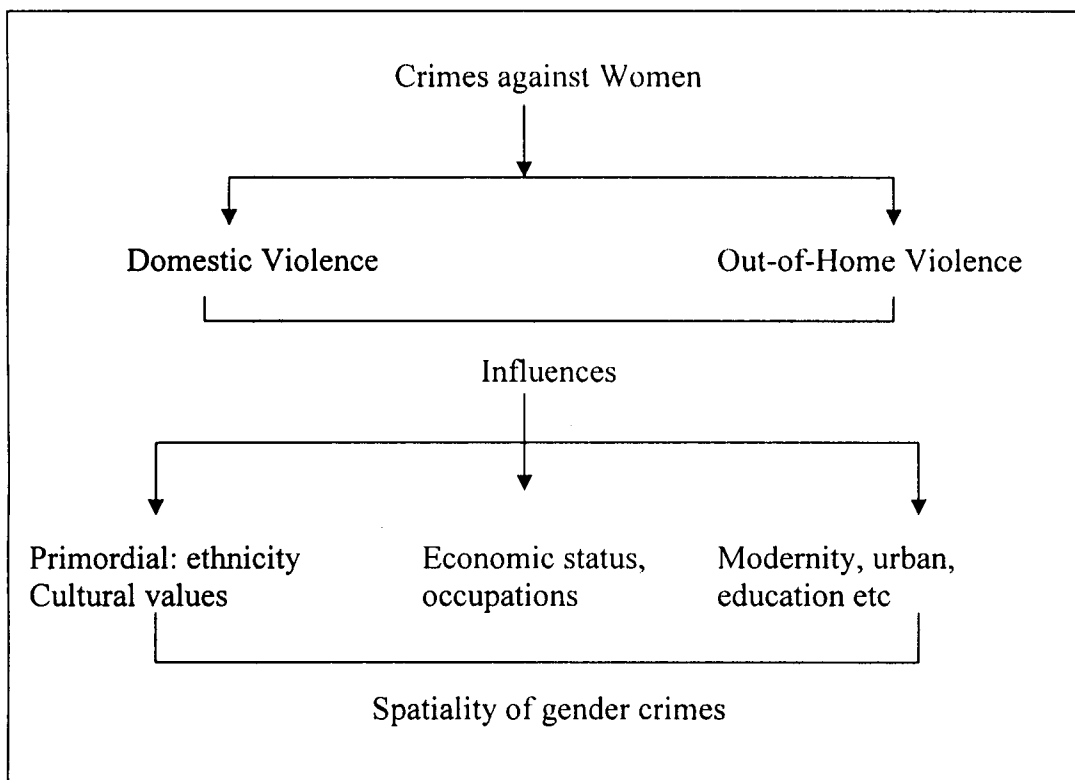
However, exposure to other cultures (in India), influences of modernity like economic stratification, urbanisation, changes in occupations, migrations from rural to urban centres etc could influence changes in cultural and behavioural spheres. For example, consumption of hard-liquor in rural areas was unheard of and frowned upon and those practising were socially castigated, however home-brewed rice beer was tolerated on occasions. Money income and liberties of urban existence breaks those social restrictions and consumption of liquor becomes common, especially the working class and the upper echelon of the population—undoubtedly an important source of marital discord and violence against women.

The institution of family is perhaps the oldest and most durable of human institution and is considered foundation of all societies. It is family that provides psychological, moral and physical security to all members within which the role of women is fundamental. Therefore domestic violence against women is the very negation of the institution of family—it brings destruction to the family even before it is constructed.

Gender violence of different forms connected with the spatiality of the woman's existence, i.e. her positioning in economic segregation in urban areas (her class background), her ethnic background that provides cultural meaning to her position after marriage or even at her parental home, her educational background and occupational pursuits that allows her to interact with the larger society. The objective of the study is to understand both domestic and out-of-home violence against women in general, but also to see if it has spatial connotations.

The Research Frame Work is represented in the flow chart, Fig. 2.1.

**Fig. 2.1: Research Frame-work**



### 2.3.2 Selection of the Sample Areas:

The first set of samples is decided on the basis of localities that are crime-prone in general from reported/registered crimes in police records and in the other two sources. As stated earlier the data collected from the Crime Branch, City, S. P. Office, are arranged on the basis of police stations. Those data collected from the other two sources are subsequently arranged according to the police stations by noting the place of occurrence of these crimes from the records. The total numbers of crimes that are registered from 1990 to 2003 (as for State Women Commission the data are from 1994-2003) are then summed up as per the police stations and the six most crime prone areas are selected as the sample areas; Dispur,

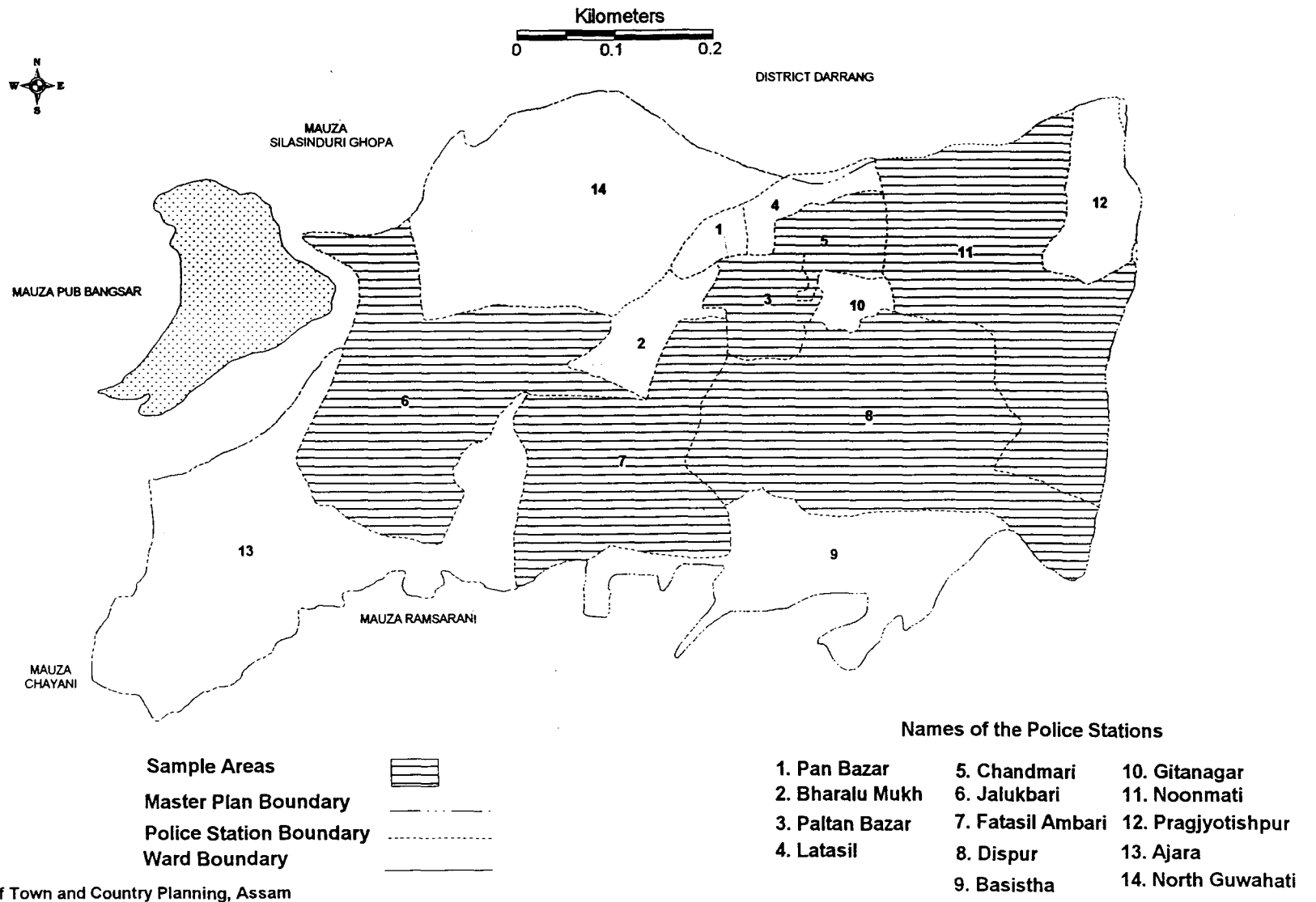
Chandmari, Jalukbari, Paltanbazar, Fatasil Ambari and Noonmati. Care is taken that these are well spread out over the entire Greater Guwahati area. From these sample areas, three such localities are identified keeping the ethnic character of these localities in mind: Jalukbari predominantly Assamese; Fatasil Ambari is taken as a mixed community area consisting women from Scheduled Tribes, Hindi speaking community, Bengali etc and Sijubari of Dispur is identified as Bengali speaking Muslim community locality (Map no 2.2).

Three more localities are selected on the basis of income classes. Since there was no economic data at the city level, through intensive discussions with the development and planning authorities and through personal experiences the income clusters are identified. Chandmari as well as Dispur is considered as the high income locality, Noonmati is identified as the middle income locality and the slum area of Paltanbazar is identified as the low income locality. Therefore the total localities are six in all.

**Table 2.1: Ward wise Distribution of Police Stations and Localities of Greater Guwahati**

Ward no	Police Stations	Localities	Ward no	Police Stations	Localities
1	Jalukbari	Sadilapur, Jalakbari	31	Panbazar, Paltanbazar	Panbazar, Paltanbazar
2	Jalukbari	Jalukbari	32	Panbazar	Paltanbazar
3	Jalukbari	Jalukbari	33	Panbazar, Paltanbazar, Latasil	Latasil, Uzanbazar
4	Jalukbari	Pandu, Maligaon	34	Latasil	Kharguli
5	Jalukbari	Maligaon	35	Latasil, Chandmari	Chanikhuti, Guwahati Club
6	Jalukbari	Pandu, Maligaon	36	Panbazar	South Chanikhuti
7	Jalukbari	Kamakhya	37	Latasil, Chandmari	Silphukri
8	Jalukbari	Maligaon	38	Chandmari	Chandmari
9	Jalukbari	Bhotnath	39	Chandmari, Paltanbazar	Rajgarh, S.Charania

# GREATER GUWAHATI ADMINISTRATIVE JURISDICTIONS OF THE SAMPLE AREAS



Source: Directorate of Town and Country Planning, Assam

10	Azara	Gutanagar, Maligaon	40	Chandmari	Bamunimaidan
11	Jalukbari , Bharalu Mukh	Bharalumukh	41	Gitanagar, Chandmari	Geetanagar, Chandmari
12	Jalukbari, B.Mukh, F.Ambari	Durgasarobor, F. Ambari, Boragaon, Tetelia	42	Gitanagar, Dispur	Bhanghaghar
13	Azara, Jalukbari, Fatasil Ambari	Fatasil, Boragaon, Tetelia	43	Dispur	Bhanghaghar, Ganeshguri
14	Fatahil Ambari	Fatasil Ambari	44	Dispur	Ganeshguri, Japorigug
15	Fatasil Ambari, Dispur	Fatasil Ambari	45	Gitanagar,Chandmari , Noonmati	Bamunimaidan, Noonmati
16	Fatasil Ambari, Dispur	Odalbakra, Kalapahar	46	Noonmati	Noonmati
17	Fatasil Ambari, Basista	Beharbari, Lakhara	47	Chandmari, Noonmati, Latasil	Kharguli, Noonmati
18	Bharalu Mukh	Bharalumukh	48	Noonmati	Noonmati
19	Bhralu Mukh, Paltanbazar, Panbazar	Santipur, Machkhuwa	49	Noonmati, Gitanagar	Geetanagar, Noonmati
20	F.Ambari , B.Mukh, Paltanbazar	Birubari	50	Dispur	Jalukbari
21	Fatahil Ambari	Kalapahar	51	Dispur, Noonmati	Hengrabari
22	Fatahil Ambari, Dispur	Kalapahar	52	Noonmati	Narengi
23	Dispur	Birubari	53	Dispur	Six mile, Panjabari
24	Dispur	Rupnagar, Ganeshguri	54	Dispur, Noonmati	Khanapara, Satgaon
25	Paltanbazar	Birubari, Paltanbazar	55	Dispur, Basistha	Khanapara, Basistha
26	Paltanbazar	Ulubari	56	Basistha	Basistha
27	Paltanbazar	Paltanbazar, Athgaon	57	Dispur	Dispur, Ganeshguri
28	Paltanbazar, Bharalu Mukh	Chatribari, Birubari	58	Dispur, Basistha	Hatigaon, Biasistha
29	Panbazar, Bharalu Mukh	Fancybazar	59	Dispur	Kahilipara, Jotia
30	Panbazar, Bharalu Mukh	Panbazar	60	Dispur	Hatigaon

Source: Town and Country Planning Department, Guwahati.

### **2.3.3 Tabulation and Analyses:**

Once the data collection is over, the primary and secondary tabulations are carried out to identify and create variables on types, pattern and growth of crimes against women and the general crimes. To show the pattern of occurrence of types of crimes against women in Assam and greater Guwahati, the data are expressed in percentages. For primary and cross-tabulation purposes, SPSS package was used that is very effective especially for cross-tabulations, extensively used in the thesis. However, higher order statistical techniques were not applied for two reasons: (i) they may not be very appropriate for primary surveys and (ii) statistical sophistication is useful if the sample domain is very large.

The growth rate of the types of crimes against women in Greater Guwahati Urban Area was calculated from the moving averages of the total number of different types of crimes of initial three years, 1990-1992 and the terminal years, 2001-2003. The total number of crimes from the three sources: Crime Branch (City, S. P. Office), Legal Aids Cell and State Women Commission, were clubbed together as per the types and police stations for this calculation, taking care that there were no duplication of data. While analysing the growth rates of types of crime against women, the crimes were sub-divided into crimes inside home and crimes outside home.

The growth rate of the general crimes and the crimes against women were also analysed. For this, only the reported crimes of the police stations were taken into account. To standardise the data to make them comparable, the total number of reported crimes of the three years moving averages in each of these police stations were divided by its total population of each police stations of 1991 (for initial years) and 2001 (for terminal years).

The distribution of population as per the police stations were calculated by superimposing the map of the police stations on the ward map of Greater Guwahati Urban Area (Corporation) of 1991 (for the population of the police stations of 1991) and 2001 (for the population of the police stations of 2001) and by adjusting the boundaries accordingly (Map no 2.3 and 2.4). The growth rates of the general crimes were calculated from the moving averages of the initial three years, 1994-1996 (data of the initial years were not available) and 2001-2003; the growth rates of the crimes against women were calculated from the moving average of the initial three years, 1990-1992 and the terminating three years, 2001-2003.

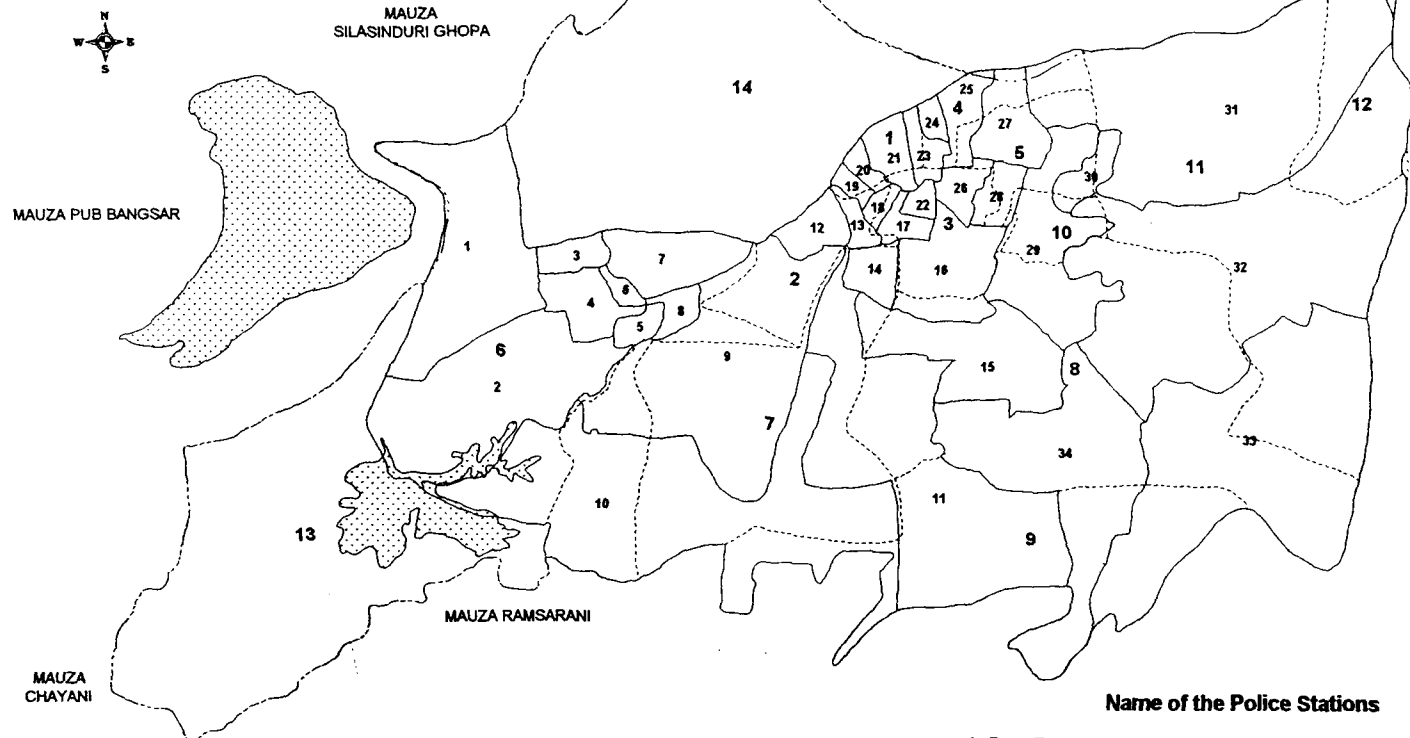
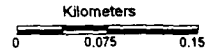
**Survey Data:**

As for the other sets of data, collected through primary survey by the researcher, data was analysed with respect to economic background of the respondents, ethnicity and social backgrounds of the respondents and in the manner external forces of modernisation, in respect of migration from rural to urban areas, change in family characterisation and changes in education and occupation affect their situation in family and larger society, particularly in respect of crimes committed against the them.

**Case Studies:**

It was also considered important that since women victims were interviewed multi-stage to get to the truths of their lives as perceived by them, it may be necessary to create narratives of their story on a selective basis in one chapter, leaving out their real identities

**GREATER GUWAHATI AREA  
(DIVISION OF WARDS, 1991)**



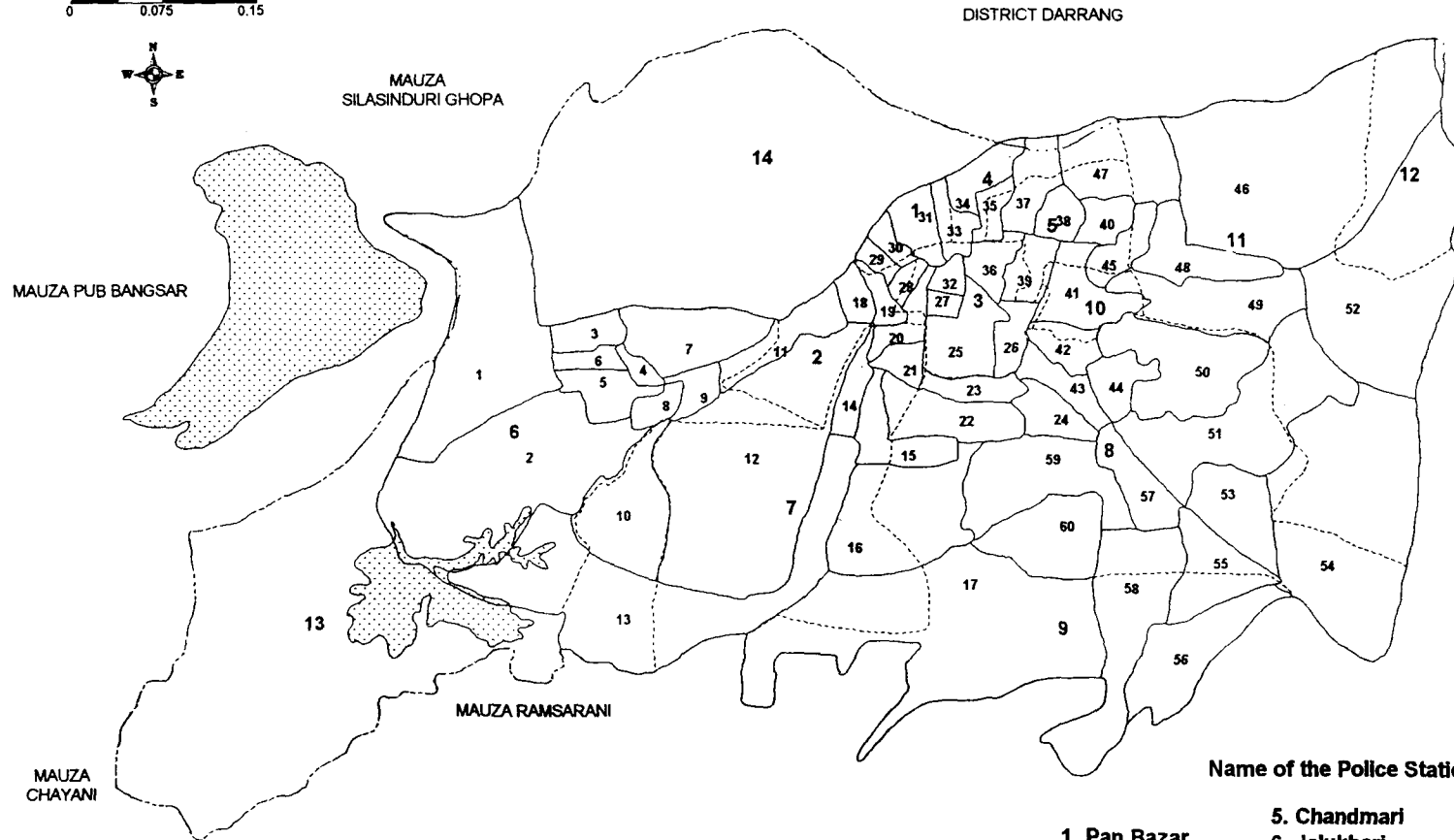
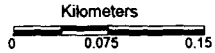
**Name of the Police Stations**

- |                 |                   |                    |
|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Pan Bazar    | 5. Chandmari      | 10. Gitanagar      |
| 2. Bharalu Mukh | 6. Jalukbari      | 11. Noonmati       |
| 3. Paltan Bazar | 7. Fatasil Ambari | 12. Pragjyotishpur |
| 4. Latasil      | 8. Dispur         | 13. Ajara          |
|                 | 9. Basistha       | 14. North Guwahati |

Master Plan Boundary ————  
 Police Station Boundary - - - - -  
 Ward Boundary ————

Source: Directorate of Town and Country Planning, Assam

**GREATER GUWAHATI AREA  
(DIVISION OF WARD 2001)**



**Name of the Police Stations**

- |                 |                   |                    |
|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Pan Bazar    | 5. Chandmari      | 10. Gitanagar      |
| 2. Bharalu Mukh | 6. Jalukbari      | 11. Noonmati       |
| 3. Paltan Bazar | 7. Fatasil Ambari | 12. Pragjyotishpur |
| 4. Latasil      | 8. Dispur         | 13. Ajara          |
|                 | 9. Basistha       | 14. North Guwahati |

Master Plan Boundary ————  
 Police Station Boundary - - - - -  
 Ward Boundary —————

Source: Directorate of Town and Country Planning, Assam

and treating the cases “as if” universal narration—a method that is becoming a common practise in Post-Modernist writings in geography—to enhance “understanding” than deriving the universalities alone.

Narrations of 16 selected cases (20%) were detailed to account for the causes, nature of the incidences from the perspective of the victim<sup>2</sup>. These will also bring out the issues involved and for better understanding. It will also bring to light the family background of both the woman and the perpetrators of the crimes.

#### **2.4 Testing of Hypotheses:**

There are four hypotheses that were proposed for evaluation in the study. It may be noted, that whereas all the hypotheses were subjected to testing and generalisation drawn, they were not subjected to testing in a statistical sense, due to the limitation and characteristics of the data. Comments on verifications of the hypotheses have been specifically outlined in the conclusions.

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<sup>2</sup> It may be admitted that the study was not designed to evaluate or sit on judgments over the perspective of the spouses and family relations as to the real reason (truth) as to who was to blame. The design on the other hand, was to understand the perspective of the victims of crimes by women only recognizing that there may be some women who might be eligible for blame or even battering, which never the less could be justified and is entirely outside the objectives of the current study.

## APPENDIX B

### Crime against Women in Greater Guwahati Urban Area (Inside Home) (Confidential)

#### A. Identification Schedule:

1. Name of the respondent:
2. Father/ Mother/Husband's name:
3. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Locality: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Place of origin  (1. Migrated from a village, 2. Migrated from another town, 3. From Guwahati)
6. Marital Status:  (1. Unmarried, 2. Married, 3. Separated/divorced, 4. Widow.)
- If 6.2, staying with  (1. Husband, 2. Own parents, 3. In- laws, 4. Relatives, 5. Others)
7. Married for how many years:  (1. < 1 yr, 2. 1-3 yrs, 3. 4-10yrs, 4. >10yrs,)
8. Address:

#### B. Socio-Economic Background:

1. Religion:  (1. Hindu, 2. Muslim, 3. Christian, 4. Sikh, 5. Others)
2. Language:  (1. Assamese, 2. Hindi, 3. Bengali, 4. Manipuri, 5. Others)
3. Caste/Community:  (1. ST, 2. SC, 3. OBC, 4. General)
4. If ST:  (1. Bodo, 2. Karbi, 3. Rabha, 4. Manipuri, 5. Missing, 6. Others)
5. Educational Level:  (1. Illiterate, 2. Under Metric, 3. Metric Pass, 4. Graduate, 5. P.G., 6. Professional, 7. Others)
6. Age:
7. Nature of family:  (1. Nuclear, 2. Joint, 3. Extended.)
8. Employment Status:  (1. House wife, 2. Unemployed, 3. Employed)
9. If employed,  (1. Govt., 2. Private, 3. Pub. Sect, 4. Self-Employed, 5. Others)
10. Occupation:  (1. Wage worker, 2. Small business, 3. Hawker, 4. Vendor, 5. Sales Person, 6. Office goer, 7. Para Medicos, 8. High Professional, 9. Business Women, 10. Others)
11. Monthly income of the respondent: (in Rupees) \_\_\_\_\_
12. House ownership Status:  (1. Rented, 2. Quarter, 3. Own,)

13. Size of the rooms: a) Big  b) Medium  c) Small

14. Nature of housing:  (1. Shanty, 2. One room apt. 3. Two room apt. 4. Three room apt, 5. Independent house, 6. Others )

15. Durable goods in the house:

T.V	Fridge	Radio	VCD/DVD	Sound Sym	Washing Mech.	Computer
Telephone	Cooking gas	Car	Cycle	Scooter	M/Cycle	

### **C. Family Profile:**

1. Family demography: i) Total no. \_\_\_\_\_ ii) Adult \_\_\_\_\_ iii) Children < 15 yrs \_\_\_\_\_

2. Education: i) Illiterate  ii) <Metric  iii) > Metric

3. Occupation: i) Employed  ii) Self Empl.  iii) Unemployed

4. Consumption Expenditure: (in rupees)

Food (M) x 12	Clothing (A)	Education (M) x 12	Medical (A)	Rent (M) x 12	House repair (A)	Total

### **D. Incident Profiling:**

1. What types of violence are committed against you and by whom?

Sl.No.	Perpetrator	Physical (I)	Mental/Psychological (II)	Sexual (III)
1.	Father			
2.	Mother			
3.	Brother			
4	Sister			
5	Husband			
6	Father-in-law			
7	Mother-in-law			
8	Brother- in-law			
9	Sister- in-law			
10	Others			

(I) 1. Battery (beaten with hand or objects) 2. Incineration/ physical disfiguring, 3. Burning/attempt to burn 4. Attempt to murder, 5. Others, (please specify)

(II) 1. Quarrels, 2. Cursing/Swearing, 3. Use abusive language, 4. Emotionally blackmailed 5. Threat of assault, 6. Others, (please specify)

(III) 1. Sexually harassed (other than the husband), 2. Sexually abused, 3) Others, (please specify):

2. How frequently these/ this occur?  (1.Daily, 2. Frequently (5-10 days in a 3.Occasionally (5-10 days in a year),

3.Others:

4. When does it usually occur? (Please ✓)

- 1. Only when alone
- 2. Husband away from home
- 3. Financial problems
- 4. Drunk
- 5. Go against will / wishes
- 6. On all occasions
- 7. Other

5. Why is it committed? (Please ✓)

- 1. Exertion
- 2. Stress (Mental / Psychological)
- 3. Alcoholism
- 4. Dowry
- 5. Frustration
- 6. Financial Problems
- 7. Bigamy / Polygamy
- 8. Others \_\_\_\_\_

6. Do you get any support  1) Yes, 2) No

7. If yes, where?

(I) Within the family	(II) Out side the family

- (I) 1. Husband, 2. Husband's relative, 3. Parental relative,
- (II) 1. Neighbor / Colleague / Friends, 2. NGO / Govt. Organisation, 3. Police, 4. Others

8. Do you think there is a solution to your problem?  1) Yes, 2) No

8.1 If, yes how?

1. | Come to a compromise with husband / in-laws
2. | Live with parental family
3. | Live a separate life
4. | Come out from the joint family
5. | Others

9. Why do you still want to stay with your husband / in-laws?

1. | Physical / Psychological / Social security
2. | Financial security
3. | For the sake of children
4. | No support from parental family
5. | Others

(Signature of the investigator)

Date:

## APPENDIX C

### Crime against Women in Greater Guwahati Urban Area (Outside Home) (Confidential)

#### A. Identification Schedule:

1. Name of the respondent: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Place of interview: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Age (in years): \_\_\_\_\_
4. Marital status:  (1. Unmarried, 2. Married, 3. Others)
5. Occupation:  (1. Student, 2. Employed, 3. Self-employed/  
business, 4. unemployed, 5. Housewife, 6.  
Others)
6. Educational Status:  (1. Illiterate, 2. <Metric, 3. Metric, 4.  
Graduate, 5. P.G, 6. Professional, 7. Others)
7. Monthly income of the family Rs. \_\_\_\_\_
8. Type of family:  (1. Nuclear, 2. Joint, 3. Extended)
9. Place of origin:  (1. Outside Guwahati, 2. Within Guwahati)
10. Address: (Home/ Institution) \_\_\_\_\_

#### B. Incident Profiling:

1) Are you subjected to some form of (sexual) harassment outside home? Yes / No

If, yes, then please answer: 1. On the way to office, market, wherever

2. Inside office/ workplace

3. Others

2) If 1.1, please state: 1. Only when alone; 2. With friends; 3. With relations

3) Which places these occur?  (1. In a public transport, 2. While walking, 3. At  
public places, 4. All the above, 5. Others)

4) How frequently these occur?  (1. Everyday, 2. Once a week, 3. Once a month, 4.  
Occasionally)

- 5) What type of incidents?  (1. Lewd remarks only, 2. Pushing, 3. Suggestive physical contacts, 4. Following, 5. All of the above, 6. Others)
- 6) By whom?  [1. Young boys (15-30yr,) 2. Middle aged (30yr >), 3. Others.
- 7) Is the perpetrator the same person?  (1. Yes, 2. No)
- If, 6.1 then is it at the same place?  (1. Yes, 2. No)
- 8) How do you react?  (1. Keep quiet, 2. Reply back, 3. Resist aggressively, 4. Others)
- 9) Do you report the incident?  [1. Parents/Guardians, 2. Police, 3. Other authorities (School /College principal, bus conductor etc), 4. Others]
- 10) Did they act?  (1. Yes, 2. No)
- If, 9.1, then what action?
- 11) Did the harassment stop thereafter?  (1. Yes, 2. No)
- 12) Do you develop strategies to confront the incidents?   
(1. Individual, 2. Collective/ Group, 3. Others)
- 13) If the harassment is at your work place/institution is the perpetrator(s)   
(1. The same person, 2. Different persons)
14. Is the perpetrator  (1. a colleague, 2. a visitor, 3. a customer, 4. Any others)
15. If a colleague  (1. A superior, 2. Others )
16. Is the incident  (1. Frequent, 2. Persistent, 3. Occasional)
17. What is the type of harassment?  (1. Lewd remarks, 2. Advances, 3. Pressure, 4. Physical assault, 5. Rewards. 6. Others)
18. Do you consider such incidents a professional hazard for women?  (1. Yes, 2. No)
- If 18.2 are you aware of the legal protection available to working-women against sexual harassment?  (1. Yes 2. No)
19. Have you acted against such persons?  (1. Yes, 2. No)
- 19.1 If Yes, how?  (1. Verbal protests, 2. Verbal complaint to superior, 3. written complaint to superior/ management, 4. Police complaint, 5. others)

19.2 If No, why?  (1.Fear, 2.Embrassment, 3.Others)

20. What has been the outcome of complaints?  (1. No action, 2.Reconciliation,  
3. Departmental proceedings,  
4. Police action, 5. Others)

21. Does the problem still persist?  (1. Yes, 2.No)

22. Are you satisfied with action against the individual(s)?  (1, Yes, 2. No)

23. Are you satisfied with the situation of women in workplace?  (1. Yes, 2. No)

If, No, then what would you suggest to improve the situation?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

(Signature of the Investigator)

Date:

## **Chapter III**

### **TYPES AND PATTERN OF CRIMES (AGAINST WOMEN) IN GREATER GUWAHATI URBAN AREA**

#### **3.1 Introduction:**

This chapter deals with the study of the different types of crimes against women over a period of fourteen years i.e. from 1990 to 2003 in Greater Guwahati urban area. The area which falls under the Guwahati Metropolitan Development Authority has been used for this study. All crimes that are reported are at the individual police stations as per the legal jurisdictional requirement. The urban authority, however, deals with administrative and developmental activities on the basis of corporation/ municipal wards (more numerous). Thus, there is considerable overlap of areas of the city between the jurisdiction of the police station and municipal ward boundaries. Section I gives a brief background of the study area. Section II deals with the pattern of crimes in general in Guwahati and the crimes against women, in specific, both in home and those she faces outside her home. The growth of the general crimes and crimes against women in Greater Guwahati over the study period is also analysed in this section.

## Section I

### 3.2 Historical Growth of Guwahati:

During the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (1826), with the annexation of the Ahom kingdom by the British, Guwahati gained its importance as an administrative centre by becoming the headquarters of the province with the residence of the Commissioner and Agent of the Governor General under the East India Company. Although Shillong was made the capital of the then Province of Assam, Guwahati occupied the controlling position in political and economic fields. In 1836, the British established a “town improvement committee” and from this date, the growth of modern Guwahati began. At that time the town had only 6.5 square kilometres divided into 8 wards, and it was confined to only the south bank of the River Brahmaputra. The north bank, which was an integral part of the town during the Ahom Rule, was left out of the town limits. The roads and the bridges were constructed in the immediate neighbourhoods of the town and the town developed by clearing adjacent forested tracts and jungles and by filling up of the marshes (“beels”). In 1878, the town was brought under a municipality which covered an area of 6.74 square kilometres. The first census of the town was held in 1872 (before the municipal formation) and its population was recorded to be 11,492 only. However, the growth of the town was very slow and its population increased to only 11,661 in 1901 (Allen, 1905: 184-185).

Guwahati’s importance increased further with the introduction of Assam-Bengal Railway Line in between 1900-1911 ([www.banglapedia.search.com](http://www.banglapedia.search.com)) which connected the town with the Upper Assam in the east and with Sylhet in the south through Lumding. It also acted as an important river port. At this time, river Brahmaputra played a vital role in

connecting the town with different places of the state and outside. From 1848 Government steamer service started between Calcutta and Guwahati. In 1860, the Indian General Steam Navigation Company took the contract to run the vessels regularly. Through this line all the raw materials and the passengers to and from Calcutta moved on a regular basis. In addition, all the important places of Assam were linked with Guwahati by the river route.

To facilitate the administrative activities of the district as well as the state, certain offices were set up here. The Deputy Commissioner's Office (1861), Office of the Superintendent of Police (1876), General Post Office (1872) and Guwahati Railway Station (1890) are some of the important landmarks of such development. Besides, being an important administrative centre, Guwahati also assumed considerable importance as a cultural centre of the State. Various socio-cultural institutions like the Satribari Christian Hospital, Cotton College (1901), the Curzon Hall (1903), Assam State Museum (1940), etc. came into existence over the decades. During World War II, the British used the city as their main stronghold by establishing the civil line and cantonment. The significant development during the British period was the establishment of the cantonment at Paltanbazar that opened new lines of transport and communication and improvement of the old ones within the town. The other significant developments (after Independence) were the establishment of the High Court, the Railway Headquarters, the University campus, the Engineering College, the Medical College, the construction of the Saraighat Bridge, Noonmati oil refinery, military cantonment at Satgaon, the Industrial Estate, many central and state government offices and institutions (Bhattacharyya, 2001:28). However, the

shifting of the state capital from Shillong to Dispur (within Guwahati) is what galvanised the city on a higher growth path.

The growth of the town was spectacular after independence. It grew both in area and population. The population of the town became 100,707 (in 1961) from 43,615 (in 1951) and the municipal area rose to 14.24 square kilometres in 1961. This unprecedented growth of population during 1951-61 (130.9 percent) can be attributed to the extension of the municipal area, on the one hand, and the large immigration from the surrounding rural areas, on the other. During this period, as many as 2,500 persons from the neighbouring areas and 4,000 from the other areas migrated to the city. Most of the in-migrants were job seekers who found employment in the secondary and tertiary sector establishments in the city<sup>1</sup>.

The early seventies witnessed unprecedented development with the establishment of the temporary capital of the state (after, Meghalaya became a separate state) at Dispur, in the eastern periphery of the city. Following this, the city grew faster and municipality was converted to a (municipal) Corporation in 1974 that covered an area of 257.09 square kilometres with 34 wards and 62 villages with a population of 200,377. It covered the area from Satgaon, at a distance of 20 kilometres from the city in the east to Khanamukh at 15 kilometres distance in the west. Towards south it extends as far as Basistha at a distance of 10 kilometres from the riverside. The extension of the city had been significant and the Master Plan that was prepared by the state Town and Country Planning Organisation

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<sup>1</sup> Deputy Director of Census Operations, Special Survey Report on Selected Towns-Gauhati, Series 3 Part VI- B, Govt.of India, 1971.Pp 1-8.

included even more areas outside the corporation boundary. This map was prepared to provide for an ultimate population of 350,000 covering the four units:

- (a) Guwahati-Khanapara Area (28.33sq km): the existing Town proper, Khanapara area, area lying to the west of T.B. hospital, and the area on both sides of Beltola Road.
- (b) Maligaon-Jalukbari area (6.07 sq km): Nilachal Hill, Maligaon area, Jalukbari proper and the area lying towards west of Pandu,
- (c) Chariali Airport area (2.02 sq km): along the new A.T. Road on way to the Barjhar Airport at about 20 km distance from the city,
- (d) Amingaon-North Guwahati area (6.07 sq km): Amingaon area and North Guwahati Town (Borah: 1985).

Since then, there has been manifold rise in the population of the city. Today Guwahati under its municipal jurisdiction covers an area of 216 square kilometres divided into 60 wards and has a population of 811,905 (Census of India: 2001) . The total area of Greater Guwahati under Guwahati Metropolitan Development Authority is 298 sq. km.

### **3.3.1 Distribution of Population/ Density of Population:**

The total population of Greater Guwahati Urban Area (excluding the population of North Guwahati) was 811905 as per Census 2001. The total population of North Guwahati is only 16286.

The ward wise distribution of population within Guwahati city is quite uneven. Of the 60 wards, ward no. 40, has the lowest population of only 0.41 percent of the total

population of the city. The other areas where the distribution of the population is less than 1 percent are Adabari, Kamakhya Gate, Santipur, Kalapahar, Panbazar, Jyotinagar hillside, Kharguli and Narengi (ward no. 5, 9, 18, 21, 30, 31, 38, 40, 47 and 52).

Ward no. 12, (Fatasil Ambari, Betkuchi and Buragaon) has the largest population, (4.09 %). Ward no. 49 and 51 (Noonmati and Hengrabari) are the two other areas which have population of more than 3 percent. Beside these areas, the rest of the wards have population between 1 percent - 3 percent.

Of the 60 wards the highest density of population, in 2001, are in ward no 6 (Pandur) with 222 persons /hectare and ward no 27 (Paltanbazar) with 214 persons /hectare. The major concentrations of population of the city are in two pockets: one is in the Pandu-Maligaon area (ward no 4, 5, 6 and 8), and the other is concentrated around Panbazar, Paltanbazar, Fancybazar, Maskhuwa, Rehabari, Hadiatpur (ward no 30, 29, 28, 19, 27, and 32) and the northern part of Fatasil-Ambari (ward no 14). Surrounding these areas are the wards with density of population ranging between 50 to 100 persons /hectare. These wards are Silphukri, Chandmari, Rajgarh, Noonmati, Ulubari, Birubari and Ganesguri (ward no 35, 36, 39, 41, 45, 42, 25, 26, 23, 24, 44, and 47). The density gradually decreases from these areas to below 50 persons /hectare towards the periphery of the city (Map no 3.2).

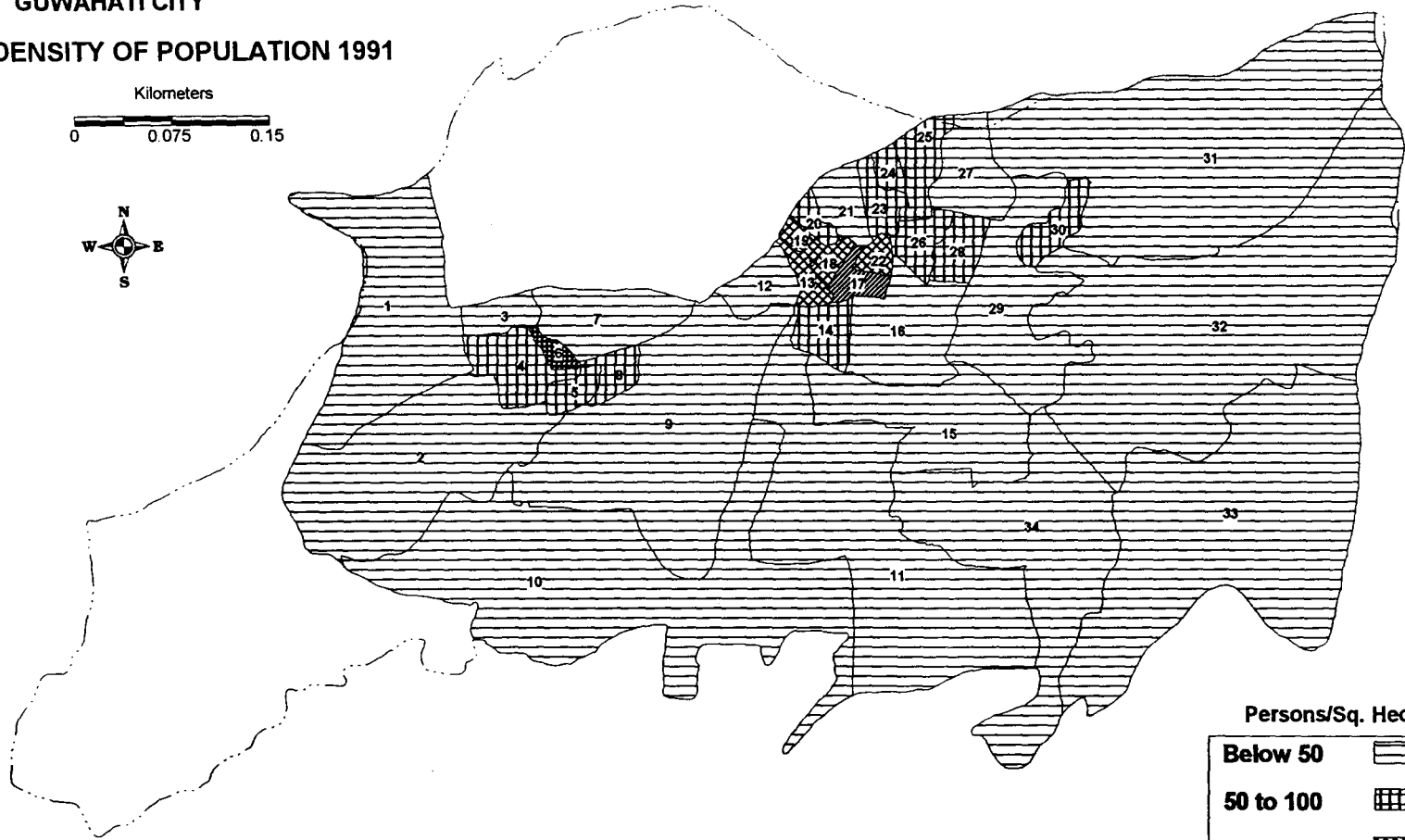
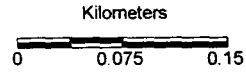
### **3.3.2 Growth of Population (1991-2001):**

Guwahati Municipality Corporation had 34 wards in 1991 (Map no. 3.1) and in the year 2001 there were re-demarcation of 26 new wards within the existing wards, totally the number of wards to 60 in the year 2001. Ward no. 6 (Pandur), which is now ward no. 4 had

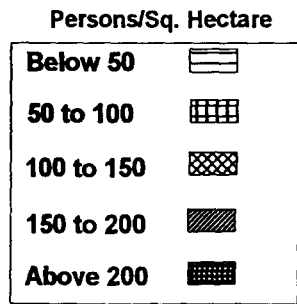
the highest density of population of 222.4 persons /hectare. The population of this ward has remained more or less the same in 2001. The next most densely populated ward was 17 (Paltanbazar). It had 186.78 persons /hectare in 1991. The population of this ward has increased to 214 persons /hectare in the year 2001 (now ward no 27). The population of ward no 13, 18, 19 and 22 (Machkhuwa, Fancybazar and Paltanbazar -now ward no 19, 28 and 29) has increased from 100-150 persons /hectare to 150-200 persons per hectare (from 1991-2001). A high density of population is witnessed in the northern part of Fatasil-Ambari, more so because it has been demarcated as a separate ward in 2001. There is also rapid growth of population in the Maligaon and Pandu area during the study period.

# GUWAHATI CITY

## WARD WISE DENSITY OF POPULATION 1991



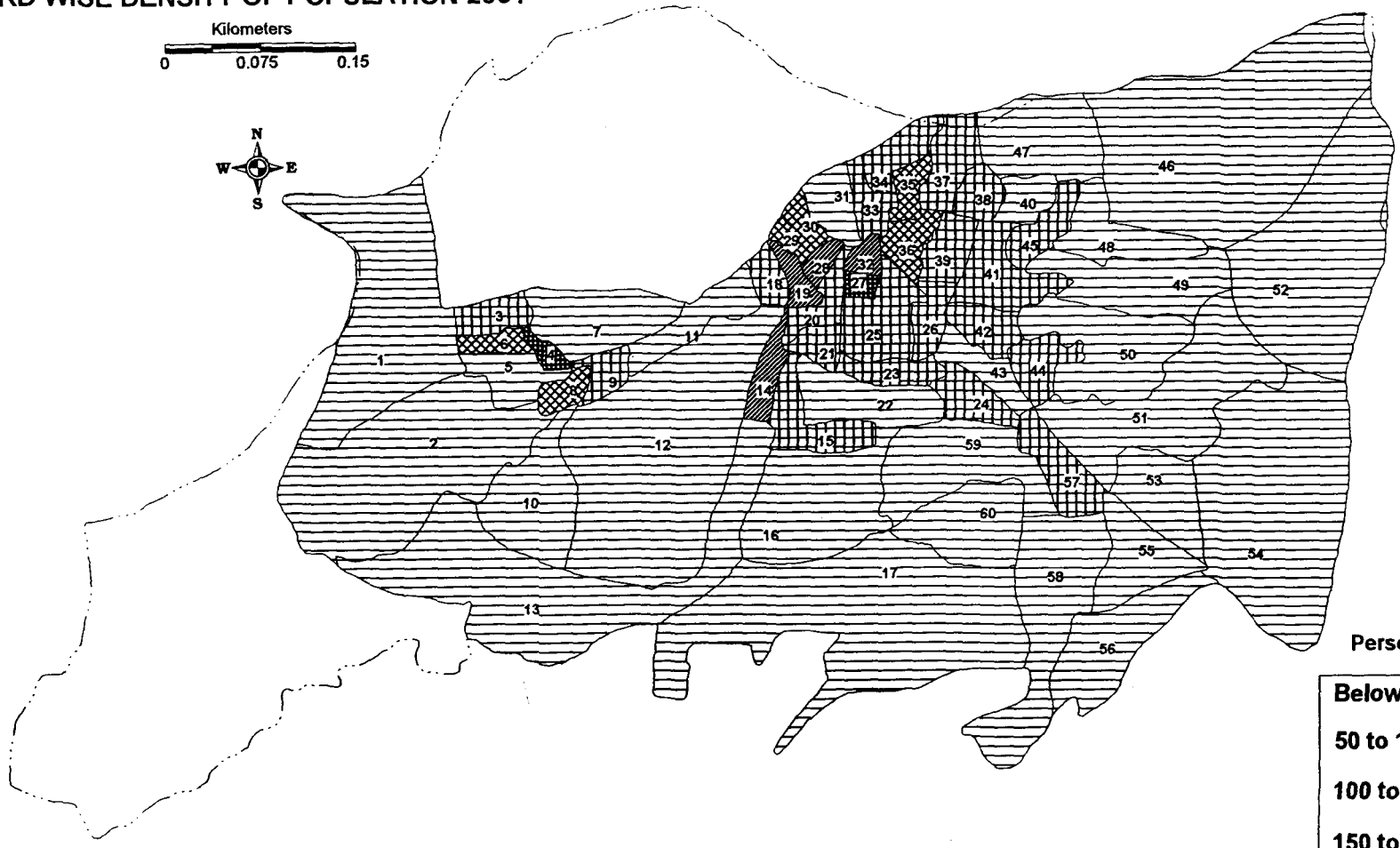
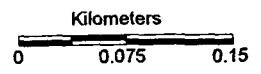
Master Plan Boundary



Source: Directorate of Town and Country Planning, Assam

# GUWAHATI CITY

## WARD WISE DENSITY OF POPULATION 2001



Persons/Sq. Hectare

Below 50	
50 to 100	
100 to 150	
150 to 200	
Above 200	

Source: Directorate of Town and Country Planning, Assam

Master Plan Boundary

**Table 3.1: Ward wise Density of Population of Guwahati, 1991 and 2001**  
(density – persons per hectare)

WARD NO	Density of Population, 1991	WARD NO	Density of population,2001	WARD NO	Density of population,2001
1	7.74	1	12.32	35	119.20
2	6.87	2	8.00	36	103.21
3	33.78	3	70.99	37	63.83
4	58.17	4	221.93	38	63.66
5	99.88	5	34.75	39	79.38
6	222.25	6	105.59	40	24.96
7	23.36	7	40.95	41	63.84
8	55.33	8	102.97	42	73.08
9	10.74	9	63.90	43	30.66
10	4.45	10	16.08	44	82.44
11	14.74	11	46.06	45	91.31
12	55.31	12	15.78	46	9.66
13	128.22	13	9.26	47	14.42
14	64.12	14	152.42	48	34.60
15	19.26	15	49.69	49	47.52
16	36.30	16	19.96	50	16.06
17	186.78	17	4.77	51	24.20
18	128.02	18	73.21	52	3.99
19	139.85	19	171.29	53	21.99
20	99.59	20	88.10	54	7.76
21	41.01	21	65.91	55	31.18
22	139.51	22	46.72	56	36.07
23	84.09	23	74.67	57	61.66
24	88.38	24	85.78	58	25.97
25	65.08	25	55.13	59	27.72
26	84.63	26	78.25	60	42.27
27	49.00	27	214.20		
28	65.14	28	162.06		
29	40.92	29	146.23		
30	61.98	30	106.37		
31	8.53	31	31.04		
32	13.42	32	152.39		
33	11.81	33	81.26		
34	21.50	34	64.89		

Source: Calculated from the data of Census of India, 1991 and 2001.

The density of population has gradually increased from less than 50 to 50-100 persons/ha from Paltanbazar towards Dispur along the Guwahati Shillong Road and from

Chandmari towards Noonmati during 1991 to 2001. There is a large-scale growth of ownership apartments in these areas, which were vacant lands. At the same time, Dispur and its surrounding areas were more attractive for city development and residential colonies since this area is less prone to water-logging during the monsoons, and the land prices were lower.

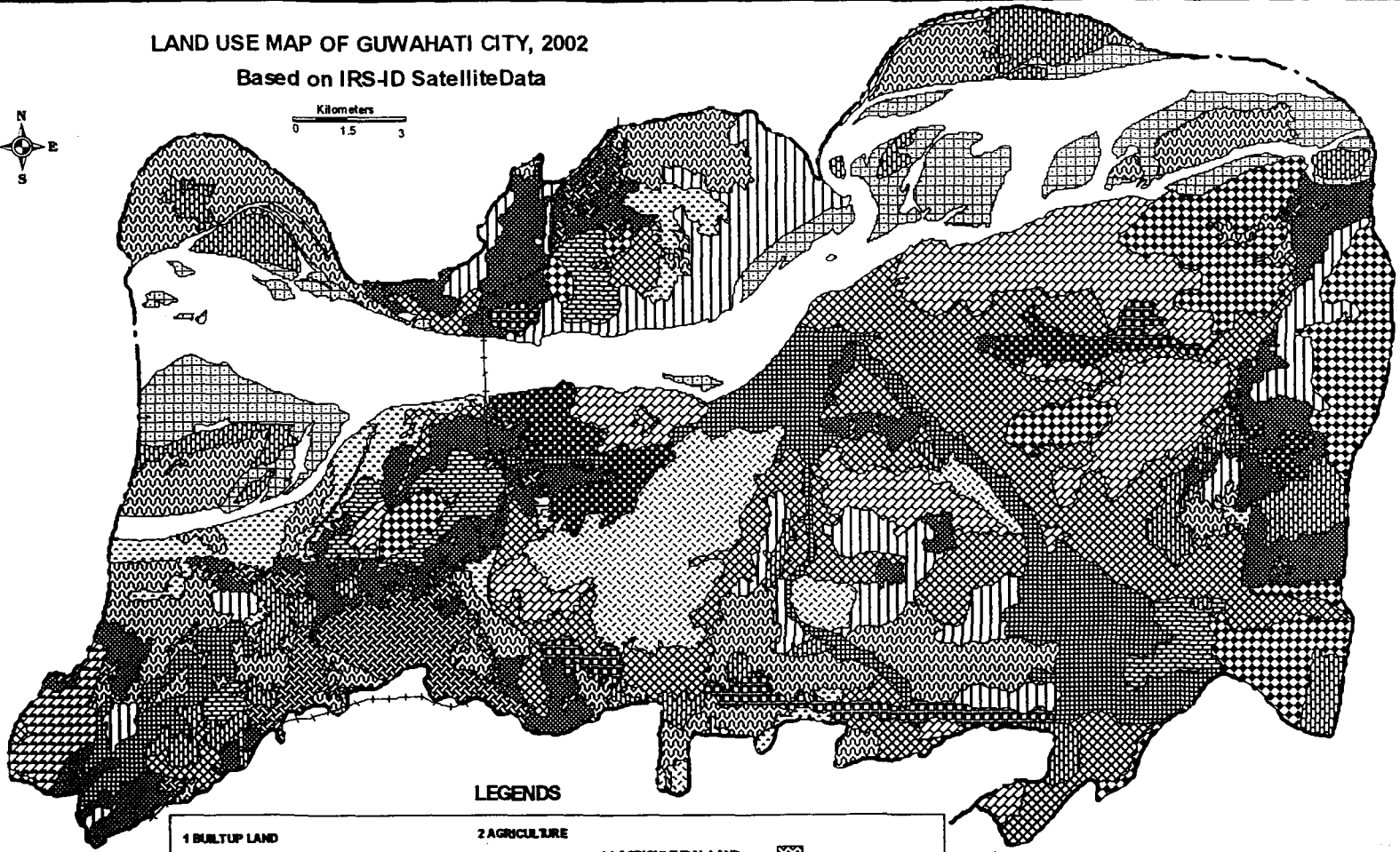
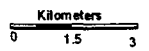
### **3.4 Land Use Pattern of Greater Guwahati:**

The land use map of Greater Guwahati is based on IRS-1D Satellite data, 2002. It is broadly divided into the following categories; residential, industrial, educational, agricultural, forest, marshy/swampy areas, grasslands, lakes and tanks (Map no 3.3).

Vast vacant lands occupied by open and closed forests and marshy land (*beels*) are found inside the city in the north eastern corner and the eastern sectors (ward no. 47, 46, 49, 50, 52, eastern part of ward no. 51). The closed forests and marshy lands extend farther toward the south western corner of the city (ward no. 54). Ward no.12 is covered extensively by scrublands, and there are vast marshy and low lying areas in ward nos. 1, 2, 5, 10 and 13 (western parts of the city). Agricultural fields are confined to ward no. 16 and 17 (southern parts of Guwahati).

Between these vacant lands there are patches of residential areas. High density residential areas are concentrated in ward no 53, 55, 57 (Dispur, Khanapara and Panjabari), northern part of 58, all along the G. S. Road, and in the Paltanbazar, Panbazar and Fancybazar area (ward no 18, 19, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34 and 36). Medium and low density residential areas are concentrated adjacent to the high density residential concentrations, in

LAND USE MAP OF GUWAHATI CITY, 2002  
Based on IRS-1D Satellite Data



LEGENDS

<b>1 BUILTUP LAND</b>		<b>2 AGRICULTURE</b>	
(a) RESIDENTIAL	(i) HEAVY	(a) AGRICULTURAL LAND	(a) PLANTATION
	(ii) MEDIUM	(b) OPEN FOREST	(b) CLOSED FOREST
	(iii) LOW	(a) MURSHY SWAMPY	(b) GRASSLAND
(b) INDUSTRIAL	(i) RAILWAY	(c) SCRUBLAND	(a) RIVER, STREAM
(c) TRANSPORTATION	(ii) AIRPORT	(b) LAKES/TANKS	(a) RIVERINE
(d) PUBLIC and SEM PUBLIC	(i) EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE		
	(ii) CANTONMENT CAMP		
<b>3 FOREST</b>		<b>4 WASTELAND</b>	
<b>5 WATERBODIES</b>		<b>6 OTHERS</b>	
Study Area Boundary, State Boundary		ROADS: National Highway, Others and Railway	

areas like Panjabari, Hengrabari, Japorigogh, and from Noonmati up to Uzanbazar (ward no 53, 59, 51, 50, 44, 45, 40, 38, 37 and 35). Low density residential areas are found in Maligaon, Pandu and along National Highway no 37 in ward no 1 and 2, with patches of high residential concentrations.

Residents of Guwahati are of Indian nationality. Assamese and Bengalis are the largest linguistic groups. Manipuris, Biharis and Marwaris are the other groups found in clusters in different localities. Punjabi, Sindhi, Nepali, Gujarati, Tamil, Malayalee, Oriya settlements are scattered throughout the city.

**Table 3.2: Linguistic Groups in Greater Guwahati**

Linguistic Groups	Name of the localities	Ward no.
Assamese	Rest of the places	Rest of the wards
Bengali	Railway colony, Rehabari, Birubari, Fatasil Ambari, Ulubari	3,4,5,6,7,14,15,22,23.
Manipuri	Ulubari	26
Marwari	Fancybazar, Chatribari, Attgaon, Paltanbazar	29,30,28,30
Behari	Paltanbazar, West Santipur.	31,11

*Source:* Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Among the Scheduled Castes, the Kaibarts and the Hiras are predominantly found in Uzanbazar and Kharghuli area of ward no 31, 33, 34 and 35 and Ambari areas of ward no 33. They are found in a scattered pattern in the other parts of the city. Schedule Tribes belonging to Bodo-Kacharis are concentrated in and around Ulubari, Narakasur, Rukminigaon, Jatia, Pub-Buragaon, Gitanagar of ward no 25, 26, 24, southern part of ward no 59, 55 and 13. Rabhas (an allied group of Bodo-Kacharis) are concentrated at Satgaon, Panjabari, Narengi, Hengrabari, Dholbama and Birubari of ward no 51, 54, 17 and 23. Karbis (Mikirs) are concentrated in Odalbakra (ward no 15) (Das: 1999).

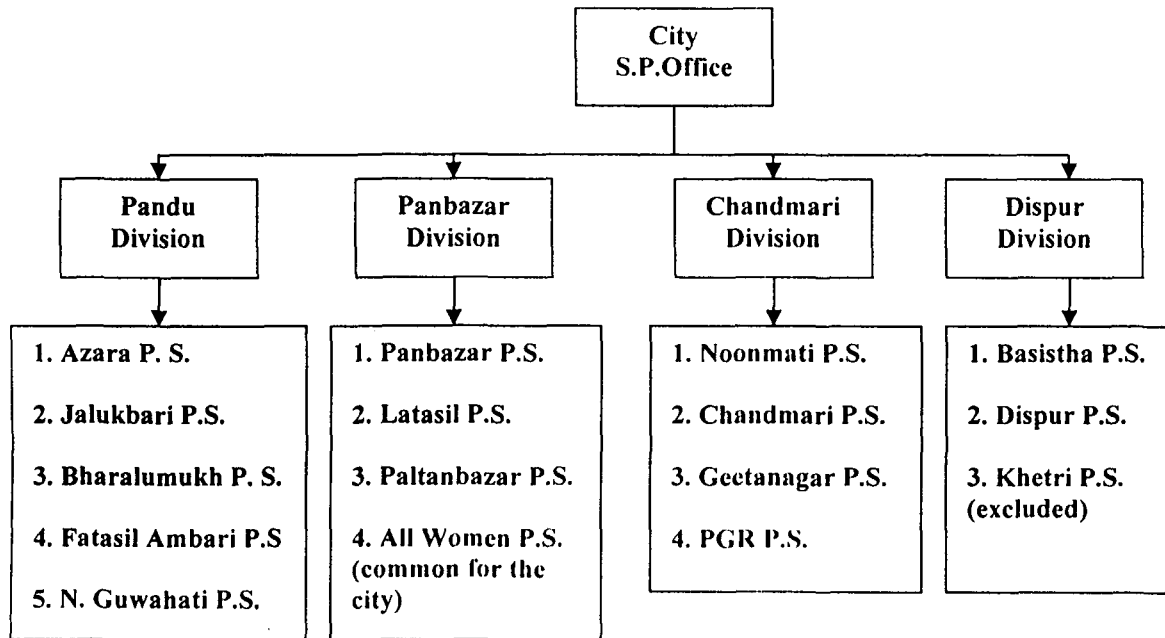
Residents of the city are mainly composed of the two religious groups, mainly the Hindus and the Muslims. Muslims are concentrated in Machkhowa, Kumarpara, West Santipur, Lakhtokia, Hadayatpur and Sijubari (Bengali speaking Muslims) of ward no 18, 19, 20, south of ward no 29 and 35 and 59. Rest of the wards are predominantly inhabited by the Hindus. People of other religious faiths, such as Sikhs, Jains, and Christians are scattered all over the city.

## **Section II**

### **3.5 Police Stations (Areas) of Greater Guwahati:**

All the police stations of Greater Guwahati are under the control of City, Superintendent of Police Office, Guwahati. There are four (4) divisions under the City S.P. Office, viz. Pandu, Panbazar, Chandmari and Dispur. Under these divisions there are sixteen (16) police stations. Namely they are: Azara, Jalukbari, Bharalumukh, Fatasil Ambari and North Guwahati (under Pandu Division); Panbazar, Latasil, Paltanbazar and All Women Cell (under Panbazar Division); Pragjyotishpur (PGR), Noonmati, Chandmari & Geetanagar (under Chandmari Division); and Dispur, Basistha and Khetri (under Dispur Division). Out of these sixteen police stations, the areas of fourteen (14) police stations are taken into consideration for this study (Fig.3.1). Khetri police station which does not fall under Greater Guwahati area is excluded. All Women Cell (PS), located at Panbazar police station, keeps records of different types of crime against women committed in different parts of the city, (for the city as a whole). The data recorded from this source is tallied together as 'combined reporting'.

**Figure 3.1: Administrative Jurisdictions of Police Stations of Greater Guwahati**



Note: P.S. is Police Station.

### 3.6 Pattern of Crime against Women in Assam: A Review:

The Constitution of India not only grants equality to women but also empowers the state to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women for neutralising the cumulative socio-economic, educational and political disadvantages faced by them. Article 15 forbids discrimination on the ground of caste, religion, sex, race and place of birth, whereas, Article 16 ensures equal opportunities of employment and equal pay for equal work Art 16(a). Despite all these safeguards, the women in our country continue to suffer and are victims of different forms of discriminations and crimes. The number of incidences

(from 5.92% in 1996 to 35.16% in 2002) and rate of crimes against women in India (4.2% in 1996 to 18.49% in 2002) are on the rise<sup>2</sup>.

To study the pattern of crimes against women in Assam and India, data from National Crime Record Bureau has been used from the year 1997 to 2002. Three different aspects of crimes against women are reported here: (i) the total number of reported crimes in Assam; (ii) the rate of crimes to the total cognisable crimes against women; (iii) the rates of crime in Assam as compared with the all India level and (iv) the proportion of crimes against women in Assam.

**Table 3.3: Occurrences of Crimes against Women in Assam (total)**

Years	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
No of reported incidences of crimes against women in Assam	3407	3388	3504	3732	4243	5092
Percent of occurrence of crimes against women to the cognisable crimes in Assam	13.5	13.2	13.5	14.2	15.9	18.7
Percent of occurrence of crimes against women to the cognisable crimes in India	12.7	13.5	13.8	14.1	14	14.1
Percent of occurrence of crimes against women in Assam	2.8	2.6	2.6	2.6	3	3.4

Source: National Crimes Record Bureau, 1997-2003.

It is noted that the overall incidences of crime against women in Assam is moving in a positive trend. It has projected a sharp increase from 3407 incidences in 1997 to 5092 incidences in the year 2002.

The rate of occurrence of crimes against women in Assam to the other cognisable crimes is also increasing. It was 13.5 percent in 1997. In 1998 it declined to 13.2 percent,

<sup>2</sup> National Crimes Record Bureau, *Crimes in India 1997-2003*, Govt Press, New Delhi.

but from 1999 there was constant rise till it reached 18.7 percent in 2002. There was a fall in this rate than the all India average in 1998 and 1999. Other than these two years the rate was always above than the all India average.

The proportion of occurrence of crimes against women in Assam has also steadily increased from 2.8 percent in 1997 to 3.4 percent in 2002. It was stable from 1998 to 2000 but rose again there after till 2002.

### 3.7 Occurrences of Crimes in General in Greater Guwahati:

**Table 3.4: Pattern of General Crimes in Greater Guwahati, 1995-2003.**

Police Stations	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	Total	Rank	%
Panbazar	454	500	435	505	507	442	467	409	299	<b>4018</b>	3	9.52
Latasil	122	116	129	135	143	131	136	150	214	<b>1276</b>	11	3.02
Paltanbazar	637	566	846	733	475	480	479	444	450	<b>5110</b>	2	12.10
Bharalumukh	208	200	270	338	333	310	255	335	319	<b>2568</b>	7	6.08
Jalukbari	384	405	430	480	472	363	362	532	559	<b>3987</b>	4	9.44
Fatasil Ambari	193	211	223	163	199	182	159	220	226	<b>1776</b>	9	4.21
Azara	122	115	130	135	151	161	134	181	174	<b>1303</b>	10	3.09
N/Guwahati	15	14	28	16	20	28	26	38	31	<b>216</b>	15	0.51
Noonmati	263	245	227	189	225	298	243	312	517	<b>2519</b>	8	5.97
Chandmari	437	508	364	341	338	353	415	516	431	<b>3703</b>	5	8.77
Geetanagar	111	117	123	155	130	113	129	121	146	<b>1145</b>	12	2.71
PGR	91	89	73	60	54	64	49	32	99	<b>611</b>	13	1.45
Basistha	277	294	308	344	277	250	252	322	314	<b>2638</b>	6	6.25
Dispur	1065	1237	995	1324	1264	1115	1297	1256	1365	<b>10918</b>	1	25.86
All Women	45	34	41	45	72	43	46	57	46	<b>429</b>	14	1.02
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4424</b>	<b>4651</b>	<b>4622</b>	<b>4963</b>	<b>4660</b>	<b>4333</b>	<b>4449</b>	<b>4925</b>	<b>5190</b>	<b>42217</b>		100.00

Source: Crime Branch, City, Superintendent of Police, Guwahati.

To illustrate the general crime pattern of Guwahati the total number of reported crimes in each of these police stations, have been taken into consideration (1995-2003).

These crimes include all the forms of offences including crimes against women. A total of

42,217 numbers of cases are reported during the study period. Of all these crimes Dispur police station reported the highest number of reported incidences of crimes (10918). Of the entire city, 25.86 percent of occurrence of crimes has been reported in this P.S. area. There are various causes for it being the most crime-prone area of the city. It has the largest jurisdiction, next to Azara Police Station, and at the same time it has extensive residential areas. Moreover it has a varied type of population composition as well as occupational setup, being the heartland of the New Capital of the State. Besides these, it is also the gateway as well as the exit of the city for which the offenders are apprehended while entering and at the same time while trying to escape from the city.

The next most crime prone area of the city is Paltanbazar. Paltanbazar police station recorded 12.1 percent of the total crimes during the study period. This is again a very densely populated area; moreover there is large influx of floating population in this area as the railways station as well as the Assam State Transport Corporation and all the Private Bus Terminals are located within Paltanbazar police station jurisdiction.

Panbazar police station has the smallest jurisdiction but is the third most crime prone area of Greater Guwahati. This area can be considered as one of the major institutional and commercial hub of the city. The area remains crowded during the day time and gets totally deserted during the night time. This often leads to varied form of crimes both during day time and also at night. Beside, the busy and the crowded Fancybazar fall under Panbazar police station which is the biggest and the main shopping area of Guwahati.

The other two most crime prone areas are Jalukbari where 9.44 percent of crimes are registered and Chandmari which recorded 8.77 percent of crimes.

### **3.8.1 Crimes against Women in Greater Guwahati:**

From a very ancient time there have been a flow of people from varied socio-cultural and economic background to Guwahati for varied job opportunity, better economic prospective, better opportunity of an urban life etc. Gradually with the increase of population in Guwahati (from 584342 in 1991 to 809895 in 2001) (Census of India, 1991 and 2001) the instances of crimes has also increased in the city (4424 reported cases in 1995 to 5190 reported cases in 2003)<sup>3</sup> and so did the crimes against women (123 reported cases in 1990 to 521 reported cases in 2003)<sup>4</sup>.

### **3.8.2 Atrocity by Husband and In-laws:**

To study the pattern of occurrences of domestic violence in Greater Guwahati, the data from Women Commission and Legal Aids Cell are more relevant. These sets of data show a clearer picture of the occurrence of atrocity by husband and in-laws than the data of City S. P. Office. It is because 48.17 percent of this type of crime is registered at All Women Cell which is categorised as combined reporting (cases from different places of Greater Guwahati).

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<sup>3</sup>Crime Branch, City S. P. Office, Guwahati.

<sup>4</sup>Crime Branch, City S. P. Office, Guwahati.

**Table 3.5: Occurrences of Atrocity by Husband and In-laws in Guwahati, 1990-2003**

Police Stations	CSP percent	SWC percent	LAC percent
Panbazar	1.53	4.72	2.47
Latasil	2.29	7.55	3.85
Paltanbazar	3.21	8.49	6.87
Bharalumukh	2.45	0.94	2.75
Jalukbari	12.23	10.38	7.97
Fatasil Ambari	2.91	6.60	10.71
Azara	3.52	0.94	2.47
N/Guwahati	0.92	0.94	2.20
Noonmati	5.05	1.89	10.16
Chandmari	4.13	16.04	18.13
Geetanagar	1.07	1.89	3.57
PGR	0.46	0.00	1.10
Basistha	1.99	5.66	2.20
Dispur	9.48	33.96	26.65
Sub total GG *	51.22	100.00	100.00
Combined reporting**	48.17		
TOTAL	100.00		

Source: Calculated by the author from the data collected from Crime Branch, City, S.P.Office, Legal Aids Cell and State Women Commission, Kamrup.

Note: GG\* is Greater Guwahati, \*\* = data collected from All Women Cell, CSP is City, Superintendent of Police Office, SWC is State Women Commission and LAC is Legal Aids Cell.

### 3.8.3 Comparison of Crimes from the Three Sources:

*City S. P. Office:* In the rest of the police stations (excluding All Women Cell) 51.22 percent of domestic violence are reported. Of this, 12.23 percent are reported at Jalukbari P.S. The next is Dispur area (9.48%), followed by Noonmati area with 5.05 percent.

*Women Commission:* The data of Women Commission shows more or less a similar picture. Here Dispur registers the highest proportion of this type of cases (33.96%), Chandmari records 16.04 percent and the third highest record of domestic violence is reported at Jalukbari area with a proportion of 10.38 percent.

*Legal Aids Cell*: Dispur again records the highest number of this type of crime with 26.65 percent. The next is Chandmari (18.13%) and in the third position is Fatasil Ambari area (10.71%).

Even though the three sources are reflecting slightly different pictures of pattern of occurrence of domestic violence, but when observed in detail it is showing a definite pattern of occurrence. Dispur is the area where the occurrence of domestic violence is more or less high. Same is the situation in Jalukbari and Chandmari. In each of these areas, there are certain pockets inhabited by lower and lower middle class families; Sijubari in Dispur area, Bamunimaidan in Chandmari area, Pandu and Maligaon in Jalukbari area. And it was noticed during the field study that this economic class of people are comparatively less hesitant to register their cases of atrocity by husband and in-laws. Paltanbazar area also has this same characteristic feature. In addition to other factors, this is one of the primary factor for which these areas are showing higher occurrence of this crime.

#### **3.8.4 Dowry Deaths and Dowry related Incidents:**

It is important to be noted here that the data of City, S.P. Office, are the records of dowry death only. But the data of Women Commission and Legal Aids Cell are the combined reports of dowry deaths as well as the cases of dowry harassment. Cases of dowry death and dowry harassment were never heard of in Assam few years back. But the ground reality shows a different picture.

**Table 3.6: Occurrences of Dowry Death and Dowry Related Harassment in Guwahati, 1990-2003**

Police Stations	CSP percent	SWC percent	LAC percent
Panbazar	0	6.25	2.22
Latasil	6.52	0	6.67
Paltanbazar	8.7	12.5	11.11
Bharalumukh	4.35	0	2.22
Jalukbari	8.7	12.5	20
Fatasil Ambari	15.22	37.5	22.22
Azara	4.35	0	0
N/Guwahati	2.17	0	2.22
Chandmari	2.17	18.75	20
Geetanagar	8.7	0	4.44
PGR	0	0	2.22
Basistha	6.52	0	0
Dispur	17.39	12.5	6.67
Sub total GG*	84.78	100	100
Combined Reporting**	13.04		
<b>TOTAL</b>	100		

Source: Calculated by the author from the data collected from Crime Branch, City, S.P. Office, Legal Aids Cell and State Women Commission, Kamrup.

Note: \* is Greater Guwahati, \*\* = data collected from All Women Cell, CSP is City, Superintendent of Police Office, SWC is State Women Commission and LAC is Legal Aids Cell.

*City S. P. Office:* In Dispur P.S. 17.39 percent of dowry death cases are reported. It is very closely followed by Fatasil Ambari where 15.22 percent of dowry death cases are lodged and 8.7 percent of this crime is reported at Paltanbazar, Jalukbari and Geetanagar P.S.

*Women Commission:* Fatasil Ambari P.S. area records the highest cases of dowry death and dowry harassment, 37.5 percent, Chandmari is the next police station area where 18.75 percent of dowry related incidences are reported. It is followed by Jalukbari, Dispur and Paltanbazar P.S. area with a share of 12.5 percent of the dowry related crimes.

*Legal Aids Cell:* In this source also Fatasil Ambari tops the list of Dowry related cases (22.22%), closely followed by Jalukbari and Chandmari (20%) and the third position in respect of this crime is occupied by Paltanbazar area. Here 11.11 percent of these crimes are recorded.

### 3.8.5 Rapes:

**Table 3.7: Occurrences of Rape in Guwahati, 1990-2003**

Police Stations	CSP percent	SWC percent	LAC percent
Panbazar	2.76	0	0
Latasil	5.25	0	14.29
Paltanbazar	7.18	0	0
Bharalumukh	3.59	0	0
Jalukbari	15.47	25	0
Fatasil Ambari	4.14	0	14.29
Azara	7.73	0	0
Noonmati	11.6	12.5	0
Chandmari	7.46	12.5	0
Geetanagar	4.7	12.5	14.29
PGR	1.38	0	0
Basistha	3.04	0	14.29
Dispur	18.51	37.5	42.86
Sub total GG*	92.82	100	100
Combined reporting**	7.18		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>		

Source: Calculated by the author from the data collected from Crime Branch, City, S.P. Office, Legal Aids Cell and State Women Commission, Kamrup.

Note: \* is Greater Guwahati, \*\* = data collected from All Women Cell, CSP is City, Superintendent of Police Office, SWC is State Women Commission and LAC is Legal Aids Cell.

*City S. P. Office:* Dispur police station shows the highest record of rape of 18.51 percent, it is closely followed by Jalukbari police station showing an occurrence of 15.47 percent and in the third position is Noonmati police station with 11.6 percent.

*Women Commission:* Here again Dispur is the area where the highest cases of rape are reported (37.5 %). The next most rape reported area is again Jalukbari with 25 percent. There are three areas (12.5%) in the third place, Noonmati, Chandmari and Geetanagar area.

*Legal Aids Cell:* Dispur in the first place in respect of the occurrences of rape (42.86%). There are four areas in the second place with 14.29 percent. They are Latasil, Fatasil Ambari, Geetanagar and Basistha. There are no cases of rape from the rest of the areas.

### 3.8.6 Molestations and Sexual Harassments:

**Table 3.8: Occurrences of Molestations and Sexual Harassment in Guwahati, 1990-2003**

Police Stations	CSP percent	SWC percent	LAC percent
Panbazar	2.99	5.26	0.00
Latasil	3.71	21.05	0.00
Paltanbazar	8.26	15.79	6.67
Bharalumukh	3.35	0.00	0.00
Jalukbari	12.22	15.79	6.67
Fatasil Ambari	4.19	0.00	13.33
Azara	6.71	0.00	20.00
N/Guwahati	1.20	0.00	0.00
Noonmati	7.66	5.26	6.67
Chandmari	8.14	15.79	6.67
Geetanagar	1.80	0.00	6.67
PGR	1.92	0.00	0.00
Basistha	4.19	0.00	0.00
Dispur	22.51	21.05	33.33
Sub total GG*	88.86	100.00	100.00
Combined reporting**	7.07		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.00</b>		

Source: Calculated by the author from the data collected from Crime Branch, City, S.P. Office, Legal Aids Cell and State Women Commission, Kamrup.

Note: \* is Greater Guwahati, \*\* = data collected from All Women Cell, CSP is City, Superintendent of Police Office, SWC is State Women Commission and LAC is Legal Aids Cell.

The data of Women Commission and Legal Aids Cell includes both sexual harassment at work place and sexual abuses in other places. The data of City S. P. Office are the reported cases of molestation as defined by section 354 IPC.

*City S. P. Office:* Highest cases of molestation are registered at Dispur of 22.51 percent. The next place of high occurrence of molestation is Jalukbari (12.22%) and Paltanbazar in the third place registering 8.26 percent of cases.

*Women Commission:* It shows a slightly different picture. In the first place are Dispur and Latasil where 21.05 percent of these types of crimes are reported. The next place of high occurrences of molestation and sexual harassment are Paltanbazar, Jalukbari and Chandmari (15.79%). There are two places in the third place, Paltanbazar and Noonmati (5.26%).

*Legal Aids Cell:* Highest cases of molestation and sexual harassment are reported at Dispur (33.33%). Twenty percent of these crimes are reported at Azara and the third place is Fatasil Ambari (13.33%).

This type of crime tends to occur more in a crowded area. It may be a crowded bus, market place, crowded streets etc. Ganeshguri area of Dispur, Chandmari and Maligaon area of Jalukbari remains crowded most of the time. This may lead to the frequent occurrence of this crime in these areas.

According to the data of State Women Commission, Lataasil is showing a high concentration of sexual harassment at work place.

### 3.8.7 Trafficking in Women:

**Table 3.9: Occurrences of Immoral Trafficking in Women in Guwahati, 1990-2003**

Police Stations	CSP percent	SWC percent	LAC percent
Paltanbazar	18.18	0	0
Jalukbari	9.09	100	0
Chandmari	9.09	0	0
Geetanagar	27.27	0	0
Dispur	33.33	0	0
Sub total GG*	96.97	100	0
Combined reporting**	3.03		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>		

Source: Calculated by the author from the data collected from Crime Branch, City, S.P. Office, Legal Aids Cell and State Women Commission, Kamrup.

Note: \* is Greater Guwahati, \*\* = data collected from All Women Cell, CSP is City, Superintendent of Police Office, SWC is State Women Commission and LAC is Legal Aids Cell.

This type of crime takes place through a very effective and a strong network which is very difficult to track by untrained person. It is maybe for this reason the report of this crime in Women Commission is low. Again, Legal Aids Cell basically deals with cases of domestic violence which is why no case of immoral trafficking are reported in this source.

*City S. P. Office:* Dispur tops the list in the registration of this type of case. It recorded 33.33 percent, followed closely by Geetanagar area with 27.27 percent. Paltanbazar, a highly commercial area, falls in the third position (18.18%).

*Women Commission:* Only one case was registered in State Women Commission which took place at Jalukbari area (100%).

Paltanbazar is one of the commercial hubs of Guwahati. There are high influx of people from different regions into this area due to the location of the railway station, the bus terminus and the other means of communication. At the same time, there also flourishes an efficient hotel industry. These may be the contributing reasons for high concentration of this crime in this area.

In Noonmati and Geetanagar area, there are number of warehouses of Food Corporation of India. The Oil Refinery and number of small industries are also located here. The trucks which bring in and take out the goods to these places are parked in Geetanagar area for days together. There are opportunities of flourishing of prostitution among the truck drivers in this area.

In Dispur, the high record of this crime is due to the arrest of the traffickers while attempting to snick in or leave the city.

### 3.8.8 Kidnappings and Abductions:

**Table 3.10: Occurrences of Kidnapping in Guwahati, 1990-2003**

Police Stations	CSP percent	SWC percent	LAC percent
Panbazar	4.72	0	0
Latasil	4.07	0	0
Paltanbazar	9.35	33.33	0
Bharalumukh	7.59	0	0
Jalukbari	13.24	0	0
Fatasil Ambari	6.11	0	0
Azara	2.31	33.33	0
N/Gauwahati	0.65	0	0
Noonmati	5.09	0	50
Chandmari	7.78	33.33	0
Geetanagar	2.69	0	0
PGR	0.65	0	0
Basistha	6.11	0	50
Dispur	23.8	0	0
Sub total GG*	94.17	100	100
Combined reporting**	2.5		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>		

Source: Calculated by the author from the data collected from Crime Branch, City, S.P. Office, Legal Aids Cell and State Women Commission, Kamrup.

Note: \* is Greater Guwahati, \*\* = data collected from All Women Cell, CSP is City, Superintendent of Police Office, SWC is State Women Commission and LAC is Legal Aids Cell.

Here all the cases of kidnapping are combined together. It includes the kidnapping cases of both the adult and the minor (<18 years) female.

*City S. P. Office:* Dispur registered the highest proportion of kidnapping cases of 23.8 percent. The second area is Jalukbari where 13.24 percent of cases of kidnappings are recorded. It is followed by Paltanbazar area (9.35%).

*Women Commission:* There are only three places where one case of kidnapping is registered. They are Paltanbazar, Chandmari and Azara.

*Legal Aids Cell:* This set of data also shows a similar picture as that of Women Commission where only one case of this type of crime is reported at Noonmati and Basistha.

Most of the cases of kidnapping of the adult, when investigated are found to be of eloping. Very often, the cases are registered after the accused is caught. Dispur, Jalukbari and Paltanbazar (bus terminals and railway station) being the outlets of Guwahati city the accused are usually caught in these police stations, while trying to flee from the city.

The kidnapping of the minors reflects another interesting picture. In certain cases it is seen that they are taken as domestic servants, but after a certain period of time they are no longer with the owner but disappear to an unknown destination (as said by certain social workers working in this field). They are kidnapped for various purposes, such as flesh trade, organ transplantation, pornographic business etc. The target group for this type of crime are the poor sections of the society who are found in huge concentration in these areas. This is a ground reality but not verified by any research work.

### **3.8.9 Eve Teasing:**

Eve teasing may not be considered as a serious offence, but sometime turn out to be a serious one. This type of crime usually goes unregistered. In Women Commission no such case of eve teasing was registered.

**Table 3.11: Occurrences of Eve Teasing in Greater Guwahati, 1990-2003**

Police Stations	CSP percent	SWC percent	LAC percent
Latasil	8.33	0	0
Paltanbazar	22.22	0	100
Bharalumukh	11.11	0	0
Jalukbari	2.78	0	0
Fatasil Ambari	13.89	0	0
Noonmati	27.78	0	0
Chandmari	5.56	0	0
Geetanagar	2.78	0	0
PGR	5.56	0	0
Sub total GG*	100	0	100
Combined reporting**	0		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>		

Source: Calculated by the author from the data collected from Crime Branch, City, S.P. Office, Legal Aids Cell and State Women Commission, Kamrup.

Note: \* is Greater Guwahati, \*\* = data collected from All Women Cell, CSP is City, Superintendent of Police Office, SWC is State Women Commission and LAC is Legal Aids Cell.

*City S. P. Office:* The highest cases of eve teasing are registered at Noonmati P.S. (27.78%). Paltanbazar has the second highest occurrences of eve teasing of 22.22 percent and in Fatasil Ambari 13.89 percent of this type of crime are reported.

*Legal Aids Cell:* Only one case of eve teasing is reported at Paltanbazar P.S. area.

The pattern of occurrence of eve teasing is not showing a strong relation with any particular place. It may happen in any place when the victim is alone or with somebody. This type of crime tends to be less when the female is accompanied by her parents or with some elderly members.

### 3.8.10 Others:

Incidents of this category include heinous crimes like murders of women under different circumstances that might have occurred either inside or outside the home. While analysing

the data of the Legal Aids Cell, the cases of occurrences of deaths under mysterious circumstances and incidences of 'bride-burning' were all found to be clubbed together under the category of 'murders'. From the analysed data the picture from the three different sources are as follows.

**Table 3.12: Occurrences of Other Crimes in Guwahati, 1990-2003**

Police Stations	CSP percent	SWC percent	LAC percent
Latasil	7.25	0	0
Paltanbazar	5.8	0	0
Bharalumukh	4.35	0	0
Jalukbari	24.64	0	0
Fatasil Ambari	5.8	50	16.67
Azara	7.25	25	0
N/Guwahati	0	0	16.67
Noonmati	2.9	0	0
Chandmari	1.45	0	16.67
PGR	1.45	0	0
Basistha	4.35	0	0
Dispur	27.54	25	50
Sub total GG*	92.75	100	100
Combined reporting**	Nil		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>		

Source: Calculated by the author from the data collected from Crime Branch, City, S.P. Office, Legal Aids Cell and State Women Commission, Kamrup.

Note: \* is Greater Guwahati, \*\* = data collected from All Women Cell, CSP is City, Superintendent of Police Office, SWC is State Women Commission and LAC is Legal Aids Cell.

*City S. P. Office:* The highest record of murder is reported at Dispur (27.54%). The next most murder reported area is Jalukbari (24.64%) and there are two areas which show similar proportion of occurrences of murder of 7.25 percent. They are Latasil and Azara.

*Women Commission:* Fatasil Ambari tops the list in the occurrences of murder from the maintained records of Women Commission where 50 percent of murder have occurred, 25

percent of the recorded murders have occurred in Dispur and Azara. There are no cases of murder from the other areas of Greater Guwahati.

*Legal Aids Cell:* Fifty percent of murders from this source have occurred in Dispur area. In Fatasil Ambari, North Guwahati and Chandmari area 16.67 percent of murders are recorded. There is no report of murder from the rest of the areas.

### 3.9.1 Growth of Crimes against Women in Greater Guwahati:

The growth rate of crimes against women in Greater Guwahati is studied over a period of 14 years, i.e. 1990-2003. The growth rate is calculated from the data of Crime Branch, City S. P. Office from the moving average of the initial three years (1990-1992) and the last three terminating years (2001-2003).

**Table 3.13 Growth of Crimes against Women in Greater Guwahati: Inside Home**  
Percent change (1990-2003)

Police Stations	Atrocity by husband & in-laws.	Dowry death	Others
Panbazar	11.11	ncr	ncr
Latasil	3.33	-8.33	inf
Paltanbazar	16.67	inf	inf
Bharalumukh	12.5	0	inf
Jalukbari	220.83	0	inf
Fatasil Ambari	Inf	8.33	inf
Azara	Inf	inf	-8.33
N/Gauwahati	25	inf	ncr
Noonmati	inf	ncr	inf
Chandmari	12.5	inf	inf
Geetanagar	-4.17	inf	ncr
PGR	inf	ncr	inf
Basistha	50	0	inf
Dispur	30.95	inf	4.17
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>40.48</b>	<b>4.76</b>	<b>45.83</b>

Source: Calculated by the author from the data of Crime Branch, City, S.P. Office.

Note: ncr = no case recorded, inf =infinite, PGR is Pragjyotispur.

### **3.9.2 Atrocity by Husband and In-laws:**

Geetanagar is the only place where there is a negative growth of this crime. Latasil is indicating a low growth, which is below 5 percent. Panbazar, Bharalumukh and Chandmari are showing a high growth rate (10-15%). Very high growth has taken place in Paltanbazar, Jalukbari, Fatasil Ambari, Azara, North Guwahati, Noonmati, PGR, Basistha and Dispur (above 15%). PGR, Azara, Noonmati and North Guwahati are showing a very high growth because in the initial years no cases of this type were recorded and at the same time there is a rapid growth of urbanisation in all these areas. The over all growth rate of this crime in the city is also very high (40.48%).

### **3.9.3 Dowry Death and Dowry Related Harassments:**

No case of dowry death or harassment due to dowry is reported at Panbazar, Noonmati, and PGR. Latasil is showing a negative growth of this crime. Fatasil Ambari is highlighting a medium growth (5-10%). Paltanbazar, Azara, North Guwahati, Chandmari, Geetanagar and Dispur are indicating very high growth of this crime (above 15%). The high growth is again due to non registration of any dowry death or dowry harassment cases in the initial years. The over all growth rate of this form of crime in Greater Guwahati is 4.76 percent.

### **3.9.4 Others:**

They are the cases of murders which have taken place in varied circumstances. No murder case is reported at Panbazar, North Guwahati and Geetanagar. Azara is indicating a

negative growth of this crime. Dispur is highlighting a low growth (below 5%). Beside these areas, all the other places are showing a very high growth (above 15%). The growth of murder in Greater Guwahati is very high, 45.83 percent, the highest of all the types of crimes against women.

### 3.10.1 Growth of Crimes against Women (by type) in Greater Guwahati (Outside Home):

**Table 3.14 Growth of Crimes against Women: Outside Home**  
Percent change (1990-2003)

Police Stations	Rape	Kidnapping	Kidnapping (Minor)	Molestation	Immoral trafficking	Eve teasing
Panbazar	-4.17	-5	0	25	ncr	ncr
Latasil	3.33	6.94	inf	66.67	ncr	inf
Paltanbazar	8.33	18.75	-1.04	18.75	inf	inf
Bharalumukh	Inf	6.25	16.67	33.33	ncr	inf
Jalukbari	12.5	-1.89	275	7.58	inf	inf
Fatasil Ambari	8.33	11.11	52.78	inf	ncr	inf
Azara	15	37.5	inf	27.38	ncr	ncr
N/Guwahati	ncr	inf	8.33	inf	ncr	ncr
Noonmati	166.67	20	58.33	46.43	ncr	inf
Chandmari	-1.04	3.79	10.42	47.5	inf	inf
Geetanagar	25	3.33	inf	-2.78	inf	inf
PGR	Inf	0	inf	-4.76	ncr	inf
Basistha	-4.17	36.11	54.17	inf	ncr	ncr
Dispur	15.74	0.93	114.58	56.41	inf	ncr
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>11.31</b>	<b>4.91</b>	<b>38.33</b>	<b>33.86</b>	<b>inf</b>	<b>inf</b>

*Source:* Calculated by the author from the data of Crime Branch, City, S.P. Office.

Note: ncr = no case recorded, inf =infinite, PGR is Pragjyotispur.

### 3.10.2 Rapes:

The places reflecting negative growth of this crime are Panbazar, Chandmari and Basistha. Panbazar is showing a low or a negative growth of all the types of crimes against women because they are usually registered in the All Women Cell which is located within the Panbazar P.S. premises. Latasil is indicating a low growth of rape cases (below 5 percent).

A medium growth (5-10%) of rape incidences are observed at Paltanbazar and Fatasil Ambari. In Jalukbari and Azara high growth of rape has taken place (10-15%). Bharalumukh, Dispur, PGR, Geetanagar and Noonmati are showing a very high growth, which is above 15 percent. The overall growth rate of rape in Greater Guwahati is 11.31 percent.

### **3.10.3 Kidnappings:**

Panbazar and Jalukbari are showing a negative growth of the crime. Low growth is observed at PGR, Dispur, Geetanagar and Chandmari (below 5%). Lataasil and Bharalumukh are reflecting a medium growth of kidnappings (10-15%). Fatasil Ambari is showing a high growth. Very high growth which is above 15 percent has taken place in Paltanbazar, Azara and Basistha as they are the outlets of Guwahati. Paltanbazar is an outlet in the sense; the bus station, the railway station etc. are all located in this area. These places may not be the area of occurrence of this crime, but the areas of registration of the cases after the accused is caught. The growth rate is this crime in Greater Guwahati is 4.91 percent.

*Kidnappings (minor):* Paltanbazar shows a negative growth of the crime. Low growth is observed in Panbazar P.S. North Guwahati indicates a medium growth (5-10%). Chandmari has a growth above 10 percent. Lataasil, Bharalumukh, Jalukbari, Fatasil Ambari, Azara, Noonmati, Geetanagar, Pragjyotispur, Basistha and Dispur are all showing a very high growth of this crime which is above 15 percent. Even though the number of

occurrence of this crime is low, Latasil, Azara, Geetanagar and Pragjyotispur, are showing a very high growth because of non occurrence of this crime in the initial years. The overall growth rate of this crime in Greater Guwahati is 38.33 percent.

#### **3.10.4 Molestations:**

Geetanagar and Pragjyotispur are reflecting negative growth rates of molestations. Medium growth of molestation has taken place in Jalukbari. Beside these areas, all the other places are showing a very high growth of molestation (above 15%). The high growth of this crime is because there are larger participation and engagement of women in various economic activities in the recent years. The overall growth of this crime in Greater Guwahati is 33.86 percent.

#### **3.10.5 Immoral Trafficking:**

No case of immoral trafficking is recorded in the last 14 years in Panbazar, Latasil, Bharalumukh, Fatasil Ambari, Azara, North Guwahati, Noonmati, Pragjyotispur and Basistha. The rest of the areas are showing very high growth of this crime. It is so because this type of crime is being reported in these areas in the recent years. The overall growth of these crimes in Greater Guwahati is also infinite.

#### **3.10.6 Eve Teasing:**

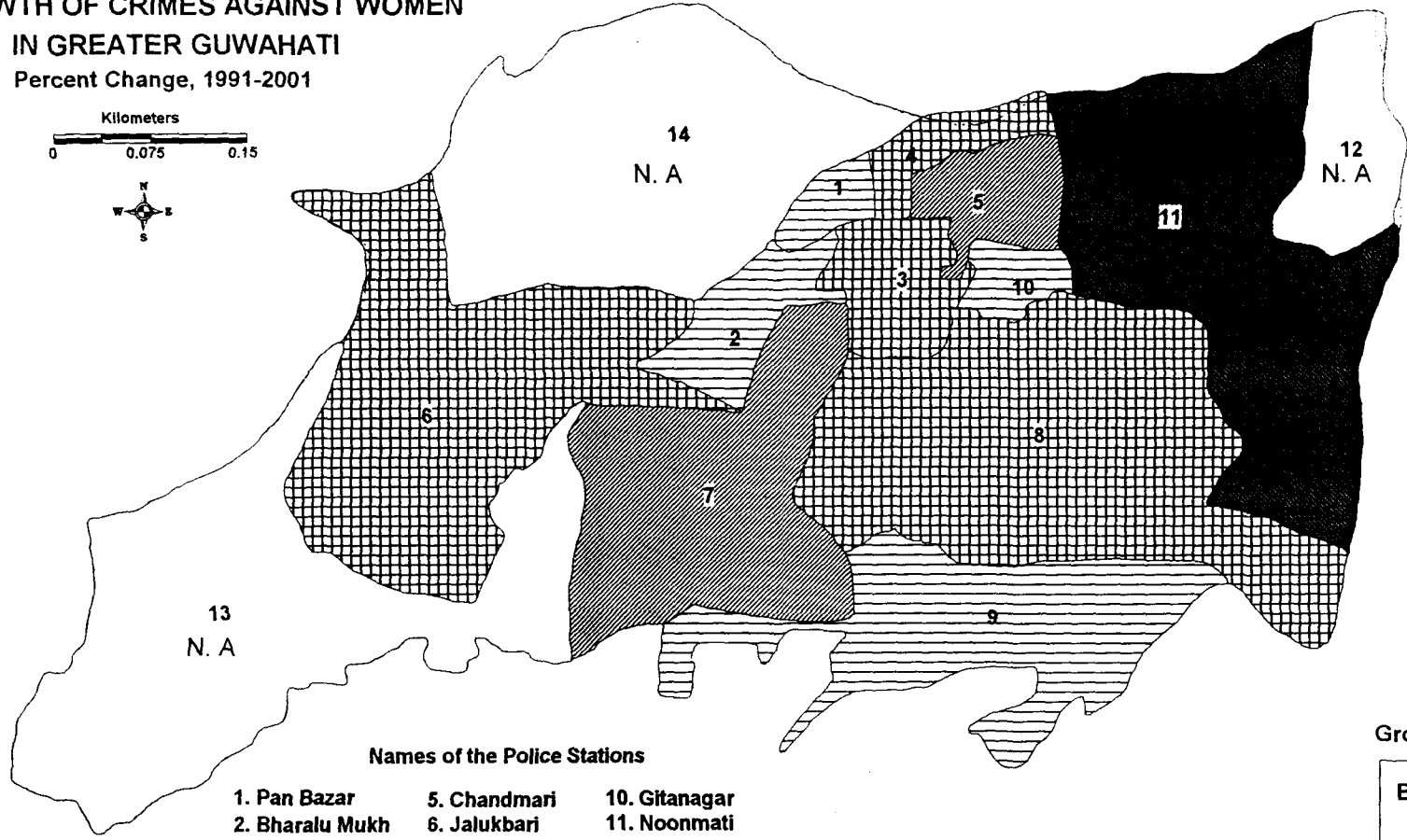
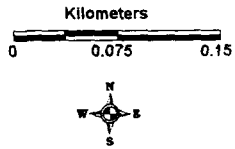
No case of eve teasing is reported at Panbazar, Azara, North Guwahati, Basistha and Dispur. The rest of the areas are indicating very high growth rate of this crime.

### **3.11 Growth of General Crimes and Crimes against Women:**

The growth rate of the general crimes and the crimes against women are calculated from the moving average of the initial and the terminating three years of the study period, 1991-2001. To standardise the data, the total number of reported crimes of the concern police station is divided by the total number of population of that police station.

The table illustrates an interesting aspect. Except Latasil and Basistha, growth of general crimes in all the areas has gone down. On the other hand, except Geetanagar, the growth of incidences of reported crimes against women has increased in all the areas. The highest growths are indicated in Noonmati (44.69%), Fatasil Ambari (23.92%), and Chandmari (23.38%) and the growth of population is also higher in these areas in the last ten years. It may indicate that with the growth of population in these areas the incidences of crimes against women has also gone up. It also illustrated that the growth to general crimes has declined in almost all the places and on the other hand the incidences of crimes against women has gone up in all the areas, except Geetanagar. Low growth rate of crimes against women has taken place in Panbazar, Bharalumukh and Basistha (below 10%). Moderate growth of crimes against women are witnessed in Latasil, Paltanbazar, Jalukbari and Dispur (10-20%) and high growth has taken place in Fatasil Ambari and Chandmari (20-30%) and very high growth of crimes against women has taken place in Noonmati (Map no 3.4).

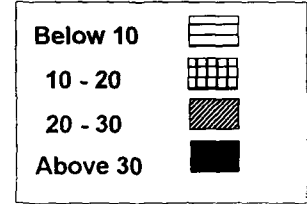
**GROWTH OF CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN  
IN GREATER GUWAHATI**  
Percent Change, 1991-2001



**Names of the Police Stations**

- |                 |                   |                    |
|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Pan Bazar    | 5. Chandmari      | 10. Gitanagar      |
| 2. Bharalu Mukh | 6. Jalukbari      | 11. Noonmati       |
| 3. Paltan Bazar | 7. Fatasil Ambari | 12. Pragjyotishpur |
| 4. Lataasil     | 8. Dispur         | 13. Ajara          |
|                 | 9. Basistha       | 14. North Guwahati |

**Growth Rate in Percentage**



N. A- Data Not Available

Source: Directorate of Town and Country Planning, Assam

**Table 3.15: Growth Rate of General Crimes and Crimes Against Women, 1991-2001**

<b>Police Stations</b>	<b>Growth rate of general crimes</b>	<b>Growth rate of crimes against women</b>
Panbazar	-1.65	0.74
Latasil	1.87	16.14
Paltanbazar	-4.72	11.24
Bharalumukh	-0.14	7.28
Jalukbari	-1.16	14.04
Fatasil Ambari	-4.72	23.92
Azara	NA	NA
N/Guwahati	NA	NA
Noonmati	-2.69	44.69
Chandmari	-1.02	23.38
Geetanagar	-3.56	-0.21
PGR	NA	NA
Basistha	1.19	2.54
Dispur	-4.14	11.65
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>-2.47</b>	<b>19.11</b>

Source: Calculated by the author from the data of Crime Branch, City, S.P.Office.

Note: NA= Data Not Available.

### **3.12 Occurrences of General Crimes and Crimes against Women:**

To verified the relation of the occurrences of general crime and crimes against women the registered crimes of police stations are taken into account (1991-2003). The areas where the general crimes are high are also generally indicating higher records of crimes against women. Dispur police station registered the highest cases of general crimes as well as crimes against women (CAW) during the study period. Paltanbazar recorded the second highest cases of general cases and it ranked third in respect of crimes against women. The relation between the two (general crimes and crimes against women) in Panbazar area is not very strong (general crimes -3 and CAW-6). The cause for showing low registration of CAW in this area is because the All Women Cell (combine reporting) is located within

Panbazar PS premises. But again Jalukbari area has a strong relation between the two, general crimes 4<sup>th</sup> and CWA 2<sup>nd</sup>.

When we speculate the relation from the lower end, it is observed that North Guwahati, Pragjyotishpur and Lataasil are less crime prone, in respect of general as well as crimes against women.

**Table 3.16: Occurrences of General Crimes and Crimes against Women (1991-2003)**

Police Stations	General Crimes	Ranks	Crimes Against Women	Ranks
Panbazar	9.52	3	4.33	6
Lataasil	3.02	11	2.84	11
Paltanbazar	12.1	2	9.19	3
Bharalumukh	6.08	7	5.45	5
Jalukbari	9.44	4	12.4	2
Fataasil Ambari	4.21	9	5.45	5
Azara	3.09	10	3.06	9
N/Guwahati	0.51	14	0.6	13
Noonmati	5.97	8	4.03	7
Chandmari	8.77	5	8.74	4
Geetanagar	2.71	12	2.91	10
PGR	1.45	13	1.27	12
Basistha	6.25	6	3.88	8
Dispur	25.86	1	23.15	1
Combined Reporting**	1.02	-	12.7	-
Total	100		100	

Source: Calculated by the author from the data collected from Crime Branch, City, S.P. Office,

\*\* = data collected from All Women Cell and Khetri P.S., CSPO.

**Findings:**

1. The overall pattern of crimes against women in Assam is rising slowly but steadily during the study period, 1997-2002, which is disconcerting considering for cultural reasons, Assam remained low on gender related crimes against women.
2. Dispur Police Station Area appears to be the most crime prone in the Greater Guwahati Urban area for general crimes, followed by Paltanbazar. The other important crime prone areas are Panbazar, Jalukbari and Chandmari.
3. Reported cases of domestic violence are high in Dispur, Jalukbari and Chandmari areas (P.S).
4. Cases of reported dowry deaths are more in Dispur and Fatasil Ambari areas. Incidences of dowry harassments are high in Fatasil Ambari followed by Chandmari and Jalukbari.
5. Rape cases are high in Dispur and Jalukbari areas.
6. Dispur, Jalukbari and Chandmari registered a very high proportion of cases of molestations and sexual harassments.
7. Records of immoral trafficking in women are high in Dispur and Paltanbazar.
8. Cases of kidnapping are high in Dispur, Paltanbazar and Jalukbari.
9. The growth of domestic violence and other crimes in Greater Guwahati has increased by more than 40 percent over the period of study.
10. Over all growth of molestation and kidnapping (minor) in the city is more than 30 percent.

11. Crimes like in trafficking in women, that were unknown or unreported, now have appeared with some prominence.
12. The growth of general crimes has gone down in all areas except in Latasil and Basistha, but the crimes against women have increased substantially in all the places except in Geetanagar area.
13. The highest growth of reported crimes against women has taken place in Noonmati, Fatasil Ambari and Chandmari areas of the city.
14. There is a positive relationship between crimes against women and general crimes.

## Chapter IV

# ETHNICITY AND CULTURAL ROOTS OF CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN

### 4. Introduction:

Cultural norms and values prevalent in a society can influence the attitude towards women, their status in the society and ultimately, the types of behaviour towards women which may be considered acceptable or unacceptable, irrespective of the fact what construes a crime or not in the eyes of law. In the Indian society, dowry for example, is considered appropriate though is illegal in eyes of law, irrespective of religious beliefs. A divorce is perfectly acceptable behaviour among the Muslims but unacceptable among the Hindus; though it is perfectly permissible under the law. Beating of wives or battery is a perfectly acceptable behaviour among the North Indians, though it may construe a crime in law. Among many tribes, divorce is perfectly acceptable, but wife-beating may be unheard of. Thus, it becomes necessary to understand the atrocities committed against women in the context of diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds of women and their families.

In the urban situation, especially in big cities, people belonging to different ethnic and cultural backgrounds tend to stay in close proximity to their own groups. These ethnic and cultural groups gradually grow to form localities inhabited by people following similar customs and traditions. In Guwahati, such localities have evolved around Manipuri Basti in Paltanbazar area, Kachari Basti in Dispur area, Bengali speaking Muslim community

around Sijubari area (under Dispur Police station), Bengali speaking Hindu community cluster in Fatasil Ambari and Pandu and in Paltanbazar area, a large concentration of Hindi/Hindustani speaking business community from different parts of North India flourishes.

Culture is an acquired trait. It is noticed that these ethnic groups are bound by certain cultural norms and values, which may engender or tolerate certain types of crimes against women as an acceptable social practice. These may also nucleate around certain gender specific crimes (the predominance of the culture of desire of a male-child among the North Indians as against no such specific desire among the Eastern Indians). Does culture and ethnicity facilitates certain types of gender specific crimes or do they have roots to crimes against women? Concentrating on these questions an attempt has been made in this chapter to study the relationship between ethnicity and culture and crimes against women. Three aspects of ethnicity and culture are taken into consideration; religion, language and caste/community. This chapter is mainly divided into three sections. In Section I, the relationship between religion and crimes against women have been looked into. Section II deals with the study of relationship between linguistic groups and crimes against women and Section III focuses on the relationship between caste/community backgrounds with gender crimes.

## Section I

### 4.1 Religion and Crimes against Women:

Of the 60 respondents in the study, 75 percent are Hindus, 20 percent belong to the Muslim community, 3.33 percent Christians, and 1.67 percent are Sikhs. In this section the crimes against women and its relation with the various religious groups are studied. This distribution of samples is by and large in conformity with the overall religion-wise distribution of population.

#### 4.1.1 Religion and Types of Crimes:

Types of crimes are broadly classified into three different sections; physical violence, mental violence and sexual violence. These three types of crimes committed by the husbands and in-laws of the women have been analysed in detail based on the primary survey.

#### 4.1.2 Physical Violence by Husband:

**Table 4.1: Physical Violence by Husband by Religion**

Religion	Percentage	Battery	Physical disfiguring	Attempted to burn	Attempted to murder	Others
Hindu	75.00	75.56	22.22	4.44	26.67	6.67
Muslim	20.00	100.00	41.67	8.33	16.67	16.67
Christian	3.33	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Sikh	1.67	100.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
Total	100	-	25.00	5.00	25.00	8.33

*Source:* Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

The proportion of occurrence of all forms of physical violence, except attempt to murder is the highest among the Muslims. Among all the religious groups, battery is the highest form of physical violence committed by the husband. There are 75.56 percent Hindu respondents who are battered, and for the Muslims, it is 100 percent. Next highest form of physical violence by husband among the Hindus is attempt to murder, whereas for the Muslims, it is physical disfiguring. The social bindings of the marriage are stronger among the Hindus. They are not much at a liberty to walk off from their marriages as among the Muslims. Maybe it is this compulsion which provokes the husbands to go to the extent of attempting murder of their wives. Whereas, physical disfiguring by husband is high among the Muslims because the Muslim women suffer from fear of “triple talak” and are unable to resist physical abuse by husbands. Physical violence by husbands is of varied forms among the Muslims, like rubbing chilli into eyes of the women or branding with hot objects. The 100 percent of battery among the Sikh is because there is only one respondent in the sample and thus cannot be relied upon, though customs of Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains are very close to the Hindus. Significantly, among the Christians the abuse by husband is the lowest or negligible, though the limitations of the sample size must be taken into account.

It is seen that within the religious groups, the proportion of occurrence of abuses is high among the Hindus. But when the proportion of respondents is taken into account it is the Muslim community who suffer more in all the forms physical violence perpetrated by the husband.

### 4.1.3 Mental Violence by Husband:

All forms of mental violence occur both within the Hindus and the Muslims and the proportion of occurrence of mental violence is more among the Muslims than among the Hindus. A large proportion of Hindu married women are threatened of being thrown out of the house or forsaken of their meals. On some occasions the children are also physically abused. In majority of the cases, irrespective of the religions, mental violence is often followed by physical violence.

**Table 4.2: Mental Violence by Husband by Religion**

Religion	Quarrels	Cursing/ swearing	Use abusive language	Emotionally blackmail	Threat of assault	Others
Hindu	75.56	75.56	71.11	48.89	55.56	20.00
Muslim	91.67	100.00	83.33	50.00	75.00	8.33
Christian	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Sikh	100.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	76.67	78.33	71.67	46.67	56.67	16.67

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

When compared between the physical and mental violence within the religious groups, it is noted that the physical violence as well as the mental violence taken together is the highest among the Muslims. This higher physical violence among the Muslims is because a large proportion of the Muslim respondents belong to lower economic strata, among whom physical assault by husband is a common practice. On the other hand, the Hindu respondents belong to different economic classes, among who mental violence is more common than physical violence.

#### 4.1.4 Sexual Violence by Husband:

As in the West, marital rape is not a crime in India. However, the Hindu respondents felt that they were sexually harassed and abused by their husbands because they were deserted by their husband after few months of their marriage. They felt sexually exploited by their husbands in their married life when they were left without notice after their motives were fulfilled. This sexual abuse is more among the Hindus. More than 8 percent of the respondents are ignored and sexually abstained (by husbands) in their married life for various reasons both among the Hindu and Muslim women as a form of punishment. (Hindu Marriage Act, however, provides for restitution of “marital rights” including rights of cohabitation by either spouses, but rarely contested judicially, because it is considered a completely private domain.)

**Table 4.3: Sexual Violence by Husband by Religion**

Religion	Sexual harassment	Sexual abuse	Others
Hindu	2.22	6.67	8.89
Muslim	0.00	16.67	8.33
Christian	0.00	0.00	0.00
Sikh	0.00	0.00	100.00
Total	1.67	8.33	10.00

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

Some of the sexually abused Muslim respondents reported initiation into prostitution by their own husbands. In a number of cases among the Muslim respondents, the husbands lured the girls into false marriages the real motive being flesh trade.

#### 4.1.5 Physical Violence by In-laws:

Unlike Central, North-Western and Western parts of India, physical violence by in-laws is apparently low in Guwahati (Assam).

**Table 4.4: Physical Violence by In-laws by Religion**

Religion	Battery	Physical disfiguring	Attempted to murder
Hindu	13.33	0.00	2.22
Muslim	41.67	8.33	0.00
Christian	0.00	0.00	0.00
Sikh	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	18.33	1.67	1.67

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

Of the 75 percent of the Hindu respondents, 13.33 percent are battered. Even though the incidence of physical battery is higher among the Muslims (41.67%) but no instance of attempt to murder by in-laws were found among the Muslim respondents. It may be further noted that majority of the Muslim respondents belongs to the lower income class (in the sample). During the study it has been observed that the in-laws of the lower income Bengali speaking Muslim community are hesitant to go to the extreme of murdering their daughter-in-laws on domestic disputes. Instead they are asked to leave the house and stay on their own. Lower incidences of violence by in-laws are maybe because of the fact that only 41.66 percent of the respondents are staying in the joint family.

In certain parts of India, when a woman is married, the marriage is more to the family than to the person. She is considered as a property of that family and all the family members owes a right over her. This sense of owning of women as a property of the family is somewhat lower in this part of India. A husband has more right over her. This may be a cause of less physical violence by in-laws reported in this study.

#### 4.1.6 Mental Violence by In-laws:

All forms of mental violence by in-laws prevail among the religious groups but are higher among the Muslims. Since there was only one Sikh respondent, it is indicating 100 percent mental violence perpetrated on the victim.

**Table 4.5: Mental Violence by In-laws by Religion**

Religion	Quarrels	Cursing/ swearing	Use abusive language	Emotionally blackmail	Threat of assault	Others
Hindu	28.89	31.11	24.44	20.00	20.00	20.00
Muslim	41.67	41.67	41.67	25.00	41.67	8.33
Christian	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Sikh	100.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
Total	31.67	33.33	28.33	20.00	25.00	16.67

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

It is interesting to note that 75 percent of the Hindu respondents are emotionally blackmailed by their in-laws by asking the women to leave the house. This form of emotional blackmailing is intolerable to women, more than the other forms of mental violence by the in-laws.

#### 4.1.7 Times of Occurrences:

**Table 4.6: Occurrences of Crime by Religion**

Religion	When alone	Husband away	Financial problem	Drunken- ness	Against will	On all occasion	Others
Hindu	4.44	4.44	22.22	28.89	37.78	40.00	22.22
Muslim	0.00	0.00	50.00	16.67	41.67	33.33	33.33
Christian	0.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00
Sikh	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
Total	3.33	3.33	28.33	26.67	36.67	40.00	23.33

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

There are a number of occasions in which the Hindu respondents are abused. Some women (4.44%) report being abused by in-laws when their husbands are away from home. A few of these respondents also reported such incidents on all such occasions. Majority of the Hindu, Muslim as well as Christian women from lower and lower middle class families are abused whenever the family undergoes financial difficulties. Violence due to financial problems also exists among few middle-class families where the husband is reluctant to work and at the same time, indulges in alcoholism, a common cause of abuse of women irrespective of religious background. It was noticed during the study that the abuser becomes more violent when in an inebriated state. If on the other occasions the violence against the victim is mental and psychological, but when the abuser is drunk, physical violence is perpetrated upon the woman---again, common among all the religious groups.

In the Indian patriarchal society in general, irrespective of religion, a wife/ daughter-in-law is expected to be obedient and do whatever her husband or her in-laws wish. But the women now feel that since they are at equal footing with their spouses, they too can have their own will and a “say” or deeds, as in various matters like pursuing a job, consent in the administration of the household matters, her way of doing things etc. These types of conflicts are common, leading to violence 37.78 percent and 41.67 percent of Hindu and Muslim respondents, respectively.

A large proportion of the respondents from all the religious groups are abused on all occasions. If the victim is disliked for some cause, or if the husband or her in-laws are dissatisfied with her for some reasons, such as her economic background, dowry, her belonging to different community, her attitude etc., she is abused on all occasions. Besides,

there are a number of other occasions in which the women are abused, such as, her refusal to stay within the joint family, or when she asks for food etc.

Among the Hindus, the violence is more on all occasions, and when the women go against the will of the husband. When there is financial problem there is more violence among the Muslims and the Christians, as majority of them belonged to lower economic class and are at the same time linked with drunken husbands.

#### 4.1.8 Religious Background and Causes of Crimes:

Table 4.7: Causes of Crimes by Religion

Religion	Exertion	Stress	Alcoholism	Dowry	Frustration	Financial problems	Bigamy/ Polygamy	Others
Hindu	2.22	11.11	15.56	24.44	6.67	22.22	20.00	60.00
Muslim	0.00	8.33	16.67	25.00	0.00	66.67	33.33	75.00
Christian	0.00	0.00	50.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	0.00
Sikh	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Total	1.67	10.00	16.67	25.00	8.33	33.33	21.67	61.67

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

There are varieties of causes among the Hindus for which crime is committed. But it is worth noting that 24.44 percent of the Hindus are harassed for dowry. Whereas dowry practices is assumed not to exist in the Assamese society. In a number of cases it is observed that they do not demand dowry when the marriage is fixed but subsequently the dowry demands flows whenever there are financial problems within the family. There are certain cases where they demanded dowry during marriage negotiation and when their demands are not fulfilled they are abused. In certain cases, which are common among the

Muslims too, they do not demand dowry but are mentally harassed and abused for not bringing adequate dowry.

Financial problem is another important cause for violence against women in all the religious groups but more so among the Christians and Muslims. In most of the families it is the wife who manages the kitchen as well as the house. When she fails to do so efficiently due to financial constraints, the frustration is often released by the husband on his wife in the form of mental and physical assault and often held responsible for it. In most of these cases it is analysed that the financial problems are associated with indulgence into alcoholism by the husband.

Bigamy is another cause of violence among the Muslims and the Hindus. It is more common among those families who have migrated to Guwahati. The open and free urban society often indulges them into bigamy on many occasions.

It is observed that for 16.67 percent of Muslims alcoholism is the main cause of domestic violence, somewhat higher than the Hindus (15.56%), though Islam forbids consumption of liquor. Most of the Muslim respondents live in Sijubari area of Hatigaon, around which there is easy access to country made liquor.

The other important cause of violence (60% of the Hindus and 75% of the Muslims) is illicit relation of the spouses, especially the husband with women other than the wife; most of such households belong to lower economic strata.

#### 4.1.9 Religion and Perceived Solutions by Respondents:

**Table 4.8: Perceived Solutions to the Problem**

Religion	Compromise	Parental family	Live separately	Nuclear family	Others
Hindu	31.11	13.33	42.22	6.67	37.78
Muslim	58.33	0.00	41.67	0.00	25.00
Christian	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	100.00
Sikh	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00
Total	35.00	11.67	43.33	5.00	36.67

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

A large proportion of the Hindu and Christian respondents feel that living separately could be a solution to their problems, and quite a few have already come out from their abused lives and have started to live on their own. A large proportion of the Muslim victims (41.67%) prefer to come to a compromise with their husband/in-laws. They lack self-confidence to live on their own as many of them are illiterates.

A section of the Hindu victims (13.33%) perceive staying with their parental family as a solution; this solution is totally absent among the Muslims and Sikhs due to lack of support of parental families. A large number of the Hindu women (victims) want to study further and be economically independent, and feel strongly that it is a solution to their problem. Since remarriage is a common practice among the Muslims, for a few Muslim victims remarriage is a perceived solution. But irrespective of religious backgrounds, a large number of them feel economic independence and separated life as a preferred option.

## Section II

### 4.2 Linguistic Background and Crimes against Women:

In this study, mother tongue of 51.66 percent of the respondents' are Assamese, 5 percent are Hindi speaking, 30 percent are Bengali speaking, and the rest speaks Manipuri, Telugu, Bihari, Bodo, and Garo etc. In this section relationships of crimes against women with the various linguistic groups have been analysed.

#### 4.2.1 Physical Violence by Husband:

Physical violence of all types by the husband is highest among the Bengali speaking community. Crimes like attempt to murder (22.22%) and attempt to burn (5.56%) are also substantially higher among the Bengali speaking community (both Hindus and Muslims). Acts of attempt to murder among the Assamese, Bengali and other communities are due to either dowry demand or illicit relationships of the spouse.

**Table 4.9: Physical Violence by Husband (by Linguistic background)**

Linguistic Groups	Percentage	Battery	Physical disfiguring	Attempted to burn	Attempted to murder	Others
Assamese	51.66	74.19	19.35	3.23	22.58	3.23
Hindi	5.00	66.67	33.33	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bengali	30.00	94.44	38.89	5.56	22.22	16.67
Manipuri	1.66	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Others	11.66	71.43	14.29	14.29	57.14	14.29
Total	100.00	78.33	25.00	5.00	25.00	8.33

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

Among the Assamese, Bengali and other linguistic groups' physical violence of all forms can be found. Battery is the commonest form of physical violence by husbands among all the groups. Physical disfiguring is also common in many of the groups except among the Manipuri community, because the atrocities are committed by in-laws. Physical disfiguring among the victims includes physical damages to ears, broken nose, cutting off ears, breaking of limbs etc. There are cases where the victims have given birth to still-born or aborted due to physical assault during pregnancy, a form of violence common among the Assamese, Bengali and other linguistic groups.

#### **4.2.2 Mental Violence by Husband:**

All forms of mental violence by husband exist within all the linguistic groups. It is interesting to note that mental violence is more than physical violence within all the linguistic groups. Cursing and swearing is the highest form of mental violence by the husband on the victim where a husband simply calls his wife degrading names. It has been expressed by many of the victims that cursing and swearing humiliates them and destroys their confidence and sense of self worth and their ability to resist further. They feel shattered because usually a Hindu woman believes that they are married to their husband not only in this life but for their eternal life. This belief very often compels them to be on the receiving end.

**Table 4.10: Mental Violence by Husband (by Linguistic background)**

Linguistic Groups	Quarrels	Cursing/ swearing	Use abusive language	Emotionally blackmail	Threat of assault	Others
Assamese	74.19	77.42	64.52	41.94	54.84	9.68
Hindi	66.67	66.67	66.67	66.67	33.33	0.00
Bengali	88.89	88.89	88.89	50.00	72.22	27.78
Manipuri	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00
Others	71.43	71.43	71.43	42.86	42.86	28.57
Total	76.67	78.33	71.67	46.67	56.67	16.67

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

When analysed between the linguistic groups it is seen that emotional blackmailing by the husband is high among all of them though it occurs more among the Assamese and the Bengalis. They are often blackmailed by their husband of breaking the nuptial code. This often traumatises the victims, when they sense the lack of social and physical security provided by the marriage and the low reputation associated with it in the society.

#### 4.2.3 Sexual Violence by Husband:

Sexual violence of all types are reported among the Assamese speaking community. Sexual violence in the form of sexual abstinence (as a form of punishment by the husband<sup>1</sup>) is also high among the Assamese. There are 3.23 percent of women reportedly were sexually exploited after marriage and then deserted. Few of them lacked the support of their parental family as they have eloped and married without parental consent. Sexual abuse by husband is more among the Bengali than the Assamese. They include both the Muslim and Hindu Bengali.

<sup>1</sup> In legal terms, this is defined as denial of conjugal rights from either spouses and is judiciable under Indian law. Whether sexual abstinence of one of the spouse amounts to sexual violence is, however, a moot question.

**Table 4.11: Sexual Violence by Husband (by Linguistic background)**

Linguistic Groups	Sexual harassment	Sexual abuse	Others
Assamese	3.23	9.68	9.68
Hindi	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bengali	0.00	11.11	11.11
Manipuri	0.00	0.00	0.00
Others	0.00	0.00	14.29
Total	1.67	8.33	10.00

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

#### 4.2.4 Physical Violence by In-laws (by Linguistic Background):

Physical violence by in-laws is high among the Bengalis. There are 27.78 percent of them who are battered by their in-laws have been reported. The sense of ownership over the daughter-in-law is more among the Bengali community, for which the atrocity by the in-laws is apparently, high. Some of the Bengali women report attempted murder by their husband (26.67%). Battery by in-laws has been reported by 16.13 percent Assamese women.

**Table 4.12: Physical Violence by In-laws (by Linguistic background)**

Linguistic Groups	Battery	Physical disfiguring	Attempt to murder
Assamese	16.13	0.00	3.23
Hindi	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bengali	27.78	5.56	0.00
Manipuri	100.00	0.00	0.00
Others	0.00	0.00	0.00
total	18.33	1.67	1.67

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

The physical assault executed on the Manipuri victim is because their marriage took place without their in-laws consent even though it was within the same community. She is held responsible for it and physically abused on all occasions.

#### 4.2.5 Mental Violence by In-laws:

All forms of mental violence by in-laws exist among all the linguistic groups and are somewhat equal both among the Hindi and Bengali speaking communities. Quarrels and cursing/swearing are high among the Assamese. Hurtful comments by in-laws are more among the employed and the higher income groups. In most of the cases it was observed that the mental abuse starts with quarrels and ends up with threat of assault.

**Table 4.13: Mental Violence by In-laws (by Linguistic background)**

Linguistic Groups	Quarrels	Cursing/ swearing	Abusive language	Emotional blackmail	Threat of assault	Others
Assamese	29.03	29.03	22.58	19.35	19.35	29.03
Hindi	33.33	33.33	33.33	33.33	33.33	0.00
Bengali	33.33	38.89	38.89	22.22	33.33	0.00
Manipuri	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Others	28.57	28.57	14.29	0.00	14.29	0.00
Total	31.67	33.33	28.33	20.00	25.00	16.67

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

#### 4.2.6 Times of Occurrences:

Among the Assamese women violence takes place on different types of occasions and it is high when she goes against the will of the husband or in-laws (38.71%). A substantial number of them (35.48%) are abused on all occasions. These are because of ego clash between the spouses or due to clashes of thoughts between the two generations, the

daughter-in-law and mother-in-law. It so happens with those daughter-in-laws who are highly qualified and are pursuing high professional jobs. Discord between them arises when the daughter-in-laws are expected to behave and perform in a traditional way, engaged more into her household duties than her profession. There are 32.26 percent, 33.33 percent and 16.67 percent of Assamese, Hindi and Bengali respondents respectively who are harassed by their husband in their drunkenness. According to these women they are indulged into alcoholism due to stress, exertion and these are released on the victim in the form of physical assault and mental violence. This is common among the Assamese women.

**Table 4.14: Occurrences of Crimes against Women (by Linguistic background)**

Linguistic Groups	When alone	Husband away	Financial problem	Drunkenness	Against will	On all occasion	Others
Assamese	6.45	3.23	22.58	32.26	38.71	35.48	16.13
Hindi	0.00	0.00	33.33	33.33	66.67	33.33	66.67
Bengali	0.00	5.56	33.33	16.67	38.89	38.89	38.89
Manipuri	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
Others	0.00	0.00	42.86	28.57	14.29	57.14	0.00
Total	3.33	3.33	28.33	26.67	36.67	40.00	23.33

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

Among the Hindi speaking respondents, two-thirds are abused when they go against the husband's will. They are expected to abide and obey him always, if not they are abused. It was observed that the other occasions in which they are abused are more related with financial problems. She is denied of her meals during financial constrains and physically abused when asked to be fed. Few of them are assaulted when they seek their

rights as the first wife when the husband is engaged in illicit relation. On the contrary, the second wife is abused if the husband returns to his first wife.

For the other linguistic groups constituting of Telugu, Punjabi, Chanthali, Garo and Bodo atrocity on all occasions (57.14%) and during financial problems (42.86%) are more. Punjabi and Telugu speaking respondents are harassed more on all occasions. The Santhal, the Garos and the Boros are harassed more during financial problems.

When compared between the groups it is observed that atrocity during financial problems is higher among the other linguistic groups. Among the Hindi and the Assamese speaking respondents the women is abused more in drunkenness. The Hindi speaking women are expected not to have any will of their own and are abused more whenever they go against the wish of their husband/in-laws.

#### **4.2.7 Linguistic Background and Causes of Crimes:**

To a large extent illicit relationships are attributable to violence among all the linguistic groups. The women are assaulted on all occasions, especially if they oppose views or decisions of the husbands. Many of the husbands reportedly want their wife's to accept the second wife (though under Hindu Marriage Act that covers Budhists, Jains and Sikhs does not permit bigamy) or want them to leave their house so that he can remarry.

Among the Assamese, alcoholism is one the major causes of violence. Quite a few of these victims became aware of this addictive nature of their husband much later after their marriage. The addictive nature of the husband often leads them to go through financial problems when a large sum of his income is spent on the drinks. It is also

common among the Bengali speaking Muslim community and the other linguistic groups. These two causes of violence, alcoholism and financial problems, are often related to each other in this study. Among the Hindi, Bengali and other linguistic groups' atrocity due to dowry demands are 33.33 percent, 27.78 percent and 42.86 percent respectively. Bengali, Hindi and the other linguistic groups are abused for not bringing adequate dowry or when their dowry demands are not fulfilled whereas, among the Assamese, the dowry demand are of different nature. In such cases the husbands are not willing to work or are unemployed. So, whenever they undergo financial constrains, the women are demanded to seek monetary assistances, both in cash and kind, from their parental family. And it is interesting to note in this study that violence due to dowry and financial problems are of same proportion among the Assamese. There are certain cases among the Assamese and the Bengalis where the wife is abused due to the suspicious nature of the husband. Among the Assamese illicit relation of the husband is one of the major causes of violence against the victim.

**Table 4.15: Causes of Crimes (by Linguistic background)**

Linguistic Groups	Exertion	Stress	Alcoholism	Dowry	Frustration	Financial problems	Bigamy/ Polygamy	Others
Assamese	3.23	12.90	22.58	19.35	6.45	19.35	16.13	67.74
Hindi	0.00	66.67	0.00	33.33	0.00	33.33	0.00	66.67
Bengali	0.00	0.00	5.56	27.78	5.56	44.44	27.78	66.67
Manipuri	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Others	0.00	0.00	28.57	42.86	28.57	71.43	42.86	14.29
Total	1.67	10.00	16.67	25.00	8.33	33.33	21.67	61.67

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

Among the other linguistic groups clustering the Punjabis, Telugus, Garos, Bodos and the Santhal's, the proportion of all the causes of crimes are high.

#### 4.2.8 Perceived Solutions by Respondents:

Majority of the Assamese (51.61%) women want to live a separated life and be economically independent and perceived it as their solution but the Bengali respondents' (50%) prefer to compromise with husband/in-laws. It seems the Assamese women are confident to stay on their own because even after they come out from their abusive life, they will have to adjust with their same society, same people around whom they grew up. The same Assamese victim would have found it difficult to make the same decision in a completely different environment and society, say somewhere in North India or South India. It is maybe of this feeling of insecure ness among the other linguistic groups which have compelled them to come to a compromise with their situations than to live separately. At the same time it also depends on the types of values with which they grew up.

**Table 4.16: Perceived Solution to the Problem (by Linguistic background)**

Linguistic Groups	Compromise	Parental family	Live separately	Nuclear family	Others
Assamese	29.03	9.68	51.61	6.45	32.26
Hindi	33.33	0.00	33.33	0.00	33.33
Bengali	50.00	11.11	33.33	5.56	33.33
Manipuri	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Others	14.29	28.57	42.86	0.00	71.43
Total	35.00	11.67	43.33	5.00	36.67

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

Few of the respondents (all the groups), except those belonging to other linguistic groups, prefer to stay with their parental family. They are reluctant to stay with their parents because they are discouraged by their parental family to leave their in/laws home for various social obligations. But the Garos, Bodos and the Chanthals women want to stay with their parental family to avoid their abusive life. They too want to stay with their parents only till they are economically independent. They expressed that they feel as burden on them if they stay there longer.

When compared between the groups, it is observed that majority of the Bengali women prefer to come to a compromise with their husband/in-laws. Again none of the Hindi speaking respondents felt that living with their parental family is the solution because they feel that they can come out from her husband's family only through their death. These families have been living in Assam for generation together but their conservative outlook is more to do with their illiterate and lower economic background.

More Assamese women want to live on their own whereas the Bengali and the Hindi women usually compromise. Only the Assamese (6.45 percent) and the Bengali (5.56 percent) women want to come out of the joint family to lessen their problem. Among the other linguistic group more than 70 percent of them feel that being economically independent will put an end to their abusive life.

### Section III

#### **4.3 Caste/Community Background and Crimes against Women:**

In this study 8.33 percent of the respondents belong to Scheduled Tribes, 20 percent of them are Scheduled Caste, 5 percent are from Other Backward Castes and the rest of the 66.66 percent belong to general population. The Scheduled Tribe women are largely from Garo, Bodo and Manipuri (Meiteis) community.

##### **4.3.1 Physical Violence by Husband:**

All forms of physical violence by husband exist among the Scheduled Caste but battery is the commonest form of physical torture followed by “attempt to murder”, which is 41.67 percent, the highest among all the communities. Physical disfiguring of all types, such as branding with hot objects, disfiguring due to excessive battery are common among majority of the SCs, though these abuses exist also among the general caste population.

Among the general caste, battery (82.5%) and physical disfiguring (27.5%) are high. Twenty percent of them are attempt to murder. Acts of attempt to burn and other forms of crimes exist in lesser number among these women.

Among the Other Backward Castes (OBCs), 66.67 percent of the respondents report battery and 33.33 percent, attempted murder.

Among the Scheduled Tribes, physical violence by husband is considerably low, though 20 percent report attempt to murder. Interestingly enough, high proportion of occurrences of violence on the ST women is because of the fact that the spouses of a

number of these women are from other communities, therefore cultural importation of criminal behaviour into a community where these are not normally encountered.

**Table 4.17: Physical Violence by Husband by Caste/Community**

<b>Caste/ Community</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Battery</b>	<b>Physical disfiguring</b>	<b>Attempted to burn</b>	<b>Attempted to murder</b>	<b>Others</b>
ST	8.33	40.00	0.00	20.00	20.00	0.00
SC	20.00	83.33	33.33	8.33	41.67	8.33
OBC	5.00	66.67	0.00	0.00	33.33	0.00
General	66.66	82.50	27.50	2.50	20.00	10.00
Total	100	78.33	25.00	5.00	25.00	8.33

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

When compared between the castes, it is observed that all forms of crimes are high among the Scheduled Caste. The Scheduled Caste belongs to the lower caste of the Hindu community. They are often seen to mimicry the upper caste at their own level. Very often they are not able to imitate them totally due to their lack of adequate educational qualification and economic condition. These often act as factors of violence against them. On the contrary, physical violence by husband is low among the Scheduled Tribes. Usually among the Scheduled Tribes, the status of the spouses are more or less equal. Both of the spouses are engaged in physical labour and economic activities. The women also share a lot of responsibilities in the household activities and in the decision making processes, both within and outside the home. During the field study very few Scheduled Tribe women were encounter as victims of domestic violence; those interviewed, have married non Scheduled Tribe husbands.

### 4.3.2 Mental Violence by Husband:

All form of mental violence by husband exists among all the castes and communities, though in different proportions (Table 4.21). Quarrels and cursing/swearing are high among the Scheduled Caste whereas, emotional blackmailing is substantially high (60 percent) among the Scheduled Tribe women. Majority of them are emotionally blackmailed by their husband for dowry whenever they undergo financial problems. Among the Other Backward Castes all forms of mental violence are of equal proportion except emotional blackmailing, which is low (33.33%). Among the general caste cursing/swearing is high and emotional blackmailing is low.

**Table 4.18: Mental Violence by Husband by Caste/Community**

Caste/ Community	Quarrels	Cursing/ swearing	Use abusive language	Emotional blackmail	Threat of assault	Others
ST	40.00	40.00	40.00	60.00	20.00	20.00
SC	91.67	91.67	83.33	50.00	50.00	16.67
OBC	66.67	66.67	66.67	33.33	66.67	0.00
General	77.50	80.00	72.50	45.00	62.50	17.50
Total	76.67	78.33	71.67	46.67	56.67	16.67

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

When compared between the caste/community, it is noticed that all the forms of mental violence by husband are substantially high among the Scheduled Caste, except threat of assault. The next community where almost all the forms of mental violence are high is among the general caste. It is because the general caste in this study comprises women belonging to different linguistic groups and religions among whom the pattern of occurrence of atrocity are diverse.

Among the Scheduled Tribe respondents, mental violence by husband is lower when compared between the different communities. During the study it was observed that the Scheduled Tribe victims usually remain dormant during the initial stage of their abusive life but often resisted aggressively during the later stage. In fact, they are not passive and are reluctant to accept the harassment as a part of their married life unlike the victims belonging to general caste.

#### 4.3.3 Sexual Violence by Husband:

Sexual violence by husband exists only among the general caste. There are more cases of sexual abuse among them than sexual harassment. Other forms of sexual violence such as indulgence into prostitution and Immoral Trafficking of women exist among the general caste population.

**Table 4.19: Sexual Violence by Husband by Caste/Community**

Caste/ Community	Sexual harassment	Sexual abuse	Others
ST	0.00	0.00	0.00
SC	0.00	0.00	0.00
OBC	0.00	0.00	0.00
General	2.50	12.50	15.00
Total	1.67	8.33	10.00

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

#### 4.3.4 Physical Violence by In-laws:

Physical violence by in-laws is lower than physical violence by husband among all the caste/community. Physical violence by in-laws occurs only in the form of battery among the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes. Unlike structured communities, in tribal

society the role played by in-laws is minimal, if at all only as facilitators—there is no scope of interference by relations in the matters of the spouses. In deed, many tribes (like Nagas, for example) encourage nuclear families at the time of marriages and a separate household. Even if, they stay together under an extended family, the ground rules are strictly adhered to—the norms more akin to the most developed and sophisticated of societies.

**Table 4.20: Physical Violence by In-laws by Caste/Community**

<b>Caste/ Community</b>	<b>Battery</b>	<b>Physical disfiguring</b>	<b>Attempt to murder</b>
ST	20.00	0.00	0.00
SC	16.67	0.00	0.00
OBC	33.33	0.00	33.33
General	17.50	2.50	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>18.33</b>	<b>1.67</b>	<b>1.67</b>

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

When compared between the communities, battery is high among the Other Backward Castes followed by the Scheduled Tribes. Majority of the in-laws of the Scheduled Tribe victims belong to Scheduled caste or general caste. Maybe it is for this reason battery by in-laws is substantially high among them. In this study all the victims (33.33%) who were attempt to murder by their in-laws belonged to Other Backward Class.

#### **4.3.5 Mental Violence by In-laws:**

Unlike physical violence, mental violence by in-laws of all types exists among the different castes/communities. Quarrels and swearing/cursing occur in high proportion among all the castes. They are a common form of mental abuse among all of them.

**Table 4.21: Mental Violence by In-laws by Caste/Community**

Caste/ Community	Quarrels	Cursing/ swearing	Use abusive language	Emotionally blackmail	Threat of assault	Others
ST	40.00	40.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00
SC	16.67	16.67	8.33	8.33	8.33	16.67
OBC	66.67	66.67	66.67	66.67	66.67	33.33
General	32.50	35.00	32.50	20.00	27.50	15.00
Total	31.67	33.33	28.33	20.00	25.00	16.67

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

#### 4.3.6 Times of Occurrences:

Among the Scheduled Tribe victims, there are cases where the husband is unemployed or have started a small business after their marriage, more often with the wife's parental financial support. Instead of earning on their own and being financially independent, they often provoke their wife to bring money from their parental home whenever they undergo any financial problem. On such occasions, the husband gets drunk and physically abuses the wife when she goes against his will. On other occasions, when the husband is not drunk, she is mentally abused on all occasion for not meeting to the demands, and this can be termed as dowry demand. This type of demand also exists among the other communities. But it is a common phenomenon within the Scheduled Tribe victims where the husband belongs to some other community. There are certain cases among the Scheduled Tribes where the victim is abused whenever the husband is drunk or when the family undergoes some financial problems.

Among the Scheduled Caste, 8.33 percent (only when alone) of them are those victims who were sexually exploited by the 'short term' husband. Most of these victims were sexually exploited when they were alone at home before their marriage. They were

lured into marriage later on by their husbands when the victims resisted to the perpetrator's sexual desire. All of these victims were very young and under age, around 16 years of age. Later on, they were deserted by their husband after few months of stay. Among the Scheduled Castes and OBCs, a large proportion of the victims were harassed during bouts of husband's drunkenness, a practice encountered though out the world among working class, low income groups.

There are different types of occasions, when a victim belonging to general caste is abused. But the violence is more when they go against the wishes of the husband or in-laws (40%), and on all occasions (42.5%). A majority of these victims are qualified and want to have a view of their own, or wish to have their own ways of life.

When compared between the communities it is observed that atrocity on the victim belonging to Scheduled Caste and Other Backward Castes are more when the perpetrator is drunk and during their financial problems whereas among the Scheduled Tribes and the general caste, it is less on these occasions. On the contrary, among these two communities, violence is exerted more on all occasions because of dowry demands and other reasons.

**Table 4.22: Occurrences of Crimes against Women by Caste/Community**

<b>Caste/ Community</b>	<b>When alone</b>	<b>Husband away</b>	<b>Financial problem</b>	<b>Drunken- ness</b>	<b>Against will</b>	<b>On all occasion</b>	<b>Others</b>
ST	0.00	0.00	40.00	20.00	20.00	60.00	0.00
SC	8.33	0.00	58.33	41.67	25.00	25.00	25.00
OBC	0.00	33.33	66.67	33.33	66.67	33.33	33.33
General	2.50	2.50	15.00	22.50	40.00	42.50	25.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.33</b>	<b>3.33</b>	<b>28.33</b>	<b>26.67</b>	<b>36.67</b>	<b>40.00</b>	<b>23.33</b>

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

#### **4.3.7 Perceived Causes of the Crimes:**

It is interesting to note that atrocity due to financial problems and dowry (in cases where in-laws belong to non Scheduled Tribes) is high and exist equally among the Scheduled Tribes. These women are abused due to dowry demand which erupts whenever they undergo financial problems. A majority of them demanded the wife's parental property as dowry. Beside these cases, victims have undergone abusive life due to other financial problems as well as bigamy among the Scheduled Tribe respondents.

Among the Scheduled Caste, the causes of violence against the victims are varied and more due to financial problem and bigamy. A large proportion of the victims' husbands are engaged in illicit relation, which is another cause of violence against the victim. Usually when the cause of violence is dowry or illicit relationship atrocity is exerted on the victim on all the occasions among all the communities.

Alcoholism, dowry and financial problems are the main causes of violence among the Other Backward Castes. There are different types of causes of violence against the victim among the general caste but dowry is one of the major causes (25%). It is high among them because it includes the Bengali community (both the Hindus and the Muslims) where this evil practise is prevalent. Elicit relation is high among all the communities. For a few general caste respondents, the cause of violence is the suspicious nature of the husband and most of these husbands suffer from inferiority complex. Frustration is the cause of violence among all the community where the husband is unemployed or when he is not able to perform as per his expectations or excel in his

workplace (among the middle income families). Again stress and exertion is common among all the communities.

When a comparative study is made between the communities, it is observed that violence because of alcoholism is high among the Other Backward Castes (33.33%) and the Scheduled Caste (25%) but it exist among the other castes/communities also. Violence due to dowry is high among the Scheduled Tribes (40%) and the Other Backward Castes (33.33%). Atrocities due to financial problem are high among the Scheduled Tribes (80%) and the Scheduled Caste (50%) and it is also due to illicit relation of the husband. In such cases, the victim is either expected to accept the relation or leave the house if she disagrees.

**Table 4.23: Causes of Crimes by Caste/Community**

Caste/ Community	Exertion	Stress	Alcoholism	Dowry	Frustration	Financial problems	Bigamy/ Polygamy	Others
ST	0.00	0.00	20.00	40.00	40.00	80.00	20.00	20.00
SC	0.00	16.67	25.00	16.67	8.33	50.00	33.33	41.67
OBC	0.00	0.00	33.33	33.33	0.00	33.33	0.00	100.00
General	2.50	10.00	12.50	25.00	5.00	22.50	20.00	70.00
Total	1.67	10.00	16.67	25.00	8.33	33.33	21.67	61.67

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

#### **4.3.8 Perceived Solutions to the Problem:**

A high proportion of the Scheduled Tribe victims feel that being economically independent will solve their problem. A few of them have trained themselves in vocational training courses and have pursued higher education to stand on their own feet. This is a common view also among the general caste women, too. For many of them adequate educational qualification has built up their confidence to confront the abusive situation. Among the

Scheduled Tribes, living with their parental family after breakdown of the marriage is also a perceived solution (40%), more so because there is no social stigma attached to such arrangements. This type of parental support is absent among the general caste, the Scheduled Castes, or the Other Backward Castes.

Among the Scheduled Caste living a separate life is a solution to their problem to 66.67 percent of the women. Most of these victims are employed and those who are unemployed, being economically independent are not a difficult task for them as they are willing to take up even low paid jobs. It is for this reason they prefer to live on their own than to compromise with their abusive life.

Among the Other Backward Castes being economically independent and living on their own is their only perceived solution.

Only a few general caste women want to come out from the joint family (7.5%) to lessen their torment. But a large proportion of them feel that being economically independent and living on their own will help them to be away from their abusive life. At the same time the equal proportion of the general caste victims wants to compromise with their husband/in-laws. And majority of them are Bengali speaking Hindu as well as Muslim respondents who prefer to compromise with their husband/in-laws not for the financial security but for the physical, psychological and social security provided by the marriage. There are few of them (general caste) who want to remarry or have remarried to come out from their abusive life. This is a common view and a solution more so among the qualified Muslim respondents.

**Table 4.24: Perceived Solutions to the Problem by Caste/Community**

<b>Caste/ Community</b>	<b>Compromise</b>	<b>Parental family</b>	<b>Live separately</b>	<b>Nuclear family</b>	<b>Others</b>
ST	40.00	40.00	20.00	0.00	80.00
SC	33.33	0.00	66.67	0.00	16.67
OBC	0.00	0.00	66.67	0.00	66.67
General	37.50	12.50	37.50	7.50	35.00
Total	35.00	11.67	43.33	5.00	36.67

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

Between the communities, a high proportion of 40 percent of the respondents of the Scheduled Tribe victims prefer to come to a compromise with their husband/in-laws. They are those victims who are abused due to financial problems and alcoholism. The Scheduled Caste and the Other Backward Castes respondents feel that living a separated life is an easy exit from their tormented lives. But majority of the victims from all the caste and communities feel strongly that being economically independent is the ultimate solution.

#### **4.4. Findings:**

1. Physical and mental violence by the husband as well as the in-laws are high among the Muslims.
2. Physical violence by the husband is high among the Bengali.
3. Sexual violence by husband is more among the Assamese community.
4. Alcoholism is one of the major causes of violence among the Assamese community.
5. Physical violence by the in-laws is high among the Bengalis.

6. Even though quarrels and cursing/swearing is a common form of mental violence which occurs in high proportion, a women feel more threatened when she is emotionally blackmailed by the husband of being thrown out or leave the house.
7. Physical violence by in-laws is lower than mental violence by in-laws irrespective of language, religion and caste/community.
8. Violence by in-laws occurs in lower proportion than violence by husband.
9. All forms of physical as well as mental violence by husband as well as the in-laws are high among the Muslims followed by the Hindus.
10. Among the physical violence attempt to murder is high among the Hindu respondents.
11. Sexual violence by husband as a whole is high among the Hindus but sexual abuse by husband is more among the Muslims where as sexual violence by in-laws exist only among the Hindu Respondents.
12. A high proportion of the respondents of all religious groups are abused on all occasion. But violence due to financial problems is high among the Muslims and the Christians.
13. Among the Scheduled Caste all from of physical violence as well as mental violence by husband is high. Whereas, it is low among the Scheduled Tribes.
14. Very few cases of domestic violence among the Scheduled Tribes were come across during the field study. On the other hand, there were innumerable cases of violence against women among the Scheduled Caste and the general caste, more so among the Bengali speaking Muslim community.

15. Physical and mental violence by husband are high among the Scheduled Caste and the General Caste and physical and mental violence by in-laws are low among them. Physical and mental violence by in-laws are high among the Other Backward Castes and the Scheduled tribes.
16. The parents of the Scheduled Tribe community encourage the women to come out from their abusive life and stay with them. This is low among the general caste and fails to exist among the Scheduled Caste and the Other Backward Castes.

## Chapter V

# INCOME CLASSES, OCCUPATIONS AND CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN

### 5.1 Introduction:

Urban centres or big cities have certain distinctive characteristics of their own. Such characteristic features are, certain well defined settlement areas, localities settled by high-income resident groups, areas occupied by middle income people and those areas inhabited by lower income groups, generally referred to as 'residential segregation'. These areas are well defined in metropolitan cities, e.g. in Delhi, Greater Kailash or Basant Vihar; Juhu or Malabar Hills in Mumbai are known to be high-income residential areas. In the same way, there are certain areas that are predominantly inhabited by the middle class people. Again the slum areas are distinctive feature of big cities inhabited by lower income families, working class residents and migrants. Slums exist in almost all the metropolitan cities of India and in other developing countries as well.

Guwahati is not yet a metropolitan city, but it is the largest city in North East India. Unlike Delhi, Mumbai, etc., the well-defined or disparities in settlement pattern on the basis of economic status of the residents are not fully developed in Guwahati. But there are certain residential pockets within Guwahati, which shows this type of residential segregation on the basis of the economic condition of the people. There are localities in Chandmari (Rajgarh and Chandmari Proper), Latasil, Dispur (around the Capital Complex)

and Geetanagar area, which are predominantly resided by high income groups. A large portion of Noonmati, Jalukbari (Maligaon area), and Fatasil Ambari etc. are settled by middle income groups. On the either sides of the railway lines, extending from Paltan bazar to Maligaon, in Sijubari area of Hatigaon, Pub-Sarania (west of Nehru Stadium) etc. are settled by the low-income households in Guwahati.

Does crime against women occur on the basis of this economic demarcation? An effort is being made in this chapter to study gender related crimes on the basis of different economic classes; the high income groups, the middle income groups and the people of lower income groups. What relation does crime against women have with employment and occupational status of the respondents (which is connected with income levels of households)? Does gender related crimes vary on the basis of the monthly income of the respondents and the economic background of the family? These questions will be analysed in this chapter.

This chapter is divided into four sections. In Section I the relationship of crimes against women with the employment status of the respondents are studied. In Section II the relation of crimes against women with occupational status of the respondents are studied. Section III deals with the study of the relation of crimes against women with the economic background of the respondents and Section IV studies the relation of crimes against women with the monthly income of the respondents.

## Section I

### **5.2 Employment Status and Crimes against Women:**

There are three categories of respondents in this section: housewives, unemployed and employed. The unemployed are those women who are legally separated from their husbands or not yet separated but are staying with parental families or with relatives or on their own. Of these respondents, 36 percent of them are housewives, 10 percent are unemployed, and 55 percent are employed (either self-employed or otherwise).

#### **5.2.1 Physical Violence by Husbands:**

Battery is the highest form of violence by the husbands in cases where the respondents are purely housewives. Among the unemployed women, battery, attempt to murder and attempt to burn are the commonest form of violence (each 16.67 %). Among the employed women, all forms of physical violence by husbands are high except attempt to burn. Few of the women have excelled in their professions and have acquired higher position than the husbands. They are physically abused due to ego clash or outbursts of husbands due to frustration. They are also abused due to the suspicious nature of the husbands (regarding marital infidelity) and it affects them more as they are employed. They are pressurised by relations of not talking to their colleague and even neighbours.

When compared between these three groups, it is observed that battery is common among all the groups but it is more among the housewives. Majority of them are looked down upon and are often treated like maidservants and are expected not to have any will of

their own. They are harassed for not bringing adequate dowry. A large proportion of the unemployed respondents are subjected to physical abuse (attempt to burn and attempt to murder) by their husbands. For this threat to their lives, they prefer to stay on their own.

**Table 5.1: Physical Violence by Husband by Employment status**

<b>Employment Status</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Battery</b>	<b>Physical disfiguring</b>	<b>Attempted to burn</b>	<b>Attempted to murder</b>	<b>Others</b>
Housewives	35	85.71	4.76	0.00	14.29	4.76
Unemployed	10	16.67	0.00	16.67	16.67	0.00
Employed	55	84.85	42.42	6.06	33.33	12.12
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>78.33</b>	<b>25.00</b>	<b>5.00</b>	<b>25.00</b>	<b>8.33</b>

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### **5.2.2 Mental Violence by Husbands:**

Among the housewives' cursing/swearing is the highest form of mental violence on them (80.95%). The other forms of mental violence also exist but use of abusive languages and quarrels are somewhat low (76.19%). The housewives as well as the unemployed respondents are driven out from the houses or are blackmailed of being thrown out in a number of occasions.

All forms of mental violence are high among the employed respondents except emotional blackmailing. Majority of them (of lower economic group) are employed due to their economic needs. They have to work and at the same time perform their household chores. Whenever there is any imbalance between the two duties, such a returning home late from work or not being able to perform their household works properly, both mental and physical violence are committed against them.

Between the groups it is observed that all types of mental violence are high among the employed respondents except emotional blackmailing and that is high among the housewives. Most of these housewives as well as the employed respondents (lower economic group), though in lower proportion, are blackmailed of breaking their marital code (accused of infidelity). It is observed that the housewives feel more threatened by this type of mental torture.

**Table 5.2: Mental Violence by Husband by Employment Status**

<b>Employment Status</b>	<b>Quarrels</b>	<b>Cursing/ swearing</b>	<b>Use abusive language</b>	<b>Emotionally blackmail</b>	<b>Threat of assault</b>	<b>Others</b>
Housewife	76.19	80.95	76.19	52.38	57.14	14.29
Unemployed	33.33	33.33	33.33	16.67	16.67	16.67
Employed	84.85	84.85	75.76	48.48	63.64	18.18
Total	76.67	78.33	71.67	46.67	56.67	16.67

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### 5.2.3 Sexual Violence by Husband:

Sexual violence is high among the housewives. Sexual abuses by husband exist among all the groups but it is more among the unemployed respondents. Among low-income families many housewives reported of their husband initiating them into prostitution or pushed them into immoral trafficking.

**Table 5.3: Sexual Violence by Husband by Employment Status**

<b>Employment Status</b>	<b>Sexual harassment</b>	<b>Sexual abuse</b>	<b>Others</b>
Housewife	4.76	9.52	14.29
Unemployed	0.00	16.67	0.00
Employed	0.00	6.06	9.09
Total	1.67	8.33	10.00

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

#### 5.2.4 Physical Violence by In-laws:

Among the housewives, battery is low and is the only physical violence committed by the in-laws maybe because they are in a better state to carry out their household duties than the employed respondents. Majority of the unemployed women are staying in nuclear families for which physical violence by in-laws do not exist. On the contrary, the employed women are victims of all forms of physical violence by the in-laws (except attempt to burn).

When analysed between the groups, it is observed that physical violence by in-laws of all forms are high among the employed respondents. In majority of the cases the conflict arises between the victims and the in-laws due to differences in attitude and also due to the independent nature of the employed respondents. These respondents feel that they too have a say in the decision making process of the household and want to actively participate in all matters. But they are expected to perform their traditional role of a housewife first and then, as a working woman.

**Table 5.4: Physical Violence by In-Laws by Employment Status**

<b>Employment Status</b>	<b>Battery</b>	<b>Physical disfiguring</b>	<b>Attempted to murder</b>
Housewife	9.52	0.00	0.00
Unemployed	0.00	0.00	0.00
Employed	27.27	3.03	3.03
<b>Total</b>	<b>18.33</b>	<b>1.67</b>	<b>1.67</b>

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

#### 5.2.5 Mental Violence by In-Laws:

Varied forms of mental violence by in-laws exist among all the groups. Among the housewives, cursing/swearing and use of abusive languages (23.81%) are high though the

other forms of violence also do exist. A few of them are threatened of being driven out from the house or had to spend the night outside the house at times. They are not provided food whenever there are any disputes between them. Quarrels occur in lower proportion among them as they lacked confidence to resist when abused.

Quarrels and cursing/swearing are the mental violence committed by the in-laws among the unemployed respondents. Mental violence occurs in lower proportion as they are occasionally abused when visited by the in-laws.

On the contrary, among the employed respondents, all types of mental violence occur in higher proportion. Unlike the housewives, they resist, at times aggressively, when abused. On such instances, often the violence flares up. A number of victims stated that they are confident to confront their in-laws on such situations because of their economic stability and their educational status. They are usually able to resist their in-laws more than their husbands. There are other forms of mental violence (passing sarcastic comments, ignoring etc) exerted by the in-laws.

Between the groups, it is observed that all forms of mental violence by in-laws are high among the employed victims. And the next group who suffer more are the housewives. Quarrels and cursing/swearing occurs almost twice more among the employed victims (42.42%) than the housewives (19.05%, quarrels and 23.81%, cursing/swearing). In certain communities of the Indian society the wife is (in a sense) owned by the family. When an employed woman ventures out and starts interacting with the outside world, the in-laws usually sense the lack of hold and power over her. This feeling of insecurity among the in-laws is perhaps a major cause of abuse of the working women.

**Table 5.5: Mental Violence by In-Laws by Employment Status**

<b>Employment Status</b>	<b>Quarrels</b>	<b>Cursing/ swearing</b>	<b>Use abusive language</b>	<b>Emotionally blackmail</b>	<b>Threat of assault</b>	<b>Others</b>
Housewife	19.05	23.81	23.81	19.05	19.05	14.29
Unemployed	16.67	16.67	0.00	0.00	0.00	16.67
Employed	42.42	42.42	36.36	24.24	33.33	18.18
Total	31.67	33.33	28.33	20.00	25.00	16.67

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### **5.2.6 Times of Occurrences:**

Among the housewives the violence is more on all occasion or when they go against the will of their husbands/in-laws. The housewives of higher economic families are abused by their in-laws on all occasions, especially if they convey their desire to pursue a job. In certain families it is a norm against the family or a way of diminishing the family status to have an employed daughter-in-law. On the other hand, few of the housewives belonging to middle income groups are look down upon for not being employed. They are abused more on all occasion or when they go against the will of relations and are treated as inferiors. A large proportion of them, 23.81 percent, are abused by the husband in drunkenness, though alcoholism is not the immediate cause of violence. Housewives belonging to lower income and lower middle income group are abused more whenever they undergo any financial problems. They are accused for mismanaging the earning brought in by the husband/ in-laws and are made to feel worthless on such circumstances.

Among the unemployed respondents, the violence is more only when they are alone and when they go against the will of the husband or in-laws (33.33%). A number of them are sexually exploited and were later on deserted by husbands. They are also abused whenever the perpetrator is in drunken state. In a number of cases, it is observed that the

perpetrator gets indulged in alcoholism, whenever they undergo financial problems to ease out their stress. In low income families husbands demand or grab the income of the wife or the children, whenever he is in need of it and spend it on alcohol, gambling or in other evil practices. When compared between the groups it is observed that among the employed respondents the violence is more during financial problems and in drunkenness.

**Table 5.6: Occurrences by Employment Status**

Employment Status	When alone	Husband away	Financial problem	Drunkenness	Against will	On all occasion	Others
Housewife	0.00	4.76	19.05	23.81	42.86	42.86	23.81
Unemployed	33.33	0.00	16.67	16.67	33.33	16.67	0.00
Employed	0.00	3.03	36.36	30.30	33.33	42.42	27.27
Total	3.33	3.33	28.33	26.67	36.67	40.00	23.33

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### 5.2.7 Perceived Causes of Violence:

Atrocity on women due to dowry demand is especially high among the housewives (33.33%). They are subjected to further abuse when they oppose or resist the illicit relations of their husbands with other women. Such a cause of domestic violence also exists among the other groups, and in fairly high proportions. In a number of cases, it is noticed that stress and frustration are related with financial problems of the family and are released on the wife in the form of violence by the husband. They are more among the housewives than the employed women.

The one-third of the unemployed married women (house wives) are harassed, perhaps perceived by the husbands and the in-laws as the root cause of their financial woes. A large section of employed women are mentally abused by the husband due to suspicion of illicit relationship at workplace, a feature typical of modernity where women

are exposed to other men, that is frowned upon by the husbands, and at the same time the family needs the extra-income that the women brings in by employment—a state of perpetual tension in the family. It is also reported that polygamy is high among the spouses of employed respondents. It is more among the lower middle-class employed women, but less among the lower and the higher income group, since their financial contributions play a significant role in the family.

**Table 5.7: Causes of crimes by employment status**

Employment Status	Exertion	Stress	Alcoholism	Dowry	Frustration	Financial problems	Bigamy/ Polygamy	Others
Housewife	0.00	14.29	19.05	33.33	9.52	23.81	14.29	57.14
Unemployed	0.00	16.67	0.00	16.67	16.67	33.33	16.67	50.00
Employed	3.03	6.06	18.18	21.21	6.06	39.39	27.27	66.67
Total	1.67	10.00	16.67	25.00	8.33	33.33	21.67	61.67

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### 5.2.8 Perceived Solutions by Women by Employment Status:

Only the housewives feel that coming out of the joint family is a solution to their problem, as the violence (by in-laws) on them is severe and frequent. At the same time, they have fewer alternatives with them as they are not adequately qualified to be economically independent or possess sufficient sources of independent incomes. The employed victims are also abused by the in-laws but they can avoid these situations when they are in their workplace. Among the housewives (38.10%) feel that coming to a compromise with husband/ in-laws are their solutions to their woes. They prefer to compromise more for financial than for social security provided by the marriage. A few of them prefer to stay with their parental family. They are rarely supported by their parental family because of reluctance to provide permanent shelter to the victims due to their own social obligations.

In such situations, they stay in the parental house for a span of time and then, return back to her abusive life after a short stay. Many of the young victims feel the necessity of economic independence that can be achieved further study.

Among the unemployed respondents, a large proportion (50%) are staying with their parental families and prefer to stay there till they are economically independent or study further. A few of them want to stay with their parents and take up all their own responsibilities after they become economically independent. Among the employed respondents, 50 percent want to live a separated life or are separated. They are confident to take this step as they possess economic independence. A large section of them (39.39%) come to a compromise with the husbands/ in-laws for the social security provided by the marriage. Many of the employed victims who have a girl child to look after often prefer to compromise. This is common among the Hindi and Bengali speaking employed women. A few employed Muslim women think of remarriage as an option.

**Table 5.8: Perceived Solution to the Problem by Employment Status**

<b>Employment Status</b>	<b>Compromise</b>	<b>Parental family</b>	<b>Separate life</b>	<b>Nuclear family</b>	<b>Others</b>
Housewife	38.10	19.05	38.10	14.29	33.33
Unemployed	0.00	50.00	16.67	0.00	83.33
Employed	39.39	0.00	51.52	0.00	30.30
Total	35.00	11.67	43.33	5.00	36.67

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

## Section II

### 5.3.1 Occupational Status and Crimes against Women:

In this section crimes against women and its relation with the occupational status of the respondents have been analysed. There are seven different categories of occupations in which the women are engaged. Of the total respondents, 55 percent of them are employed. Among the other occupations, there are women who are engaged in teaching and in Non-Governmental Organisations. Of the employed respondents, 18.33 percent are wage workers, 5 percent are running small business, 3.33 percent of them are vendors, 1.67 percent, sales persons, 13.33 percent, office goers, 5 percent are in higher professions, 1.67 percent in big businesses and the rest of the 6.67 percent in miscellaneous professions other occupations.

### 5.3.2 Physical Violence by Husband:

Battery is the commonest form of violence among all the occupational groups. All the wage workers are invariably, battered by husbands. Again, high proportions of the women are physically disfigured (54.55%) and are subjected to serious injuries (attempt to murder: 27.27%). There are 9.09 percent burn cases among wage workers. The study reveals that violent forms of physical abuses by husbands are high and common among the wage workers and among the vendors.

The saleswomen report battery and attempt to murder. Among the victims who have a small businesses, physical violence in the form of battery is common. Among the

office-goers, all forms of physical violence by the husbands occur, but battery and physical disfiguring are more common.

**Table 5.9: Physical Violence by Husband by Occupations**

<b>Occupations</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Battery</b>	<b>Physical disfiguring</b>	<b>Attempted to burn</b>	<b>Attempted to murder</b>	<b>Others</b>
Wage worker	18.33	100.00	54.55	9.09	27.27	18.18
Small business	5.00	33.33	0.00	0.00	33.33	0.00
Vendor	3.33	100.00	50.00	0.00	100.00	50.00
Sales person	1.67	100.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
Office goers	13.33	87.50	50.00	12.50	25.00	12.50
High professional	5.00	66.67	33.33	0.00	0.00	0.00
Business women	1.67	100.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Others	6.67	100.00	0.00	25.00	75.00	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>78.33</b>	<b>25.00</b>	<b>5.00</b>	<b>25.00</b>	<b>8.33</b>

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### **5.3.3 Mental Violence by Husband:**

Among the wage workers all forms of mental violence by husband occur but cursing/swearing is highest and quarrels (90.91%), use of abusive language (81.82%) and threat of assault (63.64%) are also very high. Emotional blackmailing by the husband is somewhat less among them, because second marriage as an option prevail among them, whereas among the small business women emotional blackmailing is high. These women belong to Hindu community. They are often blackmailed of being driven out of the house. The sense of feeling homelessness sinks their confidence to retaliate and makes them feel helpless. Among the vendors and sales-women, all the forms of mental violence exist. Among the office-goers quarrels is the commonest form of discord. Cursing/swearing and use of abusive languages also exist in high proportion among them but threat of assault and emotional blackmailing are somewhat less. Among the high professionals quarrels, cursing/swearing and use of abusive languages also exist but in lower proportion (66.67%).

In comparison with the other forms of mental violence by husband emotional blackmailing and threat of assault are in lesser proportion among them. Among the big business women and the women belonging to other professions all forms of mental violence by the husband exist in high and equal proportion (100%).

Among the informal sector occupational groups, it is noticed that cursing/swearing and use of abusive language are common among them even in their daily lives and such abuses often are culturally accepted; whereas among the high professionals and the office-goers (high income group), these types of mental abuses are deliberate to hurt the victims. Threat of assault is lower among small business women because of the independent nature of these women and is low among the high professionals because these types of instincts are viewed to occur less among the highly qualified perpetrators. Mental violence of all forms is lower among the high professionals.

**Table 5.10: Mental Violence by Husband by Occupation**

Occupations	Quarrels	Cursing/ swearing	Abusive language	Emotional blackmail	Threat of assault	Others
Wage worker	90.91	100.00	81.82	36.36	63.64	9.09
Small business	33.33	33.33	33.33	66.67	33.33	0.00
Vendor	100.00	100.00	100.00	50.00	100.00	50.00
Sales person	100.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
Office goers	100.00	87.50	75.00	37.50	62.50	37.50
High professional	66.67	66.67	66.67	33.33	33.33	0.00
Business women	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	0.00
Others	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	0.00
Total	76.67	78.33	71.67	46.67	56.67	16.67

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

#### 5.3.4 Physical Violence by In-Laws:

It is interesting to note that physical violence by in-laws is nearly absent among the vendors, sales persons, office goers and high professionals, many of who live in nuclear

families. Physical violence by in-laws is non-existent among women who have a stable, high status and a well paid job. Battery by in-laws is less among the employed Assamese victims and more among the wage workers (especially, Bengali speaking Muslim community).

**Table 5.11: Physical Violence by In-Laws**

<b>Occupations</b>	<b>Battery</b>	<b>Physical disfiguring</b>
Wage worker	54.55	9.09
Small business	33.33	0.00
Vendor	0.00	0.00
Sales person	0.00	0.00
Office goers	0.00	0.00
High professional	0.00	0.00
Business women	100.00	0.00
Others	25.00	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### **5.3.5 Mental Violence by In-Laws:**

All forms of mental violence by the in-laws are reported among the wage workers but quarrels and cursing/swearing is the commonest form of abuse (54.55%). Among the middle-class office going women, the worst form of social ostracism is a broken home and a ruined marriage and thus, they constitute the commonest victims of emotional blackmailing. They are often driven out from their house by the in-laws or are threatened to be driven out. All forms of mental violence by the in-laws are substantially high among the high professional respondents. The change of the role of the modern daughter-in-law is often not accepted by the in-laws.

Table 5.12: Mental Violence by In-Laws by Occupation

Occupations	Quarrels	Cursing/ swearing	Abusive language	Emotional blackmail	Threat of assault	Other
Wage worker	54.55	54.55	45.45	27.27	45.45	0.00
Small business	33.33	33.33	33.33	33.33	33.33	66.67
Vendor	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Sales person	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Office goers	25.00	25.00	12.50	0.00	12.50	12.50
High professional	66.67	66.67	66.67	66.67	66.67	66.67
Business women	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Others	75.00	75.00	50.00	25.00	25.00	25.00
Total	31.67	33.33	28.33	20.00	25.00	16.67

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### 5.3.6 Times of Occurrences:

Among low income households (wage workers etc) the quarrels are frequent engendered by struggle over small sums of money, often exacerbated by the husband's indulgence in drinking and constant demands on the daily earnings of the women. Among low-income groups, multiple marriages, polygamy is also common; in some of these cases the victim is either the first or the second wife. The first wife becomes the victim of atrocity when the husband stays with the second wife or vice versa. Among the office goers the atrocities are more when the husband is drunk, but the causes of the drunkenness are vary.

Only the high professional respondents are abused when the husbands are away from home and the abusers are the in-laws. These respondents, in the initial years of their marriage, are mentally abused by the husbands also due to false allegation and instigations by the in-laws.

**Table 5.13: Occurrences of Crimes by Occupational Status**

Occupations	When alone	Husband away	Financial problem	Drunkenness	Against will	On all occasion	Others
Wage worker	0.00	0.00	63.64	36.36	45.45	36.36	36.36
Small business	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
Vendor	0.00	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	50.00	0.00
Sales person	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Office goers	0.00	0.00	12.50	50.00	25.00	37.50	0.00
High professional	0.00	33.33	0.00	0.00	66.67	33.33	100.00
Business Women	0.00	0.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Others	0.00	0.00	25.00	0.00	50.00	75.00	25.00
Total	3.33	3.33	28.33	26.67	36.67	40.00	23.33

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### 5.3.7 Perceived Causes:

Among the wage workers, money and its constant shortage (72.73%) is the chief reason for abusing the women followed by spousal infidelity (bigamy/illicit relationships by the husband), which is fairly common. Though 36.36 percent of the women are abused in drunkenness, violence due to alcoholism is only 9.09 percent. One-third of the small business women are abused due to frustration and alcoholism, and a further one-third, due to bigamy or illicit relationships of the husband. Among the vendors and the sales persons the root cause of the violence is also illicit relationships of husbands. There are cases among the vendors, sales women and wage workers, where the husband is alcoholic and is not interested to work. Among the office goers, there are 12.5 percent women who reported abuse due to exertion, stress and frustration of the husbands. These are common among the lower middle and middle income groups when the husband is not successful professionally. Among the other occupational groups a majority (75%) of them are abused due to dowry.

**Table 5.14: Causes of Crimes by Occupational Status**

Occupations	Exertion	Stress	Alcoholism	Dowry	Frustration	Financial problems	Bigamy/Polygamy	Others
Wage worker	0.00	0.00	9.09	9.09	0.00	72.73	27.27	72.73
Small business	0.00	0.00	33.33	0.00	33.33	33.33	33.33	33.33
Vendor	0.00	0.00	50.00	0.00	0.00	50.00	100.00	0.00
Sales person	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
Office goers	12.50	12.50	25.00	25.00	12.50	12.50	25.00	75.00
High professional	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Business Women	0.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	100.00
Others	0.00	0.00	0.00	75.00	0.00	25.00	0.00	50.00
Total	1.67	10.00	16.67	25.00	8.33	33.33	21.67	61.67

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### 5.3.8 Perceived Solutions by Women:

Majority of the wage workers (63.64%) and small business women (66.64%) come to a compromise with husband/ in-laws. Muslim wage working women prefer a compromise with the husband/in- laws because of the social security provided by the marriage. If they have a girl child/children to take care of prefer to compromise and also they find themselves strangers in the city because they are migrants. Victims, who felt threat to their life staying with the husband, prefer to live a separated life or remarry. Among the vendors 50 percent of them feel that staying a separated life is a solution. There are a few who want their maintenance (alimony) if the husband is staying with the second wife (that is the legal position under bigamy). This is also a solution for a few of the small business women. The sales persons in this study prefer to come to a compromise with the husband/ in-laws for the social, psychological as well as financial security provided by the marriage. Among the office goers majority prefer a separated life and 25 percent of them compromise with the husband/in-laws. Twenty five percent of the women want to live with their parental

families and at the same time take care of their own selves. These families are headed by widowed mothers. There are certain victims in this group who are hopeful of the husband rectification and a better behaviour in the future.

**Table 5.15: Perceived Solution to the Problem by Occupational Status**

Occupations	Compromise	Parental family	Live Separately	Nuclear family	Others
Wage worker	63.64	0.00	36.36	0.00	18.18
Small business	66.67	0.00	33.33	0.00	33.33
Vendor	0.00	0.00	50.00	0.00	50.00
Sales person	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Office goers	25.00	0.00	75.00	0.00	25.00
High professional	33.33	0.00	33.33	0.00	66.67
Business Women	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00
Others	0.00	25.00	75.00	0.00	50.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>35.00</b>	<b>11.67</b>	<b>43.33</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>36.67</b>

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### Section III

#### 5.4.1 Economic Background of the Family and Violence:

In this section the relationships between crimes against women and the economic background of the family have been analysed. Instead of incomes, the consumption expenditure of the families has been considered to analyse the economic background of the family.<sup>1</sup> Yearly expenditure of the family on clothing, food, education of the children, medical expenditure, rent (those staying in rented house) and house repair (those staying in

<sup>1</sup> Since it is generally agreed that consumption expenditure data are more accurate and is a better measure of welfare/ status of the family/ household than income figures.

their own houses) have been taken into account. There are two respondents in the study who could not provide the information on expenditure pattern of the family as they stayed with the husband/in-laws family for less than a month. Five different economic groups were classified on the basis of consumption expenditure of the families. The families whose yearly expenditure is (a) less than Rupees 12000 are considered as very low economy families, yearly expenditure ranging (b) between Rupees 12001 to Rupees 24000 are categorised as lower economy families, (c) between Rupees 24001 to 50000 are considered as lower middle economy families, (d) between Rupees 50001-100000 are considered as middle economy families and (e) the high economy families are those whose yearly expenditure is above Rupees 100000.

#### **5.4.2 Physical Violence by Husbands:**

It is observed that among the very low economy families, all forms of physical violence occur, but battery is the most common. A number of women reported aborting due to severe battery. In the lower income group (b) battery is also the commonest form of physical violence by the husband, followed by attempt to murder (26.67 %) and burn injuries (6.67 %). One-fifth of the women report physical disfiguring by branding (and damaged ear-drums due to beating, ears chopped-off) and even abortions. All forms of physical violence occur to women in lower middle class families (Rupees 24001 to 50000) but battery and attempt to murder (50%) are very high. Among the middle-income families, beside battery (84.21%), physical disfiguring is common (31.58%). It is

interesting to note that even among the high-income families (Rupees 100000), mental violence is more common than physical violence.

**Table 5.16: Physical Violence by Husband by Economic Background of the Family**

Consumption Expenditure/ yr (in Rs.)	Battery	Physical disfiguring	Attempted to burn	Attempted to murder	Others
<12000	62.50	25.00	0.00	25.00	12.50
12001-24000	86.67	20.00	6.67	26.67	13.33
24001-50000	83.33	25.00	8.33	50.00	8.33
50001-100000	84.21	31.58	5.26	15.79	5.26
>100000	50.00	25.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

#### 5.4.3 Mental Violence by Husband:

Among the very low-income families cursing/swearing by the husband is the commonest form of abuse. Only 25 percent of these women are emotionally blackmailed. Among the low-income group (b) quarrels, cursing/swearing, use of abusive languages and threat of assault occurs equally (80%). More than 50 percent of the women are emotionally blackmailed. Among the lower middle-income families, all forms of mental violence are high, particularly due to abusive husbands. Among the high class families all forms of mental violence occur but in lower proportion.

**Table 5.17: Mental Violence by Husband by Economic Background of the Family**

Consumption Expenditure/ yr (in Rupees)	Quarrels	Cursing/ swearing	Use abusive language	Emotionally blackmail	Threat of assault	Others
<12000	62.50	75.00	62.50	25.00	37.50	25.00
12001-24000	86.67	86.67	80.00	53.33	66.67	13.33
24001-50000	100.00	91.67	91.67	41.67	75.00	33.33
50001-100000	68.42	73.68	63.16	63.16	52.63	10.53
>100000	50.00	50.00	50.00	25.00	25.00	0.00

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

#### 5.4.4 Physical Violence by In-laws:

Physical violence by the in-laws does not exist among the high and the lower middle income families. All forms of physical violence, except attempt to burn exist among the lower income families. Battery exists among the very low and middle income families.

**Table 5.18: Physical Violence by In-Laws by Economic Background of the Family**

Consumption Expenditure/ yr (in Rupees)	Battery (in %)	Physical disfiguring (in %)	Attempt to murder (in %)
<12000	25.00	0.00	0.00
12001-24000	26.67	6.67	6.67
24001-50000	0.00	0.00	0.00
50001-100000	26.32	0.00	0.00
>100000	0.00	0.00	0.00

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

#### 5.4.5 Mental Violence by In-Laws:

Mental abuse by in-laws is much higher than the physical violence. Among the very low economic families, all the forms of mental violence are common (25%). Among the lower income families, mental violence of all forms occurs but quarrels and cursing/swearing are the commonest. There are other forms of mental violence which exist among the lower and the lower middle class families such as denial of food, women being thrown out of home etc. Among the lower middle-income families, mental torture by the in-laws is somewhat less as majority live in nuclear families. Mental violence of all forms is high among the middle income (c) families and cursing/swearing and quarrels are the commonest. Among the high class families, all forms of mental torture exist. When compared between the groups, it is observed that all forms of mental violence by in-laws are high among the middle class families. Basically middle income or the lower middle income families are

conservative and orthodox in nature. The joint family is the “disciplining” arena where the young bride is “educated” about the norms of a conservative society, any transgression of those norms is swiftly punished. These women victims are not much educated, have no work opportunity and were brought essentially as home makers, thus the choices of these women outside the marriages are few. They are, thus the most unsecured among the entire lot.

**Table 5.19: Mental Violence by In-Laws by Economic Background of the Family**

<b>Consumption Expenditure/ yr (in Rupees)</b>	<b>Quarrels</b>	<b>Cursing/ swearing</b>	<b>Use abusive language</b>	<b>Emotional blackmail</b>	<b>Threat of assault</b>	<b>Others</b>
<12000	25.00	25.00	25.00	12.50	25.00	0.00
12001-24000	26.67	26.67	20.00	13.33	20.00	13.33
24001-50000	16.67	16.67	16.67	0	8.33	25.00
50001-100000	52.63	57.89	47.37	42.11	42.11	15.79
>100000	25.00	25.00	25.00	25.00	25.00	50.00

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

#### **5.4.6 Times of Occurrences:**

Among the very low-income families, violence is more whenever there are financial difficulties in the family, which are fairly regular. The husbands get drunk to ease off the stress and frustration and become abusive and violent in drunkenness—a situation, commonest across cultures though out the world. Among the high class families, the atrocity occurs when the women want certain liberties in their daily lives. They are abused by their in-laws for their modern outlook, as they are expected to stay as traditional wives. When compared between the groups it is observed that abuse of women during financial problems is more among the very low and lower class families. Harassment in drunkenness is more among the lower middle class families. It is important to note that majority of the

respondents belonging to high income families (75%) are abused when they go against the will of the husbands (clash of egos).

**Table 5.20: Times of Occurrences**

Consumption Expenditure/yr(in Rupees)	When alone	Husband away	Financial problem	Drunkenness	Against will	On all occasion	Others
<12000	12.50	0.00	50.00	37.50	12.50	12.50	12.50
12001-24000	6.67	0.00	53.33	13.33	46.67	46.67	13.33
24001-50000	0.00	0.00	25.00	41.67	8.33	50.00	25.00
50001-100000	0.00	10.53	10.53	31.58	47.37	42.11	31.58
>100000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	75.00	25.00	50.00
Total	3.33	3.33	28.33	26.67	36.67	40.00	23.33

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

#### **5.4.7 Perceived Causes:**

Among the women belonging to the very low economic families the causes of crimes are varied but are more related with financial problems. Dowry demand during marriage is not prevalent among this group but the woman is abused for not bringing adequate dowry, never the less. Among the lower middle class families, the women are abused when they refuse to bring additional money from their parental home, whenever the husband's family undergoes financial problems. The quest to acquire a higher standard of living within a short span of time is noticed more in these families. Unlike the other groups, dowry demands in these families are very common. Bigamy as well as illicit relationships of the husbands is a major cause of conflict between the spouses among all the economic groups, but is especially high among the high income families. There are other causes of atrocity among the high income families; ego clash between the victim and the husband/in-laws,

inferiority complex suffered by the husband and sense of insecurity among the in-laws etc. are the common causes of discord.

**Table 5.21: Causes of Crimes by Economic Conditions of the Family**

Consumption Expenditure/ yr (in Rupees)	Exertion	Stress	Alcoholism	Dowry	Frustration	Financial problems	Bigamy/ Polygamy	Others
<12000	0.00	11.11	22.22	22.22	22.22	33.33	11.11	55.56
12001-24000	0.00	0.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	40.00	40.00	40.00
24001-50000	0.00	0.00	14.29	28.57	0.00	42.86	14.29	71.43
50001-100000	10.00	30.00	10.00	30.00	0.00	30.00	20.00	60.00
>100000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	25.00	50.00	75.00
Total	2.86	10.00	16.67	25.00	8.33	34.29	22.86	61.67

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

#### 5.4.8 Perceived Solutions by Economic Background:

Majority of the women from very low income families prefer to live a separated life, since the husband is rarely the provider and source of strength of the family, with unsure incomes, drunkenness and frequent marital infidelity. However, a section of these women compromises for social security for their children. Women belonging to the very low income class often prefer to stay with their parental family (12.5 %), though not permanently. A large proportion of the victims of lower income group compromise with their husbands/in-laws but at the same time want to be economically independent. Among the middle income families, 42.11 percent women wish to pursue their studies or take up some career and be economically independent. It is an interesting fact that there are more half of high income women compromise with their husbands/in-laws than living a separated life. They fear of being looked down-upon in the society and feel humiliated to make the abusive life known to others.

**Table 5.22: Perceived Solution to the Problem by Economic Condition of the Family**

<b>Consumption Expenditure/ yr (in Rupees)</b>	<b>Compromise</b>	<b>Parental family</b>	<b>Separate life</b>	<b>Nuclear family</b>	<b>Others</b>
<12000	12.50	12.50	62.50	0.00	37.50
12001-24000	46.67	6.67	46.67	0.00	46.67
24001-50000	33.33	16.67	50.00	0.00	16.67
50001-100000	36.84	15.79	31.58	10.53	42.11
>100000	50.00	0.00	25.00	25.00	50.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>35.00</b>	<b>11.67</b>	<b>43.33</b>	<b>5.00</b>	<b>36.67</b>

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

## Section IV

### 5.5.1 Women with Independent Incomes and Violence:

In this section the relationship between crimes against women and the monthly income of the employed respondents have been analysed. Of all the respondents, 55 percent are employed/self-employed in different sectors. The earning respondents have been classified into 5 income groups on the basis of their monthly income: (a) very low income class (monthly income less than Rs 600), (b) Low income class- monthly income between Rs. 601-1200, (c) Medium income class (monthly income between Rs. 1201-2500), (d) High income class- monthly income between Rs. 2501- 8000 and (e) Very High Income class with monthly income more than Rs. 8000. Monthly income includes all direct incomes from salary, petty business, business incomes or property rental incomes and interest incomes etc. accruing to the respondent as independent income.

### **5.5.2 Physical Violence by Husband:**

Among this group (a) the marital relation between the spouses is loose. The women are economically independent and are confident of breaking the marital relationship if it becomes intolerable and therefore, among this group physical violence is quite less. In the next group (b), physical violence by husbands is recurrent phenomena, 20 percent are physically disfigured and there are attempts to murder. Many of these women are migrants from rural areas and are wage workers. They lack the closely knitted relations of the rural society and feel themselves strangers in the urban setting and hesitate to retaliate. Among the middle income group (c), all forms of physical violence are perpetrated by husbands and 85.71 percent reported battery. Physical disfiguring is also high. This is also prevalent even among the high and very high income classes of women. The women are reluctant to come out from the situation because of financial, social security and for various other social obligations. It is important to note that all the victims belonging to the very high income group are battered by the husband and 75 percent of them are physically disfigured but the frequency of occurrence is low. When compared between the groups it is noticed that battery exists irrespective of economic status of the respondents and is high among the very high income women (in few instances) and low among the low income group. Among the very low, low and medium income respondents the frequency of occurrence of the crime is high, rather a daily phenomena.

**Table 5.23: Physical Violence by Husband by Monthly Income of the Respondents**

Monthly Income (in Rupees)	Battery	Physical disfiguring	Attempt to burn	Attempted to murder	Others
<600	77.78	0.00	0.00	44.44	11.11
601-1200	60.00	20.00	20.00	40.00	20.00
1201-2500	85.71	42.86	14.29	28.57	14.29
2501-8000	80.00	30.00	10.00	20.00	10.00
>8000	100.00	75.00	0.00	50.00	0.00

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### 5.5.3 Mental Violence by Husband:

All forms of mental violence by the husband exist among all the groups. Among the very low income respondents use of abusive languages, quarrels and cursing/swearing are high and emotional blackmailing is low. Physical violence as well as mental violence by husband is less among this group. Mental violence of all nature is high among the medium income women. The mental abuse is common among all the income groups, even when they have financial security by way of their own incomes. Among the very high income group quarrels and cursing/swearing are prevalent among all the victims so is the threat of assault (since they are less physically assaulted). The educated respondents usually retaliate when mentally abused by the husband. On the contrary, quarrels and cursing/swearing are low among the very low income group because they are submissive and often blame themselves for the incidences. Use of abusive language is considered a work of lower category by the very high income families for which this type of crime is low among them. Emotional blackmailing is low among the very low income respondents and high among the high and the middle income victims. At times they are even thrown out from the house. Even though they are employed, their conservative nature and their fear of social

insecurity of a separated life compel them to remain passive to the situation. Threat (of assault) however, increases with the income of the victims as they are usually hesitant to batter the victim on all occasions because of their economic independence.

**Table 5.24: Mental Violence by Husband by Monthly Income of the Respondents**

Monthly Income (in Rupees)	Quarrels	Cursing/ Swearing	Use abusive language	Emotional blackmail	Threat of assault	Others
<600	66.67	66.67	77.78	22.22	33.33	0.00
600-1200	80.00	80.00	80.00	40.00	60.00	20.00
1200-2500	100.00	85.71	85.71	57.14	57.14	57.14
2500-8000	80.00	80.00	80.00	60.00	80.00	10.00
>8000	100.00	100.00	75.00	50.00	100.00	0.00

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

#### 5.5.4 Physical Violence by In-Laws:

Among the very low, low, middle and high income women battery is the only physical violence by in-laws. The in-laws are usually less abusive towards them because of financial assistance to the family. They are often harassed due to the liberal and independent attitude of these women. Among the middle income women the harassment by the in-laws are more. Sense of insecurity and ego clash usually makes the in-laws abusive. This is common among the middle, high as well as the very high income group. Only among the middle income group instances of physical disfiguring reported from Bengali speaking Hindu community.

**Table 5.25: Physical Violence by In-Laws by Monthly Income of the Respondents**

Monthly Income (in Rupees)	Battery	Physical disfiguring
<600	11.11	0.00
600-1200	20.00	0.00
1200-2500	28.57	14.29
2500-8000	20.00	0.00
>8000	25.00	0.00

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### 5.5.5 Time of Occurrences:

Among the very low income group violence on the victim is more when the perpetrator is in drunkenness (44.44%) and during financial problems (33.33%). The husband gets drunk to relax himself from the laborious, stressful life which makes him alcoholic at times and at the same time increases the financial problem of the family. These frustrations are released on the victim in the form of violence. Among the low income respondents violence is more for money, the husbands (wage workers) suffering from drunkenness or illicit relation with other women. In those cases where the victim is the first wife the husband wants the women to accept the second wife or wants her to leave the house. They are abused on all occasions, if opposed. There are a few, who are abused by the in-laws when the husband is away from home. Among the middle income respondents the time of occurrences of violence are varied; the husbands are not willing to go to work but wants the victims and the children to earn for the family<sup>2</sup> or the husband wants all the items to be brought from her parental family or accused for not bringing adequate dowry or the women are harassed for not being able to give birth to a male child.

Among the high income women the atrocities take place whenever they go against the will of the husband/ in-laws or on all occasions except when she is in her workplace. The atrocity starts from petty household matters. It is due to sheer disappointment/dislike toward the victims. Among the very high income respondents 75 percent of them are abused on all occasions or when the husband is in drunken state but none of them are alcoholic. Some of the husbands are suspicious and also suffer from inferiority complex.

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<sup>2</sup> Refer to Case of Chapter VIII.

This complex involves them into illicit relations. There are even in-laws, in this group, who suffer from inferiority complex as the victims are well placed professionally, enjoy more freedom and are economically independent. They are abused on all occasions.

**Table 5.26: Times of Occurrences**

Monthly Income (in Rupees)	Only when alone	Husband away	Financial problem	Drunkenness	Go against will	On all occasion	Others
<600	0.00	0.00	33.33	44.44	33.33	33.33	0.00
601-1200	20.00	20.00	40.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	40.00
1201-2500	0.00	0.00	28.57	42.86	28.57	42.86	28.57
2501-8000	0.00	0.00	10.00	10.00	40.00	50.00	10.00
>8000	0.00	0.00	25.00	75.00	0.00	75.00	25.00
Total	1.67	3.33	28.33	26.67	36.67	40.00	23.33

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### 5.5.6 Perceived Causes:

Among the very low income the husbands snatch the daily earnings of the women for gambling and alcohol. When she resist to his activities, she is abused or beaten up. Often being migrants from rural areas, the woman feel totally isolated in the urban setup. Some amount of acceptability and exposure leads the husband to bigamy. Atrocity for dowry is also common among this group. Among the middle income group the cause of violence is also due to financial problems, the women invariably blamed, whereas she supplements family income. They are also harassed for dowry (28.57%), also common high income women. The aspiration of moving up the ladder creates imbalances and conflicts within the family and the consequences are suffered by the women. Among the very high income respondents illicit relation and bigamy are the major cause of violence. The husband as well as the in-laws suffers from inferiority complex.

**Table 5.27: Perceived Causes**

Monthly Income (in Rupees)	Exertion	Stress	Alcoholism	Dowry	Frustration	Financial problems	Bigamy/Polygamy	Others
<600	0.00	11.11	22.22	22.22	22.22	33.33	11.11	55.56
601-1200	0.00	0.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	40.00	40.00	40.00
1201-2500	0.00	0.00	14.29	28.57	0.00	42.86	14.29	71.43
2501-8000	10.00	30.00	10.00	30.00	0.00	30.00	20.00	60.00
>8000	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	25.00	50.00	75.00
Total	2.86	10.00	16.67	25.00	8.33	34.29	22.86	61.67

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### 5.5.7 Perceived Solutions:

Among the very low income group, 55.56 percent want to live a separated life as they are confident having their own income. Some want to stay with their parental family and do not feel as a burden in their parental home because of their financial independence. Only 11.11 percent desire to compromise with husband/in-laws more so for the social security of their children. Respondents, new to the city prefer to come to a compromise because they lack the sense of security and the emotional support of the parental family, who may be located far away. Moreover, the network of broad social relation is broken in the urban sphere. Later on, when they get accustomed with the urban life, they are confident to live a separated life. They also want to remarry. There are more middle income women who want to live a separated life (57.14 %) than to compromise with husband/in-laws (42.86 %).

**Table 5.28: Perceived Solutions**

Monthly Income in Rs.	Compromise	Parental family	Separate life	Nuclear family	Others
<600	11.11	33.33	55.56	0	55.56
600-1200	40.00	0.00	40.00	0	20.00
1200-2500	42.86	0.00	57.14	0	14.29
2500-8000	30.00	10.00	40.00	0	40.00
>8000	25.00	0.00	75.00	0	25.00
Total	35.00	6.67	43.33	0	20.00

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

## 5.6 Findings:

The followings could be summarised as the main and important out come of the forgoing analysis:

1. Physical as well as mental violence both by the husband and the in-laws are high among the employed victims.
2. Sexual violence by husband is high among the housewives.
3. Atrocity due to dowry demand is more among the housewife victims.
4. Coming out of the joint family is the solution to the abusive life only among the housewives. Whereas among the employed respondents living a separated life is a solution to a large section of them.
5. A large proportion of the housewife and the unemployed victims believe that being economically independent is the ultimate solution to their abusive life.
6. Violent forms of physical violence by the husband are high among the wage workers, vendors and small business women.
7. Physical violence by husband in the form of battery among the entire occupational group but the frequency of occurrence decrease with the increase of the occupational status.
8. Emotional blackmailing among the wage workers is less.
9. Physical and mental violence by husband of all forms are lower among the high professionals.
10. Mental violence by the in-laws are high among the high professionals but physical violence fail to exist among the high officials.

11. Physical violence by in-laws exists only among the wage workers and small business women.
12. Physical violence by husband is low among the very low income group and the high income group.
13. Mental and physical violence by husband occur in high proportion among the lower middle class families and is low among the high class families.
14. Victims belonging to middle class families suffer the most.
15. Battery by the husband exists among all the income group of the respondents but the frequency of occurrence differs.
16. Victims belonging to the middle income group are abused more physically and mentally by the in-laws.
17. The very low income respondents are more reluctant to compromise with the husband/in-laws and the very high income respondents are more confident to live a separated life.

## Chapter VI

# FORCES AND PROCESSES OF MODERNISATION AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

### 6. Introduction:

The process of urbanisation deeply transforms a society through far reaching changes in occupations, the economy and various societal relationships. People from different walks of life settle in the same situation to avail the different type of economic opportunities provided by the urban economy and society. At the same time, access to education also allows the women to work and participate in the otherwise male dominated world. Traditionally in India, women were confined to their roles, like (in villages, e.g.) housekeeping, looking after the children and the family. Due to influences of modernisation, like education, awareness, and economic aspirations, women are breaking away from the given traditional roles, and are increasingly participating in all walks of life. These changes that the urban life brings into the life-style of women raise some forms of unacceptability between the traditional norms and the modern mindset within the family and do generate various forms of domestic conflicts that in extreme take the form of violence against the women, especially the newly married wives.

An attempt is being made in this chapter to study the forces of modernisation and their relationships with the gender specific problems. Nuclear family is considered as an indicator of modernisation because work differentiation within the joint family and work-

place differentiation results in break-up of joint families into nuclear families. Usually, families placed in urban locations tend to be nuclear. Migrations from a village to the town for work or business are also part of the forces of urbanisation and modernisation. For better economic opportunity offered by a city, different classes of people are pulled towards cities, known as 'classical stream' of migration.

There are three sections in this chapter. Section I deals with the study of crimes against women and its relation with nature of families. In Section II the relation of crimes against women with migration status of the respondents have been discussed. In Section III the relation of crimes against women with the educational status of the respondents are studied.

## Section I

### 6.1 Nature of Family and Crimes against Women:

There are three types of families in this section. They are *joint families* - residential group consisting of two or more families of at least two generations or more living in the same house and eating from the same hearth; *extended families*- the joint family is distinguished from the extended family only in that members of the latter live in same compound but eats from separate hearth and *nuclear family*- it is a co-resident group consisting of married couple and their children (Encyclopaedia Britannica, Inc. 1994-2002). Nuclear family constitutes 50 percent of the study, 41.66 percent are in joint family and 8.33 percent are in

extended family. The nature of family and its relation with the crimes against women are studied in this section.

#### **6.1.1 Physical Violence by Husband:**

Physical violence of all forms exists among the nuclear families; 70 percent women report battery, and 23.33 percent, grievous injuries (attempted to murder). It is observed that serious physical violence tend to occur more among the nuclear families. It is not to say that the joint families are free of violence against the women (by husbands).

The change in the value system within the joint families at large can be considered to be in someway impacted by forces and processes of modernisation. Urbanisation, a typical feature of modernisation has made the people more materialistic, aspirations of greater material comforts, competitions for prestige with neighbours etc. Within the (joint) families, a marriage is often seen as a forum of establishing “reputation” of the family concerned though lavish marriage parties, and of course, “dowry”.

Whereas in nuclear families, there is no one to moderate even routine conjugal conflicts, in joint families the in-laws intervene in support of the women (if abused by the husband). In a few cases, the husband is the black sheep of the family, and the in-laws have no control over his actions, though they sympathise with the wife. At the time of (arranged) marriages, the true nature of the groom (like alcoholism etc) are kept in confidence by the family from the brides family and when later revealed after marriage is

often a shock to the woman<sup>1</sup>; but later, she is likely to be blamed by the in-laws of failing to rectify the errant husband.

**Table 6.1: Physical Violence by Husband by Nature of Family**

<b>Nature of family</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Battery</b>	<b>Physical disfiguring</b>	<b>Attempted to burn</b>	<b>Attempted to murder</b>	<b>Others</b>
Nuclear	50.00	70.00	23.33	10.00	23.33	6.67
Joint	41.66	84.00	28.00	0.00	28.00	12.00
Extended	8.33	100.00	20.00	0.00	20.00	0.00
Total	100	78.33	25.00	5.00	25.00	8.33

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### 6.1.2 Mental Violence by Husbands:

Among the extended families all women are abused mentally. Use of abusive languages tends to be less among the high class, educated, nuclear as well as joint families. But all the forms of mental violence occur among all the families in varied proportions.

When compared between the groups, it is observed that all the respondents of extended families are subjected to abusive languages, cursing/swearing, most of the times. It is more because majority of them belong to low and lower middle-income families and the husbands indulge in drinking (alcoholic beverages). A few of the husbands are unwilling to take the financial responsibilities of the family. The other family members also do not have any control over the errant husbands, for which invariably the women is blamed and abused. It is however, low among the joint families, maybe because the elderly members within the families intervene.

<sup>1</sup> Reference: Case 3 and Case 12 of Chapter VIII.

**Table 6.2: Mental Violence by Husband by Nature of Family**

Nature of family	Quarrels	Cursing/ Swearing	Abusive language	Emotional blackmail	Threat of assault	Others
Nuclear	76.67	76.67	63.33	50.00	56.67	16.67
Joint	72.00	76.00	76.00	44.00	52.00	12.00
Extended	100.00	100.00	100.00	40.00	80.00	40.00
Total	76.67	78.33	71.67	46.67	56.67	16.67

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### 6.1.3 Sexual Violence by Husbands:

Among the nuclear families, 10 percent of the respondents are sexually abused by the husbands. They are those respondents who are forced into prostitution or trafficking by some of the husbands. They mostly belong to the low-income families. Sexual abstinence is somewhat common among the high-income respondents, largely related with illicit/extra-marital relationships of the husbands.

**Table 6.3: Sexual Violence by Husband by Nature of Family**

Nature of family	Sexual Harassment	Sexual abused	Others
Nuclear	0.00	10.00	6.67
Joint	4.00	8.00	16.00
Extended	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	1.67	8.33	10.00

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### 6.1.4 Physical Violence by In-laws:

In joint families, battery of the women is common (36%). Battery exists also among the nuclear families. Women are abused whenever they are visited by their in-laws. Dowry, mismanagement of the household, not being able to change the ill habits of the husband etc. are often attributed as faults of the wife, thus alibi for cruelty and battery by the in-

laws. It is even more preponderant among housewives. Often the married women feel handicapped to fight back because of lack of support from the parental families. Most of them are discouraged by their parents to separate and are advised to 'adjust' with their abusive situation especially, that the separated daughter with her children will be additional economic burden on the family and will be a social down-gradation. This psychology of the parental family is well-exploited by the husbands family, accepting the hopeless and helpless situation of the daughter-in law and more the torture.

**Table 6.4: Physical Violence by In-laws by Nature of Family**

<b>Nature of family</b>	<b>Battery</b>	<b>Physical disfiguring</b>	<b>Attempted to murder</b>
Nuclear	3.33	0.00	0.00
Joint	36.00	4.00	4.00
Extended	20.00	0.00	0.00
Total	18.33	1.67	1.67

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

#### **6.1.5 Mental Violence by In-laws:**

Mental violence by in-laws is significantly higher than physical violence among all the groups. Among the joint families all forms of mental violence by the in-laws are high and are low among the nuclear families. The joint families are generally governed by certain traditional and conservative outlooks because of the presence of elderly members within the family. The educated and the employed women are observed to be reluctant to abide these traditional codes for which they are abused mentally. When the in-laws are illiterate or when they are not adequately educated atrocities and emotional blackmailing tends to increase whereas the educated in-laws generally put in their effort to adjust and compromise with the changing situations and time.

**Table 6.5: Mental Violence by In-laws by Nature of Family**

Nature of family	Quarrels	Cursing/ swearing	Use abusive language	Emotionally blackmail	Threat of assault	Others
Nuclear	6.67	6.67	3.33	3.33	3.33	10.00
Joint	64.00	68.00	60.00	44.00	52.00	28.00
Extended	20.00	20.00	20.00	0.00	20.00	0.00
Total	31.67	33.33	28.33	20.00	25.00	16.67

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### 6.1.6 Times of Occurrences:

Among respondents in nuclear families (36.6%), atrocities occur on all occasions. The responsibilities to run the family are more for both the spouses in nuclear families. In poor and low income families, by necessity women also take part in economic activities to support the family. The physical and mental exertions at work place could cause annoyance among the spouses often leading to frequent disputes and quarrels and physical assaults by husbands.

**Table 6.6: Time of Occurrences by Nature of Family**

Nature of family	When alone	Husband away	Financial problem	Drunkenness	Oppose views	All occasion	Others
Nuclear	6.67	0.00	26.67	26.67	30.00	36.67	3.33
Joint	0.00	8.00	24.00	28.00	44.00	52.00	36.00
Extended	0.00	0.00	60.00	20.00	40.00	0.00	80.00
Total	3.33	3.33	28.33	26.67	36.67	40.00	23.33

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### 6.1.7 Reasons for Atrocities against Women:

There are a variety of causes for violence among the nuclear families, like anxiety, financial uncertainties, pressure of work etc. Among the nuclear families, exertion (3.33%), stress (13.33%) and frustration (16.67%) account for a fair bit of crimes against

the women. The husbands often indulge in drunkenness and alcoholism. Marital infidelity is another fact leading to disputes and atrocities on the wives: bigamy (33.33%), extra-marital relationships (more than 50%) etc. These types of cases are rare if not totally absent in rural societies, because of the close knit communities.

Lack of freedom to express oneself, lack of liberty, dominating attitude and at the same time conservative outlooks are some of the major factors (72%) behind the existence of violence in joint families. There are cases where the qualified respondents are refused to take up a job in joint families or are expected to lead a life of traditional housewives. Her movements are restricted and are not treated as an equal member of the family. The clashes between the traditional and conservative outlooks of the in-laws and the modern views of the daughter-in-laws often become the causes of violence. Violence related with dowry is high (36%) among the joint families because the forces of oppression on the victim can be exerted more in such family structure.

Among the extended families financial problems is the cause of violence for 60 percent of the respondents. Most of the husband in these families are into alcoholism or are reluctant to take the responsibility of the family. Whenever any financial problems prevail the wife is demanded to seek monetary help from parental family or are abused.

When compared between the groups it is noticed that atrocity due to stress is more among the extended families. Violence due to alcoholism occurs in equal proportion among the nuclear and the extended families. It is high among these families because of prevalence of higher sense of freedom. Bigamy is low among the joint families because of

the influences and presence of elderly members in the family for which there are certain social obligations.

**Table 6.7: Causes of Crimes by Nature of Family**

Nature of family	Exertion	Stress	Alcoholism	Dowry	Frustration	Financial problems	Bigamy/Polygamy	Others
Nuclear	3.33	13.33	20.00	16.67	16.67	30.00	33.33	56.67
Joint	0.00	4.00	12.00	36.00	0.00	32.00	8.00	72.00
Extended	0.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	0.00	60.00	20.00	40.00
Total	1.67	10.00	16.67	25.00	8.33	33.33	21.67	61.67

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### 6.1.8 Perceived Solutions:

In the nuclear families 50 percent of the respondents want to be economically independent (housewives) or study further to pursue better jobs (those who are not economically sound and stable) or both. There are 36.67 percent respondents who compromise with the husband both for financial as well as social security provided by the marriage (housewives and those employed in low paid jobs). But 43.33 percent of them want to live a separated life or are separated. It is seen that most of them are employed or are confident enough to be economically independent because of their higher qualification. There are also women who want to live a separated life even if they are not qualified enough. They want to come out from the situation for the children who are suffering psychologically because of their abusive family life or felt the threat of their children life.

Among the joint families 44 percent of them want to live a separated life. In these cases both the husband and the in-laws are the abusers or the husband is a silent spectator. Thirty two percent of the respondents' compromise with the husband/in-laws as their parental families are not supportive and want them to 'adjust' with it due to various social

obligations. There are a few women who want to live with their parental family till they are economically independent and then live on their own. Among the joint as well as extended families there are women who want to stay with parental family and take care of them as there are no male members in their parental families.

When compared between the families it is noticed that the women compromise more in the extended families due to lack self-confidence—without education or skills there is no employment and thus no economic independence. Women, who are educationally qualified living in extended families, want to separate and live with their parental families till they are economically independent to live on their own (20%).

**Table 6.8: Perceived Solution to the Problem by Nature of Family**

<b>Nature of Family</b>	<b>Compromise</b>	<b>Parental family</b>	<b>Live separately</b>	<b>Nuclear family</b>	<b>Others</b>
Nuclear	36.67	10.00	43.33	0.00	50.00
Joint	32.00	12.00	44.00	12.00	24.00
Extended	40.00	20.00	40.00	0.00	20.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>35.00</b>	<b>11.67</b>	<b>43.33</b>	<b>5.00</b>	<b>36.67</b>

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

## Section II

### 6.2.1 Migration Status of Respondents and Crimes against Women:

This section studies the relation of crimes against women by migration status. In the samples of the study, 35 percent women have migrated to Guwahati from villages. They have migrated with their husbands or might have migrated to the city for marriage, a situation that is particularly common in developing societies with growing impetus on urbanisation. At times the women and the children follow the husbands in search of better

economic opportunities in the city after the husband settles down there as a migrant. There are 20 percent respondents who have migrated from another town to the city because of marriage. A majority of the respondents (45%) belong to Guwahati. Migration from village to the city, particularly large cities subject the migrant families to a number of influences like (a) living in nuclear families, (b) break-down of the social network of the village, (c) exposing the women to a new work environment, i.e., working on wage employment or small enterprises to support family income and (d) particularly exposing men to alcoholism and other negative influences due to absence of social control as in the village environment.

### **6.2.2 Physical Violence by Husband:**

Battery by husbands (80.95%) is the common form of physical violence for respondents who have migrated from villages (by marriage). There are a few women in this group who have been rendered physically handicapped due to severe physical assaults. When they (low income class) are new to the city, they easily compromise to the abusive life perpetrated on them because of the different urban norms with which they are not accustomed to. They tend to accept the situation initially, because they lack confidence to fight back and feel themselves as stranger in the city because of the absence of the social network of relationships.

This sense of insecurity also at times makes the husband feel more powerful even among the migrants from towns. They have migrated to the city for their marriage than for economic factors and majority of them belongs to different communities and

language groups. The husbands at time do not hesitate to be violent because many of them lack the family support or alternative shelter within the city where they can turn to for resort. Even for the educated women, police is never the resort for help and support. There are a few respondents in this group who were rescued by the police when the neighbour reported to the police<sup>2</sup>. A few neighbours reacted and reported to the police when these disturbances become a frequent activity which disturbs the peaceful atmosphere of the 'educated' society. Others considering it as a private matter of the family and prefer to be silent spectators. There are some respondents in this group who does not know how to react to the situation when abused because they feel themselves as stranger to the abusive environment.

Among the respondents belonging to Guwahati physical atrocity by husband are of all types- physical disfiguring (25.93%), attempt to murder (33.33%) etc. Violent forms of physical violence are high among this group because of various factors. There are more employed women among them who are (both in joint and nuclear families) harassed more by the husband. Their sense of economic independence and freedom are often not tolerated by the husband/in-laws. They are more confidence (awareness of the support system being from the city) to retaliate which ends in the form of violent nature of violence on them.

**Table 6.9: Physical Violence by Husbands by Migration Status**

Migration Status	Percentage	Battery	Physical disfiguring	Attempted to burn	Attempted to murder	Others
Migrated from village	35.00	80.95	19.05	0.00	23.81	9.52
Migrated from town	20.00	83.33	33.33	16.67	8.33	8.33
Resident of Guwahati	45.00	74.07	25.93	3.70	33.33	7.41
Total	100.00	78.33	25.00	5.00	25.00	8.33

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

<sup>2</sup> Reference: Case 3 of Chapter VIII.

When compared between the groups it is observed that physical violence by the husband (except attempt to murder) is high among the respondents who have migrated from other towns and are low among the respondents from Guwahati. Their (migrants from other towns) difficulty to adjust with the different cultural set up and social norms of the city often becomes conducive for violence against her. Moreover, most of them are housewives. Cases of attempt to murder by the husband are high among the respondents from Guwahati because it consists of women from different communities (are in Guwahati for generations together). There are instances when the husband wants to get ride of the women for various reasons, such as illicit relation, ego clashes etc.

### **6.2.3 Mental Violence by Husband:**

All forms of mental violence by husbands exist among all the groups but among the migrants from village's quarrels, cursing/swearing and use of abusive languages is high. A few of them were even driven out from their house in number of occasions. They often compromise with their abusive life even though they are economically independent as they does not belonging to the city.

Emotional blackmailing is high among the respondents from Guwahati who are from other communities than Assamese and low economic classes. Threat of assault is high among the women who have migrated from other towns because the occurrence of physical violence is also high among them.

When compared between the groups, it is observed that mental violence by the husband is generally high among the women who have migrated from the villages because

they lack confidence in themselves because of different and new cultural and the social setup of the city. But later on when they gradually adopt themselves to the urban environment the situation alters.

**Table 6.10: Mental Violence by Husband by Migration Status**

Migration Status	Quarrels	Cursing/ Swearing	Abusive language	Emotional blackmail	Threat of assault	Others
From village	80.95	85.71	76.19	38.10	52.38	19.05
From town	66.67	75.00	66.67	33.33	66.67	8.33
Resident of Guwahati	77.78	74.07	70.37	59.26	55.56	18.52
<b>Total</b>	<b>76.67</b>	<b>78.33</b>	<b>71.67</b>	<b>46.67</b>	<b>56.67</b>	<b>16.67</b>

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

#### 6.2.4 Sexual Violence by Husband:

Sexual violence of some form exists among all the women; but it is especially significant for women from other towns. A few of the respondents were lured into marriage and then, deserted by the husbands. It appears, some migrant women from villages have been forced into prostitutions by their own husbands—naturally, the marriage was an alibi for prostitution racket.

**Table 6.11: Sexual Violence by Husband by Migration Status**

Migration Status	Sexual harassment	Sexual abused	Others
Migrated from village	0.00	9.52	4.76
Migrated from town	8.33	16.67	8.33
Resident of Guwahati	0.00	3.70	14.81
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.67</b>	<b>8.33</b>	<b>10.00</b>

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

#### 6.2.5 Physical Violence by In-laws:

Physical violence by the in-laws in the form of battery is high among the women who have migrated from villages and often, they are physically disfigured by the in-laws. It appears,

as reported by the respondents that their rural background and unfamiliarity with the ways of city life is frowned upon and becomes a trigger for violence. Women migrants who are housewives are abused more than those who have some employment (low-paid jobs). Women with background of Guwahati also suffer battery (14.81%). In general it is observed that physical violence by the in-laws is high among the migrants from villages.

**Table 6.12: Physical Violence by In-laws by Migration Status**

<b>Migration Status</b>	<b>Battery</b>	<b>Physical disfiguring</b>	<b>Attempted to murder</b>
Migrated from village	28.57	4.76	0.00
Migrated from town	8.33	0.00	0.00
Resident of Guwahati	14.81	0.00	3.70
<b>Total</b>	<b>18.33</b>	<b>1.67</b>	<b>1.67</b>

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### **6.2.6 Mental Violence by In-laws:**

Mental violence of all forms by the in-laws is high among the respondents from Guwahati and is low among the migrants from other towns. The residents of Guwahati who belong to well educated middle and high class families are more liberal in their outlook and seek to have a sense of freedom (social as well as economical) which are often frowned upon because of their conservative outlook. And the social as well as the economic status of the high professionals are not given due respect by the in-laws but are humiliated and even treated as maid servants. They are expected not to participate in any decision making process or to have any will of their own at home and are ignored. The enviousness of the in-laws of the economic and the social freedom enjoyed by the employed respondents makes them abusive. It is also because of the difference of opinions between the in-laws

and respondents. This happens more when there is a wide educational gap between the in-laws and the daughter-in-laws. This widens the outlook between the two- traditional and modern.

Among the women from villages, the mental violence by the in-laws is more (among the lower economic group) because they are usually less self-conscious of the society. At the same time there are a few of them who are looked down upon since they are from villages. They are passed sarcastic comments when they try to adjust and adopt with the urban society.

**Table 6.13: Mental Violence by In-laws by Migration Status**

Migration Status	Quarrels	Cursing/ swearing	Use abusive language	Emotionally blackmail	Threat of assault	Others
Migrated from village	28.57	28.57	23.81	14.29	23.81	9.52
Migrated from town	16.67	16.67	16.67	16.67	16.67	16.67
Resident of Guwahati	40.74	44.44	37.04	25.93	29.63	22.22
Total	31.67	33.33	28.33	20.00	25.00	16.67

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### 6.2.7 Times of Occurrences:

Among the migrants from villages, occurrence of crimes is more when they oppose views of the husband or in-laws. They are expected to do whatever the perpetrator intends, have no wish of their own and treated as inferiors. This is also common among the women from middle and high class families but the status of the women from poor families sinks further. In certain families who have migrated from villages the husbands often get indulged into certain common social traits of an urban society -illicit relation, alcoholism, bigamy etc. The woman is expected to accept these social norms and abused when she disagrees or asked to leave the house or break the marital code. These habits of the

husband add to the financial constraints of the family. It is for these reasons occurrences of crime is more when they under go financial problems.

The women who have migrated from other towns and those from Guwahati, the atrocity is more dowry related. Dowry can be regarded as a force of modernisation because in a rural Assamese society dowry demands fail to exist. It has ventured into Assamese society along with the communities who have migrated to Assam, among whom this custom flourishes. A few of these women are demanded dowry during 'marriage negotiation'. But most of them are abused for dowry in other occasions. They are insulted and rebuked for not bringing adequate dowry or are ask to demand monetary support from their parental family. There are a few cases where the husband wants the parental property to be transferred to his name<sup>3</sup>.

When compared between the groups, it is observed that atrocity when the husband is away from home is frequent, especially in cases of residents (non-migrants) of Guwahati. A few of them are disliked by their in-laws as they have married on their own. There are a few women who have cordial relation with their husbands but are disliked by their in-laws who interfere in their relationship. Atrocities due to financial problems are more among the women from other towns (middle class women) among whom the aspiration to climb the ladder of social and economic status is high. In an urban society alcoholism is more so an accepted social norm for which violence on the women from Guwahati in drunkenness is high. Majority of them are confident and retaliate and the atrocity increases in frequency when they confronts.

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<sup>3</sup> Reference: Case 9 of Chapter VIII.

**Table 6.14: Times of Occurrences**

Migration Status	When alone	Husband away	Financial problem	Drunkenness	Oppose views	On all occasion	Others
from village	9.52	0.00	33.33	19.05	47.62	23.81	19.05
from town	0.00	0.00	41.67	25.00	41.67	33.33	33.33
Resident of Guwahati	0.00	7.41	18.52	33.33	25.93	55.56	22.22
Total	3.33	3.33	28.33	26.67	36.67	40.00	23.33

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### 6.2.8 Perceived Causes of Crimes:

The respondents who have migrated from villages are abused more for financial problems (lower economic group). Soon after settling in the city the husband gradually gets indulged into certain 'urban traits' such as alcoholism, gambling etc. in the initial stage to release his stress and frustration. But later on he gets addicted to it as there is little resistance to his activities. This adds to the already existing financial constrains of the family. The husband often grabs away the earning of the women to spend in his addictions. If the woman always put a resistance to his activities he prefers to have a second wife or get indulged into illicit relation.

Among the respondents who have migrated from other towns atrocities due to financial problems are more but it is always not due to poverty but more for the quench to attain a materialistic life within a short period of time. For which atrocity due to stress (16.67%), frustrations (16.67%) and exertion (8.33%) are also high among them. These often lead the perpetrator into alcoholism

Bigamy does not exist among the migrants from other towns but atrocities for illicit relation of the husband are high among them and those from Guwahati because they get exposed to these indifferent and flexible social norms of an urban society. The

consequence of these changes in attitudes has to be endured by the women who are often more conservative in their outlook.

When compared between the groups it is observed that atrocity due to dowry is high among the women who are from Guwahati because Guwahati is multi-ethnic in character so are the samples in this study and the Assamese society is also influenced by these practises. Violence due to alcoholism is high among the respondents from Guwahati because it is more so an accepted urban social norm and there is also easy access to it, unlike in rural society, where a broad network of relation exists, the perpetrator is hesitant to indulge himself into such habits.

**Table 6.15: Causes of Crimes by Migration Status**

Migration Status	Exertion	Stress	Alcoholism	Dowry	Frustration	Financial problems	Bigamy/Polygamy	Others
Migrated from village	0.00	4.76	14.29	9.52	4.76	42.86	33.33	57.14
Migrated from town	8.33	16.67	16.67	25.00	16.67	50.00	0.00	83.33
Resident of Guwahati	0.00	11.11	18.52	37.04	7.41	18.52	22.22	55.56
Total	1.67	10.00	16.67	25.00	8.33	33.33	21.67	61.67

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### 6.2.9 Perceived Solution to the Problem:

Among the women from villages almost equal proportion comes to a compromise with her situations (42.86%) and at the same time want to live a separated life (47.62%). It was observed during the field works that the women in this group when they are new to the city usually compromises due to the social, financial as well as physiological security provided by the marriage. But gradually, when they grow with their situation, they gain and groom up their confidence to live a separated life only if they are economically independent. But those women who have to take care of the children prefer to compromise with whatever

situation they are in (low income group). A few of these women (lower economic group) prefer to remarry or have remarried.

Among the women who have migrated from other towns majority of them prefer to be economically independent to build up their confidence to confront their abusive life and be respected within the family as equals. But many of them compromise because they are not literate enough to take up an adequate job or are not supported by their parental family with their decision to live separately or have other social obligations. When the abusers are the in-laws they prefer to come out from the joint family. A number of these women want to stay with their parental family for a temporary period, till they are economically independent to stay on their own.

The women from Guwahati are more confident to stay separately or on their own because they are accustomed to the urban society. For the women with social networks of friends and relations, it gets difficult to come out of the abusive life. They fear social ostracism. A few have taken up the responsibilities to take care of their parents and stay with them. Others still have pursued further education or have taken up some career oriented and vocational courses to be economically independent.

When compared between the groups, it is noticed that the women who have migrated from villages compromise more with the abusive situation because they lack self-confidence and sense of insecurity that their new existence in the city ushers in. Among the women from other town they prefer more to stay with their parental family because they have few other options left with them. Among the migrants from villages there are more women who want to live a separated life (47.62%) because they have the option of second

marriage. Many of the migrants from towns want to be economically independent to lessen their atrocity as they have more access to these opportunities in an urban situation. It is interesting to note that they want to be economically independent, not by a separated life, but to improve their status within the family.

**Table 6.16: Solution to the Problem by Migration Status**

<b>Migration Status</b>	<b>Compromise</b>	<b>Parental family</b>	<b>Live separately</b>	<b>Nuclear family</b>	<b>Others</b>
Migrated from village	42.86	9.52	47.62	0.00	33.33
Migrated from town	41.67	16.67	33.33	8.33	58.33
Resident of Guwahati	25.93	11.11	44.44	7.41	29.63
<b>Total</b>	<b>35.00</b>	<b>11.67</b>	<b>43.33</b>	<b>5.00</b>	<b>36.67</b>

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### Section III

#### 6.3 Crimes against Women by Educational Status:

In every modern society education is considered as an empowering tool as it makes one eligible to access information and build up their awareness. In this section an attempt is being made to analyse the relationship between crimes against women and the empowering tool, education. There are 18.33 percent women who are illiterates, 31.67 percent, under metric, 33.32 percent, metric pass, 11.67 percent are Graduates and the rest 5 percent are high professionals. Among the high professionals there are doctors, engineers and bureaucrats. Majority of the illiterates are wage workers.

### 6.3.1 Physical Violence by Husband:

In Table 6.19, it is observed that among the highly qualification women (graduates and higher professionals) extreme violent forms of crimes (attempt to burn and murder) is rare. However, across educational classes, other forms of crimes are reported, particularly battery (wife bashing) is the commonest pastime of the erring husbands in the sample. Therefore, whereas higher education appears as a deterrent to extreme criminal assaults, but it is no safety valve for “routine, daily bashing” of the wife. Why that happens? The chief reason appears, as it is in the Indian society, the concept of husband, “swami” (literally, the owner), thus is more than equal to the wife; thus, has inherent rights to “discipline” the wife or to show her the “right place”—it is not an equal spousal relationship. The problem is, this is the position of acceptance by the wife—occasional “slaps” are just about “OK”—part of the spousal game, not the other way around. Second, though such acts are legally punishable, it requires a complaint to the enforcement authority by the wife—which is a rarity, whereas a *suo moto* action by the police or by a third-party should be sufficient for action as in the case of amended Dowry Act provides for.

**Table 6.17: Physical Violence by Husband by Educational Level**

Educational Level	Percentage	Battery	Physical Disfiguring	Attempted to burn	Attempted to murder	Others
Illiterate	18.33	75.00	33.33	8.33	25.00	8.33
Under Metric	31.67	78.95	31.58	5.26	26.32	15.79
Metric Pass	33.32	78.95	10.53	5.26	31.58	0.00
Graduate	11.67	85.71	28.57	0.00	14.29	14.29
Professional	5.00	66.67	33.33	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	100.00	78.33	25.00	5.00	25.00	8.33

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

When compared across educational classes, the graduate housewives are the worst sufferers. A few of them want to pursue a job but are refused by the in-laws and the husbands act indifferently. On the other hand, the employed graduates are expected to attend to their household chores, and be a professional woman, at the same time. The highly qualified, professionally successful women are often harassed because husband may be zealous or suffer from inferiority complex. They are also less abused because in all the cases both the spouses are educationally highly qualified and that forbids them to indulge in undignified acts, a restraint put by person's "self-image". Among the illiterate respondents (usually both the spouses are generally illiterates) conservative outlooks prevail, which puts them often in the receiving end, i.e., acceptance of beating by husband as normal and the inherent rights of the husband.

### **6.3.2 Mental Violence by Husbands:**

All forms of mental violence by the husband are common and exist in varying proportions among all the educational groups. Quarrels, cursing/swearing and use of abusive languages are the commonest. But it is observed that mental violence is high among the women who are metric pass (lower middle class families). The social status of these women does not permit to take up any odd jobs and majority are housewives. Those employed does not contribution substantially towards the family economy for which their status within the family remains as same as the housewives. They are considered as subordinates and are expected to be a housewife first.

When compared between the groups it is observed that the proportion of occurrences of mental violence is more among the women who are metric pass and it gradually decreases in both the upper and lower directions, among the illiterates and the high professions. Among the higher educated group, the family is conscious about their neighbours and are afraid of forming a negative reputation within the society through their mental atrocity on the women. On the other hand among the illiterates there is more physical violence than mental violence. She is hit first than shouted.

**Table 6.18: Mental Violence by Husband by Educational Level**

Educational Level	Quarrels	Cursing/ Swearing	Use abusive language	Emotional blackmailing	Threat of assault	Others
Illiterate	66.67	75.00	66.67	25.00	41.67	0.00
Under Metric	73.68	73.68	73.68	52.63	57.89	21.05
Metric Pass	89.47	89.47	78.95	57.89	68.42	31.58
Graduate	71.43	71.43	57.14	42.86	57.14	0.00
Professional	66.67	66.67	66.67	33.33	33.33	0.00
Total	76.67	78.33	71.67	46.67	56.67	16.67

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### **6.3.3 Sexual Violence by Husband by Educational Status:**

Among the illiterates and the under-metric women, a few of the women have been sexually exploited by the husbands. They were initiated into prostitution by their own husbands. A few women with secondary education (metric-pass) were deserted by the husbands after few months of marriage; consequently they felt sexually exploited—marriage was a guise for sexually exploiting young girls, without appropriate social or legal safeguards.

**Table 6.19: Sexual Violence by Husband by Educational Level**

<b>Educational Level</b>	<b>Sexual harassment</b>	<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	<b>Others</b>
Illiterate	0.00	8.33	0.00
Under Metric	0.00	10.53	5.26
Metric Pass	5.26	10.53	21.05
Graduate	0.00	0.00	14.29
Professional	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.67</b>	<b>8.33</b>	<b>10.00</b>

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### 6.3.4 Physical Violence by In-laws:

Physical violence is generally less by the in-laws. Except some among the illiterates, battery by in-laws decreases with the increase in education of the women, especially among the highly qualified professionals. Women's education acts as an effective deterrent against physical violence. However, among the Hindu Bengali community, physical assaults by the in-laws are reported even among the graduate women, especially if she is a housewife. Most of the illiterate women live in nuclear families, thus not much reported violence by in-laws.

**Table 6.20: Physical Violence by In-laws by Educational Level**

<b>Educational Level</b>	<b>Battery</b>	<b>Physical disfiguring</b>	<b>Attempted to murder</b>
Illiterates	16.67	0.00	0.00
Under Metric	21.05	5.26	0.00
Metric Pass	21.05	0.00	5.26
Graduates	14.29	0.00	0.00
Professionals	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>18.33</b>	<b>1.67</b>	<b>1.67</b>

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### 6.3.5 Mental Violence by In-laws:

In contrast to physical violence, mental violence of all types somewhat increases with the increase in education of the women, particularly since physical violence declines and verbal and psychological attacks replaces physical violence. It maybe because (a) first, the new-found freedom due to education are often not tolerated by the in-laws; (b)second, there are differences of opinions, outlook, way of doing work etc between the DIL (daughter-in-law) and MIL (mother-in-law); and (c)third, there is also a sense of inferiority complex suffered by the in-laws (MIL).

It is observed in some cases that when the woman is qualified, economically independent, and the husband more attached to the wife, a sense of insecurity dawns on the in-laws and they become abusive.

**Table 6.21: Mental Violence by Husband by Educational Level**

Educational Level	Quarrels	Cursing/ Swearing	Use abusive language	Emotional blackmailing	Threat of assault	Others
Illiterate	16.67	16.67	16.67	8.33	16.67	8.33
Under Metric	31.58	31.58	26.32	21.05	26.32	10.53
Metric Pass	36.84	36.84	26.32	21.05	26.32	15.79
Graduate	28.57	42.86	42.86	14.29	14.29	28.57
Professional	66.67	66.67	66.67	66.67	66.67	66.67
Total	31.67	33.33	28.33	20.00	25.00	16.67

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### 6.3.6 Times of Occurrences:

Among the illiterate women, violence are frequent during times of financial problems (58.33%), either during times of husbands profligacy, indulgences or during times of lack of employment or health troubles; the woman invariable is blamed for all the owes of the husband and the family. The poor and illiterates Hindu women accept the violence as their

faith tells them, but not all Muslim women. Opposing husband's actions or opinion may attract swift disciplining, especially among the illiterate women. On the other hand, women with secondary education or tertiary (graduates), are harassed even more on all occasions, for reasons like dowry or opposing the wily ways of the husband (illicit relations). Women with higher education want certain freedom of mobility, speech, view etc. that are not easily conceded by the in-laws.

**Table 6.22: Occurrences of Crime by Educational Level**

Educational Level	When alone	Husband away	Financial problems	Drunkenness	Oppose views	On all occasions	Others
Illiterate	0.00	0.00	58.33	25.00	25.00	50.00	16.67
Under Metric	5.26	0.00	31.58	31.58	52.63	26.32	26.32
Metric Pass	5.26	0.00	21.05	31.58	26.32	42.11	10.53
Graduates	0.00	14.29	0.00	14.29	28.57	57.14	28.57
Professional	0.00	33.33	0.00	0.00	66.67	33.33	100.00
Total	3.33	3.33	28.33	26.67	36.67	40.00	23.33

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### 6.3.7 Perceived Causes of Violence:

Uneducated and illiterate women view the chief reasons of domestic violence as money, rather lack of it and illicit relations with other women. The irony is, they hold a contradictory position—more money would make the husbands look more for other women! The difficulty is, most of the women believe that more money brings in more peace in the household—the unequal and secondary position assigned to them by a predominantly patriarchal social order is hardly ever realised and questioned!

Lack of adequate education adds to their existing abusive life by diminishing their position in the family. Among the graduate housewives dowry is one of the major causes of violence. There are a few women in this group who are abused for their eagerness to be

economically independent<sup>4</sup>. On the other hand, the employed graduates and the professionals are abused for not being able to maintain a balance between the 'dual role of a housewife and a working woman'. In all these cases the in-laws are the main abusers; the husband also joins in subsequently, when constantly badgered about the wife.

**Table 6.23: Causes of Occurrences by Educational Levels**

Educational Level	Exertion	Stress	Alcoholism	Dowry	Frustration	Financial Problems	Bigamy/Polygamy	Others
Illiterate	0.00	8.33	25.00	0.00	8.33	58.33	41.67	58.33
Under Metric	0.00	10.53	5.26	26.32	10.53	42.11	26.32	57.89
Metric Pass	0.00	10.53	26.32	31.58	10.53	26.32	10.53	57.89
Graduates	14.29	14.29	14.29	57.14	0.00	0.00	14.29	71.43
Professional	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Total	1.67	10.00	16.67	25.00	8.33	33.33	21.67	61.67

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### 6.3.5 Perceived Solutions:

Among the illiterate women, a large section (58.33%) wants to live a separated life or remarry, as they are economically independent. However, women with daughters prefer to compromise for the social security provided by the marriage and especially, for the future marriage of their daughters. Women with metric-pass, 52.63 percent want to live a separated life and would like to be economically independent. They prefer to stay with their parental families but only till they are economically stable; the graduate housewives have similar views. They want to pursue some career oriented courses or study further. On the other hand, there are mixed responses from professional women. Roughly one-third prefer leading a separated life; whereas the same proportion wishes to compromise with their situations and the rest prefer to keep quite or wait-and-watch.

<sup>4</sup> Reference: Case 1 of Chapter VIII.

**Table 6.24: Solution to the Problem by Educational Levels**

<b>Educational Level</b>	<b>Compromise</b>	<b>Parental family</b>	<b>Live separately</b>	<b>Nuclear family</b>	<b>Others</b>
Illiterate	33.33	0.00	58.33	0.00	25.00
Under Metric	42.11	15.79	26.32	0.00	42.11
Metric Pass	31.58	15.79	52.63	5.26	31.58
Graduates	28.57	14.29	42.86	28.57	42.86
Professional	33.33	0.00	33.33	0.00	66.67
Total	35.00	11.67	43.33	5.00	36.67

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### **Findings:**

1. All forms of physical violence by the husband are high among the joint families.
2. Mental violence of all forms by the husband is high among the extended families.
3. Physical and mental violence by in-laws of all forms are high among the joint families and low among the nuclear families.
4. Mental violence of all forms is higher than the physical violence in all the family types.
5. Among the nuclear families the atrocity is more on all the occasions.
6. In joint families the respondents are abused more on all occasion or when she goes against the will of the perpetrator because of the lack of support system both within as well as from parental family.
7. Atrocity due to exertion, stress and frustration exist more among the nuclear family.
8. Majority of the women want to live a separated life in all the types of families.
9. Physical violence by the husband is varied at the same time violent in nature among the migrants from villages.

10. Physical violence by husband is high among the women who have migrated from other town and low among the women from Guwahati.
11. Mental violence is high among the women from villages.
12. All forms of physical violence by the husband except attempt to murder are high among the respondents who have migrated have towns.
13. When compared on the basis of migration status mental violence by the husband and physical violence by the in-laws are generally high among the women who have migrated from villages.
14. Mental violence of all forms by the in-laws is high among the respondents from Guwahati.
15. Among the women who have migrated from villages, occurrence of crimes is more when they go against the will of the husband and in-laws
16. Violence due to alcoholism and dowry are high among the respondents from Guwahati. Financial problem is the primary cause of violence for the women who have migrated from villages and towns.
17. The women from Guwahati are more confident to lead an independent life, but the women who have migrated from villages prefer to compromise and the women who have migrated from towns what to be economically independent to come out from their abusive life.
18. The women who are metric pass are harassed more both physically and mentally by the husband.

19. Violent forms of violence by the husband exist less among the women who are of higher qualification.
20. Physical violence by the in-laws gradually decreases with the increase of the educational status of the women and fail to exist among the high professionals.
21. Mental violence by the in-laws increases with the educational status of the women.
22. Atrocity during drunkenness and financial problems decreases with the increases of the educational status of the women.
23. Bigamy as a cause of violence increases with the decrease of the educational status of the women.
24. Dowry is one of the major causes of violence among the graduate housewives.
25. Among the graduates and the high professionals the atrocities starts from small petty matters.
26. The illiterates prefers to live a separated life, the under metric women prefers to comes to a compromise with their situation and the professional women reacts indifferently to their abusive life.

## Chapter VII

### CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN OUTSIDE HOME

#### 7.1. Introduction:

Urbanisation provides different types of opportunities to women. There are greater mobility, opportunities to avail employment due to access to education, greater liberty and freedom compared to the rural counterparts. Through education or other work skills she ventures into the workplace, which is otherwise a male dominated world. These at the same time, generate some specific type of problems, which are women-centric. Urbanisation and modernisation no doubt at one hand, empowers women but at the same time it brings in other types of influences, which also creates specific types of problems for women to confront. It can generate psychological as well as physical pressure on the women which may expose the women now to various forms of harassments including 'sexual harassment at workplace'. These are some of the darker sides of modernisation that act as hurdles for the all round development of the women.

In this chapter, violence related to women's work outside home has been analysed. There are four sections in this chapter: Section I deals with the study of violence that occur outside home against the women and its relation with the age of the women; Section II deals with the relation of violence outside home with marital status of the respondents; Section III deals with the analysis of crimes against women outside home and its relation

with occupations and Section IV, educational status of the respondents and crimes against women outside home. It also includes the perception of respondents on possible solutions.

## Section I

### **7.2 Crimes against Women Outside Home:**

Twenty respondents were interviewed with the help of a structured schedule to study the various sexual harassments that women are subjected outside the home. During the field study it was kept in mind to include women from all walks of life; college going students, office goers, businesswomen and housewives, etc. within the sample. But it was observed that the married women and housewives are generally not subjected to harassment in public places. This is perhaps, due to the cultural meanings assigned to married women in the Indian situation, i.e. married women by traditional value system are elevated to the place of mother. However, there could be exceptions under particular circumstances. Therefore, married women were excluded as well women above the age of 35 years. In this section the place of occurrence, the frequency, type, etc of crimes outside home in relation to age have been analysed. How women are subjected to sexual harassment outside home? When does this usually occur? -- These are some of the questions we seek to answer in this section.

### **7.3.1 The Age Factor:**

The respondents are aged between 17 to 35 years but majority of them are between 18 to 28 years of age. Thirty percent of the respondents are below 18 years of age, 50 percent, between 18 and 25 years, and 20 percent are above 25 years. All of them reported some or the other form of sexual harassment.

### **7.3.2 Places of Occurrences:**

More than 88 percent of the women (below 18 years) have been sexually harassed on the way to the workplace, markets and to educational institutions etc, and 22.22 percent of them, inside the premises of their own schools and colleges. Many reported (66.67%) that they are sexually harassed almost everywhere outside their homes, especially, eve-teasing. Often, the incidents are surprising with little time for reaction or retaliation, as the abuser mingles with the crowd or walks away quickly after the incident. This usually takes place during morning hours near the school premises when the students are in a hurry to enter the schools/ colleges or at closing times<sup>1</sup>. These harassments have a continuous pattern starting the moment they step out of home, on the street, in the public transport and inside the schools and colleges, and the same pattern repeats till they return home. These young women are too young or bold to retaliate or seek help of law enforcement, also for reasons of social castigation.

All the respondents in the age group between 18 and 25 years are subjected to abuse on the way to office, markets and colleges, at workplaces (22%), and in crowded

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<sup>1</sup> Reference: Case 14 of Chapter VIII.

places (22%). Among this age group the sexual harassment, both in type and extent tend to decrease with increase in age of the woman (Table 7.1). With age, the women get matured to deal with the incidents of harassment, can retaliate which acts as a deterrent or in extreme cases, could report to public authority or simply ignore the incident as a 'professional hazard', in a sense, accepting the situation as 'business as usual'.

Respondents who are above 25 years, (50%) report being abused on the way to the office, market etc and the same proportion inside the workplace. Among this age group it is seen that they are less harassed on the way to the office but their harassment increases inside the workplace. For married women who are above 30 years harassment somewhat decreases in public places because they are confident enough to protect themselves.

**Table 7.1: Places of Occurrences of Sexual Violence**

<b>Age Classes</b>	<b>On the way, market etc.</b>	<b>Inside offices/workplace</b>	<b>Others</b>
>18	88.89	22.22	66.67
18-25	100.00	22.22	22.22
>25	50.00	50.00	0.00

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

There is no place in particular where the respondents below 18 years are subjected to sexual violence, because they have been harassed anywhere they venture to go out. They are harassed in public transport, particularly in crowded bus where the perpetrators many times pretend, the sexual advances were not intentional, if caught in the act red-handed. In less crowded buses they are subjected to harassment, because they lack confidence to speak up and object to advances and passes. About 11 percent report being sexually harassed in their own educational institutions, often by their male teachers, especially the

physical instructors or the yoga teachers who get the opportunity of touching the adult pupils.

Among the respondents belonging to age group between 18 and 25 years, sexual harassment is more frequent in the public transport. They are also abused in educational institutions and workplaces. Women above 25 years are also abused in public transport, though the frequency of occurrence is less. More than 50 percent of the women are harassed in workplaces because they need to interact with people from all walks of life. It is generally observed that the occurrences of sexual harassment at public places decreases with the increase of age.

**Table 7.2: Places of Occurrences of Sexual Violence**

Age	Public transport	Walking	Public places	All the places	Others
>18	-	-	-	88.89	11.11
18-25	44.44	11.11	11.11	66.67	33.33
>25	50.00	0.00	0.00	50.00	50.00

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### **7.3.3 Timings of Occurrences:**

All the respondents (15-18 years) are sexually harassed in all places when they are alone but more in crowded places and in crowded public transports, even when they are with their friends. The women of 18 to 25 years are harassed when they are with their friends and even with relations. Among the other age group (above 25 years) all the women are harassed only when they are alone. In such situations, the women usually lack confidence to retaliate.

**Table 7.3: Timings of Occurrences**

Age	Only when alone	With friends	With relations
>18	100	55.56	0.00
18-25	100	77.78	22.22
>25	100	0.00	0.00

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### 7.3.4 Frequency of Occurrences:

Women below 18 years (22%) are harassed everyday in different places outside home. Similarly, women up to age 25 years (44.44%) are sexually abused at least once a week. There are some young women (between 18 and 25 years, 11.11%) who are sexually harassed everyday. The frequency of occurrence of sexual violence of the women outside the home decreases with age. On the other hand, among women above 25 years, 50 percent are harassed occasionally. These women also happen to be those who are sexually harassed in their workplaces. Women of higher age are less victimised because they are confident and bold enough to resist the perpetrator<sup>2</sup>.

**Table 7.4: Frequently of Occurrences**

Age	No response	Everyday	Once a week	Once a month	Occasionally
>18	0	22.22	44.44	11.11	22.22
18-25	0	11.11	44.44	44.44	0.00
>25	50	0.00	0.00	0.00	50.00

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### 7.3.5 Types of Crimes:

Young women (15-18 years, 66.67%) are subjected to all forms of sexual attacks as reported for this study; 33.33 percent are subjected to suggestive physical contacts; and

<sup>2</sup> Reference: Case 16 of Chapter VIII.

22.22 percent, pushing. It is observed that women within this age group are subjected more to sexual harassment than to sexual abuse. These types of harassment are common in the crowded public transport and in crowded places but more in a public transport because it is easy for the perpetrators to escape if caught red-handed. In educational institutions and workplaces, the sexual harassments are suggestive physical contacts. The perpetrators are usually young but above 30 years.

For women belonging to 18 and 25 years age group all the types of sexual harassments exist and in equal proportion. "Stalking" is less among this age group and nearly absent for who are above 25 years. The women who work till the late hours at night are invariably stalked at night. In most of the cases, stalker is the same person and usually belongs to age group between 18 and 25 years, i.e. probably younger adult males than the women.

**Table 7.5: Types of Sexual Violence**

Age	Lewd remarks	Pushing	Suggestive physical contacts	Following	All the violence	Others
>18	11.11	22.22	33.33	0.00	66.67	5
18-25	44.44	44.44	44.44	11.11	44.44	5
>25	0.00	50.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

#### **7.4 Sexual Harassment by Marital Status:**

To study the relationship of sexual violence outside home with marital status the respondents are grouped into two categories, unmarried and married. There are 85 percent unmarried and 15 percent married women who were sampled in this study. The unequal distribution of the sample was for the reason, that a very large majority of very young

women (below 25) are invariably more mobile in the city due to education or work-related activities. Only a small proportion of women of higher age work outside or otherwise subjected to sexual harassments outside home situations.

#### 7.4.1 Places of Occurrences:

Nearly all the unmarried women (94.12%) are sexually harassed on the way to the offices, markets and educational institutions. They are harassed less inside the workplaces than the married women, in which cases the perpetrators are often colleagues or visitors. On the other hand, the married women are less harassed on the way to the office, market etc. The married women are less harassed in public places because in the Indian society, their social images and status are elevated by traditional values and the potential tormentors are discouraged; but these values are gradually getting eroded and now even married women are not spared of these indignities in public places.

**Table 7.6: Places of Occurrence of Sexual Violence**

<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>On the way to the office, market, wherever</b>	<b>Inside office/workplace</b>	<b>Others</b>
Unmarried	94.12	17.65	47.06
Married	66.67	66.67	0.00
Total	90.00	25.00	40.00

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

#### 7.4.2 Timings of Occurrences:

All the respondents are tormented by sexual advances when they are alone. Even (33.33%) married women are also harassed even when they are with their friends but more if they are with their unmarried (women) friends, mistaken for being unmarried, therefore eligible for torments. There are a few women (both unmarried and married) who are subjected to lewd

remarks on the street or in the public transport. Many culprits are reportedly in a high or in a state of drunkenness. The unmarried young women are not even spared even when they are with close relatives.

**Table 7.7: Places of Occurrences**

<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Only when alone</b>	<b>With friends</b>	<b>With relations</b>
Unmarried	100	64.71	11.76
Married	100	33.33	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>60.00</b>	<b>10.00</b>

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

#### **7.4.3 Frequency of Occurrences:**

A large proportion of unmarried women (41.18%) reported that they are victims of sexual harassment at least once a week. The women who venture out frequently from home and at the same time avail the public transports are harassed even more, such as, the students or the employed women. This is also common among the married women, especially those belonging to lower income groups. As a whole, the unmarried women are more frequently harassed than the married ones.

**Table 7.8: Frequency of Occurrences**

<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>No response</b>	<b>Everyday</b>	<b>Once a week</b>	<b>Once a month</b>	<b>Occasionally</b>
Unmarried	0.00	17.65	41.18	29.41	11.76
Married	33.33	0.00	33.33	0.00	33.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.00</b>	<b>15.00</b>	<b>40.00</b>	<b>25.00</b>	<b>15.00</b>

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

#### **7.4.4 Types of Crimes:**

Among the unmarried women the types of sexual violence are of varied nature. More than 50 percent of the women are victim of all forms of harassments. Many young women are

not only sexually harassed but are often sexually abused, though suggestive physical contacts and pushing that are common in the public transport and crowded places. In the educational institutions, suggestive physical contacts by the male teachers have been reported. Lewd remarks are passed in the workplaces and also while walking on the street. Nearly, one-third of the married women are subjected to all forms of sexual harassments and abuses, particularly those belonging to lower income group. But the aggressive forms of sexual harassment do not exist among them and the other forms of harassment occur only occasionally.

**Table 7.9: Types of Sexual Violence**

<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Lewd remarks only</b>	<b>Pushing</b>	<b>Suggestive physical contacts</b>	<b>Following</b>	<b>All the violence</b>	<b>Others</b>
Unmarried	29.41	35.29	41.18	5.88	52.94	10
Married	0.00	33.33	0.00	0.00	33.33	0
Total	25.00	35.00	35.00	5.00	50.00	10

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### **7.5 Sexual Harassment by Occupations:**

There are three types of respondents categorised for this study. Seventy five percent of the respondents are students, 25 percent, employed and the rest 5 percent, self employed. The self employed are mostly from very low income stratum (maid servants). Majority of the employed respondents are working in private organisation and in low paid jobs. There was only one employed respondent who is a government employee.

### 7.5.1 Places of Occurrences:

All the self-employed women are sexually harassed both on the way to the workplace, market etc and also in their workplaces. As stated earlier, many are maid servants either staying in their employer's houses or are part-time workers, moving from house to house in the morning or evening hours. The employers reportedly use their authority to seek sexual favours when the women are alone at home. A few stay with their employers family since they were recent migrants from villages with no place of their own to stay, or cannot afford to rent a place to stay or may feel unsecured to stay alone, being young themselves. This provides the perpetrators advantages of this situation; a few reportedly ran away from the workplace when they had no other way out from the persistent sexual harassment by the employers. The part time workers had to leave their jobs because of these incidences.

The students are harassed more on the street, public places etc, but they are harassed less in within their own educational institutions (7.14%). A few of the students are harassed by the tutors in their tuition classes. On the other hand, comparatively the employed respondents are harassed less on the way to the workplace, public place because of their age but are more victimised at workplaces.

**Table 7.10: Places of Occurrences**

<b>Occupations</b>	<b>On the way to the office, market wherever</b>	<b>Inside office/workplace</b>	<b>Others</b>
Student	92.86	7.14	57.14
Employed	80.00	60.00	0.00
Self employed	100.00	100.00	0.00
Total	90.00	25.00	40.00

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

The self-employed women are harassed in all the places. They are victims of sexual harassment in workplace, public transport and other public places. Students are the next occupational group who are also harassed to a large extent. Most students (78.57%) are harassed in all the places. Almost all of them are harassed in the public transport except a few who have their own private transport. The employed women are harassed less in the public places but more in the workplace than the other.

**Table 7.11: Places of Occurrences**

<b>Occupations</b>	<b>In a public transport</b>	<b>While walking</b>	<b>At public places</b>	<b>All the places</b>	<b>Others</b>
Student	21.43	0	7.14	78.57	14.29
Employed	40.00	20	0.00	40.00	0.00
Self employed	0.00	0	0.00	100.00	0.00
Total	25.00	5	5.00	70.00	10.00

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### **7.5.2 Timings of Occurrences:**

All the women are harassed when they are alone; in the workplace/educational institution or elsewhere. The students are harassed even when with friends and relations. They are harassed when they are with relations while walking in crowded places. With their friends they are subjected to sexual harassments in public transports, while walking and in crowded public places. They are harassed more because of their immaturity and lack of confidence to retaliate. They generally do not report these incidences to their parents out of embarrassment but share them with friends. On the other hand the employed women are more prone to eve-teased or passed lewd remarks when with their friends.

**Table 7.12: Timings of Occurrences**

Occupations	Only when alone	With friends	With relations
Student	100	64.29	14.29
Employed	100	40.00	0.00
Self employed	100	100.00	0.00
Total	100	60.00	10.00

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### 7.5.3 Frequency of Occurrences:

The frequency of occurrences of sexual harassment is high among the employed respondents because they are variably more mobile and interacts with varied groups of people. Sexual harassment tends to be more in those workplaces which are inflexed by people from all walks of life; hospital<sup>3</sup>, PCO etc. Among the self employed women (maid servants) sexual harassments are more frequent (once a week) as they work till odd hours at night. Generally most of them walk alone long distances to their workplaces. There are 14.29 percent students (low age group) who are harassed almost daily in the public transports. The students belonging to higher age group are sexually harassed occasionally (once a month) on the way to the educational institutes or elsewhere.

**Table 7.13: Frequency of Occurrences**

Occupations	No response	Everyday	Once a week	Once a month	Occasionally
Student	0	14.29	35.71	35.71	14.29
Employed	20	20.00	40.00	0.00	20.00
Self employed	0	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00
Total	5	15.00	40.00	25.00	15.00

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

<sup>3</sup> Reference: Case 15 of Chapter VIII.

#### 7.5.4 Types of Crime:

Among the self employed respondents sexually harassments are of varied forms. They are stalked, passed lewd remarks on their way to the workplace, more at night, which is common also among the employed women. These traumatise them among the dark lanes of the unlighted street. They are also harassed by their employers in form of advances and suggestive physical contacts in their workplace. When they refuse to such unwanted sexual advances the employer simply creates an untenable and hostile work environment.

Among the employed women the sexual harassment in the workplace is more in the form of lewd remarks. There are cases where the women working in PCO are constantly harassed (pornographic conversation, lewd remarks) by some unknown person through phone calls. There are nurses in private hospitals harassed by the attendants of the patients (lewd remarks). There are women (Govt. employee) who are passed lewd remarks and even advances made by their senior colleague. It is observed that advances becomes frequent and bold when they stay quite and do not retaliate.

Stalking is somewhat low among the students. Pushing or suggestive physical contacts are common in crowded public places, public transports and while walking (lewd remarks).

**Table 7.14: Types of Crimes**

Occupations	Lewd remarks only	Pushing	Suggestive physical contacts	Following	All the violence	Others
Student	28.57	42.86	50	0	50	5
Employed	20.00	20.00	0	20	40	0
Self employed	0.00	0.00	0	0	100	5
Total	25.00	35.00	35	5	50	10

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

## 7.6 Educational Factor:

There are four different categories of women on the basis of their educational status. The women who are below metric constitute 35 percent of the respondents (employed and self employed, low paid jobs). There are 40 percent women who are metric pass (students), 5 percent, Graduates and 20 percent, Post Graduates (employed in services).

### 7.6.1 Places of Occurrences:

All the women irrespective of their educational status are sexually harassed on the way to their workplace/educational institution, public places etc. except the Graduate women, an office goer, who commutes in private vehicle is only harassed in her workplace. Beside this case, sexual harassment in the workplace/institutions declines with the increase of the educational status of the women because the well qualified women are employed in higher status job where they enjoy a certain amount of authority within the office and at the same time they are more confident to retaliate. They are not considered by the perpetrator as easy targets as the illiterates or the women of low qualification. The women (under metric) employed in low paid job or in private organisation are exploited more; high risk of losing their jobs or desperately dependent on the job.

**Table 7.15: Places of Occurrences**

<b>Educational Status</b>	<b>On the way to the office, market wherever</b>	<b>Inside office/workplace</b>	<b>Others</b>
< Metric	85.71	42.86	28.57
Metric	100.00	12.50	62.50
Graduate	0.00	100.00	0.00
P.G	100.00	0.00	25.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>90.00</b>	<b>25.00</b>	<b>40.00</b>

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

They as well as the women who are metric pass are victimised almost in all the places outside their home. Women from all the educational groups are subjected to sexual harassment in the public transport. But none of these incidences were reported to the public authority or the guardians. Among the Metric pass and the Post Graduates equal proportion of them are harassed in the public transport and public places (25%).

**Table 7.16: Places of Occurrences**

<b>Educational Status</b>	<b>In a public transport</b>	<b>While walking</b>	<b>At public places</b>	<b>All the places</b>	<b>Others</b>
< Metric	14.29	0.00	0.00	85.71	28.57
Metric	25.00	12.50	0.00	75.00	0.00
Graduate	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
P.G	50.00	0.00	25.00	50.00	0.00
Total	25.00	5.00	5.00	70.00	10.00

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### 7.6.2 Timings of Occurrences:

All of the respondents are sexually harassed when they are alone. These are actions of sexual harassment in the workplace/ institution. It is observed that the students irrespective of their qualification are harassed when they are with their friends or their relatives in the street and crowded places. Among the women who are below metric harassed is more (87.5%) when they are with their friends. It can be stated that the age factor plays a vital role than qualification for the occurrence of sexual harassment in public places.

**Table 7.17: Timings of Occurrences**

<b>Educational Status</b>	<b>Only when alone</b>	<b>With friends</b>	<b>With relations</b>
< Metric	100	42.86	0.00
Metric	100	87.50	12.50
Graduate	100	0.00	0.00
P.G	100	50.00	25.00
Total	100	60.00	10.00

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### 7.6.3 Frequency of Occurrences:

Frequency of occurrences of sexual harassment is more among the women who are below metric level (lower economic status). They are employed and have to venture out everyday to their workplaces and are exposed to more situations. Majority of them (42.86%) are harassed once a week and 28.57 percent, almost everyday. They are harassment more because of their economic status since they are generally look down upon and their protest goes unheard. They are stalked when they walk long distances alone to their workplaces (at night). The women who are metric (students) are harassed frequently (50% -once a week and 12.5% - daily). The Post Graduate women are not harassed everyday but occasionally (50%) in the crowded public places, streets etc and frequently (once a week) in public transport; 25 percent. It is observed that the frequency of occurrences decreases with the increase of the educational status of the women.

**Table 7.18: Frequency of Occurrences**

<b>Educational Status</b>	<b>No response</b>	<b>Everyday</b>	<b>Once a week</b>	<b>Once a month</b>	<b>Occasionally</b>
< Metric	0	28.57	42.86	14.29	14.29
Metric	0	12.50	50.00	25.00	12.50
Graduate	100	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
P.G	0	0.00	25.00	50.00	25.00
Total	5	15.00	40.00	25.00	15.00

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### 7.6.4 Types of Crime:

Among the women who are below metric sexual harassment takes place both in the workplace (suggestive physical contacts, uncomfortable touch and lewd remarks) and in the other places (stalked and lewd remarks). Among the women who are metric-pass, all forms of sexual harassment occur, though suggestive physical contacts are high and

stalking low as they are always accompanied by their relatives when they go out at night. They are victims of pushing, suggestive physical contacts (public transports, crowded public places) and eve-teasing while walking. A few of them are even physically harassed while walking in the streets. Often they are taken by surprise and do not know how to react. Among the women with Post Graduate education, pushing and suggestive physical are common but occasional (crowded public places, public transport) but eve teasing is high and frequent (especially while walking).

**Table 7.19: Types of Crimes**

<b>Educational Status</b>	<b>Lewd remarks</b>	<b>Pushing</b>	<b>Suggestive physical contacts</b>	<b>Stalking</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>Others</b>
< Metric	14.29	28.57	42.86	14.29	42.86	5
Metric	25.00	25.00	25.00	0.00	75.00	0
Graduate	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	5
P.G	50.00	75.00	50.00	0.00	25.00	0
Total	30.00	35.00	35.00	5.00	50.00	0

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### **7.7 Income Factor:**

An effort is being made in this section to study the relationship between the economic background of the families of the respondents and the sexual harassment outside home. The women are categorised into three groups. There are 25 percent women belonging to low income families (monthly income less than Rupees 5000), 25 percent, from middle income families (Rupees 5000 – Rupees 15,000) and the rest 50 percent belong to high income families (monthly income above Rupees 15000).

### 7.7.1 Places of Occurrences:

All the women of the low and middle income group (Table no. 7.21) are harassed on the way to their office, market or wherever. The women from low income families are harassed more outside her home as well as in the workplace. Majority of them are employed (maid servants, private organisations). They feel exploited because of their low economic status in their workplace as they are highly dependent on their job and have fewer avenues left with them. All the women belonging to the middle income families, mostly students, are harassed more outside their home and in other places and also in their institutions and tutorial classes by their instructors/tutors (75%). On the other hand the women belonging to the high income families are harassed less both outside home and workplace/institution. They are less exposed to these situations (crowded public places, public transports etc) as they commute in their own conveyances. They are never the less harassed in their educational institutions/workplaces.

**Table 7.20: Places of Occurrences by Monthly Income of the Family**

<b>Income (in Rupees)</b>	<b>On the way to the office, market wherever</b>	<b>Inside office/workplace</b>	<b>Others</b>
<5000	100.00	60.00	0.00
5000-15000	100.00	0.00	75.00
>15000	71.43	28.57	28.57

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

The women from lower income families who are sexually harassed more. Eighty percent are harassed in all the places and 20 percent in public transports or while walking. Women in this economic group of higher age are also harassed. But the middle class women are abused more because of their lower age as they are more vulnerable to sexual

harassment in the public places. On the other hand, the women of high income families are harassed less.

**Table 7.21: Places of Occurrence by Monthly Income of the Family**

Income (in Rupees)	In a public transport	While walking	At public places	All the places	Others
<5000	20.00	20	0.00	80.00	0.00
5000-15000	0.00	0	0.00	100.00	0.00
>15000	57.14	0	14.29	28.57	28.57

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### 7.7.2 Timings of Occurrences:

All the respondents from all the economic groups are sexually harassed when they are alone because as they feel helpless both physically and psychologically when alone in such situation. The women belonging to lower income families are also harassed when they are with their friends. On the other hand the women from the middle and high income group are also harassed when they are with their relations (crowded public places). Women belonging to higher income families are harassed less when they are with their friends.

**Table 7.22: Timings of Occurrences**

Income (in Rupees)	When alone	With friends	With relations
<5000	100	60.00	0.00
5001-15000	100	66.67	12.50
>15000	100	42.86	14.29

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### 7.7.3 Frequency of Occurrences:

The women belonging to the lower income families are sexually harassed more than the other two income groups. Twenty percent of them are harassed daily (crowded public transport), 60 percent, once a week and 20 percent are harassed occasionally in their

workplaces. Among the middle income group the frequency of occurrences are somewhat low, 12.5 percent daily (public transports), 37.5 percent, once a week, once a month and 12.5 percent are harassed occasionally (educational institutions). Among all the economic groups the women from higher income group are less frequently harassed.

**Table 7.23: Frequency of Occurrence by Monthly Income of the Family**

<b>Income (in Rupees)</b>	<b>No response</b>	<b>Everyday</b>	<b>Once a week</b>	<b>Once a month</b>	<b>Occasionally</b>
<5000	0.00	20.00	60.00	0.00	20.00
5000-15000	0.00	12.50	37.50	37.50	12.50
>15000	14.29	14.29	28.57	28.57	14.29

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

#### **7.7.4 Types of Crime:**

For women of lower income families, passing of lewd remarks and stalking by strangers are high as they have to walk long distances to their workplaces even during late hours. Even, they have no peace due to sexual harassment in the workplaces—sexual advances by employers and rapes are common among house maids. On the other hand, pushing and suggestive physical contacts occur mostly in the public transports are low among this group. Stalking is somewhat low for the middle and the high income groups as they commute in public transport to their workplaces/educational institutions. Sexual harassment in the workplace usually takes place in the form of passing lewd remarks and advances among the middle and high income women, and even, reportedly cases of unwanted and uncomfortable touches by the instructors in the educational institutions.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Among the other forms of crimes are cases of two women, one from low and the other from the high income families who were repeatedly raped. The woman from the low income family was raped by the owner of the house. Later on he was convicted. The other girl belonging to high income family was repeatedly gang raped after she was kidnapped and was planned to be trafficked. She is a Post Graduate.

**Table 7.24: Types of Crimes by Monthly Income of the Family**

<b>Income (in Rupees)</b>	<b>Lewd remarks only</b>	<b>Pushing</b>	<b>Suggestive physical contacts</b>	<b>Following</b>	<b>All the violence</b>	<b>Others</b>
<5000	20.00	0.00	0.00	20	80	5
5000-15000	25.00	25.00	25.00	0	75	0
>15000	28.57	71.43	71.43	0	0	5

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Note: The total do not add up to 100 % as there were multiple choices

### **7.8 Suggestions by the Respondents:**

Strong resistance and self defensive technique is the best way to protect oneself from sexual harassment in the public places and public transports. This as a suggestion was put forth by 45 percent of the respondents. Ten percent of them suggested that it can be acquired if compulsory self defensive courses are imparted especially to the girl child at the school level. It is an important point to be noted that Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan of Guwahati has already taken up this as a curriculum for the girl child.

More than 80 percent of these working women are not aware of the legal provisions for the working women at workplace. They felt that active awareness drive about the laws regarding women in particular through media and other agencies is an utmost necessity. The women organisations working in this filed should and can take an active role to give it an extra thrust. At the same time there should be easy access to complain redressel cells both in the workplace/institutions. Thirty percent of them felt that due to long and delayed departmental proceedings many of the victims are reluctant to avail them. Thereby it should be made quicker and users' friendly. There are two rape victims in this study who strongly recommended this suggestion and felt that the rapist should be hung unto death. Five percent of the women stated that strong punishment should be rendered to those who commit crimes against women and widely published of the punishment rendered to the

perpetrators. One of the ways to feel safer at night for the working women is to have the streets properly lighted.

There are varieties of suggestion given by the women to reduce sexual harassment in the public transports. Twenty five percent of the women, more so the women of lower age group, feel that the co-passenger should also be supportive and react to such incidences than be indifferent to sexual harassment in public transport. There should be special buses for women and children or special sitting arrangements within the bus for women and children. Special buses for women will be of great benefit for women who work till the late hours at night. Fifteen percent of the women suggested that the crowd of the buses should be lessened as they are harassed most in the crowded buses.

A few of the women felt that proper sex education and counselling in institutions and home are essential for both the children. At the same time the parents should also be aware of the situations that the child may fall into. They should be oriented about these abuses and how to retaliate them in different situations than to maintain a silence over these issues.

**Table 7.25: Suggestions**

<b>Suggestions.</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Self defence	45
Quick proceeding and justice	30
Awareness drive about the laws through media or by others sources	30
Co-passengers should react to such incidents within the bus.	25
Parents should be aware and alert of the child behaviours	20
Easy access to complain and quick action.	15
Lessen the crowd of the buses	15
Streets properly lighted up at night.	10
Proper counselling to the male child	10
Compulsory self defensive courses to girls at school	10
Separate sitting arrangement within the bus for ladies and gents.	5
Access of complain box within school premises and public places.	5
The NGO should take more active role.	5
Wide publicity of the punishments rendered to the perpetrators	5
Proper sex education	5
Special buses for women and children	5
Severe punishment to anybody who committees CAW	5
Hung unto death punishment to a rapist.	5
More stronger laws for women	5
Women should be more aggressive	5

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

### **Findings:**

1. All the respondents who are surveyed in this study are sexually harassed outside home.
2. Women who are below 18 years are more vulnerable to sexual harassment outside home and in variety of places and situation.
3. The occurrence of sexual harassment decreases with the increase of age of the women.
4. The frequency of occurrence decreases with the increase of the age of respondents.

5. The unmarried women are more susceptible to sexual harassment in all the places and situations and at the same time more frequently harassed.
6. The students and the self employed women are more subjected to sexual violence.
7. The women irrespective of their educational status are harassed in the public transport and public places.
8. Sexual harassment in the workplace declines with the increase of the educational status of the women.
9. Frequency of occurrence of sexual harassment decreases with the educational status of the respondents.
10. Women belonging to lower income families are more sexually harassed both in the public places and workplaces.
11. Sexual harassments in the forms of suggestive physical contacts and pushing are common in the public transports.
12. Passing of lewd remarks are common while walking.

## **Chapter VIII**

### **RESPONDENTS AND THEIR NARRATIVES**

#### **8.1 Introduction:**

This chapter deals with the study of the various aspects of respondents interviewed intensively for the study. There were two groups of respondents: (a) victims of domestic violence and (b) victims of sexual violence outside the home environment. This chapter is divided into three sections. Section I and Section II deal with the study of the socio-cultural, economic, educational, age and family profile of the respondents. Section III gives an account of the case studies of the respondents of both domestic violence and others forms of violence which she suffers outside her home.

#### **Section I**

##### **8.2.1 Socio-Economic Background of Respondents of Domestic Violence:**

Sixty respondents were intensively interviewed to collect information regarding extent, different forms of violence, frequency and reasons of violence etc against women inside the house. Information regarding their socio-cultural and economic background has also been collected to get a better understanding of the characterisation of the respondents.

### 8.2.2 Places of Origin:

Many people from the other parts of the state and region migrate to Guwahati for various reasons, such as education, employment and occupation, better way of life and opportunity, etc. Of the 60 (sixty) respondents, 35 percent have migrated from rural areas, 20 percent, from another town. The rest of the 45 percent are permanent residents of Guwahati.

### 8.2.3 Marital Status:

Only 5 percent of the respondents are unmarried. They are harassed by their own relatives. Of the balance 95 percent, 76.66 percent continue with the marriage and the balance 18.33 percent are either separated or divorced. Of the 76.66 percent married respondents, 18.33 percent are still staying with their husband, 33.33 percent of them are staying with their own parents. There is a small section (3.33 percent) that stays with their in-laws, but not with husbands; 41.66 percent stay on their own, an independent existence and some in State Homes or in other rehabilitation centres.

**Table 8.1: Place of Residence of the Victims**

<b>Residence of victims</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Husband	18.33
Own Parents	33.33
In-laws	3.33
Relatives	3.33
Others	41.67

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

Fifteen percent of the respondents are married for less than a year and the same proportion are married between 1-3 years. One-third of the respondents are married for 4-10 years and another 31.66 percent, more than 10 years.

**Table 8.2: Respondent Classes by Length of Marriage**

No. of Years	Percent
Unmarried	5
< 1 year	15
1 - 3 years	15
4 - 10 years	33.33
> 10 years	31.67
Total	100

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

#### **8.2.4 Religion:**

Majority of the respondents are Hindus (75%). Twenty percent of the respondents are Muslims, 3.33 percent, Christians and only 1.66 percent, Sikhs. The region-wise distribution of the sample of respondents is more or less in conformity with the overall distribution of population.

#### **8.2.5 Languages:**

Even though, Guwahati is inhabited by people of different communities, majority of the people of the city are Assamese speaking (51.66%), 30 percent, Bengali speaking, 1.66 percent, Manipuri speaking, 5 percent Hindustani speaking and the rest (11.66%), other Indian language or dialects.

**Table 8.3: Languages of the Respondents: Domestic Violence**

Languages	Percent
Assamese	51.66
Hindi	5.00
Bengali	30.00
Manipuri	1.66
Others	11.66
Total	100

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

### 8.2.6 Caste / Community:

A majority of the respondents belong to the general caste (66.66%). Twenty percent of the respondents are Schedule Castes, 8.33 percent, Schedule Tribes and only 5 percent are from Other Backward Castes. Of the Schedule Tribes, 5 percent of them are Bodo community, 1.66 percent Manipuri community and the rest 1.66 percent are from Garo community.

### 8.2.7 Educational Status of the Respondents:

Of the 60 respondents, 19.99 percent of them are illiterate, 31.66 percent, under Metric and the same (31.66%) proportion has passed their Metric exam. There are 11.66 percent Graduates and rest 5 percent are high professionals.

**Table 8.4: Educational Status of the Respondents**

Educational Status	Percent
Illiterate	18.33
Under metric	31.67
Metric pass	33.32
Graduate	11.67
Professional	5.00

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

### 8.2.8 Employment Status:

There are 45 percent unemployed respondents of whom 35 percent are housewives and the 10 percent are staying in State Home in Guwahati or in some rehabilitation centres. The rest of the 55 percent of the respondents are employed.

Of the 55 percent employed respondents, 8.33 percent are in Government services, 20 percent, in private organisations, 25 percent, are self employed and 1.66 percent are engaged in other services.

### 8.2.9 Occupations:

The respondents in this study are engaged in a variety of occupations, from very low paid to very high paid job. Of the employed respondents, 18.33 percent are wage workers, 5 percent- small businesses women, 3.33 percent- vendors, 1.66 percent- sales persons, 13.33 percent- office goer, 13.33 percent- high professional, 1.66 percent are high profile business women and the rest 6.66 percent of the employed respondents are engaged in some other occupations ( NGOs, private companies, teachers etc).

**Table 8.5: Occupations of the Respondents: Domestic Violence**

Categories	Percent
Unemployed/HW	45.00
Wage worker	18.33
Small business	5.00
Vendor	3.33
Sales persons	1.67
Office goers	13.33
High Professionals	5.00
Business women	1.67
Others	6.67

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

### 8.2.10 Monthly Income of Respondents:

There is wide variation within the monthly income of the respondents (from <Rs. 500 to Rs.30000 a month). For the convenience of the study, the monthly incomes of the respondents are grouped into categories which will highlight the variation clearly.

More than half of the respondents (53.33%) belong to very low income group- less than Rs.500 in a month, 13.33 percent of the respondents earns between Rs.500-1000, 23.33 percent are of moderate income (Rs.1000 to 5000), 4.99 percent are of high income group (Rs.5000 to 10,000 per month) and the 5 percent are from very high income group (more than Rs.10000 a month). Table 8.6 indicates that the proportion of respondents decreases with the increase of the income. Women belonging to low income group are more willing to share their experiences than the women from higher income group.

**Table 8.6: Monthly Income of the Respondents: Domestic Violence**

Amount in Rupees	Percent
0-500	53.33
500-1000	13.33
1000-2000	10
2000-5000	13.33
5000-10000	4.97
>10000	5.01

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

### 8.2.11 Ownership of Property by the Respondents:

There are 61.66 percent respondents staying in their own houses, 25 percent, rented houses and the rest 13.33 percent are staying in quarters.

There are 36.66 percent respondents staying in independent houses, 11.66 percent, in three room apartments, 15 percent, in two room apartments and 6.66 in one room apartment. Large proportions (28.33%) are staying in shanty houses.

**Table 8.7: Nature of housing**

Nature of housing	Percent
Shanty	28.33
1 room apt.	6.67
2 room apt.	15.00
3 room apt.	11.67
Independent house	36.67
Others	1.67
Total	100

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

### 8.2.11 Durable Goods in the House:

The use of thirteen different durable goods by the respondents are taken into consideration to ascertain their economic status; television set, refrigerator, radio, VCD/DVD player, sound system, washing machine, computer, telephone, cooking gas, car, scooter, motor cycle and bicycle. It was found out that 16.66 percent of the respondents did not even have a single durable good in the house, 23.33 percent of them have one to three durable items, 41.66 percent, four to eight durable goods and 18.33 percent respondents owns more than eight durable goods.

**Table 8.8: Durable Goods in the House: Domestic Violence**

No of items	Percent
0 items	16.67
1 - 3 items	23.33
4 - 8 items	41.67
More than 8 items	18.33

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

### 8.2.12 Family Profile of the Respondents:

Family profile of the respondents can throw certain reflections on the causes and types of domestic violence on the women.

### 8.2.13 Age of the respondents:

The age of the respondents are classed into certain intervals. There are lesser women in the lower and the upper limits, 11.67 percent (20 years and below) and 13.33 percent (40 years and above). Majority of them are between 21-30 years (50%) followed by the women between 30 to 40 years (26.67%).

**Table 8.9: Age of the Respondents: Domestic Violence**

Age in Years	Percent
20 and below	11.67
21-30	50.00
30-40	26.67
40 and above	13.33

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

### 8.2.14 Nature of the Family:

Fifty percent of the respondents are staying in nuclear family, 41 percent, in joint family and 8.33 percent in extended family.

### 8.2.15 Members of the Family:

More than half of the respondents (51.66%) have a small family (1-4 members), a common feature in an urban setup, 36.66 percent, a moderate sized family (5-8 family members) and 11.66 percent have large family with more than eight members. There are 43.33

percent of the respondents who have families with two or less adults with them, 45 percent, with three to six adults and the rest 11.66 percent have more than 6 adults. Twenty percent of the respondents are childless. Respondents with one or two children constituted 65 percent and 10 percent of them have more than two children.

#### **8.2.16 Literacy Status:**

Twenty percent of families have one or two illiterates in the family and 11.66 percent with more than two illiterates. Fifty-five percent of the respondents have 1-3 members in the family who are below metric (above 15 years of age) and 5 percent have more than three persons below metric. In cases of 53.33 percent respondents, 1-3 members in their family have tertiary education, and in 6.66 percent cases, more than three members.

#### **8.2.17 Employment Status:**

To understand the employment status of the families the total number of employed, self-employed and unemployed members in the family is taken into account. In cases of 48.33 percent respondents one or two members in the family are employed and in 16.66 percent cases, more than three. Fifty percent of the respondents have 1-3 self employed members in the family. The families of the respondent as reported by the respondents have fewer unemployed, but many (90%) did not wish to react to the question.

## Section II

### 8.3.1 Background of the Respondents (Crimes Outside Home):

Twenty respondents were surveyed to collect information regarding crimes committed against women outside home from different walks of life and of different age groups. Of those surveyed, 85 percent of them were unmarried and only 15 percent married. Eighty five percent of the respondents are staying in nuclear families, 5 percent in joint family and 10 percent of them do not have a family as such, because they are orphans/single women living in orphanages, run by some NGOs, or in working women's hostels. Out of the 20 respondents, 60 percent of them do not belong to Guwahati. They have come to Guwahati for their studies or for jobs. Forty percent of the respondents are permanent residents of Guwahati.

### 8.3.2 Age Distribution:

In this study, 15 percent of the respondents are below the age of 17 years, 45 percent, between 17 to 20 years, 30 percent between 20 to 30 years and the rest 10 percent of the respondents are above 30 years.

**Table 8.10: Age of the Respondents: Crimes Outside Home**

Age	Percent
<17 years	15
17-20 years	45
20 - 30 years	30
> 30 years	10

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

### 8.3.3 Economic Status:

To illustrate the economic background of these respondents a number of parameters are taken into consideration. They are the monthly income of the family of the respondents, occupation of the respondents and their educational status. A wide range of respondents from varied income groups were included in the study. Respondents from very low income group earning less than Rupees 1000 a month comprise 10 percent, respondents from low income group (Rupees 1001 to 5000) is 15 percent, 5 percent belong to moderate income families (Rupees 5001 to Rupees10000), 20 percent of them belong to high income families (Rupees 10,001 to Rupees 15,000) and 50 percent of the families earn more than Rupees 15,000 a month (relatively affluent families).

**Table 8.11: Monthly Income of the Families of Respondents**

Monthly Income in Rs.	Percent
< 1000	10
1001-5000	15
5001-10000	5
10001-15000	20
>15000	50

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

### 8.3.4 Occupation of the Respondents:

There are 70 percent respondents who are students, 25 percent, employed and 5 percent are self employed. A number of housewives were approached for interview, but they are reluctant to provide information of sexually harassment.

### 8.3.5 Educational Status of the Respondents:

Thirty five percent of the respondents have not cleared their metric examination, 40 percent are metric pass, 5 percent, Graduate and 20 percent are Post Graduates.

**Table 8.12: Educational Status of the Respondents: Crimes Outside Home**

<b>Educational Status</b>	<b>Percent</b>
< Metric	35
Metri	40
Graduates	5
P.G.	20

Source: Based on Field Work by Author, 2003-04

## Section III

### 8.4.1 Narratives of (Cases) the Respondents:

This section deals with the case studies of the respondents who have been victims of domestic violence and violence outside home. These case studies are essential as they give a detailed account of the nature, intensity, causes and consequences of the violence against women and helps in developing “understanding” the issues involved. It also highlights the family backgrounds of both the victims and the perpetrators, which may influence the actual acts of violence against women. These case studies also reveal the hidden factors and circumstances, which cannot be totally brought into light by statistical analysis alone. For purposes of keeping the identity of the victims confidential, the specific victims have been provided with pseudo-names, like Ms. 1, Ms. 2, and so on. Of the 60 cases, for which

detailed data were collected, a selected 16 have been analysed in this chapter, representing different issues, economic classes etc.

#### **8.4.2 Case Studies of Domestic Violence (Husband/In-law):**

Three groups are differentiated on the basis of the economic background of the respondents. The economic conditions of the family in which the women are staying are taken into consideration for this categorisation. They are divided as the high income group, middle income group and the low income group.

#### **8.4.3 Cases of High Income Respondents:**

The cases are from Chandmari area.

##### **Case 1**

Mrs. 1 is a daughter-in-law of a rich family. She is 24 years of age and is married for less than a year. She is an Assamese Hindu. She got married just after completing her graduation. She stays in a huge palatial house with all the modern amenities and several servants to look to her needs. Though a joint family, it is small with only three members who are all highly qualified.

Mother-in-law of Mrs. 1 has a dominating personality and wants everything to be done as per her wishes. Mrs. 1 needs to follow strict instructions of her mother-in-law and for everything she needs to take her permission. Whenever she puts up her own views or wishes and goes against her mother-in-law, she is scolded and even threatened of assault. Even for petty matters, she is scolded in front of the servants, which makes her feel

miserable. These unpleasant scenes are frequent. She is scared of the intemperate nature of her mother-in-law and stays all the time in mental tension. She wants to do some work outside, to keep herself engaged and stay away from frequent showdowns, but that too is strictly prohibited. She is at times threatened of divorce and getting her husband remarried if she is not cooperative. The husband is a silent spectator and never says a word against his mother. He hardly spends any time with her and stays most the time with his mother.

This behaviour of the mother-in-law is due to a sense of insecurity in her old age. She had three sons; the two elder sons are living separately with their families. She fears that the youngest son now staying with her may also leave her for which she is very possessive about him. This is having an adverse affect on Mrs. 1. Husband of Mrs. 1 is also scared of his mother, both for emotional as well as reasons of the huge property that his mother is likely to bequeath him.

Mrs. 1 lacks self confidence, both being too young as well as being newly married. After each instance of humiliation, her confidence sinks further. She feels let down and alone, except a few encouraging words from her sister-in-laws. Moreover, she belongs to a middle class family with three unmarried younger sisters and aged parents. She is afraid of taking any bold step by going against her mother-in-law because it may disrupt her marriage that may have an adverse impact subsequently on the marriage of her younger sisters. Her parents are also against her acting with haste but advice her to be patient and adjust to the situation.

**Case 2**

Mrs. 2 is married into a rich family at a very young age of 16 years. Both Mrs. 2 and her husband were stage artists and hoped of pursuing their careers together. After her marriage she had to stay at home leaving her professional career and interests and the husband continued his work. Currently, Mrs. 2 is 23 years of age and the mother of two children, and has completed seven years of married life. She was staying with her in-laws in a huge independent house in Chandmari. Her husband is still a stage actor who stays away from home for more than nine months a year.

She is often psychologically brutalised by her in-laws with who she has to spend most of the time during long absences of her husband. There are frequent quarrels. The in-laws often used abusive languages and threatened her of assault. She was even sexually harassed by her father-in-law a couple of times, when she was newly married. Whenever her husband used to come home for short vacations, he used to be provoked by all her in-laws with accusations and allegations, for which Mrs. 2 was physically assaulted number of times by her husband, with a degree of drunkenness. There have been many instances when her husband and in-laws threaten her of sending her out of the house.

According to Mrs.2, her in-laws dislike her because she comes from a poor family. Her lower economic status is looked down upon and is a matter of embarrassment to the family in the eyes of the larger society. Her parents are ill-treated whenever they visit her, for which they have ceased visiting her any more. She is even accused of not bringing any dowry. She suspects that her husband may have illicit relations with other actresses

working with him, for which he is losing interest in her and can stay away from her and their children for such a long period of time.

Two issues can be discerned in this case. First, being from a poor family she could not fulfil the dowry demands. Second, she must be shown her place, being from a poor family and no independent income of her own, she ought to serve others.

Being fed up with her undignified existence, she left her husband's place and started living with her own parents, with her children. It was observed that except her mother, rest of her family members want her to go back to her husband as the family is already overburdened with three unmarried daughters and a son. Her father is the only earning member in the family with a number of competing demands on his resources.

She now desperately wants to be economically independent and live on her own. But she has neither educational qualification (having married at school-going age) nor has any capital for her to do something on her own. She knows she cannot stay with her parents for long. She weighs the alternative of returning to her abusive in-laws and husband for financial security.

It is an interesting fact that none of them had registered any case of atrocity of either the husband or the in-laws at any police station. Mrs 1 and Mrs. 2 sought advice from certain NGOs and did not go beyond that.

These two cases are in families with better economic circumstances. In these cases, the main issue is the lack of economic independence of the women or a profession to fall upon, out of an unhappy marriage. Since living with parents does not provide a choice to

the women both for economic and social reasons, the women live a life of indignity and despondence, with abusive husbands and in-laws.

#### **8.4.4 Cases of Middle Income Respondents:**

There two cases are from Noonmati area.

##### **Case 3**

Mrs. 3 is 40 years old. She migrated to Guwahati from a small village after her marriage. She is married for more than 10 years but now she is staying on her own with her two daughters. She is an Assamese Hindu belonging to the Scheduled Caste community. She has not completed her metric level education and is employed in a private company. She got married into a middle class family. Her husband is a Government employee.

She was born to a middleclass family, brought up by a step-mother. After her (arranged) marriage, she came to know that her husband is an alcoholic and spends all his earnings on drinks. Moreover, she had disappointments over economic circumstances of her husband. Few months after their marriage, marital discord arose due to money demands of the husband followed by physical assaults. Consistent demands of money (from parental family) and physical abuse led to her loosing a child in pregnancy. The husband once even attempted to murder her by burning alive! Since her existence became impossible with constant physical violence and torture, she parted ways, with a legal separation. This was a courageous step for a lower middleclass woman with two young daughters with no sources of earning. Subsequently, she managed to get a job and gain economic independence to look after her self and the children.

Feeble support from her parental family influenced her to live with the situation till she could. Initially she was not confident enough to come out from the situation because she lacked proper educational qualification to seek employment for an independent life. But when she realised that her daughters are also affected psychologically by growing up in the violent atmosphere, she got legally separated from her husband.

#### **Case 4**

Mrs. 4 is 21 years of age. She is from Guwahati and is now staying with her mother. She is the eldest of the three children of her widow mother. She is a Bengali Hindu. Immediately after completing her graduation her marriage was arranged with a business man.

Her husband is from a mediocre family. They were staying in a joint family where both the brothers stay and run the business together. But her husband has an upper hand in all the business matters. He stays away from her all the time, sometimes even at night. Later on she discovered about her husband having illicit relation with his sister-in-law. When she enquired about his relation with her, she was beaten up and threatened her to stay away from it and not interfere. From that day onwards, she is frequently physically abused by her husband and treated as maid servant. She was not allowed to communicate with her family members. Her sister-in-law together with her husband attempted to slowly poison her by administering with toxic medicines.

She told about all her sufferings and her unwillingness to stay with her husband any longer to her aunty, who was on a visit. Her aunty hesitated to take the decision all by herself but later on agreed and convinced Mrs. 4's husband to take Mrs 4 home for few days. While leaving for her parental home, she was not allowed to bring any of her

belongings and her jewellerys taken off by her sister-in-law. Since then, she is with her parental home. Mother of Mrs. 5 has sued a case against her husband for spoiling her daughter's life. Mrs. 5 wants to pursue her academic qualification and be economically independent.

From the narration of Mr. 4, it is clear that the elder brother is aware of his brother's evil deed. But he is a silent spectator fearing of being asked to leave his house and live on his own. Then why was the need of the marriage? May be, a show to the society and put a curtain to their illicit relation. The victim knew that she had no hope in this marriage as her husband was not at all interested in her and above that he tried to kill her by providing her toxic medicines.

She was willing to leave the situation as she knew her widow mother will be supportive and can stay with her, go for higher education or some professional course and be economically independent.

#### **8.4.5 Cases of Low Income Respondents:**

These two cases are studies from Paltanbazar area.

##### **Case 5**

Mrs. 5 is 38 years of age. She is married for more than ten years but staying on her own. She was born in Guwahati but belongs to Bihar. She speaks Hindustani (Bhojpuri). She is a vendor living in a shanty rented house with only two durable goods in it. She is staying in a nuclear family with her three daughters and a son. All her children are under metric and two of her daughters are self employed.

Since the last few years she along with her children is battered daily by her husband in drunkenness at night. His physical atrocities have damaged her ear. He tried to strangle her couple of times, curse her, use abusive languages, emotionally blackmailed her and would not provide her with food. This was the daily affair. His intention was to drive her out from the house and remarry the women with whom he has an illicit relation. Even after these tortures when she refused to leave the house, he left her and is now staying with the other lady.

Now even though she is on her own and leads a peaceful life, she wants her husband to come back and stay with them because of the social security provided by the marriage and also for the sake of the children. She is worried that she will not be able to get her daughters married without her husband. Her parental relatives are supporting her emotionally and a NGO is fighting for her legally.

A married Indian woman very often feels socially secluded and unsecured without her husband. It is more so for a women who have daughter and belong to the poorer section of the society. Again, there are many customs and traditions in the Indian society which are patriarchy. Generally the lower sections of the Indian society are not flexible to these traditions due to their conservative mind set and lack of adequate education. Her illiteracy together with her cultural backgrounds groomed her conservative outlooks and made her weaker, mentally.

#### **Case 6**

Mrs. 6 is 35 years old married for more than 10 years and is now living on her own. She is a Hindu and speaks Telugu. She belongs to Schedule Caste community. She is an illiterate

and is as a vendor. She earns very less for a living. She is living in a shanty rented house with not a single durable good in the house.

They were staying in a nuclear family with two sons. In the first few years of their married life everything was normal. Later on, he got indulged into alcoholism and daily returns drunk, beat Mrs 6 and her sons. The frequency and the intensity of the violence gradually increased. It is more during financial problems (demanded her earnings). Later on she came to know that he has married another woman and has a two year old child. When Mrs 9 inquired about the relation, he got violent and tried to stab her with a sharp object. She somehow managed to escape by overpowering him as he was drunk. Since then they are separated. She has strong support from her family and has filed a case for legal separation. She wants him to provide maintenance to her and their sons. Her two sons are her greatest support and security now.

Mrs.6 is confident and bold to live on her own because her two sons and they are her physical and social support. On the contrary, Mrs. 5 lacks confidence to stay on her own because of her three unmarried daughters. Another cause which is like a boost to Mrs 6 is the strong and consistent support from her parental relatives.

#### **8.4.6 Cases of Respondents Bengali Speaking Muslims:**

Two cases are taken from Sijubari area under Dispur police station.

##### **Case 7**

Mrs. 7 is 35 years of age and is a Bengali Muslim. She migrated from a village along with her six daughters to stay with her husband in Guwahati, now for ten years. She is illiterate

and a daily wage worker. Their nuclear family of eight members stay in a shanty (rented) with only two durable goods. All of them are illiterate. Her two elder daughters always accompany her to work.

The husband is not interested to work and thinks the seven females to look after him but still needs a male off-spring, the lack of which is the source of torment of the wife. The violence on the wife used to be more whenever there are serious financial difficulties at home or when she opposes his fancies. She is always blamed for not being able to run the house efficiently. He punishes her by rubbing chilli into her eyes. On one occasion her limbs were broken with a hard object.

Ironically, she compromises with her husband and blames herself and her ill fate for all her woes. For all this constraints she is ready to bear all the torture and stay with her husband and her sense of guilt is at the same time giving opportunity to her husband to exploit her situation.

#### **Case 8**

Mrs. 8 is 25 years old Bengali Muslim. She migrated to Guwahati with her first husband. She is now staying with her second husband. She comes from a very poor family. Her marriage was arranged with an elderly person when she was only sixteen years old. She is under metric. Both she and her husband stay in a two room rented apartment. They had four durable good in their house.

He initially was a very caring husband and often promised her of a flight trip to distant lands. Subsequently he turned out to be very harsh and a rude person. He used to mentally abuse her for no reasons. One day he brought with him a girl who stayed with

them for three days and during the stay her husband was having physical relation with the unknown lady. Gradually it became a regular practise. Some times he used to bring two girls and some time more and they are all different girls all the time. She suspected that her husband was involved in immoral trafficking in women. He warned Mrs.8 to treat them friendly so that their neighbour does not suspect anything unusual. He also wants her to join the trade. On one occasion he sent two men into their house when she was all alone. They demanded to have physical relation with her. They could not proceed further when she refused and threaten to raise her voice. When she narrated the incident to her husband she was surprised when he started to batter her mercilessly for refusing. After few days of this incidence, she observed a total change in his behaviour again. He was very caring and promised to take her to Kolkata. She became suspicious of his nature and ran away when there was nobody at home. He too never came looking for her. Later on she remarried and since then she is with her second husband.

In this case the violence was more of mental and psychological. She was compromising as long as she was feeling safe with her husband. The husband was able to have his own way because she was young and at the same time was from a rural area and lacked a network of support system within the city. When she smelled the threat in her life (targeting her next) she ran away from the situation. It was easier for her to come out of it and remarry again as she was single and had no children.

#### **8.4.7 Cases of Mixed Community Respondents:**

The two cases of mixed community are taken from Fatasil Ambari area.

**Case 9**

Mrs. 9 is 20 years old, a resident of Guwahati. She is married for less than three years and is now staying with her mother. She is a Hindu Assamese belonging to the Bodo community. She is under graduate and is working for a private company. She earns satisfactorily. She is the youngest of the three daughters of her widow mother.

She got married when she was only 17 years old. Theirs was a love marriage. Both of them belong to middle class families and were living in a nuclear family. Since her husband was unemployed Mrs 9 mother set up a business for him. Hardly after one month of their marriage marital discord started to exist. He lacked interested in work and demanded her to seek monetary help from her mother during any financial crunches. Mrs. 9 often agreed to his wishes. Her mother-in-law also accuses her for inadequate dowry during her visits. Since she has no brother and their economic condition was poorer than her other sisters (married), he subsequently demanded her to convince her mother to transfer her parental property in his name. He wanted the property as dowry. She was physically and mentally abused for more than two year over this issue. She never uttered a word about her torture to any of her family member. On one instance when her husband was abusing her, Mrs. 9's mother happened to visit them and was horrified seeing her daughter battered. Fearing that he might kill her in other instances her mother brought her home. Mrs 9 has sued a case against her husband and her mother-in-law for atrocity for dowry and has sought for legal separation. She wants to stay with her mother and is economically independent.

Mrs. 9's is a case of atrocity for dowry. They are residing with the communities where dowry is a common practise. Her husband and his family are maybe influenced by the society in which they dwell. Her husband tried to exploit her situation since her mother is a widow and there was no strong resistance from any of the other members of the family. Moreover, Mrs 9 was of tender age and use to be terrified by his violent nature and never dared to resist aggressively to her husband's motives. Her mother played an important role to bring her out of the abusive life. This very much has to do because she is a Scheduled Caste where the status of a man and a woman are more so less same and a married daughter is not considered as a burden.

#### **Case 10**

Mrs. 10 is 30 years old, a resident of Guwahati. She stayed with her husband less than three years after her marriage and is now staying with her own parents. She is a Bengali Hindu. She is a graduate and was staying in a joint family (7 members). Her in-laws are stay in an independent house. They are of middle class family and all of them are literate and employed except Mrs.10 and her mother-in-law.

From the very day of her marriage conflict between both the families started. On her marriage day they were not satisfied with the food provided and the hospitality extended to the groom's side. It was an indirect indication of their dissatisfaction with her dowry. Her mother-in-law took away all her jewellery from her on the very next day of her marriage. Later on she was battered for petty matters by her mother-in-law and her sister-in-laws. Occasionally her husband was also provoked to physically abuse her. She was cursed for not bringing sufficient dowry, called evil, used abusive languages, emotionally

blackmailed and was threaten of assault if she did not bring her demanded dowry immediately. All these assault used to occur frequently but more when her husband was away. The dowry demands gradually increased. Her parents were aware of it but could not meet to all their demands as her father was a retired person and has two more daughters to marry off. They were also ill treated during their visits.

On one instance her husband left her in her parental house and never came to take her back. When her father went to enquire about it when there was silence for a long time, her in-laws clearly told him that they did not want Mrs.10 back and was preparing for their son's second marriage.

This is a case of atrocity for dowry. When her in-laws knew she will not be able to fulfil their demand they dumped her in her parental house. Mrs 10 is considered more so a property of the family after her marriage and every member of the family owe a sense of ownership over her. It is for this sense of belonging, the in-laws abuses her more than the husband unlike the other cases. At the same time they never hesitated to go to the extreme because Mrs.10 never resisted aggressively and her parents were also helpless.

Mrs. 10 still wants to go back to her husband but stay separately as she feels as a burden in her parental house. She fears social ostracism. She lacks confidence as she is not economically independent and was never outgoing from her childhood and has grown up with a conservative mindset which makes her feel as a subordinate as a woman all the time.

#### **8.4.8 Cases of Respondents belonging to Assamese Community:**

##### **Case 11**

Mrs 16 is 40 years old, from Guwahati. She was married for more than 10 years but is separated and is on her own now. She is Assamese Hindu belonging to general caste. She is a Govt. employee earning satisfactorily.

They were staying in a nuclear family. They have a son. Both of them were working in the same department and were staying in the quarter. During the first few years of their marriage everything was sailing smoothly. Later on her husband got indulged into alcoholism. She was frequently battered in his drunken state. Later on she too used to hit back but was often overpowered by him. Once he kicked her so hard that couple of her ribs were fractured. The harassment stopped for a period when he was posted in some other place. Few months after his transfer, she was informed of her husband having illicit relation with a local girl. When she visited her husband she came to know that they have married secretly in a temple and the other lady was expecting his child. Soon after this incidence she filed a case against her husband and sought for legal separation.

Now they are legally separated and her husband, provide maintenance for their son and the property right to their son.

From the narration it is clear that Mrs 16 has a strong personality which may have hurt the ego of her husband and made him feel inferior. He could not accept her being more powerful for which he looked for a partner who was less powerful and submissive. On the contrary Mrs 11 did not compromised with her husband's action because she was economically strong and stable. Another important fact is that since she was working in the

police station she was aware of the laws. Awareness of her rights and the procedure to procure them made her stronger.

### **Case 12**

Mrs. 12 is 38 years old. She lives with her husband and is married for more than 12 years. They have a daughter who is 10 years old and is a bright student.

Both Mrs.12 and her husband come from a well to do families. After her marriage she was staying in a joint family (twelve members). Her husband was the youngest of the three brothers and was running their family business together. Soon after her child was born their business share was divided between the three brothers by her mother-in-law. Mrs. 12 was also given a certain share (in cash) as their daughter-in-law. Since then her problems started to erupt one after another. Her husband was always in loose in his business. After the downfall of his business he started asking for his wife's money. In the first few instances she gave him willingly but when she discovered that he was wasting the money in gambling and alcohol, she refused to part with her share. Since then, there used to be quarrels between them which subsequently intensified until they were asked to leave the house by her in-laws. She came to know about the darker side of her husband's nature much late. Her in-laws always used to put a curtain to all his habits fearing that the marriage will fall apart when they were newly married. But after their daughter was born they stopped hiding it further. She feels that maybe it was this nature (gambling and alcoholism) of her husband the reason behind the division of business. Soon her in-laws also stated being indifferent toward her and there was a total change in their behaviour.

**Case 13**

Ms 13 who is 30 years of age belongs to a very poor section of the society. She is unmarried and is now staying in a destitute home. She is a Christian belonging to the Scheduled Tribe community (Garo). She is an illiterate.

Ms.13 migrated to Guwahati with her father in her childhood. After her father expired she was staying with her mother and sister. When she was eight years old her mother remarried. From then onwards atrocity by her step father became a part of her life. He physically abused her at all instance and would not let her stay with her mother. She was not allowed to stay inside the house or to be fed. She used to sleep outside the house. Even in her sleep she used to be kicked and physically harass her. He becomes violent when he is drunk. Her mother smuggled food for her. When she was around sixteen years old, after a number of attempts, her father finally sold her off to a Muslim man who was about forty years of age. She was kept in hostage for three days in a dark room where she was repeatedly raped by a number of persons. On the forth day she managed to escape but was caught by them. The commotion of her escape alerted the neighbour and after their report she was rescued by the police. Both the Muslim guy and her step father were arrested. When she was taken back home by the police, the neighbour would not allow her to stay there anymore. The police keep her in a destitute home and since then she is there. Later on she gave birth to a girl child who is kept in an orphanage.

While staying in the destitute home her mother wanted to take her home. But she refused to go as she did not trust her. Now she wants to come out of the destitute home and live on her own and be economically independent.

Mrs. 13 is left with fewer avenues. After taking account of her past life, nobody wanted to adopt her (last 14 years) as she is a rape victim. But she is confident to stay on her own as she feels that her life cannot be worse than her past life and also because she excelled in all the vocational training provided by the state home.

#### **8.4.10 Cases of Crimes Outside Home:**

Three cases are taken for study which will reflect specific issues regarding sexual harassment outside home.

##### **Case 14**

Ms 14 is studying in a Government Higher Secondary School. She belongs to Guwahati and come from a well to do nuclear family. She is 16 years of age.

She innocently admitted that she is subjected to different forms of sexual harassment both within the educational institute and elsewhere. She is subjected to sexual harassed everyday in the crowded public transport on her way to school or on her way back home -busy school hours. She is pushed intentionally or suggestive physical contacts are made (public transport). And this tends to occur more when she is alone. While walking in the crowded public places she became victim of sexual harassment a number of times, at times even abused. The perpetrators are the middle aged male (above 30 years). She never reported any of these incidences to her parents but shared them with her friends. She always kept quite when harassed, sometime out of embarrassment or sometime not knowing how to retaliate, resist or react.

She is also a victim of sexual harassment in her institution. The perpetrators are two specific male teachers. They touch out of context that makes she feels uncomfortable. They behave in the same manner with many of her friends. Sometimes they even pass some lewd remarks. She never acted against these persons out of fear. At the same time she is not aware of any law from which protections can be sought.

She feels that there should be special buses meant for women and children during the busy school/office hours and complain box, for intimation with confidentiality about harassment, within the institution's premises. She strongly feels that the other passengers should retaliate when they notice any unpleasant scene in the public transport than act as an indifferent co-passenger.

#### **Case 15**

Ms 15 is 23 years old. She is unmarried and is a nurse in a private nursing home. She stays in a working women hostel. She has come to Guwahati to pursue this job as the economic condition of her family is not satisfactory. She is a victim of sexual harassment both within the workplace and in public places.

She is harassed frequently on the way to her workplace as she her job demands working in the odd hours. She is victimised in the public transport (pushing and suggestive physical contacts) and while walking (lewd remarks, stalked) to/from her workplace at night. This occurs frequently. The perpetrators are generally the middle aged men. She does not react when eve teased or stalked (out of fright) but resist aggressively when abused in the public transports. She has shared about her experiences to her guardians. They suggested her to retaliate or ignore depending on the situation.

In her workplace lewd remarks are passed and sometimes advances are made by the attendants of the patients. Ms 15 has made number of verbal complains to the concern authority but no action is taken against any of them maybe because it may harm the reputation of the nursing home. She had this feeling from the reaction of the management. Even though it happens occasionally she feels that these incidences are professional hazards for a working woman.

### **Case 16**

Ms. 16 is a student who comes from a well to do nuclear family of Guwahati. She is 22 years of age and doing her Post Graduation.

She is a victim of sexual harassment in public places. These tend to occur on the way to her institution, market or wherever only when she is alone. It happens occasionally (once a month). In the public transport and crowded public places (which is a common place of harassment for all the cases) pushing and suggestive physical contacts are the forms of harassment, sometime even when the bus is not crowded. While walking, lewd remarks are passed. Here again the perpetrators are the middle aged persons. She always resisted aggressively to these incidences. These types of harassment have occurred in different places and by different persons in all the three cases. She usually reports these incidences to her parents and shared it with her friends. On one instance she has reported to the police about an incidence of eve teasing but is not sure of what happened thereafter but thing remained the same. She too agrees that these types of incidences are professional hazards to women.

She feels that self defence is the best way to retaliate for which martial arts training should be made compulsory for a female child in the school level itself. At the same time there should be easy access to police complain and prompt action from the legal authorities.

### **8.5 Findings:**

1. It is observed that the causes of violence against women are varied. But in more than 60 percent of the cases alcoholism was associated with the crime and the perpetrator tends to become more violent when he is drunk.
2. The harassments are due to various causes; financial problems, illicit relationship, alcoholism, frustration, the typical domination of a daughter-in-law by her mother-in-law etc. but in number of cases dowry and bigamy are the causes of violence.
3. A victim coming out of the situation depends basically on her educational qualification and her being economically independent. In a number of cases it was noticed that the victim wanted or went for higher qualification to pursue a job after their separation. Education was not only their confidence but also their awareness building agent. Illiteracy on the other hand drags them to conservative outlook.
4. Of all the supports, parental support is the vital and the strongest support for the victim. If this support is feeble or weak a victim is usually hesitant and compromises with her situation. And in many cases strong parental support has assisted the victim to overcome her problem.

5. In almost all of the cases it is the husband who abuses the victim physically, and the in-laws harasses mentally and psychologically, except Mrs. 14 who was physically abused more by her in-laws.
6. The victims approach towards the crime and her decision to deal with the situation are very much influenced by the cultural norms and values with which she grew up. If she is brought up with conservative outlook she is reluctant to come out from her abusive life. On the contrary, she feels bold enough to take a decision against the flow if she grew up in a broad minded family.
7. The girls of lower age groups are victimised more outside their home and in varied places because of their innocence and at the same time their fear and embarrassed to retaliate.
8. Sexual harassment at public places is more for Case 15. Since she has to move out at night she is stalked but usually women of her age are not stalked during the day time but a girl of lower age is also followed during the day time.
9. Ms 15 could not put forth her complain strongly to the authority because she has a fear of loosing her job and at the same time she feels as an outsider to the city.
10. The public transport is the common place where all the women are subjected to sexual harassment in the form of pushing and suggestive physical contacts.
11. All the perpetrators are middle aged (above 30 years).
12. The harassment occurs at different places by different persons.
13. In most of the cases the victims share their experiences with their friends than with their parents.

## **Chapter IX**

### **CONCLUSION**

**9.1** Gender violence is universal that pervade all cultures and all peoples of the world, especially the structured societies irrespective of the degree of development, levels of incomes and wealth or political systems or religious faiths. However, the details of the types, patterns of such violence differ across cultures/ civilisations and therefore, the geographical space. However, the problematic of gender and especially gender related violence and crimes (generally referred to, as those against women) are new to geography itself, though never the less, very crucial in new perspectives in which geography finds its engagements in recent times.

On the basis of the finding of the earlier eight chapters this chapter summaries the major outcomes of the study, attempts verification of the hypotheses proposed, generalisation and implications of the study, limitations of the study and the suggests further work in this field.

#### **9.2 Summary of Findings:**

The findings of the study have been summarised objective-wise as follows:

(i) *Objective one:*

Dispur, Chandmari and Jalukbari are the areas of high occurrences of *atrocities by husband and in-laws (498-A IPC)*. In each of these areas, there are certain pockets inhabited by lower and lower and middle-income families, like Sijubari in Dispur area, Bamunimaidan in Chandmari area, Pandu and Maligaon in Jalukbari area. It was also noticed during the field study that women belonging to this class are comparatively less hesitant to register their cases of *atrocities by husbands and in-laws*. High concentration of *dowry death and dowry related harassment (304-B IPC)* have taken place in Fatasil Ambari, Jalukbari and Chandmari during the study period (1990-2003). Dispur and Jalukbari records the highest cases of *rapes*. *Molestation and sexual harassment* tends to occur more in densely populated areas like, Ganeshguri area of Dispur, Chandmari and Maligaon area of Jalukbari that remain densely inhabited--which may be one of the reasons of frequent occurrences of these crimes in these areas. Dispur, Geetanagar and Paltanbazar show the highest concentration of *trafficking in women*. Dispur, Jalukbari, Paltanbazar and Chandmari recorded the highest cases of *kidnappings and abductions*. There are more reports of *eve teasing* in Noonmati, Paltanbazar and Fatasil Ambari (on the basis of data from the City, S.P. Office). *Others* forms of crimes include murder cases, which have taken place in varied circumstances, are concentrated in areas like Dispur, Fatasil Ambari and Jalukbari. In case of Jalukbari and Fatasil Ambari, dowry can be attributed as a major cause of murder of women.

(ii) *Objective Two:*

Jalukbari is considered predominantly an Assamese community residential area, Fatasil Ambari, as a mixed community residential area inhabited by Scheduled Tribes, a variety of Hindi speakers and Bengali speaking communities and Sijubari of Dispur is known as predominantly Bengali speaking (Muslim community) locality. Religion, linguistic and caste/community background of the women and their connections with the domestic violence (Chapter IV) are as follows:

- (a) All forms of physical as well as mental violence by husbands and in-laws are high among the Muslims followed by the Hindus (Table 4.1, 4.2, 4.4 and 4.5). Among the Hindu women, attempt to murder both by the husband and the in-laws are high. Sexual abuse (in the form of initiating/forcing wives into prostitution and trafficking!) by husbands is more among the low income Muslim families (Table 4.3). The Hindu women are harassed on all occasions, especially due to dowry or due to illicit relationships of the husbands with other women and the Muslim women (low income families), harassed more due to grabbing away the earnings of the wife by the husband, marital infidelity by the husbands as well as dowry. The Muslim women are more ready to compromise with their situation<sup>1</sup>. But the Hindu women prefer to live a separated life or study further to be economically independent.

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<sup>1</sup> It must be noted that the women referred to from the Muslim community are invariably from very low income families and therefore, the findings are related to poor families from the community. For these women, the desperate economic situation does not permit them to live a separated life. Moreover, the nature marriage among the Muslims is quite different and a divorce could be quite easy, at least among the low income families, since it is based on a contract, (though the 'triple Talaak' has been discouraged by All Indian Muslim Law Board in its recent pronouncement)—thus the struggle to keep the marriage in tact than breaking away, as among the Hindus and other communities.

(b) Atrocities of all forms both mental and physical by the husband and in-laws are also high among ethnicities, like the Bengalis followed by Assamese (Table 4.9, 4.10, 4.12 and 4.13). But attempt to burn and murder married women for dowry or other reasons are high among the other linguistic groups (Telugu, Punjabi etc., *non-East Indian* communities: NEIC). Atrocities due to alcoholism are more prevalent among the Assamese and other linguistic groups (NEIC). Dowry related violence and bigamy/ spousal infidelity are more among the Bengalis and NEIC. Around 50 percent of the Bengali respondents (both Hindus and Muslims) prefer to live with the situation (compromise), whereas the Assamese women prefer to live a separated life.

All forms of violence by husband are high among the Scheduled Castes and low among the Scheduled Tribes couples (Table 4.17 and 4.18). Sexual violence by the husbands are common to general castes/communities; however, violence by in-laws are more common to Other Backward Castes (OBC) and Scheduled Tribes (particularly, in cases of ST women married to non Scheduled Tribe husbands) and are conversely, less among couples from the Scheduled Castes and general population (Table 4.20).

*(iii) Objective Three:*

Among the localities within the limits of Greater Guwahati Urban area, Chandmari and Dispur are considered as the high income localities, Noonmati, middle income locality and the slum areas of Paltanbazar, low income localities. Study of employment status,

occupational status and economic background of the families in relation to gender crimes indicate the following (Chapter V):

- (a) Physical and mental violence both by the husband and the in-laws are high among the employed women (Table 5.1, 5.2, 5.4 and 5.5). The women are generally abused for not being able to perform dual duties of a house-keeper (*home-maker!*) and as a working woman--her sense of freedom is envied by the in-laws, the husband, suspicious of illicit relationships at work-place and no less, the harassments on the way to work or at work place, if you are young and attractive as a person (!). Sexual violence by husbands is high among the housewives (unemployed with no source of independent incomes). The housewives are harassed more on all occasions or when they go against the will of the husbands/in-laws because of constant dowry demands. A large section of the housewives compromise to the circumstances (especially, women with low level of education) since choices before them are limited—a separated life is fraught with economic and physical insecurity with little long-term support from the parental families, especially that there is no social security system in the country against penury. However, many women with education wish to lead a separated and independent life. One-third of the women want to study further, get a job and become economically independent. Majority of the employed women want to lead an independent life.
- (b) Physical and mental tortures by the husbands are high and of extreme severity (breaking limbs, abortions, damaged hearing etc.) among low income self-

employed or wage workers (vendors, wage-workers and the sales-women), and is low among, expectedly, the educated professionals (Table 5.9 and 5.10). Physical violence by the in-laws is common to the former; whereas, mental violence by the in-laws (ignorance, passing sarcastic comments, use of abusive languages etc.) is high with the latter, especially when they oppose the in-laws (Table 5.13). Daily-wager women suffer their husbands' financial profligacy and illicit relations with other women, so also, among other small-time self-employed women (vendors and the small business women), who suffer at hands of their drunken and polygamous husbands. Among the office goers, the causes are varied: work-stress, exertion, professional frustrations etc (Table 5.14). Majority of the daily-wagers, sales women and small business women prefer to compromise due to the social security provided by the marriage and also for the security of their children. On the other hand, the vendors, office goers and the business women prefer to live a separated life (Table 5.15).

- (c) Physical and mental violence by the husbands are high in the low-income families (Rs 24001-50000) and lower middle-income families (Rs 50001-100000) (Table 5.16 and 5.17); but among the very poor households (below Rs 24000) as well as the high income families (above Rs. 100000/ year) sexual violence are nearly non-existent. Mental violence by the in-laws is high in the middle income families and physical violence among the low economic families. Atrocity due to alcoholism increases with towards of respondents with low incomes, whereas atrocity due to dowry increases among respondents in families with middle

incomes of the family but not among the high income families (Table 5.20 and 5.21).

*(iv) Objective Four:*

As evident from Table 3.15, crimes against women have increased in all the areas of the city except Geetanagar, whereas growth is the highest in Noonmati. The rapid growth of population in this area during the recent period can be attributed as one of the causes. The lowest growth is in Panbazar area because this is largely a business area and resided only by business communities (Marwadis, e.g.), largely upper income class.

The growth of crimes against women (by types) (from 1990 to 2003) is as follows:

*(a) Atrocity by husband and in-laws:* Reported crimes of this nature show growth in all areas of the city except Geetanagar. The highest growth is reported from Jalukbari (220.83%) and very high growth in Fatasil Ambari, Azara, Noonmati and Pragjyotishpur areas which reported very low crime earlier years. Overall, this crime grew by 40.48 percent in Greater Guwahati (Table 3.13).

*(b) Dowry death:* There appears to be a spurt in dowry related deaths in all the areas, which earlier reported practically none except in two areas; Fatasil Ambari (8.33%) and Latasil. This is a serious concern and appears the city is falling into the trap of “Indian Mainstream” an epithet for many terrible practices (Table 3.13).

(c) *Rape*: Noonmati area shows a very high growth (166.66%) of reported rape cases. The overall growth rate of rape in Greater Guwahati is 11.31 percent (Table 3.14).

(d) *Kidnappings*: Very high growth rates have been observed in kidnappings in areas like Paltanbazar, Azara and Basistha. The average growth rate for Greater Guwahati is 4.91 percent (Table 3.14).

(e) *Molestation*: Except Geetanagar, Pragjyotispur, Jalukbari and all the other places are showing very high growth of molestation (Table 3.14).

(f) *Immoral Trafficking of Women*: Jalukbari, Chandmari, Paltanbazar and Dispur appear the principal areas high growth of this crime (Table 3.14).

(g) *Others*: They are the cases of murder of women under different circumstances. There is substantial growth of murder of women in the city, 45.83 percent, the highest of all the crimes. (Table 3.13)

(v) *Objective Five*:

The relation of violence against women arising due to modernising forces such as migration from rural to urban areas, employment status of women, nature of families (nuclear or joint) and sexual harassment outside home have been considered and the implications are as follows (Chapter V, VI and VII):

- (a) When crimes against women are studied on the basis of the personal incomes of the women respondents it is observed that physical and mental violence by the husbands and the in-laws as well as sexual abuse are high among the low and middle income women (Rs 1201-2400) (Table 5.23, 5.24 and 5.25). Drunkenness, dowry and constant financial harassment by husbands are common to these women. All forms of violence are low among the lower income women (< Rs 600) as well as the high income women (Rs 8000).
- (b) Physical violence by the husband is more in the nuclear families and mental violence among the extended families (Table 6.1). Physical violence (in lower proportion) and mental violence by the in-laws (more) are reported among the joint families (Table 6.4 and 6.5). Atrocities by husbands due to work-related stresses, exertion and frustration are more prevalent in the nuclear families (Table 6.7). The women staying in the joint families usually prefer compromises with their situations but majority of the women staying in the joint and the nuclear families want to be economically independent and live a separate life (Table 6.8).
- (c) Attempt to murder (by the husband) appears quite frequent as reported by the respondents, those are non-migrants (residents of Guwahati), whereas mental violence is more common among the women who migrated from villages. There are cases, where husbands apparently brought the wives in some guise from village for the motive of making a living by engaging these hapless women in prostitution rackets.

(d) The frequency of occurrences of sexual harassment outside home decreases with the increase of the age of the women (Table 7.4). The unmarried women are more susceptible to sexual harassment in all places and situations, and at the same time, are frequently harassed (Table 7.7 and 7.8) Women belonging to lower income families are sexually harassed more both in the public places and workplaces.

*(vi) Objective Six:*

Education among women evidently appears to be an important factor for safety in the home environment. Physical violence by the husbands are high among less educated women (metric or below metric), but less among the highly educated (graduates and professionals), as well as illiterates! (Table 6.17) Physical violence by the in-laws also decreases with the increase in the educational level of the women but is the vice versa for mental violence (Table 6.20 and 6.21). Atrocities due to stress and frustration increases with the educational status of the women and though it is not a professional factor. Spousal violence decreases with the higher educational level of the women, related to drunkenness or infidelity, which is common among spouses of low education and low incomes (Table 6.22). However, irrespective of their educational status, women are invariably targets of sexual harassment in the public transport and public places, due to poor law enforcement system, especially the lower rung of police functionaries, who consider eve-teasing, or making sexual gestures to young women is “perfectly legal” in the country and is no business of the law enforcement authority. Sexual harassment at workplaces and the

frequency of occurrences declines with the increase of the educational status of the women because education makes them confident to confront the unsolicited “Romeos” (7.19).

*(vii) Objective Seven:*

There appears to be a strong relationship between the occurrences of general crimes and crimes against women, when one observes this phenomenon on the basis of number of cases registered in each of these police stations. Dispur records the highest cases of general crimes, at the same time the CAW are also the highest in Dispur (the Capital Township of Assam!). Such association of general crimes and CAW in Paltanbazar, Jalukbari and Chandmari are more or less the same. Though intended, statistical association between the two was not carried forward due to a number of factors related with the data base, but there is no doubt that the two are strongly related (Table 3.16).

### **9.3 Testing of Hypotheses:**

As per the testing of the hypothesis are concerned they were not subjected to testing in a statistical sense, due to the limitation and characteristics of the data, i.e., the total number of respondents for domestic violence are 60 and for violence outside home, 20. Therefore, the approach adopted for verification of the stated four hypotheses was through cross tables and association of different indicators.

### 9.3.1 Hypothesis One:

*"Crimes against women tend to increase or decrease in response to changes in overall crime rates in a society".*

This hypothesis stands vindicated when the relationship of occurrences of general crimes and crimes against women are taken into account, data on police station-wise. The areas where the general crimes are high are also record higher levels of crimes against women. Dispur police station registered the highest cases of general crimes as well as crimes against women (CAW) during the study period (1991-2003). Paltanbazar recorded the second highest number cases general cases and ranked third in respect of crimes against women. The relation between the two (general crimes and crimes against women) in Panbazar area is not very strong (rank of general crimes -3 and CAW-6). The cause for showing low registration of CAW in this area is because the All Women Cell (combine reporting) is located within Panbazar PS premises. But again Jalukbari area has a strong relation between the two, general crimes 4<sup>th</sup> and CWA 2<sup>nd</sup>.

When we associate the two at the lower end, it is observed that North Guwahati, Pragjyotishpur and Lataasil are less crime prone, both general and crimes against women.

### 9.3.2 Hypothesis two:

*"Crime rates and types vary across economic classes".*

There are variations of violence against the women across economic classes both in types and extent. Physical and mental violence by the husband are substantially high among the lower middle class families (Rs 24001-50000) and low among the women in high

economic class (> Rs 100000). Sexual violence by the husbands is high among the middle class families (Rs 50001-100000). Physical violence by the in-laws is high among the low income women, whereas it is non-existent among the high income families. But mental violence by the in-laws shows somewhat a different picture. Mental violence is high among the middle income families, but is less among the lower middle class families.

In situation where women have independent incomes, all forms of violence by the husbands (physical, mental and sexual) are high among the lower middle income respondents (Rs. 1201-2500/ month). Physical violence by the husband is low among the very low (monthly income less than Rs 600) and the high income women (+ Rs 8000). On the other hand, mental tortures by husbands are less among the very low income women. Sexual violence by the husband does not exist among the very low and lower income women. Physical and mental violence by the in-laws are high among the lower (middle-class) income women and is the least among the very low income women. Battery by the husband exists among all the income groups but the frequency of occurrences gradually decreases with the income of the women.

Both physical and mental violence by husbands and the in-laws are high among the employed women. Violent forms of physical tortures by husbands are high among the wage workers, vendors and small business women. Battery by the husband exists among the entire occupational groups but the frequency of occurrence decreases with the increase in the occupational status. Physical and mental violence by husband of all forms are lower among the high professionals.

### 9.3.3 Hypothesis three:

*"Types of crimes against women vary along ethnic diversities".*

All forms of atrocities (physical, mental and sexual) by the husbands and in-laws are high among the Muslims than the Hindus. But attempts to murder by the husbands and in-laws are higher among the Hindus respondents.

Physical and mental violence (husband and in-laws) are high among the Bengali speaking community and it is like a daily affair for majority of them. Atrocities by the husbands are low among the North-Indian (Hindustani) speaking communities. Sexual violence by husband is more among the Muslims (forced prostitution and trafficking), though among the Hindus it represents other forms.

Among the Scheduled Castes all forms of physical violence as well as mental violence by husbands are high, whereas, it is expectedly low among the Scheduled Tribes. Very few cases of domestic violence among the Scheduled Tribes were reported in the study. On the other hand, there were innumerable cases of atrocities among the Scheduled Castes and the general caste populations. Physical and mental violence by in-laws are high among the Other Backward Castes and low among the Scheduled Castes.

Therefore, there appears to be strong association of ethnicity, culture and pattern of crimes against women; e.g., whereas there are reported dowry cases among the North-Indian communities (Biharis, UPites, Rajasthanis and Punjabis), it is not a prominent factor among the Assamese and Bengali communities, in which case marital infidelity and bigamy emerge as more important factors in spousal discords.

#### 9.3.4. Hypothesis four:

*"Modernisation of society influences intensifies and types of crimes against women".*

Education of the women is an important component of the process of modernisation. It was observed during the study that though physical and mental violence by the husbands occurs among all the educational groups but the types and frequency of atrocities vary substantially by educational level. Violence decidedly decreases with the increase of the educational level of the women and also the frequency of occurrences. Except a few exceptions, atrocity by the in-laws also shows a similar trends and it is nearly absent among the high professionals (physical violence). But mental violence apparently, increases with the educational status of the women. Whereas education at one level, opens of economic and social opportunities for women and drastically improves her quality of life (even that of the family), it has to be admitted that it also exposes her, ironically, to sexual harassment in the workplace and also outside the home environment in general. It is not to argue that education is to blame, rather it is failure of the society and polity to protect women who become partners of progress for the entire society.

As compared to rural areas, the urban, fragments the old family structure into nuclear families by necessity, which produces its own ethos of spousal discord, stresses and strains that at times spills over to violence, with no one to help in mending fences. Physical and mental violence (both by husbands and in-laws) are high in the joint families but in the nuclear families the spousal violence is often extreme. Torture or newly wed women is common to joint families due to dowry demand, whereas in nuclear families

husbands exposure to liquor and other women, loneliness and frustrations of the urban existence are important factors.

Physical and mental violence by the husband and physical atrocities by the in-laws are high among the migrants, especially women migrants from villages. They generally are not confident enough to retaliate and thus, suffer and compromise with violent husbands and atrocious in-laws—suffering often is accepted fact of the urban existence—situation dictated by fate. On the other hand, women who grew up in Guwahati suffer from mental violence by the in-laws, because they are more outgoing in nature; seek for more private space and time, less leaning towards traditional values and way of life etc.

Therefore, no doubt, whereas modernity has positive influences over the woman's life, access to economic opportunities, education, occupations, independence, but it also adds to the dual roles they have to play now, at workplace and at home; stresses and harassments at work and on the way, especially that often the state and the society is blind to their plight, even within the walls of their own homes.

#### **9.4 Larger Implications of the Study:**

- (i) The first major concern that emerges from the study is that both crime in general and the crimes against women are on the rise in the State of Assam and especially in Guwahati, the largest urban area of the North-East Region. As observed in most industrialised nations, at the time these countries were industrialising and urbanising the average crime rate (per population) rose many times and indeed, these are many times more in many developed countries today, especially

grievous crimes. These are of course dealt with a more responsive and responsible crime administration system and judiciary. This also costs these societies a packet, but is considered necessary and in a way cost of development. In developed countries, whereas there is a judge for every few hundred persons, in our situation, probably one for over 50,000 persons—so both law enforcement and judicial administration suffer.

- (ii) However, the moot question is how to deal with crimes against women within the four walls of home that is supposed to be the safest for all. Family is the oldest institution constituted by man on which perhaps stand all other social institutions; and if this institution is called to question, then the entire edifice of society may collapse leading to chaos and disarray. Domestic violence, especially battering of wives is the commonest of all crimes against women to all societies and all communities, the developed and the developing as well. It is also is a problem of the under-belly of the society—sanctity of spousal privacy and space—thus, the least reported. The case in point is Aluwalia case<sup>2</sup> in UK, wherein the spousal murder on the part of the woman in question was considered as an “act in self-defence” thus acquittal of the defendant and British jurisprudence stood corrected. So, part of the problem lies with the law enforcement system that needs a complaint to the effect of marital abuse to be filed by the battered wife and the criminal justice system is “shy of entering into what is considered a purely private sphere”. This of course, needs to be addressed—the story is not of

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<sup>2</sup> Case Comments: R v Ahluwalia: The Vindication of Battered Women, Special Issue on *Feminism and Law*, National Law School Journal, Vol I. 1993, p173.

that of the battered wives of Guwahati, but all such women though the length and breadth of the country—perhaps, the entire humanity.

- (iii) Why the wife remains silent about an abusive husband and spiteful in-laws and fears coming to public it three-fold: (a) A sense of shame of carrying what is culturally a sacred private affair to public—women in India (even elsewhere) do not disclose such matters even to their parental families. It is considered as failure of the woman, to deal with her own home and husband. (b) Second, once taken out of the context of home and family, the situation becomes irretrievable, i.e., break down of the marriage itself, which the women are extremely wary about. Culturally, divorced women are not considered normal—they are either of questionable moral character or failures to keep their marriages in tact. Rarely, the husbands are called to question. (c) Third, what alternatives do such women have? By and large, they have no source of their own incomes—it is only in recent times that women started getting education in numbers and opting for professional or work environment. Often, within a few years of marriage, they are saddle with many children who are to be looked after—though Indian courts are sympathetic to maternal custody, they are by and largely reluctant to provide sufficient alimony and maintenance to the divorced wife. The parental families are reluctant to take the responsibility of the married daughter and reluctant to share the parental property and give a share of it to the married daughter—the expenses during the marriage (including any dowry) is considered the share of the daughter, which in most cases are misappropriated by the husband's family after

separation or one has to go through long civil procedures (not criminal) to retrieve “Streedhan”(!), which is no doubt is “robbery” of one kind.

Therefore, the women either keep silent or “compromises”, i.e., she tolerates all the atrocities perpetrated on her for either sake of children or her own precarious economic existence and then, accepts the whole situation as her destiny or the daily battering as a normal spousal relationship—since she has no other such exposure and reluctant to talk about it to friends or relations. As clear in from the study, when women have education and are in some form of employment or earning and have independent incomes, they are more than willing to break out of an abusive family life either to live on their own or start life all over again. So, the crux of the solution to the problem to a great extent lies with women’s education and independent economic standing, which will not be forthcoming without education. Education also creates awareness about rights of the women and the general role they play and the responsibilities of the state towards the citizens; thus, makes them confront unreasonable spouses or intimidating in-laws by making them self-confident.

A connected question is also the age at marriage—which necessarily is not a serious issue in the region, except for low income, North-Indian families who prefer marriage of very young girls, as evident in some case studies as well as some young adolescent girls lured into elopement then abandoned after a few months of marriage. Only marriage at the right age can help because the women will be mentally matured to deal with a married, family situation than a girl of impressionable age. Often the families give

consent to such marriages because these are culturally acceptable and economically sensible, “one mouth less to feed”.

- (iv) From the study also amply clear that in communities where women’s work participation is nearly equal to men, there is little spousal discord, i.e., the families in Scheduled Tribes, where wife beating is rare, interference of in-laws totally absent. It is also for the fact, it indicates a truly shared-life between the spouses, both working together to make that life possible. If, it does not work, then the exit is simple and with out much fanfare. When one looks at the general population irrespective of caste or religion, the husband sits on a moral high ground being the “provider” in the family, thus, the one to be heeded on all counts, reasonable or otherwise. Second, the exit out of a messy married life is awfully difficult and becomes a public nuisance for the women, many dread it and prefer to live a life without much interest. The tribal model is simple: men and women work equally; the marital entry is easy, so is the exit there is no burden, there is no dependence of one on the other.
- (v) Though not quite explicitly understood from the study itself, there are indications about the spatiality of existence of women in the urban situation. Women who have migrated (in marriage) to the city (Guwahati), especially low income family women, invariably living in slums or poor localities, work at parental houses in their own fields in the villages have now being replaced by work as house-maids or vendors, often travelling great distances and falling prey to eave teasers, or subjected to harassment at the hands of employers in informal sectors. Though

there exist laws against sexual harassment at workplace, it confined to only the organised sector. There is hardly any protection in the informal sectors; especially the worst is the domestic work environment, where child labours as well as sexual exploitation of house-maids are common stories, for millions of women and children, with the law looking at the other way. The young women have no means and guts to come to police stations to file complaint against the employers—in extreme cases, even when young women visit the police station to file a complaint, they are booked under some pretext and there are any number of custodial rapes in this country—a factor that deters women even thinking of visiting a police station.

The other exploitation that came to light is the racketeering in which young girls from villages are married to urban touts for the ulterior motive of using these hapless victims in prostitution rackets and trafficking, especially in poor Muslim families—often the parental families having no idea of what happens to their daughters. This is undoubtedly serious breaches in law enforcement system in the city and must be dealt with heavy hands by the authorities.

Education and work also allows women a different spatial experience in form of movements from home, work and home etc and also, are very often subjected to sexual harassment at workplace. It is also observed that women with education and age are more successful in dealing with such unwarranted overtures, than very young women or those with little education. Thus, the problem certainly is not “work” itself, but better

“construction of the individual woman” as a participant is the question and not as an onlooker or victim in the great enterprise called life itself.

### **9.5 Future areas of Research Work:**

The following are the potential areas for further study in this field, which due to limitations of scope and time could not be carried out during this study itself:

- (i) As stated earlier, in-depth investigation of the causes of higher concentration of certain crimes against women in certain localities (area specific) can lead to better understanding of the genesis of the crime against women.
- (ii) It will also be challenging to study specifically problems connected with working women (across social and economic classes).
- (iii) Spatial variation of status of women can also be studied on the basis of urban, semi-urban and rural women and its relation with crimes against women.
- (iv) It must be admitted that the current study was designed to study crimes against women from the “women’s perspective” alone with no intention whatsoever to sit over judgement who is right or wrong. It is clear from most studies from all over the world that the victims whether at home or at work place or outside, in variably are women, though theoretically one cannot discount spousal cruelties perpetrated on men also. Thus, another area that can be explored is the views of family and husbands in cases of separated families not with the intention of coming to a judgement but to understand aspects that may not be reflected from women’s perspective alone.

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