

## What Impact Have SARS-CoV-2/Covid-19 Pandemic on Domestic Violence against Women in India across Different States and Union Territories from the Beginning of Lockdown Due To covid-19 pandemic in March 2020 till 20th September 2020?

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### Abstract

**Background:** The protection of women is of utmost importance and prime concern in India due to a huge population, equity issues, gender issues, lack of positive deviance at the community level, illiteracy, socio-economic factors, migration from rural to urban areas, inaccessibility to legal help and of course many more factors. The SARS-CoV-2 pandemic had presented a challenge even for developed nations around the world regarding women's protection in the ongoing pandemic era & especially during the lockdown period when it is difficult to go out and shout for help. Estimates published by WHO indicate that globally about 1 in 3 (30%) of women worldwide have been subjected to either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime. Lockdowns during the COVID-19 pandemic and its social and economic impacts have increased the exposure of women to abusive partners and known risk factors while limiting their access to services. Situations of humanitarian crises and displacement may exacerbate existing violence, such as by intimate partners, as well as non-partner sexual violence, and may lead to new forms of violence against women [1]. **Objectives:** The main aim of this research is to find out the Impact of the SARS-CoV-2/Covid-19 Pandemic on domestic violence against women in India across different states and union territories from the beginning of lockdown due to the covid-19 pandemic. Data from March 2020 till 20th September 2020 is available so the study will give detail for this period.

**Settings & Design:** The month-wise and state-wise data indicating the number of complaints registered with the National Commission for Women in India (NCW) under two different categories in two different tables 1 & 2 will be discussed and displayed. The period of study is from March 2020 to 20th September 2020.

**Materials & Methodology:** The press information bureau, Government of India Ministry of Women and child development have publicly announced under the heading- Increase in domestic violence against women dated 22nd Sep 2020. The data obtained is analysed by using Microsoft Office software [2].

**Result:** Increase in domestic violence against women in India from March 2020 till 20th September 2020.

**Conclusion:** India should have various strategies to ensure the safety of women in such pandemic-like situations. It seems that present laws and regulations are insufficient to give the desired results. The barriers to the legal and protective system and delivery of helpful services etc. constraints should be rectified and added with a proper dynamic plan to carry on usual women's protection services even in pandemics and natural disasters. India needs to develop an exclusive plan to tackle such situations such as the establishment of a separate cadre of workers for women's protection services. India is having a very huge population of women vulnerable to different kinds of violence so the Government must give top priority to making India a safe place for women.

**Keywords:** SARS-CoV-2, Pandemic, Violence, Women

## Introduction

The protection of women is of utmost importance and prime concern in India due to a huge population, equity issues, lack of positive deviance at the community level, illiteracy, socio-economic factors, migration from rural to urban areas, and inaccessibility to legal help, and of course many more factors. The SARS-CoV-2 pandemic had presented a challenge even for developed nations around the world regarding women's protection in the ongoing pandemic era & especially in the lockdown period when it is difficult to go out and shout for help. The police force and other protective forces have been largely deployed to tackle the situation of the pandemic of Covid-19. This shift has had a tremendous effect on ongoing various violence against women in the pandemic era. Pregnant mothers & children are especially more vulnerable groups. The women usually have a sense of fear in meeting others, particularly in pandemic acute emergencies. Moreover, most of the women have to stay at the home due to lockdown enforcement and added to this as per protocols the community and system both have constraints erupting from the sudden situations of pandemics. The mental health of women is having violence as well as workload with social issues is a measure concern globally.

The advocacy for maternal health and women empowerment has been done and emphasized by many national and international organizations for several decades considering them especially vulnerable groups in times of disaster such as pandemics. The Covid-19 pandemic has clearly disclosed the weakness of the protective system to protect the above-mentioned vulnerable groups. The situation also produced a demand for a separate cadre to protect women in situations of disaster like pandemics. It seems many protective services were not delivered in the covid-19 era, which may produce undesirable and detrimental effects at the mass level in the coming future.

## Objectives

Domestic abuse also called "domestic violence" or "intimate partner violence" can be defined as a pattern of behaviour in any rela-

tionship that is used to gain or maintain power and control over an intimate partner. Abuse is physical, sexual, emotional, economic, or psychological actions or threats of actions that influence another person. This includes any behaviour that frightens, intimidates, terrorizes, manipulates hurts, humiliates, blames, injures, or wounds someone. Domestic abuse can happen to anyone of any race, age, sexual orientation, religion, or gender. It can occur within a range of relationships including couples who are married, living together, or dating. Domestic violence affects people of all socioeconomic backgrounds and education levels [3].

The main aim of this research is to find out the Impact of the SARS-CoV-2/Covid-19 Pandemic on domestic violence against women in India across different states and union territories from the beginning of lockdown due to the covid-19 pandemic. Data from March 2020 till 20th September 2020 is available so the study will give detail for this period.

## Materials and Methodology

The national commission for women (NCW) in India has launched an Ad campaign from the beginning of the lockdown in March 2020. The lockdown was announced on 24th March 2020 for 21 days. Various Ads through electronic as well as social media were instituted to know about the women who have suffered any kind of violence to come forward and report to concerned departments and authorities in several ways. The NCW had also launched a WhatsApp number as well as a helpline number for reporting domestic violence situations in addition to other previously established chains of communications. Concerned departments and authorities duly addressed the received complaints. The complaints received were recorded in two headings as shown in table 1 and table 2. Table 1 category includes protection of women against domestic violence received from March 2020 till 20th September 2020. Table 2 includes total complaints registered/received by NCW related to crime against women as well as deprivation of their rights from March 2020 till 20th September 2020.

**Table 1: The State-wise and month-wise data indicating number of complaints registered with NCW under the category "Protection of Women against domestic violence", received during the last six months, i.e. from March 2020 till 18th September, 2020-Source- <https://pib.gov.in/allRel.aspx>**

S.No	State	March	April	May	June	July	August	September (till 20.09.2020)	Received through WhatsApp	Total
1	Andhra Pradesh	1	2	1	1	5	4	3	13	30
2	Assam	4	6	3	2	-	2	-	14	31
3	Bihar	6	20	31	31	43	29	16	78	254
4	Chandigarh	-	1	1	3	-	1	-	2	8
5	Chhattisgarh	3	5	1	4	3	5	1	12	34
6	Dadar & Nagar Haveli	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	4
7	Delhi	63	60	94	76	119	115	76	181	784

8	Goa	1	1	-	-	1	-	-	2	5
9	Gujarat	6	4	6	11	2	8	1	17	55
10	Haryana	22	13	15	27	41	19	17	75	229
11	Himachal Pradesh	3	4	4	5	2	2	2	7	29
12	Jammu and Kashmir	1	1	2	6	3	3	-	6	22
13	Jharkhand	6	6	7	12	9	10	4	33	87
14	Karnataka	5	18	12	21	17	11	4	49	137
15	Kerala	2	5	2	4	3	3	1	13	33
16	Madhya Pradesh	4	17	7	16	36	18	5	46	149
17	Maharashtra	17	45	60	59	56	56	22	143	458
18	Manipur	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
19	Meghalaya	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
20	Nagaland	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
21	Odisha	3	2	1	2	3	9	1	12	33
22	Pondicherry	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
23	Punjab	5	10	10	14	19	13	5	27	103
24	Rajasthan	10	15	8	11	30	27	5	67	173
25	Tamil Nadu	11	10	13	14	17	10	16	46	137
26	Telangana	4	4	7	9	7	5	-	15	51
27	Tripura	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2
28	Uttar Pradesh	110	47	85	110	208	163	55	190	968
29	Uttarakhand	-	3	3	6	12	13	3	11	51
30	West Bengal	10	16	19	16	24	12	5	80	182
31	Miscellaneous								297	297
	Total	298	315	393	461	660	537	243	1443	4350

**Table 2: Month-wise and State-wise data of complaints registered/received by NCW since March 2020 (till 20.09.2020). Source- <https://pib.gov.in/allRel.aspx>**

S.No.	State	March	April	May	June	July	August	September (till 20.09.2020))	Domestic Violence complaints- Received through- WhatsApp	Total
1.	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
2.	Andhra Pradesh	10	14	11	15	18	16	10	13	107
3.	Arunachal Pradesh	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
4.	Assam	7	10	6	7	5	7	1	14	57
5.	Bihar	52	54	78	106	138	98	56	78	659
6.	Chandigarh	4	3	2	6	7	7	4	2	35
7.	Chhattisgarh	5	17	7	12	19	15	6	12	93
8.	Dadra and Nagar-Haveli	-	-	3	1	-	-	-	4	8
9.	Daman & Diu	-	-	1	1	2	-	-	-	4

10.	Delhi	154	128	217	240	338	278	167	181	1697
11.	Goa	2	3	1	-	1	1	-	2	10
12.	Gujarat	14	15	16	29	22	20	8	17	141
13.	Haryana	76	40	73	103	181	117	67	75	731
14.	HimachalPradesh	5	6	9	11	9	7	6	7	60
15.	Jammu andKashmir	2	6	5	13	10	11	3	6	55
16.	Jharkhand	11	13	19	36	37	31	19	33	199
17.	Karnataka	26	35	56	53	45	40	18	49	322
18.	Kerala	6	10	23	13	12	18	11	13	106
19.	Lakshadweep	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
20.	Madhya Pradesh	51	34	56	68	106	71	50	46	479
21.	Maharashtra	52	95	118	156	127	116	58	143	865
22.	Manipur	-	2	1	-	2	-	-	-	5
23.	Meghalaya	2	-	-	1	2	1	-	-	6
24.	Nagaland	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
25.	Odisha	9	9	9	12	14	20	6	12	91
26.	Pondicherry	-	-	-	2	3	-	-	-	5
27.	Punjab	21	26	42	37	56	48	25	27	281
28.	Rajasthan	48	39	83	82	118	96	40	67	572
29.	Tamil Nadu	32	27	46	64	47	41	39	46	341
30.	Telangana	17	10	20	23	22	19	8	15	134
31.	Tripura	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	4
32.	Uttar Pradesh	699	159	530	876	1461	966	600	190	5470
33.	Uttarakhand	17	9	21	33	55	41	15	11	201
34.	West Bengal	24	36	47	43	55	41	18	80	342
35.	Miscellaneous	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	297	291
36.	Total	1,347	800	1500	2043	2914	2128	1235	1443	13,410

## Settings & Design

The month-wise and state-wise data indicating the number of complaints registered with the National Commission for Women in India (NCW) under two different categories in two different tables 1 & 2 will be discussed and displayed. The period of study is from March 2020 to 20th September 2020. The data is compared to the previous year's 2019 data.

The data is also shown in tabulated as well as in a graphical form for ease of understanding. All the data obtained were analysed using Microsoft office software. The analysis report is presented as graphs and in letters.

## Methodology

All the data obtained were analysed using Microsoft office software. The analysis report is presented as graphs and in letters. The data for

analysis is obtained from the source mentioned below in reference.

## Results

Increase in domestic violence against women in India from March 2020 till 20th September 2020. The total number of State-wise and month-wise data indicating a number of complaints registered with NCW under the category "Protection of Women against domestic violence", received during the last six months, i.e. from March 2020 till 18th September 2020- is 4350 (Uttar Pradesh reported maximum). The total number of Month-wise and State-wise data complaints registered/ received by NCW since March 2020 is 13410(Uttar Pradesh reported maximum). The data is compared to NCRB (national crime record bureau) data 2019 the total number of a female victims of domestic violence was 554 & the total number of incidents was 553 and the crime rate was 0.1 % per lakh population-see table 3 [4].

**Table 3: SLL Crimes against Women (Crime Head-wise & State/UT-wise) – 2019**

S. No	State/UT	Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act 1956 (Women Victims cases only)									Protection of Women from Domestic Offences Act 2019		
		C) Prostitution in or in the vicinity of public places (Section 7)			D) Seducing or soliciting for purpose of Prostitution			E) Other Sections under ITP Act					
		I	V	R	I	V	R	I	V	R	I	V	R
1	2	114	115	116	117	118	119	120	121	122	123	124	125
1	Andhra Pradesh	5	5	0.0	0	0	0.0	54	98	0.2	0	0	0.0
2	Arunachal Pradesh	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0
3	Assam	2	2	0.0	0	0	0.0	10	10	0.1	0	0	0.0
4	Bihar	5	15	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0
5	Chhattisgarh	11	11	0.1	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0
6	Goa	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0
7	Gujarat	0	0	0.0	8	8	0.0	2	2	0.0	0	0	0.0
8	Haryana	10	11	0.1	0	0	0.0	13	16	0.1	2	2	0.0
9	Himachal Pradesh	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	2	2	0.1	3	3	0.1
10	Jammu & Kashmir	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0
11	Jharkhand	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	3	5	0.0	73	73	0.4
12	Karnataka	30	44	0.1	14	25	0.0	49	80	0.2	1	1	0.0
13	Kerala	4	5	0.0	0	0	0.0	3	5	0.0	194	195	1.1
14	Madhya Pradesh	5	5	0.0	0	0	0.0	2	2	0.0	248	248	0.6
15	Maharashtra	46	76	0.1	25	28	0.0	24	43	0.0	11	11	0.0
16	Manipur	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0
17	Meghalaya	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	1	1	0.1	0	0	0.0
18	Mizoram	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0
19	Nagaland	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0
20	Odisha	2	5	0.0	3	3	0.0	13	13	0.1	1	1	0.0
21	Punjab	4	4	0.0	0	0	0.0	5	5	0.0	3	3	0.0
22	Rajasthan	3	8	0.0	4	4	0.0	14	17	0.0	2	2	0.0
23	Sikkim	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0
24	Tamil Nadu	11	11	0.0	5	10	0.0	65	72	0.2	0	0	0.0
25	Telangana	2	2	0.0	1	2	0.0	14	22	0.1	1	1	0.0
26	Tripura	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0
27	Uttar Pradesh	10	14	0.0	1	2	0.0	10	10	0.0	5	5	0.0
28	Uttarakhand	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	2	2	0.0	0	0	0.0
29	West Bengal	2	2	0.0	0	0	0.0	95	151	0.2	6	6	0.0
TOTAL STATE(S)	152	220	0.0	61	82	0.0	381	556	0.1	550			
30	A&N Islands	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0
31	Chandigarh	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0

32	D&N Haveli	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0
33	Daman & Diu	1	10	0.8	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0
34	Delhi	0	0	0.0	1	1	0.0	2	4	0.0	3	3	0.0
35	Lakshadweep	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0
36	Puducherry	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0
TOTAL UT(S)	1	10	0.0	1	1	0.0	2	4	0.0	3	3	0.0	
TOTAL ALL INDIA	153	230	0.0	62	83	0.0	383	560	0.1	553			
Due to non-receipt of data from West Bengal in time for 2019, Data furnished for 2018 Has been used (I= No. of Incidences/Cases, V= No. of Female Victims & R=Crime Rate Per lakh population) - source- <a href="https://ncrb.gov.in/">https://ncrb.gov.in/</a>													

### Discussion

India should have various strategies to ensure the safety of women in such pandemic-like situations. It seems that present laws and regulations are insufficient to give the desired results. The barriers to the legal and protective system and delivery of helpful services etc. constraints should be rectified and added with a proper dynamic plan to carry on usual women's protection services even in pandemics and natural disasters. India needs to develop an exclusive plan to tackle such situations such as establishing a separate cadre of workers for women's protection services. India is having a very huge population of women vulnerable to different kinds of violence so the Government must give top priority to making India a safe place for women. The women who are illiterate must not have access to all these reporting systems as well as women from poor economic backgrounds are added with remote village areas with fewer communication mechanisms.

### Conclusion

- Establishment of exclusive special women protection cell in disaster like pandemic situations at central level as well as at all the states and union territories of India.
- Covid-19 pandemic has given us a lesson that we must have gender equity in society & women's who are considered most vulnerable in situations of distress must have adequate supportive protection all the times especially during pandemics and other natural calamities. Women constitute a large portion

of population and the country and state must have a separate department to ensure the protection to this vulnerable section of the population.

- India being the second most populous country in the world should have a robust women protection strategy to operate in any situations.

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### Authors' contributions

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