

Rape and the Indian record

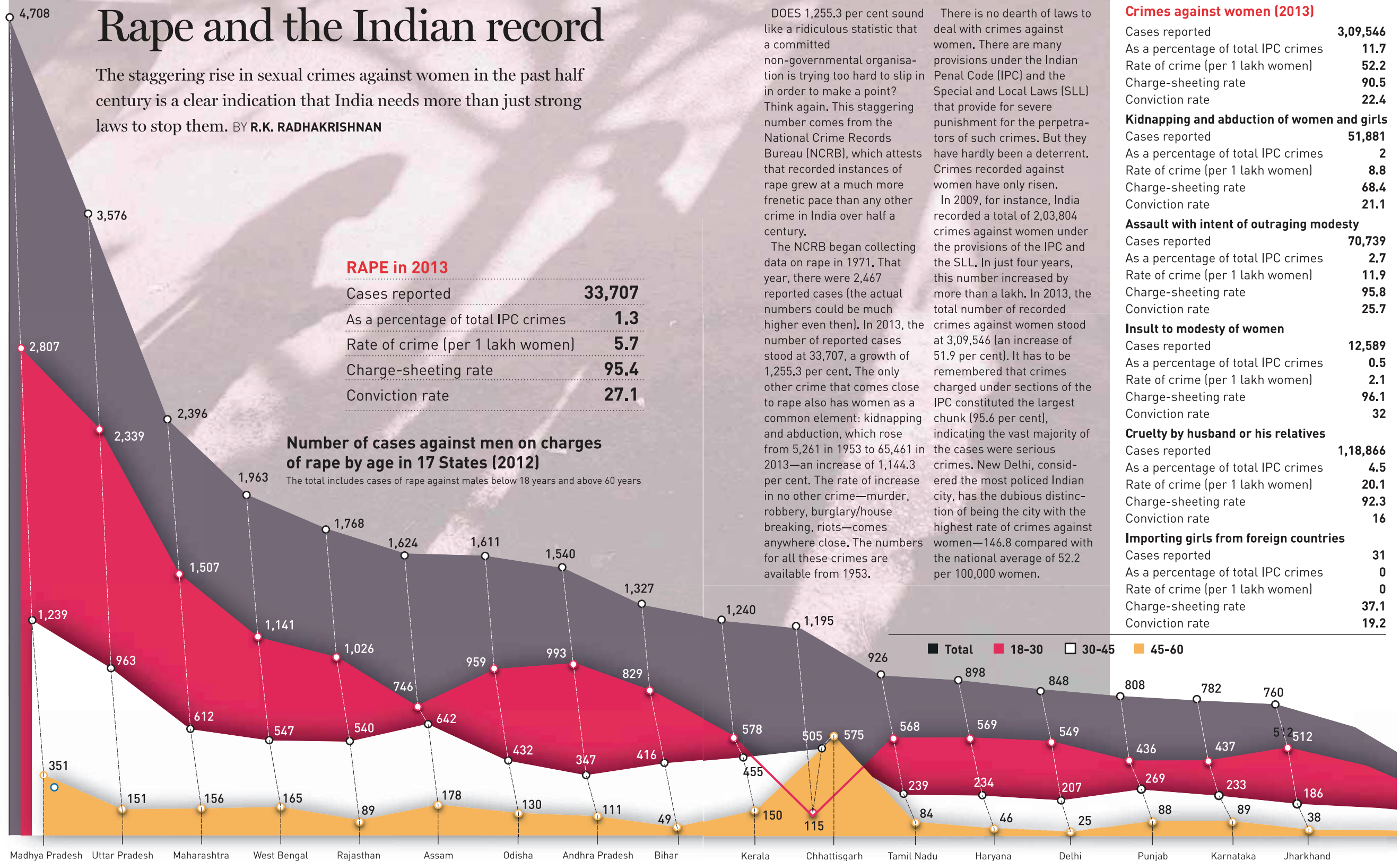
The staggering rise in sexual crimes against women in the past half century is a clear indication that India needs more than just strong laws to stop them. BY R.K. RADHAKRISHNAN

RAPE in 2013

Cases reported	33,707
As a percentage of total IPC crimes	1.3
Rate of crime (per 1 lakh women)	5.7
Charge-sheeting rate	95.4
Conviction rate	27.1

Number of cases against men on charges of rape by age in 17 States (2012)

The total includes cases of rape against males below 18 years and above 60 years



DOES 1,255.3 per cent sound like a ridiculous statistic that a committed non-governmental organisation is trying too hard to slip in in order to make a point? Think again. This staggering number comes from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), which attests that recorded instances of rape grew at a much more frenetic pace than any other crime in India over half a century.

The NCRB began collecting data on rape in 1971. That year, there were 2,467 reported cases (the actual numbers could be much higher even then). In 2013, the number of reported cases stood at 33,707, a growth of 1,255.3 per cent. The only other crime that comes close to rape also has women as a common element: kidnapping and abduction, which rose from 5,261 in 1953 to 65,461 in 2013—an increase of 1,144.3 per cent. The rate of increase in no other crime—murder, robbery, burglary/house breaking, riots—comes anywhere close. The numbers for all these crimes are available from 1953.

There is no dearth of laws to deal with crimes against women. There are many provisions under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Special and Local Laws (SLL) that provide for severe punishment for the perpetrators of such crimes. But they have hardly been a deterrent. Crimes recorded against women have only risen.

In 2009, for instance, India recorded a total of 2,03,804 crimes against women under the provisions of the IPC and the SLL. In just four years, this number increased by more than a lakh. In 2013, the total number of recorded crimes against women stood at 3,09,546 (an increase of 51.9 per cent). It has to be remembered that crimes charged under sections of the IPC constituted the largest chunk (95.6 per cent), indicating the vast majority of the cases were serious crimes. New Delhi, considered the most policed Indian city, has the dubious distinction of being the city with the highest rate of crimes against women—146.8 compared with the national average of 52.2 per 100,000 women.

Crimes against women (2013)

Cases reported	3,09,546
As a percentage of total IPC crimes	11.7
Rate of crime (per 1 lakh women)	52.2
Charge-sheeting rate	90.5
Conviction rate	22.4

Kidnapping and abduction of women and girls

Cases reported	51,881
As a percentage of total IPC crimes	2
Rate of crime (per 1 lakh women)	8.8
Charge-sheeting rate	68.4
Conviction rate	21.1

Assault with intent of outraging modesty

Cases reported	70,739
As a percentage of total IPC crimes	2.7
Rate of crime (per 1 lakh women)	11.9
Charge-sheeting rate	95.8
Conviction rate	25.7

Insult to modesty of women

Cases reported	12,589
As a percentage of total IPC crimes	0.5
Rate of crime (per 1 lakh women)	2.1
Charge-sheeting rate	96.1
Conviction rate	32

Cruelty by husband or his relatives

Cases reported	1,18,866
As a percentage of total IPC crimes	4.5
Rate of crime (per 1 lakh women)	20.1
Charge-sheeting rate	92.3
Conviction rate	16

Importing girls from foreign countries

Cases reported	31
As a percentage of total IPC crimes	0
Rate of crime (per 1 lakh women)	0
Charge-sheeting rate	37.1
Conviction rate	19.2