

Praja Foundation report: Cases of thefts, rape and molestation surged in 2022

By Megha Sood

Nov 24, 2023 09:18 AM IST

A study by the Praja Foundation reveals that crime in Mumbai has increased in 2022 compared to 2021, with a rise in thefts, rape, molestation, and cyber crimes. The number of major crimes registered in 2022 was 28,815, compared to 17,434 in 2021. Rape cases increased by 130% over the past 10 years, with 901 cases in 2022. Cyber crimes also doubled, with 4,723 cases in 2022. Police officials attribute the increase in reporting to growing awareness and understanding of the law.

MUMBAI: A study conducted by the Praja Foundation reveals that crime across the city has seen a considerable rise in 2022 as compared to 2021. According to the data provided on Thursday, there were 28,815 major crimes registered in 2022 compared to 17,434 cases in 2021. Although the number of murder cases decreased from 157 in 2021 to 128 in 2022, cases of thefts, rape and molestation have shown a considerable increase.

As per the organisation's report- The state of policing and law and order in Mumbai- the number of rape cases increased from 777 to 901 in 2022. Rape cases have shown an alarming rise of 130% in the past 10 years when number of cases were 391.

Molestation cases increased from 1,466 in 2021 to 1,577 in 2022. Out of the total rape case in 2022, at least 63% were cases under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act where victims were minors. The data also showed that in 2022 at least 73% of POCSO cases were pending investigation.

Police officials said that POCSO cases are sensitive cases and need to be investigated thoroughly. "More people are now understanding the POCSO Act and are aware of their rights and coming forward to report the crimes," said Chimaji Adhav, senior police inspector of Malwani police station which is one of the police stations where a maximum number of POCSO cases are registered.

Former additional director general of police and retired IPS officer Prem Krishna Jain said, "While rape cases have increased in the city, today, the victims are coming ahead and registering cases which was not the case a few years back. There was a social stigma and people were afraid to register cases," said Jain.

Apart from crime against women, the number of cyber crimes in the city has also shown a considerable rise. In 2022, 4,723 cases of cyber crime were registered in Mumbai compared to 2,883 cases in 2021. According to data, hacking cases doubled from 32 in 2021 to 60 in 2022. Credit card and cheating cases also increased from 2,229 in 2021 to 3,490 in 2022.

The data further revealed communal posts on social media have also increased from 166 in 2021 to 460 in 2022 and sextortion cases too showed an increase from 54 in 2021 to 78 in 2022. According to cyber experts, the cases registered are just the tip of the iceberg as many victims of cyber crimes do not come forward or face trouble in getting FIRs registered.

“Nowadays, mobile and other electronic devices have become virtual homes for everyone, and apps are replaced by family or friendship relations. Banks, games, communication, and many other things are replaced by the digital era,” said Dr Shekhar Pawar, a doctorate in cybersecurity from SSBM Geneva, Switzerland, founder and CEO of SecureClaw Inc, USA and GrassDew IT Solutions Pvt Ltd, Mumbai. “This virtual world is dangerous, as earlier crimes were happening on streets or in physical locations; now those are performed in cyberspace. Apart from financial losses due to various online thefts, individuals’ privacy, women’s dignity, harassment, extortion, and many other things are already under rising cyber threats with the sophisticated use of technologies like AI, deepfake, morphing, and various advancements. While our nation feels proud to move ahead with the vision of digital India, cybersecurity must be our priority,” he added.

In regards to cyber crimes, Jain said they have gone up as people are still unaware of safety measures while using the internet. “Cyber criminals have become innovative to trap the victims who still need awareness while using the internet. The government and banks across the country are doing a lot to create awareness but people need to follow their instructions,” said Jain.

Link- <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/mumbai-news/praja-foundation-report-cases-of-thefts-rape-and-molestation-surged-in-2022-101700768188320.html>