

War Against Rape (WAR) Sexual Violence Factsheet Jan – Dec 2011



The year 2011 ended on a high note with the passing of two major laws by Parliament extending the ambit of protection offered to women under the law in Pakistan. Purportedly, they represent an attempt to curb violence against women in the country as well.

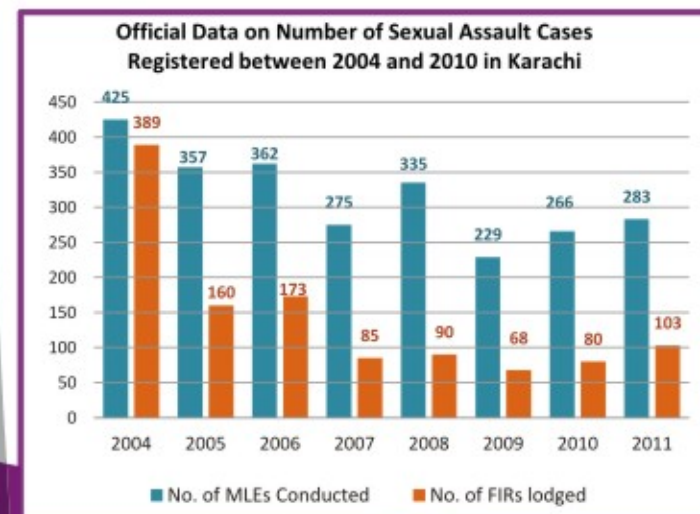
The role of the State extends to, amongst others, providing security to all its citizens, by preventing crime, investigating it and ensuring punishments to offenders. Sadly, while the Government of Pakistan continues the momentum of legislation on women's issues, the implementation of laws has remained problematic, with little focus on addressing patriarchal subjugation of women and preventing crimes against women in the first place.

In order to highlight the growing severity of the issue of Sexual Violence (SV), and the constant failure of the State to ensure the protection of the rights of survivors and delivery of services, it is imperative that the number of incidents of SV are recorded and analysed. WAR gathers statistics and case-related information from all 103 police stations in Karachi, including Women Police stations and the three major Government hospitals in Karachi where medico-legal exams (MLEs) are conducted. However, the cases it investigates may be referred from other sources as well, including town offices (over 18 in Karachi), other NGOs, media and directly from courts via public prosecutors and judges.

Reported Sexual Assault Cases January - December 2011

A reported 4091 First Information Reports (FIRs) were lodged across Pakistan in 2011, in cases of Rape and Sexual Assault¹. Official records for Karachi² show that in 2011, 103 FIRs were registered; in cases of sexual assault (includes Rape, Gang Rape, attempt to Rape and Sodomy). Data collected from the three major Government hospitals shows that 283 Medico-legal Exams (MLEs) were conducted in cases of sexual assault in 2011.

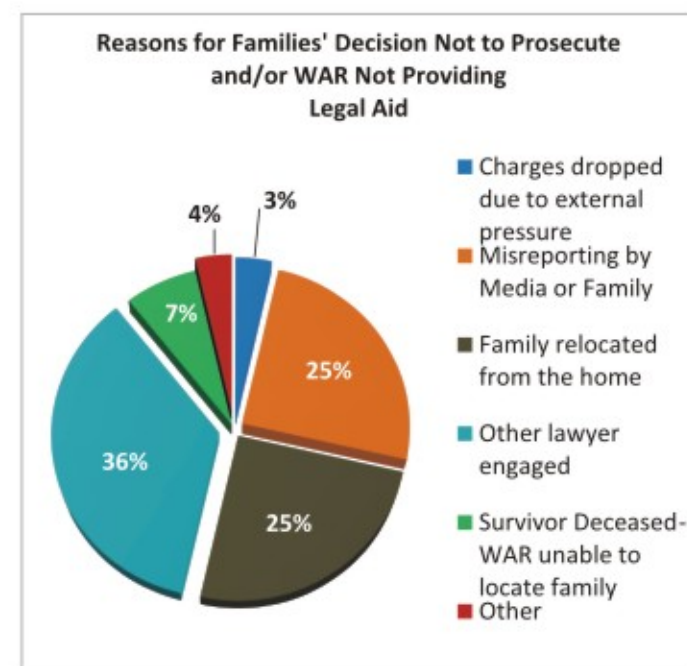
WAR has been tracking the difference in the number of FIRs and MLEs conducted in Karachi since 2004. A comparison of the data obtained from the police and the medico-legal sector from 2004-2011 is depicted below:



Police records show that of the 103 FIRs registered between Jan-Dec 2011, *challan* of only 45 (44%) of the cases have been presented in court, and 56% have been disposed off under Classification A – which means that there was lack of evidence for the case to proceed further, or the accused had absconded. At the end of December 2011, 30 of the 45 cases were pending trial, whilst 14 have resulted in convictions.

WAR's Investigations

WAR investigated 41 cases of sexual assault in 2011. 32% of these cases were taken to court by WAR's legal team. The chart below illustrates the reasons why 68% of cases were not taken.



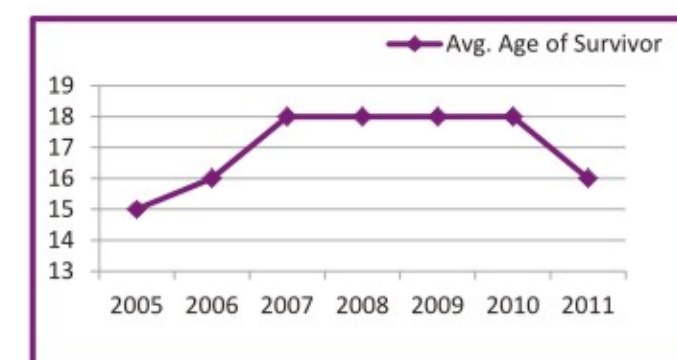
Analysis of cases investigated by WAR in the period Jan – Dec 2011 highlighted the following facts:

- The age group most vulnerable to sexual violence was 12-17 years (29%), followed by 6 – 11 years (27%).
- 37% of survivors were children under the age of 12, whilst 66% were under 18 years.
- The average age of a rape survivor was 16 years.
- Majority (80%) of rape survivors were female, while 20% were male.
- Demographically, the highest incidents of sexual violence were recorded in Bin Qasim town (18%), with Orangi town (14%) in second place.
- 25% of the survivors' families shifted from their homes to escape stigma and persecution.

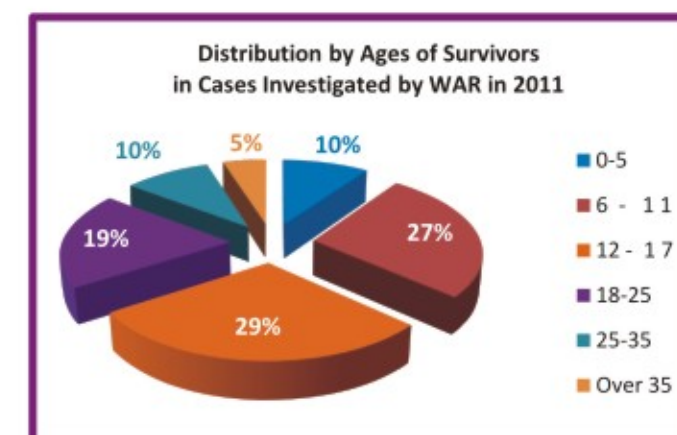
Emerging Trends

Child Sexual Abuse (CSA)

In 2010, a reported number of 2,252 children were sexually abused throughout the country³. In 2009, the total number of reported cases was 968⁴. The chart below traces the average ages of survivors in cases investigated by WAR from 2005 – 2011.



The following chart illustrates the ages of survivors in the cases investigated in 2011.



This year 66% of the total cases investigated by WAR involved children under the age of 18; the youngest survivor being only 3 years old. The statistics reveal decreasing ages of survivors compared to previous years. Most cases of CSA were accompanied by grievous bodily injury and 6 resulted in survivors' death - with the youngest being 5 and the oldest 16 years old and the average age being 10.6 years.

Social Stigma

In a patriarchal society like Pakistan, sexual violence, in particular rape, is accompanied by a strong social stigma, and the general attitude that rape is somehow the woman's fault.

Most often survivor families face persecution by relatives/ community and are ostracized for 'bringing it on themselves'. Families often fear that the survivor and other females in the family will not get married if knowledge of the incident spreads. In WAR's investigated cases of 2011, 7 families shifted from their homes due to community pressure; many of these families were driven from their homes by the landlords.

Underreporting of Cases of Sexual Violence

Every year WAR holds community meetings in each town of Karachi, with the aim of spreading awareness and encouraging dialogue on Sexual Violence, while also mobilizing participants towards collective action in dealing with cases reported from their areas.

Approximately 50 unreported cases, a large number of which were those involving minors and incest, were discussed in the meetings in 2011. Although a few of the survivors had approached Medico-legal Centres with the view of getting medical care, they preferred not to report the incident to the Police.

This explains the 63% increase in the number of cases where a MLE exam was conducted, but no FIR was registered, i.e. only 36% of the survivors who went to get a medico-legal exam at either one of the 3 government hospital in Karachi had their FIR registered with the Police. Should the additional 50 cases be added to these figures, the percentage of FIRs registered, as opposed to the actual number of incidents of Rape and Sexual Assault, would be 31%.

People across all towns reflected feelings of distrust and apprehension towards the criminal justice system, especially the police. They all preferred either keeping the matter private or seeking justice through informal systems, such as *Muhalla Committees*, or through local, religious or political leaders in their community.

¹ Annual Statistics on VAW in Pakistan, *Aurat Foundation*, 2011

² As obtained from the Inspector General of Police, (Crime Branch), Karachi

³ Cruel Numbers Report, *Sahil*, 2010

⁴ *Ibid*

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War Against Rape (WAR), Karachi, established in 1989, is working to provide comprehensive services to rape survivors and to advocate just laws and rights-based services for survivors of sexual violence. For more information, please visit our website.

