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 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 administrating 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
domestic violence, 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 16th 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**

![Flow Chart of Research Frame-work]

- **Crimes against Women**
  - **Domestic Violence**
  - **Out-of-Home Violence**
  - **Influences**

- **Primordial: ethnicity**
- **Cultural values**
- **Economic status, occupations**
- **Modernity, urban, education etc**
- **Spatiality of gender crimes**
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 atrocity 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 atrocity 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. But the Hindu women prefer to live a separated life or study further to be economically independent.

1 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, Pragjyotispur, 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 4th and CWA 2nd.

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 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.