National Crime Records Bureau Data

Why in news?

The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) released the much delayed crime data for 2017.

What are the categories of data?

- The NCRB has introduced more than three dozen new categories and sub-categories of crimes under various heads.
- At least four categories where significant diversification of data can be seen are -
    i. crimes against women and children
    ii. atrocities against Dalits
    iii. cases of corruption
    iv. time taken by police and courts to take cases to their conclusion
- For the first time, the NCRB has introduced categories of cyber crimes against women and children.
- In the case of Dalits, the NCRB has for the first time published data on offences registered solely under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.
- The further categorisation under this includes insult, land grab and social ostracism.
- The NCRB has also recorded cases of disproportionate assets against public servants.
- The other heads include abetment, criminal intimidation, simple hurt, credit/debit card and online frauds, Internet crimes through online gaming and kidnapping for begging among others.
- Importantly, for the first time, the NCRB has dwelt on not just pendency of cases (with the police and courts) but also the period of such pendency.

What are the highlights?

- **Women and children** - In the case of women and children, the NCRB has this time recorded data for "murder with rape".
- In 2017, close to 33,885 women were reported to have been raped across the country.
- Of these, 227 were murdered after the rape.
- Close to 28,150 children were raped with cases registered under IPC and the

POCSO Act.

- Of these, nearly 150 were killed after being raped.
- The NCRB has, however, removed the category of gangrape that was introduced to its database following the December 2012 gangrape case.
- In the category of cyber crimes against women, nearly 4,200 offences were recorded.
- It includes cases where women were stalked, blackmailed or their morphed pictures were uploaded on the internet.
- In a sub-category for SLL (special and local laws) cyber crimes against women, the number of women-centric crimes is given as 600.
- Of this, 271 relate to publishing or transmitting of sexually explicit material under the Information Technology Act.
- The report has also introduced the categories of sexual harassment at the workplace and in public transport.
- As many as 479 and 599 cases were reported in 2017 under these categories respectively.
- Also, nearly 33,600 cases were registered and close to 40,400 juveniles arrested during the year.
- Majority of juveniles in conflict with law apprehended under IPC and SLL crimes were in the age group of 16 to 18 years.
- These cases accounted for around 72% of cases during 2017.
- **Justice delayed** - In the latest report, the NCRB, besides the numbers, has also recorded the period of pendency.
- For IPC crimes, police are supposed to file a charge-sheet within 90 days.
- The data show that police delayed charge-sheets in 40% of cases.
- In certain cases such as rioting, which includes communal riots, police delayed filing of charge-sheets in 60% of the cases.
- There are more than 3 lakh cases pending investigations for more than one year.
- In more than 40% of cases, the fast-track courts have taken more than 3 years to finish the trial.
- In fact, in as many as 3,384 cases committed to fast-track courts, the trial was finished in more than 10 years.
- Of the 38,000-odd cases that fast-track courts completed in 2017, over 4,500 cases had been running for 5-10 years.
- In only around 11,500 cases was the trial completed within one year.
- In courts as a whole, more than 2,71,000 cases were pending trial at the end of 2017.
- **Other data** - Under the category of rioting, new subcategories have been added which include vigilante action, disputes over water, power and property and rioting during morchas.

- Some other new data include spreading of fake news where 257 offences have been recorded.
- As many as 952 election-related offences were also recorded in 2017 apart from offences relating to religion (1,808) and Obscene Acts and Songs at Public Places (29,557).

What are the key drawbacks in the report?

- **Hate crimes** - The report omits data on mob lynchings, khap killings, murder by influential people and killings for religious reasons.
- A few months ago, government officials had blamed the States of West Bengal and Bihar for lackadaisical responses in sending data in this regard.
- The Supreme Court, in 2018, in an order, called for a special law to deal with lynching.
- Data on such hate crimes would have been useful in both law enforcement and jurisprudence.
- But the Central government has time and again argued against the need for a separate law.
- It has affirmed that curbing lynching was a matter of "enforcement".
- As of now, there exist only a few independent "hate crime trackers" based on media reports.
- Without a proper accounting of hate crimes, tackling them effectively is hard.

- **State-wise variations** - The NCRB data on crime hide significant variances in case registration of serious crimes such as rapes and violence against women across States.
- This makes it difficult to draw State-wise comparisons.
- The total number of crimes committed against women country-wide increased by 6% since 2016, while those against dalits went up by 13%.
- However, there is the possibility of some States reporting such crimes better.
- This is pertinent, particularly in rape cases.
- E.g. the UT of Delhi registered a rate of 12.5 per one lakh population, surpassed only by MP (14.7) and Chhattisgarh (14.6)
- But the filing of rape complaints in Delhi have significantly increased following public outcry over the December 2012 rape incident.
- This could partially explain the high rate of such cases.
- The higher record of IPC crimes in Delhi among metropolitan cities in 2017 is also likely due to the use of easier (online) means to register them.
- **Assessment methodology** - The report uses the census base year as 2001 to calculate crime rates for States and 2011 for metropolitan cities.
- This makes the assessments unwieldy.

Source: Indian Express, The Hindu

