



Sexual Crimes against animals

CALLING FOR LAWS TO PROTECT ANIMALS FROM
SEXUAL ASSAULT



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The Federation of Indian
Animal Protection Organisations

Sexual violence against animals is a serious but completely neglected form of abuse in India, with significant gaps in legal protection. While the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (1960) criminalises general cruelty to animals, and Section 325 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (2023) covers some forms of animal harm, there is currently no legal provision that provides justice to animal victims of rape or sexual assault.

This report examines the scope of this issue, documents several cases of sexual violence against animals, and analyses the current legal framework's limitations in providing adequate protection and justice for animal victims of sexual abuse.

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Introduction



Non-human animals suffer various forms of physical violence and mental torture at the hands of humans. In circuses, 'sports', and in being raised for food and lifestyle, animals endure exploitation and suffering.

Apart from the use and abuse of animals in industry, farming systems, and for entertainment, animals are often victims of sexual abuse in the form of rape, sexual assault, exploitation for pornography, sexual torture and subsequent killing, mutilation of reproductive organs, and more. Some of these crimes have been caught on CCTV cameras or reported by citizens. Despite being widespread, crimes against animals that are committed for the perpetrators' sexual gratification seldom receive sustained attention or conviction. **Highlight**

In 2020, FIAPO (Federation of Indian Animal Protection Organisations) and All Creatures Great and Small published a report, **"In Their Own Right – Calling for Parity in Law for Animal Victims of Crimes,"** that documented crimes against animals in India between 2010 and 2020.

The report catalogued some extreme cases of sexually-motivated crimes, such as the rape and killing of a pregnant goat in Haryana in 2018, where autopsy confirmed assault, leading to calls for stricter laws.

The report also called for reforms to address crimes against animals with the same seriousness as crimes against humans, arguing for legal parity and better protection.

Legally, the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960 (PCA Act), while criminalising cases of cruelty, does not include a provision to address sexual violence against animals. Historically, such offences fell under Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 (IPC), which criminalised what it referred to as "unnatural offences."

Following the recent amendment of the IPC and its replacement by the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, (BNS) there is a legal void when it comes to prosecuting sexual crimes against animals. Section 325 of the BNS addresses harm to animals, including killing, maiming, or poisoning. It stipulates a jail term of up to five years, a fine, or both, for those found guilty. But the section does not explicitly cover sexual crimes.

This report highlights how this legal gap, combined with no penalties under the PCA Act and minimal penalties under Section 325 of the BNS, allows perpetrators of sexual crimes against animals to act with near impunity.

What changed



Sexual acts with animals, widely termed under law as bestiality*, previously fell under Section 377 ("Unnatural offences") of the Indian Penal Code, but has been removed from the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita without any alternative provision.

Section 377 stated:

"Whoever voluntarily has carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman, or animal, shall be punished with imprisonment for life, or with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine."

Explanation: Penetration is sufficient to constitute the carnal intercourse necessary to the offence described in this section.

While Section 377 was partially struck down by the Supreme Court of India in the Navtej Singh Johar case** to decriminalise consensual same-sex relationships, it remained applicable to sexual intercourse with animals, making the act punishable under this Section. Needless to say, animals cannot provide consent – the voluntary and wilful agreement in response to another's proposition.***

Notes

* In this report, we recognize that the term "bestiality" is demeaning towards animals. Therefore, we have used alternative terms such as "sexual crimes against animals," which include animal rape and sexual abuse, to focus on the victims of these violations. However, the term "bestiality" is used only where necessary for explanation and historical purposes or when cited in research articles.

** Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India, (2018) 10 SCC 1 (India)

*** Consent, Legal Information Institute, <https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/consent> (last visited Sept. 19, 2024).

How Section 377 protected animals



Section 377 was the sole section of IPC that dealt with the “offences” of “sodomy, buggery, and bestiality”^{*}, terms carried over from colonial laws. Since modern Indian criminal law was drafted by Lord Macaulay under British rule, many terms and offences were borrowed from the prevailing English laws of the time. At one time, these “offences” were punishable in England by being burnt.^{**}

The IPC therefore carried over the same expression, “carnal intercourse against the order of nature” without defining it. The inclusion of animals in this section may have been seen as less significant, as animals were not considered primary victims. Rather, animals were seen as so insignificant, that sexual acts with animals tainted the perpetrator as having indulged in “bestiality,” with no recognition of the animal victim of the sexual crime.

Furthermore, for prosecution under section 377, penetration was required, no matter how minimal. While this technically included cases of animal rape, it did not extend to other forms of sexual abuse toward animals.

The 2018 landmark judgment in *Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India*^{***} marked a significant turning point paving the way for a more progressive society.

The Court rightly upheld portions of Section 377 that criminalised non-consensual sexual acts or rape against same-sex partners or men. It stated, “The provisions of Section 377 will continue to govern non-consensual sexual acts against adults, all acts of carnal intercourse against minors, and acts of bestiality.”

Before BNS replaced IPC, activists sought justice for animal victims of sexual crimes under Section 377, which included the crime of animal rape under the term “unnatural sex.” Citizens could file cases involving sexual abuse against animals, thereby providing “incidental” relief to animal victims of rape.

The law never considered the offence from the perspective of the animal victim of sexual crime. Instead, it labeled the human as deviant for engaging in intercourse with an animal, focusing on the human act of bestiality/sodomy. The removal of Section 377 leaves animals without any legal protection.

Notes

* This term was used in IPC to describe the offence of sexual intercourse with animals. As a result, animals did not get consideration as victims of sexual abuse; rather, such acts were viewed as morally unjustified behaviour by humans.

** Commentaries on Dr Hari Singh Gour, *The Indian Penal Code* page number 1552 (15th ed. 2015)

*** *Supra* 3.

No official data on crimes against animals



The National Crime Reports Bureau (NCRB), maintains a database of crimes in the country. NCRB was set-up in 1986 to function as a repository of information on crime and criminals so as to assist investigators in linking crimes to perpetrators based on the recommendations of the Tandon Committee, the National Police Commission (1977-1981), and the Ministry of Home Affairs' Task Force (1985). The Bureau has also been entrusted to maintain a National Database of Sexual Offenders (NDSO) and share it with the States/Union Territories on a regular basis. NCRB also compiles and publishes National Crime Statistics i.e. Crime in India, Accidental Deaths & Suicides, and also Prison Statistics. These publications serve as principal reference points for policy makers, the police, criminologists, researchers and the media, both in India and abroad.*

However, the NCRB has no record of any kind of crime against animals under the PCA Act or of bestiality under Section 377 of the IPC.

Despite multiple news reports of sexual abuse against animals mentioned later in this report, FIAPO discovered through an RTI filed with the NCRB that no records exist for cases of animal rape registered under Section 377 of the IPC. Additionally, there are no available records of crimes against animals, including any under the PCA Act, the IPC, or the BNS.

The RTI filed by FIAPO asked for:

- (i) Details of cases filed pan India under Section 377 of the IPC, pertaining to "carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any animal", between 2014 and 2024; and
- (ii) Details of the number of cases filed pan India under Section 11 of the PCA Act between 2014 and 2024.

The NCRB, in response to the RTI, stated that the specific information requested was not available with the Central Public Information Officer (CPIO). However, state-wise and Union Territory-wise data on cases registered under unnatural offences (Section 377 of the IPC) can be found in the "Summary" chapter of the Bureau's annual Crime in India report, accessible on its [official website](#).

The [2022 NCRB report](#) does not record sexual crimes against animals under Section 377 of the IPC. Notably, cases under Section 377 relating to offences against humans have been recorded, but there is no data on sexual crimes against animals.

Notes

* National Crime Records Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs, Crime in India 2022 (Statistics Volume I), <https://www.ncrb.gov.in/> (last visited Oct. 13, 2024).

Likewise, data on cases registered under mischief-related offences (Sections 428-433 of the IPC) is also not available through the CPIO. The Summary chapter of the report provides state-wise and UT-wise data, though it lacks a breakdown within Sections 428-433, making it impossible to isolate cases specific to animals under Sections 428-429.

It is incomprehensible that despite being the country's primary repository of crime data, the NCRB does not maintain records on crimes against animals under IPC/BNS or on cases registered under the PCA Act, even though such incidents are rampant, and frequently reported in the media, with FIRs being filed.

In March 2022, FIAP0 intervened in a case in Kolkata involving the rape of a female street dog, where the police initially refused to file an FIR. An FIR was finally registered under Section 377 of the IPC. The incident, captured on camera, showed a man raping and slapping the dog. The perpetrator was arrested, and the case seemed to move forward. However, it was later dismissed claiming a lack of eyewitnesses and the absence of evidence of rape in the medical report.

The maintenance of data is essential not only for apprehending criminals and ensuring parity before the law, but also for shedding light on the psychological factors driving criminal behaviour, which affect not just animals, but society as a whole. The link between violence against animals and violence against humans has been established in several research studies and articles.

Animal sexual abuse & other crimes

The link between human and animal violence was first brought to light in 1751 through a series of illustrations called the 'Four Stages of Cruelty'. Although there are differing opinions on the link between animal cruelty and other criminal offences, the existence of the link itself is indisputable.*

"These illustrations depict the graduation hypothesis or the idea that animals are the first victims before perpetrators progress to other forms of violence. Over the last 60 years, there have been multiple studies from sociological, psychological, legal, social welfare, and medical perspectives that highlight the impact of animal cruelty and its relation to other forms of violence".**

"More than 50 years ago, Kinsey, Pomeroy, and Martin (1948) estimated that between 10 and 20% of the general population of the United States had engaged in bestiality, with a slightly higher prevalence in rural settings and among poorly educated males".***

A study in 2021 compared "the family characteristics, victimisation histories, and number of perpetration offences of juvenile offenders who admitted to having had sex with animals to juvenile offenders who did not. The study found that 96% of the juveniles who had engaged in sex with nonhuman animals also admitted to sex offences against humans and reported more offences against humans than other sex offenders their same age and race. Those juveniles who had engaged in sex with animals were similar to other sex offenders in that they also came from families with less affirming and more incendiary communication, lower attachment, less adaptability, and less positive environments. Those juveniles who had engaged in sex with animals reported victimisation histories with more emotional abuse and neglect and a higher number of victimisation events than other offenders."****

Notes

* <https://www.ourhenhouse.org/four-stages-of-cruelty/>

** <https://www.indiatoday.in/information/story/unmasking-animal-abusers-a-psychological-analysis-of-animal-cruelty-2411622-2023-07-26>

*** William M. Fleming, Brian Jory, and David L. Burton, Characteristics of Juvenile Offenders Admitting to Sexual Activity with Nonhuman Animals, 10 Soc'y & Animals 1, 32 (2002) <https://www.animalsandsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/fleming.pdf> (last visited Oct. 13, 2024).

**** Id. at 31

Another descriptive study examined 456 arrests for animal sexual assault-related incidents in the United States from 1975 to 2015 to explore patterns of offending, offender characteristics, and how cases were adjudicated. The results suggest that animal sex offences may be linked to other criminal behaviour, and involve a spectrum of sexual acts, including coercive, violent, and non-violent penetration; solicitation for sex with animals; and deviant behaviour including torture and necrophilia. Findings of concern were that 31.6% of animal sex offenders also committed sexual offences against children and adults; 52.9% had a prior or subsequent criminal record involving human sexual abuse, animal abuse, interpersonal violence, substances, or property offences; and only 39.1% of arrests involving the direct sexual abuse of animals resulted in prosecution.

“The broad range of sexual assault patterns and varied legal outcomes suggest that bestiality* is more pervasive and more serious than previously thought and point to a need for additional research to aid in detection, intervention, sentencing, treatment, and supervision methods,”** the study states.

“Researchers have found that 43% of school shooters in the United States between 1988 and 2012 had histories of animal abuse. In homes with domestic violence, 50% of children reported that the abuser threatened to harm or kill a beloved animal in order to maintain control over their human victims. Children who exhibit cruelty towards animals are more than twice as likely to have suffered maltreatment themselves.”***

In the US, “based on a preliminary analysis of National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) data from 2018, there were 4.43 animal cruelty incidents nationally per 100,000 of the population, compared to 106.68 for assault, 65.77 for robbery, and 799.40 for drug offences. While the data from NIBRS will be imperative in studying animal cruelty, current research studies have used other data sources, highlighting the importance of NIBRS data while acknowledging that existing research has used different data to conduct their studies. For example, researchers examined the demographic and criminal characteristics of 150 adult males arrested for animal cruelty. The mean age of the offenders included in the study was 37, with 41% arrested at least once for interpersonal violence, 18% for a sex offence, and 28% for different interpersonal crimes (e.g. violating a restraining order or harassment).”****

Notes

* Word used in the report

** David W. C. L. Wong, The Duty to Protect and the Duty to Warn: A Review of the Literature, 47 J. Am. Acad. Psychiatry Law 1 (2019), <https://jaapl.org/content/early/2019/05/16/JAA-PL.003836-19> (last visited Oct. 14, 2024)

*** Animal Legal Defense Fund, Link Factsheet (2022), <https://aldf.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Animal-Legal-Defense-Fund-Link-Factsheet.pdf> (last visited Oct. 14, 2024)

**** The Link Between Animal Cruelty and Human Violence, FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin (Feb. 2018), <https://leb.fbi.gov/articles/featured-articles/the-link-between-animal-cruelty-and-human-violence> (last visited Oct. 15, 2024).

Robert K Ressler, who developed profiles of serial killers for the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), states, "Murderers ... very often start out by killing and torturing animals as kids." [PETA India](#), in its blog titled People Who Are Violent Towards Animals Rarely Stop There, states: "Studies have now convinced sociologists, lawmakers and the courts that acts of cruelty to animals deserve our attention. They can be the first sign of a dangerous pathology that threatens humans as well."

The links and research are essential and cannot be overlooked. Given the lack of comprehensive Indian research and data on violence against animals, it is even more crucial for NCRB to include offences against animals in its repository.

Crucial: Data on crimes against animals

The FIAPPO report documents 720 cases of crime against street animals, 741 cases against working animals, 588 cases against companion animals, 88 cases against farm animals, and 258 cases against wild animals and birds, between 2010 and 2020. About 1,000 assault cases were documented, which included 82 cases of sexual abuse, 266 cases of cold-blooded murder, and over 400 cases of violent attacks of beating, kicking, torturing, throwing acid or boiling water, maiming a part of the body, and attacking with a knife or a blunt object. Twenty of the documented cases were assault against animals by children. The report covers only those cases that were based on news reports, data from animal organisations, and social media posts documenting everyday violence against animals. The actual number of unreported cases is likely to be much higher.

The lack of proper documentation of crimes against animals in India only diminishes our understanding of the connection between animal cruelty and other forms of violence, which could guide the development of more effective laws and policy reforms. There is a clear need for comprehensive data – not only for enforcement but also, in the light of the scientific studies mentioned above, to reduce such incidents and gain insights into the criminal behaviour behind them. "Animal cruelty is committed for a variety of reasons in India. Some do it out of ignorance or poverty, while others do it for fun. Individuals may harm animals as they feel animals are not as valuable as humans," says Ms Tannu Saini, a psychologist.

The weakness in the BNS lies in the complete elimination of Section 377 without addressing sexual crimes against animals and provisions for redressal for animal victims of crime. A majority of sexual offences against animals went unreported, even when there was a recourse under the law.

Notes

* [Unmasking Animal Abusers: A Psychological Analysis of Animal Cruelty, India Today \(July 26, 2023\)](https://www.indiatoday.in/information/story/unmasking-animal-abusers-a-psychological-analysis-of-animal-cruelty-2411622-2023-07-26), <https://www.indiatoday.in/information/story/unmasking-animal-abusers-a-psychological-analysis-of-animal-cruelty-2411622-2023-07-26> (last visited Oct. 15, 2024).

In such a disheartening context, the removal of provisions addressing sexual crimes against animals is not only morally, ethically, and legally wrong, but it also poses a serious threat to society. The removal of laws addressing sexual crimes against animals can lead to increased instances of such crimes, creating a culture of impunity. This can desensitise society to violence against vulnerable beings, eroding empathy and respect for life.

Additionally, it may signal that animal welfare is not a priority, potentially fostering an environment where cruelty and violence is tolerated or ignored. Over time, this could contribute to broader societal issues, including a lack of accountability for violent behaviour and a diminished moral compass regarding the treatment of all living beings.

In the absence of official records, we have compiled cases from various newspapers that highlight the instances of sexual abuse against animals in the country, many of which were first catalogued in the FIAPPO report.

Sexual Crimes against Animals in India

Farmed animals

Year	Case
2004	<p>In a bizarre incident that smacks of sadism, two men in South Delhi's Tughlaqabad area allegedly raped a cow. The two repeatedly stabbed the cow after the assault. The incident occurred around 4 am, when the two accused, in an inebriated state, were walking back home. The two reportedly tied the cow's legs to a tractor and also tied up its snout and after sexually assaulting the animal, stabbed it repeatedly. The owner, Amar Singh, went to the police station, but he says the police were initially hesitant to lodge a complaint. It was only when there was a public backlash that they registered a complaint. (Indiatimes report, documented in the VoSD report).</p>
2011	<p>A shocking incident occurred in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, where a one-and-a-half-year-old calf was sexually abused by four young men. These men were migrant workers from Odisha and were caught by the calf's owner after hearing its cries in the night. In a brutal attempt to silence the animal, the men beat it and caused injuries, including smashing its tongue, which left it bleeding. The case highlights how migrant workers or others working closely with animals sometimes exploit their positions, causing severe physical and psychological harm to animals.</p>
2012	<p>An FIR under Section 377 was registered against a man for having sex with a three-month-old calf. While the calf is being raised in a Gaushala, the accused had reportedly jumped bail.</p>
2013	<p>In Indore, a 40-year-old man, Gulab Singh, was arrested for allegedly beating and sexually assaulting his neighbour's cow. The incident occurred when Singh, a local laborer, untied the cow and brought it into his house, tying its legs and snout before committing the act. The cow's owner, Bindu Jaiswal, along with neighbors, discovered the assault and immediately raised an alarm, leading to Singh's arrest. Initially, the police were reluctant to file a complaint but later registered charges under Section 377 of the IPC. Authorities noted that Singh appeared mentally disturbed, though not inebriated at the time of the incident.</p>
2013	<p>In Tamil Nadu, a man named Muthu, aged between 50 and 55, was arrested for allegedly sexually assaulting an injured cow found lying on a railway track. Witnesses from an animal welfare NGO, who initially responded to the scene after reports of the cow's injury, observed Muthu using coconut oil as a lubricant to engage in the act. The NGO's volunteers apprehended Muthu as he attempted to flee, and he later confessed to the offence. A veterinary examination confirmed that the cow had been sexually abused. Muthu was subsequently charged under Section 377 of the IPC.</p>

Year	Case
2015	In Kollam, a mahout named Rahul was arrested for allegedly attempting to engage in bestiality with a cow, leading to the animal sustaining a fractured hip. Police reported that Rahul, who was reportedly under the influence of ganja, tied the cow's hind legs, causing it to struggle and fall, resulting in the injury. The incident occurred near an elephant camp where he worked, and he fled after locals raised an alarm. Animal welfare activists alerted the police, and Rahul was later arrested, facing charges under the PCA Act and the IPC. The cow's condition remains serious, with a veterinarian indicating it may not be able to stand again.
2015	The Mulky police in the Dakshina Kannada district of Karnataka arrested 24-year-old Santosh Talwar for allegedly engaging in a sexual act with his neighbour's goat. The incident took place in K.S. Rao Nagar when Talwar reportedly took the goat into his toilet late at night. Neighbours, alerted by the goat's noises, discovered him in the act. He was subsequently charged under Section 377 of the IPC, and a government veterinary doctor confirmed that the goat had been sexually assaulted.
2015	An 18-year-old boy from a dairy farm area in Najafgarh, South West Delhi, was accused of raping a calf. After learning about the incident, his parents admitted him to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), where he was treated by the hospital's department of Psychiatry and Forensic Medicine. The offender reportedly showed no guilt or remorse, even after the calf died, and openly admitted to his involvement. Dr Satapathy, one of the doctors treating him, expressed concern that individuals who engage in childhood bestiality are more likely to commit interpersonal crimes as adults, highlighting this as a warning sign for society. Despite treatment efforts, the teenager fled the hospital and did not return, leaving concerns about his future actions.
2015	A 25-year-old man, Dinesh, was booked in Bulandshahr, Uttar Pradesh, for allegedly raping a seven-month-old cow in Mandanagla village. The incident was reported by the calf's owner, Sukhpal, who filed a complaint with the police. Dinesh was charged under Section 377 of the IPC.
2016	In Betul district, Madhya Pradesh, a 50-year-old man, Sravan Vyas, was arrested for allegedly raping a cow that had escaped from a farmer's shed. Three women witnessed the incident on March 19 and reported it to a local resident, Mithilesh Kumar, who alerted the police. Vyas, suspected to be under the influence of alcohol and possibly drugs, was charged under Section 377 of the IPC. Although locals demanded charges under the PCA Act, authorities declined, citing insufficient evidence.
2017	In Jaipur, a 27-year-old man was arrested for allegedly raping a cow. Local residents reported the incident to the police, who took immediate action, leading to the man's arrest. He was charged under Section 377 of the IPC.

Year	Case
2018	<p data-bbox="347 248 1436 353">On 26 July 2018, a seven-year-old pregnant goat died a day after being allegedly raped by eight men in Haryana's Nuh district. PETA India worked with the police to get a case registered against the accused under Section 377 of the IPC.</p> <p data-bbox="347 394 1436 853">This case, in Nagina, Haryana, received significant attention due to its horrifying nature. A pregnant goat, belonging to a local villager named Aslup Khan, was sexually assaulted by three men, while five others stood by and watched. When the owner confronted them, the men brutally smashed the goat's head against a wall, resulting in her death the following day. Khan, devastated by the loss, considered the goat not just livestock but a part of his family, especially as she was close to delivering two kids. The medical examination confirmed that the goat was 50 days pregnant and had died from brain haemorrhage. Initially, the local police registered the case under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, which carries a minimal fine. However, PETA India stepped in and ensured the case was escalated, with charges eventually filed under Sections 377 and 429 of the Indian Penal Code 1860, as well as the Prevention of Cruelty Act. This case sparked public outrage, highlighting the need for stronger laws to protect animals from such abuse.</p>
2018	<p data-bbox="347 927 1436 1099">A 42-year-old man from Vadodara was arrested by the Varnama police for allegedly engaging in unnatural sex with three cows. The incident came to light when the cows' owner found them in a distressed condition and informed the authorities. The arrest was made after a report was filed by the cows' owner. Following the man's confession, police charged him under various sections, including Section 377 of the IPC.</p>
2018	<p data-bbox="347 1167 1436 1301">A cow was allegedly assaulted in East Godavari, Andhra Pradesh. The owner, N Lakshminarayana, reported the cow missing and later found it at a farm. He claimed the cow was "brutally assaulted," with swelling on its back, and upon his complaint the case was filed under the PCA Act.</p>
2019	<p data-bbox="347 1368 1436 1541">A labourer in rural Patna, identified as Mohammed Simraj, allegedly raped a pregnant goat, resulting in the animal's death. The incident involved Simraj reportedly abducting and assaulting the goat while intoxicated. The local police arrested him and filed charges under the IPC and the Wildlife Protection Act. This case followed a similar event in Haryana where a pregnant goat died after being gangraped by eight men.</p>
2019	<p data-bbox="347 1599 1436 1733">In Ahmedabad, police arrested a man named Lalo Patni after he was allegedly found engaging in sex with a cow near the city's airport. The cow's owner, Gobar Desai, filed a complaint after finding one of his cows missing and later spotting the accused with the animal. Patni was charged under Section 377.</p>
2019	<p data-bbox="347 1800 1436 1966">In Ayodhya, a man named Rajkumar was arrested for allegedly assaulting cows at a shelter run by Kartaliya Baba Ashram. Shelter volunteers, alerted by CCTV footage, caught Rajkumar attempting similar acts again. He was subsequently detained by police and charged under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code. Rajkumar, who admitted to being intoxicated at the time, claimed he did not fully recall his actions.</p>

Year	Case
2020	In January 2020, a farm labourer and his brother in Andhra Pradesh were arrested and produced before the local court for being caught raping cows under the influence of alcohol.
2020	In a shocking incident in Kerala's Kannur district, a 33-year-old man named Sumesh was arrested for raping and torturing a two-year-old calf to death. The crime occurred after Sumesh took the calf from its stable and sexually assaulted it, leading to the calf's death from strangulation caused by the rope it was tied with. The calf's owner noticed it was missing and, after a search, villagers discovered the dead animal. Medical reports confirmed the sexual assault. Sumesh was charged with domestic violence, theft, and animal cruelty, with evidence including his clothing found at the crime scene.

Companion animals

Year	Case
2009	Mahesh Kamat, a taxi driver, was arrested for having sex with a street dog. Eyewitnesses and medical reports were the only evidence on which the Tardeo Police Station in Mumbai based the case. The news report stated that "the police and law experts have never heard or represented such a case. Anuradha Sawhney, then head of PETA India, said: "He the accused] needs to be taken to a psychiatrist."
2011	Based on repeated complaints by residents of Chandigarh, Neeru Sidhu, the Secretary of the local chapter of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA), filed a complaint that the staff hired to look after the dogs by SPCA were indulging in 'bestiality'. A man named Manglu was arrested on investigation.
2013	The case of Blacky, a street dog, was discussed in the VSoD report based on extensive interviews with Save Our Strays (SOS), a suburban Mumbai-based animal welfare organisation. Blacky was tortured sexually by a man living in the same locality. He had inserted multiple metal objects into her and was rescued in an extremely weak condition by SOS. Shirley Menon who founded SOS was quoted as stating: "We have a particular spot in Andheri West from where we get repeat complaints. It is a spot where junkies hang out and even the police stay away from there. We had sent a few there one night when a late-night feeder witnessed a man sexually abusing a dog and called me. The cops reached there, stopped the commotion, (a lady and her young daughter got into a fight with the junkies and were cornered by them) shouted at the lady and told her never to feed on the streets at that late hour, that too with a young 18 year old daughter. I wanted to file a complaint, but the lady backed out." (Documented in the VoSD Report)

Year	Case
2014	<p>Residents of Nallasopara, a north-western suburb of Greater Mumbai, caught a man red handed while he was having "sex" with a two-month-old puppy in the month of March, 2014. He had lured the puppy by offering some food, then took the animal to a secluded place and had "sex". The puppy's shrill voice raised an alarm for the residents who immediately collected at the scene and thrashed the man. According to them the man was fully drunk.</p> <p>While the police did arrive, they let the man off with a warning saying it was just a puppy. Witnesses claimed this was not the perpetrator's first attempt at sex with animals.</p>
2014	<p>A 55-year-old man in Delhi, identified as Shiv Kumar, was arrested for allegedly engaging in sexual acts with a street dog in the Mayur Vihar Phase 1 area. A neighbour reportedly witnessed the incident and subsequently turned Kumar over to the police.</p>
2015	<p>A student-made documentary on sexual crimes against animals, "Bestiality – the Unheard Rape", an animal rights activist, Aditi, narrates the case of a watchman found raping a female dog in the housing society premises. Police and members of an NGO arrived, took the accused to the station and filed a case under Section 377. The perpetrator was taken into custody, then granted bail due to political pressure and lack of forensic evidence. The dog was treated and recovered. This highly important twenty minute long documentary from the city of Mumbai narrates several horrific stories shared by animal activists of sexual crimes against animals.</p>
2016	<p>A man in Kerala allegedly sexually assaulted a dog, with the incident coming to light after a video of the act surfaced on WhatsApp. The video, which shows the dog being forcefully held and raped in a dilapidated building, was widely circulated. The animal welfare society filed a complaint with the state's Director General of Police, urging a thorough investigation. The incident is believed to have occurred in Kerala, based on the language spoken by the perpetrators in the video.</p>
2017	<p>A man in Bangalore was arrested for allegedly forcing his wife to have sex with a dog. The incident came to light after the woman reported the abuse to the police, claiming that her husband not only forced her into the act but also filmed it. According to her complaint, she had endured repeated abuse and threats, which escalated to this incident. The man has been charged under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act. The case has drawn attention to issues of marital abuse and cruelty.</p>
2017	<p>In a horrifying case of animal cruelty in Delhi, 34-year-old taxi driver Naresh Kumar was accused of raping a female puppy, which subsequently died from excessive bleeding and shock, as confirmed by a post-mortem report. The incident allegedly took place under the influence of alcohol, and Kumar reportedly confessed the act to an animal lover, leading neighbours to the puppy's carcass discarded in a drain.</p>

Year	Case
2018	A man named Kamal Hassan was booked in Jaipur for allegedly engaging in unnatural sex with a female street dog. The FIR and a complaint was registered from PETA India and animal rights activist Sachin Stalin. Although the video evidence was unclear and the dog had not been located at the time, the police stated that once the dog was found, a medical examination would be conducted. Hassan was sent to judicial custody under Section 151 of the Criminal Procedure Code and the case was registered under Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code.
2018	A man in Kolkata was caught in the act of sexually assaulting a street dog inside his home. Two men saw the drunk suspect leading the dog into his residence and, doubting foul play, followed him. They found the man raping the dog, whose mouth had been tied with a rope. The man was detained, and the dog was taken to a veterinary hospital for treatment.
2018	Jill Killick, an animal feeder and rescuer, discovered Black Lill, a well-known street dog in the village of Siolim, North Goa, in a critically injured state. Black Lill, a fiercely independent and elusive dog, had evaded previous attempts to catch and sterilize her. When Killick found her, she was bleeding and unresponsive. A medical examination revealed a four-inch screwdriver handle forcibly inserted into her uterus. This brutal act sparked outrage among local activists, who likened the incident to the infamous Nirbhaya case, highlighting the potential link between violence against animals and sexual violence against women and children. Despite public outcry and complaints filed under Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code 1860, the police investigation yielded no leads, and the case was closed within a year due to lack of evidence.
2018	In another 2018 incident from Ghaziabad in UP, two men allegedly sexually abused a street dog, tied the animal behind their scooter and dragged her to death. Witnesses saw them dragging the dog, caught one man while the other escaped. The perpetrator, in a brazen defence, claimed the dog had bitten many people in the locality so this was done to teach her a lesson.
2018	A security guard was arrested for assaulting a known community street dog Bindu in Mumbai by inserting an iron rod pulling out her intestines. It is alleged it was retribution after he was scared by her bark. Bindu died of trauma and her newborn puppies did not survive after her. The security guard was arrested and immediately granted bail of Rs. 3000.
2018	A minor was arrested in Lucknow for allegedly engaging in bestiality with a dog in the Krishnanagar area. The incident came to light when animal rights activist Shaba Khan witnessed the act and reported it to the police. Khan suspected the minor to be the son of a labourer working at a nearby construction site. Following the complaint, the police registered an FIR under Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code.

Year	Case
2018	In Malwani, Mumbai, four men allegedly raped a male dog, leaving it severely injured and bleeding. The dog was found with mutilated genitalia and was in significant trauma. Local residents and an animal welfare group rushed the dog to a veterinary clinic for treatment. According to eyewitnesses, the assault occurred while the dog's front legs were tied and mouth gagged.
2019	In Kharghar, Maharashtra, a 20-year-old man, Munmun Kumar, was arrested for allegedly raping a street dog and forcing it to perform oral sex. The incident was witnessed by a group of students who recorded the act and uploaded the video online. Animal rights activist Vijay Rangare saw the video and filed a complaint. Initially, the local police were reluctant to register the case, citing that the video did not clearly show penetrative sex under Section 377 of the IPC. However, after further escalation, an FIR was registered, and the accused was remanded to police custody.
2021	In September, 2021 a 60-year-old was arrested in Rajasthan's Kota for allegedly raping a street dog. A month later, a 67-year-old was accused of raping his neighbor's pet dog in Haryana's Gurugram, and the act was caught on camera.
2021	A 67-year-old vegetable trader was arrested in Mumbai's Juhu area for sexually abusing a dog. An NGO volunteer caught the senior citizen raping a street dog and also submitted a video of the appalling incident to the police. Seemingly, the police suspected that the man had raped over 30 dogs over a long period of time. Additionally, the accused claimed that since he fed the animals and animals "did not object," his act was not a crime.
2018	In another 2018 incident from Ghaziabad in UP, two men allegedly sexually abused a street dog, tied the animal behind their scooter and dragged her to death. Witnesses saw them dragging the dog, caught one man while the other escaped. The perpetrator, in a brazen defence, claimed the dog had bitten many people in the locality so this was done to teach her a lesson.
2023	In March of this year, a man was arrested under Section 377 and other provisions of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act for sexually torturing a female dog in central Delhi's Inderpuri.
2023	Another incident of a man raping a dog in Hari Nagar, Delhi, made headlines in February. Both incidents were captured on tape, and the footage went viral on social media.
2023	A 65-year-old man in Malad (Maharashtra) was found to have raped a kitten. Disturbingly, he had more of them in cages in his home.

Year	Case
2024	In December, a man was arrested on charges of raping a one and a half month old puppy in Naigaon suburb of Mumbai. Despite an FIR being registered, the man was let out on bail and no further action has been taken.
2025	In April, a man was arrested in Delhi's Shahdara area for having allegedly raped multiple dogs. A social worker posted a video online of the man sexually assaulting a dog. A case was registered under Section 325 (mischief by killing or maiming an animal) of the BNS and the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act.
2025	In April again, another FIR was filed in the case of a pet dog found unconscious on the road in Delhi's Saket area. A condom was retrieved from the dog's private parts. The dog could not be medically revived and died.
2025	In April, a construction worker in Temple Town of Coimbatore was found sexually abusing a dog by a local resident. An FIR was filed under Section 173 of the BNSS and Section 11(1)A of the PCA Act.

Wild animals

Year

Case

2016

In a horrific incident, medical college students from Vellore in Tamil Nadu brutally killed a female monkey after she entered their hostel room. They tied up the monkey's hands, legs and neck with a phone wire, took her to the hostel terrace and thrashed her brutally in front of 30 other students. They also stabbed her back with a sharp object and raped her with an iron rod. "The monkey was abused by the worst means," said Antony Robin, one of the activists involved in exhuming the body. "Her hand was tied in the rear side and a telephone wire was tied to her neck. We observed fractures in the knee, ankle, neck and other places. We also noticed a sharp object was inserted from behind and came in front. This is by far the worst case [of animal cruelty] we have seen." The body was exhumed and buried behind the hostel. The students were suspended from college.

2017

In Mumbai, an adult female monkey was rescued by the Forest Department from a watchman in Vile Parle (east) who allegedly kept the animal tied up for nearly two years and subjected it to sexual abuse. The rescue was initiated after Animal Welfare Officer Sangeeta Ruia reported the incident to the department's helpline. While locals confirmed the monkey had been tied to a tree, no formal action has been taken against the watchman pending medical results. Ms. Ruia claimed she witnessed the monkey in a compromising position with the watchman and sought to file a First Information Report (FIR), but officials advised they would follow departmental protocols. If evidence supports the allegations, the watchman could face charges under the Wildlife Protection Act, the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, and Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code, with potential penalties including life imprisonment or up to ten years in prison.

2022

In March 2022, forest officials arrested 4 men, and found photos and videos on their phones of them gang-raping a monitor lizard, and then killing and eating it.

Global legal provisions

While India has removed essential legal recourse for animal rape, other parts of the world take this issue seriously, with many countries imposing stringent punishments and recognising its severity.

We are not suggesting that India should simply replicate the laws of other countries, but rather emphasising that when an offence is acknowledged as serious, it is crucial to have appropriate legislation in place to address it.

England

- Law: Sexual Offences Act 2003, Section 69
- Details: Prohibits sexual intercourse with animals and imposes penalties for both direct and indirect acts of penetration involving animals.
- Additional: Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008, Section 63, prohibits possession of images of sexual acts with animals.

Germany

- Law: Animal Welfare Act, Section 3(13)
- Details: Forbids using animals for sexual acts or offering them for third parties for such acts.

Australia

- Law: Crimes Act 1900, Section 63A
- Details: Engaging in sexual activity with animals is punishable by up to 10 years in prison.

United States

Varies by state

- California: Penal Code § 286.5 – Misdemeanour for sexual contact with animals; exceptions for veterinary practices.
- Massachusetts: M.G.L.A. 272 § 77 – Felony for sexual contact with animals, with up to 10 years of imprisonment for repeat offences.

- Maryland: MD Code § 3-322 – Misdemeanour with up to 10 years of imprisonment.
- Florida: Statutes Annotated 828.126 – Felony for sexual activities involving animals with additional penalties, including animal ownership prohibitions.
- Texas: Penal Code § 21.09 – State jail felony for bestiality, elevated to second-degree felony if the act results in severe injury or death of the animal.

The Way Forward

In conclusion, the decriminalisation of sexual crimes against animals in India with the removal of Section 377 of the IPC raises serious concerns for animal protection. Although some protections exist under Section 11 of the general animal cruelty law of the PCA Act and Section 325 of the BNS, they lack specific provisions targeting sexual crimes against animals, leaving animals vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. This gap also poses a danger to society as it allows dangerous criminals to remain free and commit various other offences. India must acknowledge this gap and take prompt action to introduce clear legal provisions by criminalising the offence again in a much better way.

Early identification of risk factors and psychopathology in sexual crime cases against animals by psychological analysis is lacking in India. In 1993 article, Dr Frank Ascione stated that *“bestiality may be considered cruel even in cases when physical harm to an animal does not occur (this is similar to the case of adult sexual activity with a child where consent is presumed to be impossible).”* This is because animals are unable to be fully informed, communicate consent, or to speak about their abuse.

FIAPO recommends that, with the complete repeal of Section 377, it should be replaced by a more progressive law that not only sheds its colonial legacy but also reflects contemporary views on animal protection and rights. Animals must be recognised as sentient beings with inherent dignity, not merely as objects.

We urge that the BNS be amended in a way similar to the 2013 amendments to Sections 375 and 376 of the IPC, broadening the definition of offences. This would ensure that any form of invasive act against an animal — beyond just carnal intercourse — is treated as a serious unnatural offence and duly punished. By introducing a legal framework that explicitly criminalises all forms of sexual violence against animals, India can lead by example in championing progressive justice for society including animals, ensuring that vulnerable beings are not left unprotected in a modern society.

In October 2023, FIAPO also submitted a detailed representation to the Union government urging to introduce an alternative Section under the BNS that addresses sexual crimes against animals. We have the following suggestions on how the new law can be shaped:

Notes

Animal Sexual Abuse Fact Sheet, Vermont Humane Federation (2016), <https://vermonthumane.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Animal-Sexual-Abuse-Fact-Sheet.pdf> (last visited Sept. 16, 2024).

The Way Forward

- **Comprehensive Prohibition:** The law should clearly and unequivocally prohibit sexual abuse of animals making it illegal in all forms and under all circumstances. This should include any sexual activity with animals for any purpose.
- **Animal Protection Focus:** The law should prioritise animal protection of all animals should be looked at as victims and not subject, recognising them as sentient beings.
- **Clarity in Definitions:** The law should provide precise definitions of different type of sexual abuse to avoid ambiguity and ensure consistent enforcement.
- **Appropriate Penalties:** Penalties should be proportional to the seriousness of the offence, considering factors such as the harm caused to the animal and the intent of the perpetrator. This includes fines, imprisonment, mandatory counselling, or other punitive measures.
- **Strong Enforcement:** Adequate resources and mechanisms for enforcement should be in place to ensure effective application of the law and prosecution of violations.
- **Protection for Whistle-blowers:** Law should include provisions to protect individuals who report animal cruelty cases, encouraging them to come forward without fear of retaliation.
- **Regular Review and Update:** Laws should be regularly reviewed and updated to adapt to changing societal norms and emerging concerns related to animal protection.

Annexure: Draft Section

The sample draft of the sections is below:

DEFINITIONS: Section XYZ (1) – Sexual Abuse of Animals

Animal Rape or Sexual Conduct or Sexual Contact: Any act, including but not limited to oral sexual contact, sexual contact by penis or vagina or hand or through any object, or sexual intercourse, penetration, involving a person and an animal.

Commercial or Recreational Purpose: Any activity conducted for financial gain, entertainment, or personal gratification.

A person commits an offence under this Act if they knowingly or intentionally engage in any of the following acts:

Sexual Conduct with an Animal: Engaging in any form of sexual conduct or sexual contact with an animal.

Facilitation of Sexual Conduct with an Animal: Causing, aiding, abetting, or coercing another person to engage in any form of sexual conduct or sexual contact with an animal.

Permission for Sexual Conduct with an Animal: Knowingly permitting sexual conduct or sexual contact with an animal to occur on premises under their charge or control.

Organising Sexual Conduct with an Animal: Organising, promoting, conducting, advertising, aiding, abetting, participating as an observer, or providing services in furtherance of any act involving sexual conduct or sexual contact with an animal for a commercial or recreational purpose.

Possession or Transfer with Intent: Possessing, selling, transferring, purchasing, or otherwise obtaining an animal with the intent that it be subjected to sexual conduct or sexual contact.

Creation or Distribution of Pornographic Material: Creating, distributing, publishing, or transmitting, whether for commercial or recreational purposes, any pornographic image or material depicting a person subjecting an animal to sexual conduct or sexual contact.

Penalty: Any person found guilty of an offence shall be subject to imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine of minimum Rs. 50,000/-.

This draft represents our preliminary effort to address the gravity of the crime. While the sections and rationale may not be flawless, they are intended to be comprehensive and illustrative. To effectively reinstate this law, it is essential to fully understand the underlying reasons for its necessity. Therefore, we aimed to make this draft as detailed and thorough as possible. We are committed to restoring this law.



Acknowledgements

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