

## **Women's Safety: An Empirical Study**

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### **Introduction**

In the past decade, women have progressively earned a higher standard of living in the society. Women are now gaining higher positions and form a big or huge section of anywhere all around the world. They are now more independent and competent enough to take care of themselves and their societies like family, friends etc. they are more able and capable to make their own life choices and live in their own terms. But everyday women are mistreated or maltreated in the society. Women's safety and its issues are discussed and debated all around the world. It has become an increasingly highlighted issue in India over the last few years. Several incidents have received considerable media attention and become the subject of intense debate among politicians, police and civil society. Global Studies and Surveys demonstrate that women feel less comfortable and secure in public places even in developed countries and are afraid of violence and aggression. This dilemma is prevailing in developing countries and the facts associated with women harassment are terrifying. Women harassment and ferocity in public places reported by urban women in India is 79 percent, in Thailand 85 percent and in Brazil 89 percent. According to the survey, 81 percent of women have faced some form of sexual harassment in their lives. It can lead to anxiety, depression, lower self-esteem, alienation and overall degradation of their physical and mental well being. The Thomson Reuters Foundation released study that ranked India as the most dangerous place because of its high incidences of sexual violence, lack of access to justice in rape cases, child marriage, female feticide and human trafficking. The report noted that the reported cases of crimes against women rose 83 percent between 2007 and 2016, where there were four cases of rape every hour. Women safety and their protection concern is one of the endless issues in our society.

### **Literature of Review**

A Study published in 2013 as part of the UN Women's Safe Cities initiative, founds that a large proportion of women in Delhi are fearful of going out alone at night. Less than five percent of Delhi's women said public spaces in the city were safe or very safe. The same report said that the

recorded incidence of violence against women in Delhi may in fact be understated, as many incidents remain unreported. For this, the report said the fault is in the culture of victim-blaming.

According to the census of 2017, 48.76 percent of Pakistan populations are women. It has been observed that there remains an increasing concern about the safety of women in public places over the recent years. Females, predominantly those residing in low income settlements, feel insecure in their place of living after dark as those zones are badly lighted, streets are not properly paved, the sewer water run-offs on the roads and streets making it a threat for them to move, bus stops are often positioned on the corners that force them to move in the dark streets. According to recent newspaper report 85 percent of women face harassment in Karachi City.

Women in small towns feel much less insecure than big cities or villages. The survey enables us to pinpoint some of the most vulnerable groups of women that require special policy attention: young women below 25 years feel particularly unsafe in all kinds of localities. While women in village feel safer than metros, the young women in the rural areas are more vulnerable than their counterparts in urban areas. The poor women who live in the big cities turn out to be the most vulnerable group across all the locations and categories in this survey. Single working women feel much more insecure than the average. While there is no strong community pattern to the level of insecurity, young Muslim women feel particularly vulnerable.

The analysis of the study revealed that 35 percent of females feel unsafe in the morning and 38 percent in the evening, which is the time when they face many issues. Pakistan is an Islamic nation and according to the culture of Pakistan women usually do not travel and are outdoors at night, they typically visit educational institutions and workplaces during daytime, the reviews articulated that whenever they travel, they are more vulnerable and exposed to ferocity. Few of the women move in the night time of which 13 percent in Lahore feel unsafe in the dark. As described in literature, females feel insecure at night because public places are poorly lit, bus stops are often positioned at the places which are also dark that force them to move in the dark streets.

Three months before the commonwealth games, Delhi's rating continue to plummet as a city unsafe for women. An overwhelming number of Indian travelers have given Delhi the thumbs down in terms of safety. Of the total number of travelers polled, 67 percent felt that Delhi was the most unsafe city in India followed by Goa (17 percent) and Mumbai (9 percent). The trip advisor survey that interviewed 5000 respondents said that Patna (5 percent) and Noida (4 percent) were the other unsafe cities. The capital city has become notorious for some of the most heinous crimes in the past few years. Crime against women, incidents of foreigners being cheated from transit points like

airports and railways stations have only strengthened this reputation. Goa has earned the ignominy this year of being unsafe thanks to the increasing number of assault cases against foreign tourists.

### **Methodology**

The present study aims to explore the perception of women's attitude regarding their safety and security in the society, to find out the difficulties and problems that they face in public places or day to day life, to know their awareness about the safety measures. Explorative research design was selected for this study. For the present study convenient sampling method was used. 200 young girls were analyzed in this present study. The study was carried out in Chennai city. The primary and secondary data was used in this present study. Primary data were collected from the respondents by means of personal interview using structured interview schedule. Observation method also applied to collect the supplementary information.

### **Results and Findings**

The respondents of this present study were college girls. When they were asked about the safety in public places (like bus stop, railway station, shopping malls, markets, park, beach etc) three fourth(75 percent) of them feel unsafe in public places and only 25 percent of them feel safe. In that 50 percent of the respondents feel unsafe in public transport (like bus, train, and share auto), 12 percent of them feel unsafe while walking on the road and remaining 3 percent of them feel unsafe in beach. Nearly half of the respondents (49 percent) feel unsafe in the night and 21 percent of in the early morning (before 6 am). Since women were more vulnerable and exposed to ferocity at night time in the public places, they mostly avoid using the public places during the dark time, even the family never allows the girls to go out at night time. Remaining 30 percent of the respondents feel unsafe in all the time because of the fear about the issues happening against the women in contemporary society. When the respondents were asked about the experience of disturbance faced from the harassers in public places, 35 percent of them have been verbally abused like whistling, singing, comments etc, two fifth of the respondents (40 per cent) have experience visual abuse like staring, gesticulating etc,. 10 percent of them have been physically abused like touching, groping etc, and remaining 15 percent of the not experience any kind of abuses. In that 20 percent of them not informed about these kinds of incidents to anyone, 15 percent of them shared with their parents, 65 percent of them shared with their friends. When they were asked about the usage of safety apps, three fifth (60 percent) of them agree that the safety apps and helpline were useful. 25 percent of them need more effectiveness in the safety apps and remaining 15 percent of them unaware about safety apps and helpline. It's really shocking information that the present generation unaware about the

safety apps even they were spend more time in mobiles. Majority of the respondents (55 percent) used to carry something like pepper spray, chilli powder, perfume etc for protect them. Remaining 45 percent of them not carry anything for their protection. When they were asked about the safety techniques or self-defense techniques like karate, silambam, martial arts etc, almost all the respondents (95 percent) don't know any safety techniques or self-defense techniques. Only 5 percent of the respondents knew safety techniques. When they were asked about their satisfaction level with the government initiative for women safety, 56 percent of them satisfied with the government initiative for women safety whereas 44 percent of them not satisfied with the government initiative for women safety because they feel that, even we have strict legislation to protect women, crime against women were increased day by day. Moreover when they were asked about the vulnerable age group among women for harassment, the viewpoint of all the respondents was women of all age groups because the harassment happen against the child, married, unmarried, widow, adolescent even the elder.

## **Conclusion**

Women have the right to live free from fear and violence. In order to improve the women safety in India the first step is to improve the number of women in every sphere of society. Women must be taught by self-defense techniques to protect themselves. The government should increase the availability of security guards and CCTV cameras in all public places. Laws must be made stricter relating to crimes against women. Further, there should be fast-track courts to hear the cases and should be investigated in a time bound manner. Along with that the change in mind set of people is very essential for the safety of women. From family to educational institutions men should be taught about respecting females and treat them as equals. In the contemporary society with the help of social media awareness should be created to both men and women relating to women safety.

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