

**Safe City Free of Violence against Women and Girls Initiative:
A collaboration of the Department of Women and Child Development, Delhi Government,
JAGORI, UNIFEM and UN HABITAT
July 8, 2010**

I. Background Note

Project purpose:

Women and girls are vulnerable to violence both within and outside the home and we recognize the links between all forms of violence against women and girls.

For this pilot initiative the focus is primarily on violence in the public domain which includes sexual harassment, staring, touching, sexual assault, attempted rape, stalking, lewd comments and such. These forms of violence demand different responses and strategies precisely because of their location in the public place. The project has components of baseline research, training, advocacy, community mobilization, partnership building and creating an overarching framework and strategy to create safer cities for women and girls.

The project recognizes the need to work with different departments of the Government including Departments of Education, Women and Child, Police, Transport, Urban Planning, Bhagidari, Delhi Commission of Women, and civil society actors such as resident welfare associations, city planners, community groups, youth groups, men's groups, women's special interest groups (working with minority and marginalized communities), and students.

The Pilot project in Delhi is in its first phase for a period of 18 months started in November 2009 to April 2011. The 'Safe City Free of Violence against Women and Girls Initiative' was launched by Prof. Kiran Walia, Hon'ble Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Women and Child Development, Delhi Government, in collaboration with JAGORI, UNIFEM and UN-HABITAT, on the 25th of November 2009, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

Key Activities:

- Creating a baseline for understanding nature of violence against women in urban spaces in Delhi: 5000 population survey in key areas of Delhi to be identified by the Government.
- Establishment of a strategic framework and a model for Delhi: this will include a review of policies and programmes, stakeholder analyses, identify capacity gaps and undertake visioning workshops under the leadership of the Department of Women and Child Development, Govt. of Delhi.
- Building capacities of partners and supporting the government key agencies and departments and civil society partners to create safer and a more gender inclusive environment.
- Up scaling and expanding the usage of the safety audit tool by sharing of knowledge and tools with other cities.
- Campaigns to raise public awareness.

Expected Outcomes:

- Expansion in the global database and body of knowledge of factors that cause gender

- exclusion and denial of women's rights in cities.
- Model interventions and policy recommendations for enhancing women's rights and access to the city available in the public domain.
- Enhanced public awareness, engagement and advocacy on women's rights, access and inclusion in the city.

II. Introduction to the Baseline Survey

The underlying aim of this research study is to have a thorough understanding of the nature and incidence of violence against women and the factors affecting it in order to build a strategic framework which can address the range of issues. Research conducted over the past few years has shown consistently that women in Delhi face different forms of sexual harassment ranging from visual to physical, including acts of violent aggression, not only in private spaces, but also in public spaces around the city. The almost daily incidence points to the 'normalization' of violence against women in the city. The large scale prevalence of these incidents needs to be understood within the wider context of urban growth, urban planning and governance.

JAGORI has conducted several research studies and detailed safety audits across the city since 2004 in order to understand women's experiences of safety. The findings from the various research studies point to women's general insecurity including fear of and experiences of sexual harassment and sexual assault. In order to gain a clear and broad picture of the entire city, this survey of 5000 men and women from across the nine districts of the city was carried out in January – March 2010.

This survey was conducted on a sample of 5010 men and women, cutting across class, age and profession. It was conducted through interviews in a variety of public spaces, including markets, parks, bus stops, residential areas etc. The main aims of the research are to identify the forms of harassment faced by women, the factors contributing to them, societal response, role of the police, as well as the strategies adopted by women to deal with continued and multiple forms of harassment.

Methodology

This research is a joint Initiative of Dept. of Women and Child Development, Delhi Govt., JAGORI, UNIFEM and UN HABITAT. The Research study undertaken by New Concept with support from JAGORI included the Sample covering all of the nine districts of the Capital, The survey was conducted with 3816 women, 944 men and 250 common witnesses. In all the three categories, only men and women above 16 years of were considered for the survey.

The survey is unique in getting the response of men as well as common witnesses to harassment. Common witnesses include both men and women who by virtue of their work or occupation are situated near public places and have a high probability of being witnesses to acts of sexual harassment on women. Interestingly, both categories – men and common witnesses have in their responses, in several instances, pointed to a higher incidence of sexual harassment than reported by the women. This shows that the perception of gender-based harassment is high among all sections, cutting across gender and class.

Each category of respondents in the survey is further divided into groups, broadly based on their occupation and nature of work, like senior level working men and women, middle level, factory workers, other workers, home makers, students and other categories.

Demographic Profile

The survey was conducted with 3814 women, 944 men and 250 common witnesses. The sample generally included a fairly young population with more than 80 percent women, 75 percent men and more than 50 percent common witnesses below 35 years on an average. A sizeable section, 43.2 percent women respondents and 37.6 percent men were educated, the average respondent being college or university educated. The income of majority of the respondents (45.7 percent women, 54 percent men, 93 percent common witnesses) was less than Rs.10, 000).

III. Key Findings

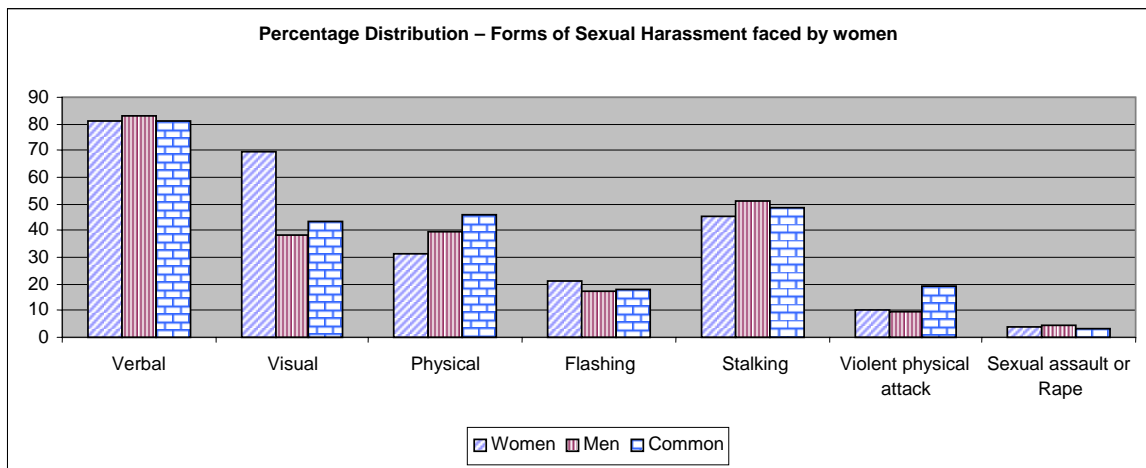
The findings of the survey show that women's and girls face violence and the fear of it on a continuous basis in the city. Due to the fear of violence and harassment many women do not have the autonomy to freely move in a variety of public spaces – markets, parks, bus stops, roads.

Forms of violence / harassment women face in public spaces in Delhi

An overwhelmingly high percentage of respondents in all categories believe that sexual harassment of woman is the single most important factor that renders Delhi an unsafe city. In fact, a high of 85.4 percent women, 87 percent men and 93 percent among common witnesses said that sexual harassment is rampant in public places.

Verbal harassment of women is the most common form of sexual harassment, as reported by more than 80 percent respondents. This is followed by visual harassment, as reported by 70 percent women, even though male respondents and common witnesses pegged the frequency of visual harassment at a lower level. Only 38.5 percent among men and 43.6 among percent common witnesses reported visual harassment. Stalking of women is a common on the streets. While 45 percent women had experienced being stalked, 51 percent men and 48.6% common witnesses reported witnessing women being stalked. In addition 40 percent men and 46 percent common witnesses reported witnessing physical harassment of women. Significantly, only 31 percent women reported physical harassment. While 21 percent women said flashing was a common form of harassment, 18 percent of men agreed.

Fig – 1

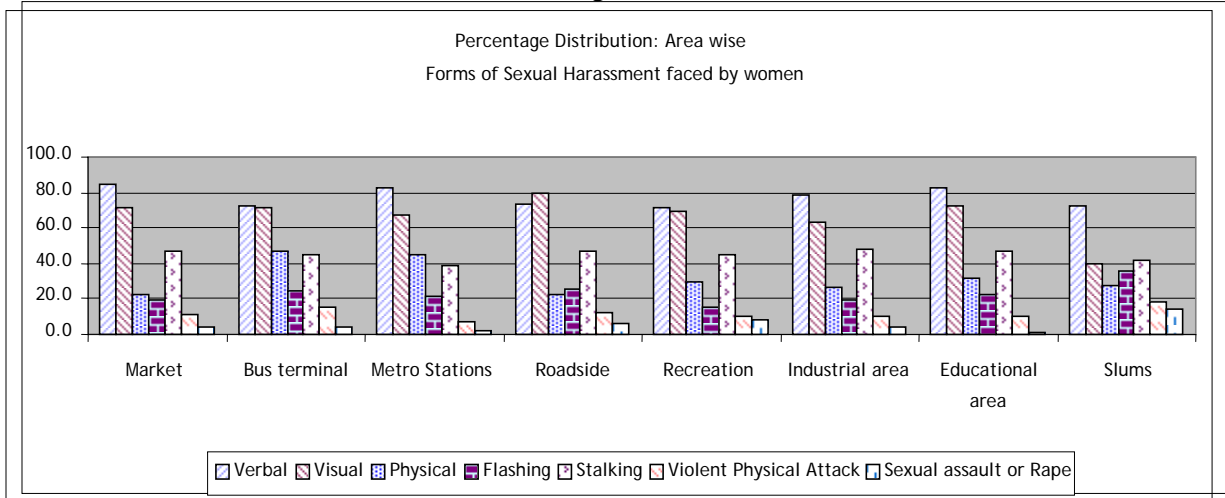


Where harassment is faced

The area wise distribution of harassment shows that women face maximum harassment in market places (84.9 percent), followed by 83 percent at Metro stations, 82.4 percent, in areas around schools and colleges and 79 percent in industrial areas.

At around 80 percent visual harassment is highest on roadside followed by 73 percent around educational institution and 71.3 percent around bus stops. (See Fig 2)

Fig 2

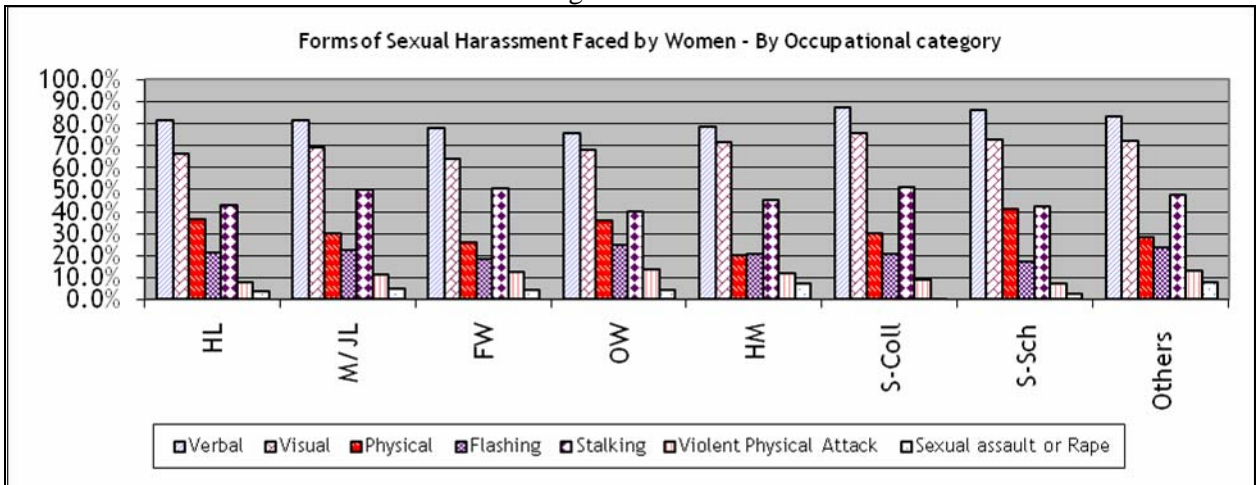


Who is more vulnerable

An examination of occupational profile of respondents reveals highest incidence of verbal harassment among school and college students (87 percent, and 86 percent,) respectively. These are also the categories facing the highest incidence of visual harassment (73 percent among school and 75 percent among college students).

Physical harassment is highest among school students (41 percent) and high level category (36.2 percent). At around 51 percent stalking is highest among college students. Although women of all categories face sexual harassment in various degrees, school and college going students appear to be most vulnerable to harassment in public places. (Fig- 4)

Fig- 4

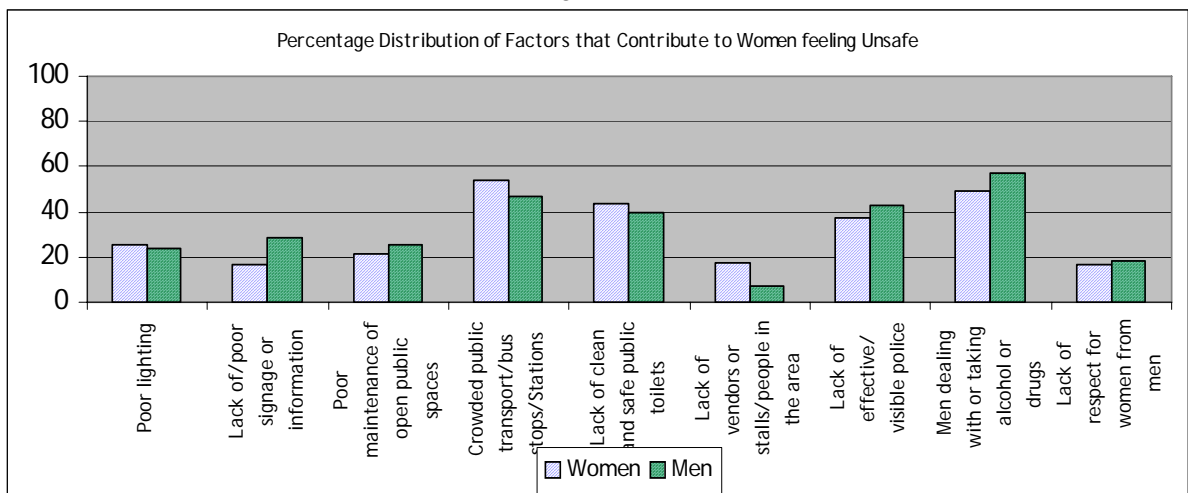


Factors that contribute to lack of safety

The lack of gender friendly and proper, functional infrastructure like street lights, public transport, roadside toilets largely contribute to making Delhi unsafe. The survey findings show public transport, buses as the most common public space where maximum sexual harassment occurs. In addition, the behaviour and conduct of men in public spaces, particularly on the roads aggravate insecurity.

Around 54 percent women reported feeling unsafe and vulnerable in crowded public transport and bus stops. Quite a high percentage of men, approximately (47 percent), as well as common witnesses (57 percent) share the same opinion. An equally important cause of insecurity is the open usage of alcohol and drugs by men in public spaces, as reported by 49 percent women and a relatively higher percentage of men (57.5 percent) and common witnesses (56.8 percent). Lack of clean and safe public toilets add to women’s insecurity, as reported by approximately 44 percent women, 40 percent men and 43.2 percent common witnesses. Lack of effective and visible police presence contributes largely to making Delhi unsafe. 43.1 percent of men shared this opinion, as against 37 percent women. 17 percent among women perceive vendors and stalls on the streets as markers of safety. Men and common witnesses, however, gave less importance to presence of vendors and stalls as safety guarantors. (Fig -5)

Fig - 5



How women respond to harassment and lack of safety

Women adopt different strategies to deal with sexual harassment, often confronting the harasser, sometimes seeking help from family and friends. Rarely however do they turn to the police for help. Nearly 68 percent (N=3493) women respondents reported confronting the perpetrator, 65 percent sought help from family, while 50 percent approached friends. 17 percent said they approached by-standers for help. A mere 6.6 percent accessed helplines.

Women expressed a lack of trust and confidence in the police. Only 0.8 percent women respondents reported incidents of harassment to the police. 58 percent said that they did not even consider approaching the police. Majority of women - 60 percent perceived great obstacles in approaching the police. 44.6 percent thought that the police would not take any action, 42 percent believed the police would trivialize the incident, while nearly 29 percent said that the law enforcers would merely perform token duty by registering the case. Significantly, 27.3 percent thought police would blame the harassed instead of the harasser. The survey reveals very few women 0.8 percent actually reported to the police when faced with sexual harassment.

The survey finds that the lack of faith in the police is the highest among other workers and factory workers. Around 50 percent of other workers and 46 percent of factory workers thought that police would not take any action. 31 percent of women in the high level occupational category, and 35 percent in the mid level category believed that police would merely record the incidents if sexual harassment cases are reported. (Fig. – 6)

Fig – 6

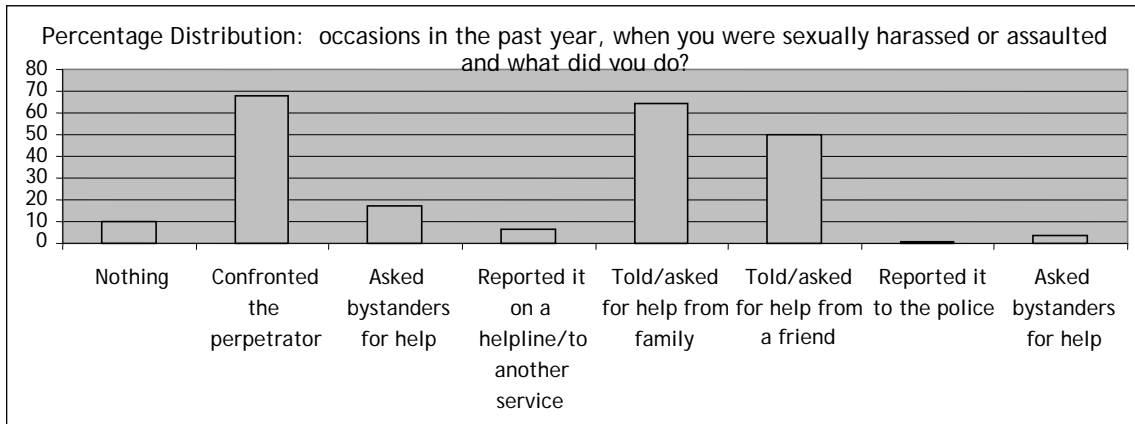


Figure 1

Women from high level employment categories (75 percent), followed by mid-level professionals (72 percent) and other workers (69 percent) were most vocal in confronting harassers. School and college-goers, who were most vulnerable to harassment, however, generally did not confront the harasser. (Table - 1)

Table 1

Actions Taken	High Level category	Mid & junior profile	Factory workers	Other workers	Home makers	College Students	School Students
Nothing	8.6%	12.3%	10.0%	12.3%	9.5%	6.3%	9.7%
Confronted the perpetrator	74.7%	72.1%	67.4%	69.0%	69.5%	59.2%	59.5%
Asked bystanders for help	13.9%	16.1%	18.2%	16.4%	21.9%	17.2%	11.7%
Reported it on a helpline/to another service	7.7%	8.3%	9.8%	3.4%	7.9%	9.2%	1.8%
Told/asked for help from family	61.3%	54.9%	59.5%	67.6%	65.8%	65.1%	77.0%
Told/asked for help from a friend	46.6%	48.2%	43.7%	39.9%	37.8%	71.4%	64.4%
Reported it to the police	0.9%	0.4%	0.9%	0.5%	1.6%	1.5%	0.2%
Other	1.6%	3.8%	1.8%	6.3%	4.1%	3.7%	1.6%

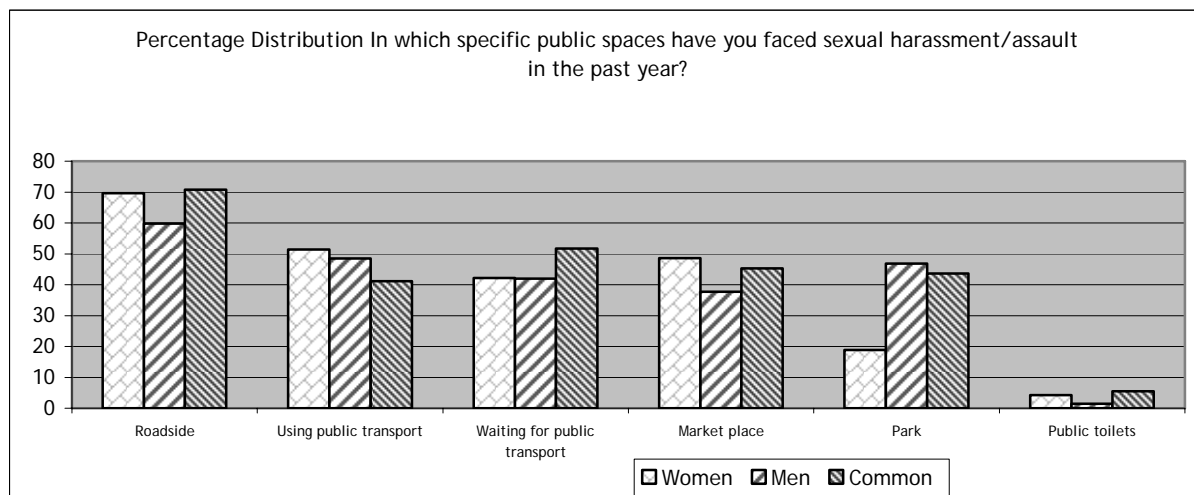
Response of witnesses to sexual harassment of women in public spaces

When asking women and men whether they would extend support when they saw a woman facing harassment, 54% women, 69% men and 66% common witnesses reported that they preferred to not get involved. Among women respondents, 37 percent came forward to the support of the victim, 22 percent gathered public support while a mere 7.1 percent sought help from the police.

Spaces are perceived as unsafe or inaccessible to women

Roadsides and public transport are the most vulnerable places where women face the highest risk of sexual harassment. Around 70 percent women admitted being harassed on the roadside while 50 percent women reported being harassed in public transport and 42 percent faced harassment waiting for public transport. Around 60 percent men and 71 percent common witnesses reported that they have seen women being harassed in similar situations. Men and common witness also voiced similar kind of opinions.

Fig – 8



Among the different occupational categories, school students faced maximum harassment on the roadside (78.1 percent), followed by other workers (76.8 percent) and college-goers (69.2 percent). Among male respondents, majority of factory workers, 69.6 percent reported witnessing incidents of sexual harassment on roadside followed by 66.5 percent other workers. A high of 65.6 percent men in the mid-level occupational category said they have witnessed women being harassed in public transport.

Conclusions

- The roadside and inside public transport has emerged as the spaces where women are most vulnerable to facing some form of sexual harassment. Around 70 % women reported being harassed by the roadside while around 60 % men and 71 % common witnesses reported that they have seen women being harassed.
- Around 51.4 % women reported that they faced harassment using public transport while 49 % men and 41 % common witnesses reported that they have witnessed women being harassed.
- Large number of women also reported to be insecure in market places and while waiting for public transport etc.
- Men using or dealing with drugs and alcohol, lack of a vigilant police force are other contributing factors that added to women’s insecurity.
- Distrust of the police force runs high among the citizens and most women did not think that they could approach the police in time of need. Only 0.8 % women reported incidents of sexual harassment to the police.

Recommendations:

- ‘Walk- able’ and disabled-friendly pavements with adequate lighting
- Proper maintenance of key public spaces, including clean, safe and adequate toilets for both men and women: male public toilets could be redesigned so that they do not open out on the street; women’s toilets should ensure doors and privacy measures
- Improve public transport system with safety measures such as helplines for passengers, immediate response by the crew and a system in cases of distress and support within the buses.

- Advocate the use of helplines, widen the helpline network and publicize the existing helpline numbers in public places through stickers and booklets. Redress complaints of sexual harassment effectively and immediately.
- Opening 24-hour eateries and allowing street vendors around busy spaces that provide some form of safety to women travellers at night and diversified use of space
- Efforts to induct more women in the police, appoint women bus drivers, conductors; gender sensitizing conductors, drivers and the police.
- Deployment of uniformed as well as plain-clothes police personnel in public places.
- Concerted efforts to sensitize people including the youth as partners in creating safer cities and conducive environments;
- Curtailing 'open-drug peddling' and other unlawful group activities on the street and in communities.