



Save the Children®

WINGS 2018

WORLD OF INDIA'S GIRLS

*A study on the perception of girls' safety
in public spaces*

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**A STUDY ON THE PERCEPTION OF
GIRLS' SAFETY IN PUBLIC SPACES**



Save the Children works in 120 countries globally and across 18 states in India for children's rights – To inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children, and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives. It is determined to build a world in which every child attains the right to survival, protection, development and participation. We deliver immediate and lasting improvements to children's lives worldwide. Save the Children works for:

- A world which respects and values each child.
- A world which listens to children and learns.
- A world where all children have hope and opportunity.

Save the Children, India
Plot no 91, Sector 44,
Gurugram – 122003, Haryana, India.
Telephone: +91 124 4752000

Website: www.savethechildren.in
Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/india.savethechildren>
Twitter: https://twitter.com/stc_india

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Preface

The World of India's Girls: A study on the perception of girls' safety in public spaces

India's girls are growing up in an atmosphere marked by rapid growth and greater opportunities. Increased access to education for girls, more awareness about their rights and exposure to opportunities outside the home has meant that more girls are aspiring for a better and non-traditional life.

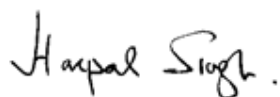
Ironically, while the aspirations of girls have soared, society's response has not been as encouraging. It is a concern that many young girls, their parents, siblings and the community at large perceives public spaces to be unsafe for girls. As a result, many bright girls are forced to drop out of school, do not pursue higher education and restrict themselves from engaging in decent work due to fear. Public spaces, like schools, workplaces (whether agricultural fields or call centres), public toilets and markets, while bringing opportunities, are also marred by the spectre of fear and abuse. Here, girls face verbal, physical and emotional harassment and abuse too often. And the fear of that abuse is what keeps them trapped in the confines of their homes.

In May 2013, Save the Children conceptualized the World of India's Girls Report (WINGS 2014 Report), a document that took an in-depth look into the complex status of girls in India. The report led us to mainstream gender focus into many of our programmes since then and focus on girls' education, early and forced marriage and sexual and reproductive health rights of young girls. In a dynamic world, it is important to consistently use research and evidence to capture, analyze and preempt the change. It is important to then use that data to inform programme and policy initiatives for greater impact. In 2017, Save the Children initiated "**WINGS 2018: World of India's Girls: A study on the perception of girls' safety in public spaces**". This report aims to explore and understand how the perceptions of girls' safety (or the lack of it) acts as a barrier to these young girls accessing their basic rights and living productive lives.

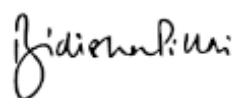
The study was conducted in six states of India. It proves, beyond any doubt, that girls are unable to achieve their full potential because they or their families are fearful of public spaces. The first step for us as a society would be to design and ensure that our public spaces are safe, towards opening the door of a future filled with opportunities for girls. There is a crying need to make our cities and villages, workplaces, markets, and public spaces safer for them to thrive. However, there is an even greater need for us to ensure that we challenge and change the patriarchal mindsets, social norms and behaviours which perpetuate the growing violence and abuse that these young girls face when they go out.

The report highlights that the issue of girl's safety has to be owned by each one of us; as individuals, families, communities, civil society organisations, media and the Government. We hope that this report will be widely used by all stakeholders to inform their own programmes leading to catalytic change in making India a safer world for our girls.

Thank you,



Harpal Singh
Chairman, Save the Children in India



Bidisha Pillai
Chief Executive Officer, Save the Children in India



सत्यमेव जयते



मेनका संजय गांधी
Maneka Sanjay Gandhi

मंत्री
महिला एवं बाल विकास मंत्रालय
भारत सरकार
नई दिल्ली-110001

MINISTER
MINISTRY OF WOMEN & CHILD DEVELOPMENT
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
NEW DELHI-110001

MESSAGE

The rights of Women and girls and their perception of safety are of utmost importance in achieving an inclusive and equitable society. India has been a frontrunner in integrating the SDGs into its child development policy. Gender equality cannot be achieved unless we understand the perception of safety and security of various groups in society and cater to them.

The Indian Government has enabled progressive laws like Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012 and the Criminal Amendment Act, 2013 but a part of the onus lies also with the families and communities towards ensuring girl's safety. Occurrence of sexual violence, particularly, in India that fosters belief of perceived male superiority unknowingly sets an inferior status for its girls and women. And that is a real threat which needs to be addressed on an urgent basis.

This study on the perception of girls' safety in public spaces captures the perceptions of safety in public spaces of girls, boys as well as their parents in the urban and rural context. The study explores the support systems available for girls in case of any harassment in public spaces and the implications on violation of their rights, including early marriage. The study also analyses effectiveness of administrative and civil society interventions and services in place to address the issue.

I congratulate Save the Children in bringing out this report and I appreciate the efforts of all individuals and institutions who have contributed to this report.

(Smt. Maneka Sanjay Gandhi)

Off. : 'A' Wing, Shastri Bhawan, Dr. Rajendra Prasad Road, New Delhi-110 001, Tel. : 23074052-54, Fax : 23387354
Resd. : 14 Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001, Tel. : 23357000, Fax : 23354321

हरदीप एस पुरी
HARDEEP S PURI



सत्यमेव जयते



MESSAGE

आवासन और शहरी कार्य
राज्य मंत्री (स्वतंत्र प्रभार)
भारत सरकार
MINISTER OF STATE (IC)
HOUSING AND URBAN AFFAIRS
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

The sign of a mature society can be gauged from the content, vigour and rigour of its public discourse. In India, a vibrant and pluralistic society, the status accorded to women and as a corollary to the girl child has many dimensions. Religious, cultural and socio-economic factors have often in the past been allowed to be used to the disadvantage of women.

It is heartening that increasing emphasis on the education of the girl child and more women joining the workforce are bringing about much needed change.

Economic progress affords more opportunities for women. This could be short-circuited if the personal security concerns of the girl child or women remain an issue of concern.

I am happy, therefore, that the study on 'Perceptions of Girl's Safety in Public Places', is being released. While the need for such studies is self-evident, it has to be followed up on the ground. That would need the unbiased efforts of policy makers, planners, administrators, the law enforcement agencies and last but not the least, civil society, in equal measure.

New Delhi
17 April 2018


(Hardeep S Puri)



स्तुति कक्कर
Stuti Kacker
अध्यक्ष
Chairperson

भारत सरकार
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
राष्ट्रीय बाल अधिकार संरक्षण आयोग
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR PROTECTION OF CHILD RIGHTS
नई दिल्ली-110 001
New Delhi - 110 001



MESSAGE


The girls of India today live in a society demarcated by multiple languages, religions, ethnicities and political thought, among many other things. Yet they define their own generation, which is starkly different from their mothers' and grandmothers'. India's girls are growing up amidst a climate of hope, aspiration and positive growth enabling them to aspire and realize their dreams. The overall development of girls is also closely related with their ability and opportunity to interact in public spaces.

While public spaces provide opportunities for social interaction and healthy growth they also conjure an image of fear and abuse. Violence against girls and women in public places is an everyday occurrence for women and girls in both urban and rural areas. Women and girls experience and fear various types of harassment in public spaces which include stalking, unwanted remarks and inappropriate touching.

The harassment of girls in public spaces is harmful to their mental, emotional and social development. This stark reality of violence has instilled a sense of fear and lack of safety in the minds of girls even when they walk on the streets, go to school, use the public transport or are vending goods at the market. Lack of safety across the spaces is a big barrier in the realization of rights of girl child.

The world of India's Girls WINGS 2018 comes at an opportune time where the upliftment of the girls and ensuring their safety is at the forefront of the political and social discourse. The report captures the perceptions safety in public spaces of both boys and girls and their parents in the urban and rural context.

I appreciate Save the Children for bringing out such an important report. I also compliment all the people who have contributed to this significant piece of work.


(Stuti Kacker)
26.04.2018

5वां तल, चन्द्रलोक बिल्डिंग, 36, जनपथ, नई दिल्ली-110 001
5th Floor, Chandernok Building, 36, Janpath, New Delhi-110 001
दूरभाष/Ph. :011-23478212, 23731583, फैक्स/Fax: 011-23731584
ई-मेल/E-mail : cp.ncpcr@nic.in वेब/Web: www.ncpcr.gov.in



Message from Child Champion

“कभी-कभी साहस” और “कभी-कभी सावधानी” काम आती है। मैंने अपने स्कूल में आयोजित एक सप्ताह के लंबे आत्मरक्षा प्रशिक्षण में भाग लिया था जहां हमने खुद को खतरे से बचाने के लिए कराटे के कई गुर सीखे। प्रशिक्षण ने मुझे बहुत आत्मविश्वास दिया है और पहले व्यक्ति (मेरा बड़ा भाई) जिसे मैंने अपने हाथों की कोशिश या कहें कि कराटे की चाल से हराने में कामयाबी हासिल की है, जबकि वह मुझसे थोड़ा लंबा है। और वह मुझे हरा सकता था। जब हम अपने स्कूल में जाते हैं तो बस या साइकिल आँटो लेते हैं, कभी-कभी यह इतना असुरक्षित लगता है, लेकिन आत्म रक्षा के बारे में जानकर अब बहुत अंतर महसूस होता है। मेरा मानना है कि सभी लड़कियों को यह प्रशिक्षण लेना चाहिए और स्कूलों में यह प्रशिक्षण एक सप्ताह के लिए नहीं बल्कि एक वर्ष के लिए होना चाहिए। मैं यह भी कहना चाहूँगी कि आत्म-रक्षा प्रशिक्षण हमारे स्कूल के लड़कों के लिए भी होना चाहिए।

“मैं बड़ा होने पर डॉक्टर बनना चाहती हूँ, और हां वह डॉक्टर जो अच्छी तरह से कराटे कर सकता है।...”

निशा, 16 साल

हाईस्कूल की छात्रा, तैमूर नगर, नई दिल्ली

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Executive Summary

Interaction in public spaces is a crucial component for the development of girls in their early and late adolescence as they prepare for a life of adulthood. The opportunity and ability to interact in public spaces enable them to get their education, exchange ideas and thoughts with their friends and peers, and offer overall development. It is essential for the girls to develop a world view, to pursue a career, or even go out for recreation or run errands. Such exposure is paramount for girls to become self-confident in their interaction with the world outside their homes, and also to become capable to pursue gainful employment and become self-reliant.

But public spaces, while bringing opportunities, are also accompanied with the spectre of fear and abuse. Girls fear and experience various forms of harassment in public spaces – from lewd remarks, inappropriate touching to physical and sexual assault. These incidents/affronts happen on streets, narrow by-lanes, in the neighbourhood, in and around schools, in public transport, public toilets, in parks, in local markets, malls and restaurants, among others.

In 2013, the United Nations Commission for the Status of Women (CSW57) identified various forms of sexual violence against women and girls (SVAWG) in public spaces as a distinct area of concern, and called on the governments to prevent it. This requirement also reflects in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that has set “the elimination of all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres” as one of its specific goals (Target 5.2). The New Urban Agenda of 2016 too commits to promoting a safe, healthy, inclusive, and secure environment in cities and human settlements for all to live, work, and participate in urban life without fear of violence and intimidation. However, safety in rural spaces has not been discussed much even though a larger population resides in rural areas as well as semi-urban peripheries of cities.

Harassment of girls in public spaces is a widespread phenomenon in urban and rural India, jeopardising the protection and care of children. This lack of safety in public spaces not only violates the girls’ right to security and mobility, but it also leads to

violation of rights provided to children in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and United Nations Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (UNCEDAW) .

In light of these realities Save the Children in India, has conducted a study to capture perception of safety for girls in public spaces.

The core objectives of the study included:

- a) Provide an in-depth understanding of the perception of safety of girls in the context of public spaces in both rural and urban areas and identify the factors that make girls feel unsafe across these spaces.
- b) Gain insights into the perception of other stakeholders (especially boys) about safety of girls across public spaces.
- c) Identify the various response mechanisms adopted by girls when they perceive themselves to be unsafe
- d) Understand the implications of girls’ perception of lack of safety in public spaces, on their access to various rights (mobility and education)
- e) Explore and understand the link between perception of lack of safety of girls at these spaces and early marriage of girls and consequent violation of their rights.
- f) Provide an in-depth understanding of government, administrative and civil society interventions, mechanisms, infrastructure and services in place to address the issue of safety of girls and identify some of the good practices.
- g) Recommend effective measures for improving the safety in the public spaces identified by girls during the study and also strengthen the provisions under various schemes and policies at national, state and local level.

The present study was conducted in six states of India, namely Assam, Delhi-NCR, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Telangana and West Bengal. The sample was selected using nonprobability sampling technique on the basis of geographical location

and required primary stakeholders. Each of the states was selected from the six regions (East, West, North, South, Central and North-East) using a composite measure comprising child sex ratio; rate of crime against women; women married before the age of 18 years of age; women who experienced spousal violence; and women who worked in the last 12 months and got paid in cash. The state with the highest value in the composite index were selected for the study. It was essential to capture the urban-rural differences and similarities as well. Therefore, sample was drawn from the urban and rural areas of these states. The total urban sample was from 30 cities of varying sizes and the rural sample was from 84 villages in 12 districts. The sample selected thus was not representative of Pan-India picture nor of the selected state, but was aimed to assist in studying in depth the prevailing perceptions on the issue of safety of girls in public spaces, the related dynamics and implications.

Interaction in public spaces is a crucial component for the development of girls in their early and late adolescence as they prepare for a life of adulthood.

The study adopted a mixed method approach involving a structured questionnaire survey covering 5359 respondents across urban and rural segments, consisting of 3128 adolescent girls (aged 11-18 years), 1141 adolescent boys (aged 15-18 years), 248 young, married women (aged 19-22 years) who were made to marry early, and 842 parents of adolescent girls. There were 40 focus group discussions (FGDs) with a similar set of respondents, and series of in-depth interviews with various stakeholders representing duty bearers, civil society organisations and academics. Stakeholder meets were held in three cities, i.e. Mumbai, Hyderabad and Kolkata, for sharing the key findings of the study and getting recommendations for enhancing the safety of the girls in public spaces. The study was undertaken under the guidance of an expert Advisory Committee. All research protocols, data capture instruments and consent forms were thoroughly vetted and cleared by an authorised ethical review board

Key findings of the study:

- A. Fear of open spaces and also of crowded spaces:** One in three adolescent girls surveyed were scared of traversing the narrow by-lanes of the locality, as well as the road to go to school or the local market. In rural areas one in four adolescent girls felt unsafe when using open spaces/agricultural fields for open defecation. Nearly three in five girls reported feeling unsafe in situations where the public place was over-crowded.
- B. Inadequate lighting:** 60 percent of adolescent girls expressed feeling unsafe in streets or other public spaces with inadequate lighting.
- C. Apprehension of using public transport:** Adolescent girls felt scared in over-crowded buses, trains, metros, local trains etc. as they feared inappropriate touching and groping. 58 per cent of the adolescent boys and 52 percent of the parents of the interviewed girls shared that it was not safe for girls living in their neighbourhood to take a public transport in the evening.
- D. Fear of physical and sexual abuse:** Over one in every four adolescent girls perceived the threat of being physically assaulted, including getting raped, while venturing into public spaces, while one in three expected to be inappropriately touched or even stalked.
- E. Perception of adolescent boys:** Nearly half of the boys interviewed were of the opinion that men must have the final word in all decisions. One in three boys held an opinion that slapping a woman to reprimand her should not be interpreted as violence. One in three adolescent boys felt that girls should avoid wearing certain types of clothes while going out in public spaces.
- F. Limited family support systems for adolescent girls:** Nearly two out of five adolescent girls who did not say that they would confide in their parents, felt that if their parents do come to know about an incident of harassment, they will, in all likelihood restrict their movement outside of home. Over 50 per cent parents agreed that they will probably end up scolding their daughters for letting this happen; and 42 per cent feel that they are likely to regulate their daughters' movement in public spaces if they came to know of any incidence of harassment experienced by their daughters.

G. Gender stereotyping among boys and parents which has implications for safety of girls in public spaces: One in three boys and two out of five parents saw an active role of women in some harassment cases by provoking the offender. As many as half of the boys and as many of parents of adolescent girls were of the opinion that the best way for girls to be safe is that they should avoid certain public spaces or they should simply avoid going out after dark.

H. Implication on child marriage due to lack of safety: One in five parents surveyed believed that it is better to get their daughters married early rather than take the risk of something happening with her on her way to school/work/any public space. Nearly three in ten girls who were students at the time they got married expressed their feeling of having missed out on completing their education because they got married. Three out of four married girls subject to child marriage had admitted, that they had to forfeit many of their aspirations and dreams.

I. Absence of bystander support: According to the adolescent girls, their support systems outside their homes were also not substantive. Mothers of the adolescent girls shared that they do not expect bystanders to get involved in offering assistance if something were to happen to them on the roads.

J. Inadequate support from the Police: 40 per cent of the adolescent girls believed that the reaction of the local police station (in the event of their going and lodging a complaint) would range from either blaming the complainant or showing acute reluctance in recording the complaint.

K. Lack of awareness of Childline number, and also of Government statutory bodies: A majority of the girls were not aware of government statutory bodies like Child Welfare Committees that can be approached for referral to appropriate authorities for redressal against harassment. In fact, only around 20 per cent (on an aggregate) of the total sample of adolescent girls claimed to have some awareness of such bodies. Awareness among parents was even lower: only 11 per cent of the total sample of parents had any such

information. Awareness of the Childline (helpline for children) number (1098) was also very low.

L. Media reportage: Around 90 per cent of adolescent girls who were exposed to stories on sexual assault on girls and women in the media have started to become more careful about where they go in public spaces.

Key Recommendations:

Safe public infrastructure and transport must be ensured:

- CCTVs to be installed across all street/by-lanes and critical locations like markets, cinema halls, malls and important roads and their maintenance ensured. CCTV recordings to be maintained for minimum three months period.
- All public spaces in rural and urban areas should have proper functional lighting.
- Free, safe, hygienic, functional and 24 x 7 accessible public toilets for women, preferably operated by female staff, should be provided in public spaces, including highways, in cities, towns and rural areas.
- Safe public transport for women be ensured through installing CCTV cameras, GPS and SOS button to alert the police control room and sensitisation of drivers and conductors. Where possible, girls/ women-only transport services should be started by state governments, especially on routes serving educational institutions like schools and colleges.
- A mobile phone based citizen's feedback mechanism that provides an opportunity to citizens to provide feedback to local government institutions about the lack of safety in public space.

Effective policing is essential:

- Police should regularly patrol various parts of the city, especially vulnerable spaces, highways, public parks and educational institutions, offices.
- Representation of women in the police force should be increased to encourage reporting by women and for sensitive investigation.
- Police beat/patrol team should be available through-out the city and towns, with emphasis on ensuring greater presence of women police officers in the team.

- Patrol vans to be equipped with conferencing facility to report the case to magistrate for fast track redressal of reported cases.
- Complaint boxes should be placed in public spaces with a nodal officer responsible to review these complaints and take necessary actions as per established, standard procedures.
- 'By-standers' engagement to be enhanced by making them aware about their rights and providing them protection against perpetrators of crime.

Involvement of traffic police in any incident of harassment to be assured:

- Traffic Police could play significant role as first responders of incidences of harassment on the roads, in public transport, autos, taxis or any other vehicles. It is imperative that they undergo training and sensitisation on appropriate behaviour and protocols of being first responders.
- A special component needs to be devised in their refresher training courses where they would be trained to proactively listen to complaints and refer to the local police station.

Active community engagement must be encouraged:

- Community Support mechanisms like self-help groups, children's groups and, mothers' groups need to be engaged in creating a strong support system for the adolescent girls.
- Community-based watch guard systems including shopkeepers/traders, residents, RWA, CPC should be set-up and made functional to ensure that they become the "eyes and ears" of the police for the safety of girls in public spaces.
- Resident Welfare Associations and Mohalla Samitis need to be sensitised to ensure that all local vendors (including guards manning the entry/exit gates of societies and public parks) are made aware about the safety of girls.
- Effective child-friendly reporting and redressal systems should be developed at the community level and widely publicised.

Gender sensitisation of service providers :

- All drivers, conductors and helpers of public transport, including those from private cab

aggregator services like Uber and Ola, should undergo mandatory induction programme on safety of girls .

- Ensure inclusion of gender sensitisation and girl's safety component in induction and in-service training programmes of local self-governance authorities, Integrated Child Protection Scheme functionaries, Aanganwadi workers, ASHA workers, ANMs, doctors and other health workers.
- Gender sensitisation and safety of girls in public spaces should be part of the curriculum at the B.Ed. and M.Ed., as well as on-the-job training, induction and refresher training programmes of teachers and other in-service personnel

Gender sensitisation of family and community:

- Awareness and gender sensitisation of children (both boys and girls), parents and care givers, grandparents, on gender issues and girls' safety needs to be ensured. Children's participation should be facilitated to mobilise the children, families and communities around the work of girls' safety should be part of school curriculum.
- Parents Teacher Meetings (PTMs) could be used to create awareness on gender sensitisation, and to encourage having open discussions with their children on gender equality, raising their voices against harassment.
- School Management Committees (SMCs) should be sensitised on issues of girls' safety. They should ensure that measures to ensure girls' safety is part of the school development plan and is effectively implemented.
- Large scale sensitisation campaigns by local self-governance institutions and service providers should be launched on safety of girls in public spaces which include information on facilities like Childline.
- Mass awareness building campaigns on girls' safety in public spaces should be run in print and electronic media as well as social media.

Strong civil society action must be mobilized :

- Civil society actors should be actively involved for capacity building and awareness generation

of adolescent girls, boys, families, communities on gender

- They should also be involved in sensitisation of relevant state actors on components of safety in public spaces; and undertaking monitoring, research and advocacy with state actors and policy makers to ensure effective design and implementation of initiatives for safe public spaces for girls and women

Media engagement must be strengthened:

- Capacity building programmes need to be organised at district, state and national level for sensitisation of media on safety of girls, sensitive reporting, followup and on the role of bystander involvement in helping a girl in distress.
- Sensitisation efforts should also aim at sustained reportage of incident of harassment against a girl till the judgment is delivered. Wider publicity of convictions is needed.
- Success stories of bystanders playing an important role in helping/mitigating the situation of a girl in distress and steps taken by various stakeholders to improve the situation should be shared regularly with the media.
- Field visits of media persons, round table meets of senior editors and regular press briefings may be undertaken.

Effective utilisation of financial resources is essential:

- Political parties and public representatives should prioritise and advocate for girls' safety and ensure more effective use of public funds controlled by them.

- There is a need to simplify the process of approval of projects for Nirbhaya Fund and develop measures for proper utilisation of funds.
- Concentrated efforts need to be made to mobilise additional resources from corporates, philanthropists and other social development initiatives on girl safety issues.
- Strong mechanisms to be developed to ensure effective utilisation of the earmarked resources to make public spaces safe for girls and women.

Conclusion

Public spaces are perceived to be unsafe by the adolescent girls and also by their families for various reasons, impacting the lives of these girls in various ways. There are several factors that impinge on their right to mobility, education and employment. Therefore, it is strongly advocated that the State, community and family create enabling conditions to ensure the safety of girls in public spaces so that they can live a life of dignity and fulfil their potential.

Several government-sponsored and civil society initiatives that promise to secure the rights of the girls have been undertaken. The allocations made under the Nirbhaya Fund is one such initiative which, if strategically designed and effectively implemented, can contribute to making public spaces safe for adolescent girls and women.. Development of applications for girls for increased vigilance and providing emergency response is another positive step.

Along with the short-term solutions to address safety in public spaces, there is a need to make concerted efforts at family, community and societal levels to challenge and transform deeply embedded stereotypical gender norms to prevent violence against adolescent girls and ensure accomplishments of their rights.



CHAPTER 1

Safety of Girls in Public Spaces: Conceptual and Policy Trajectories in India

1.1. Girls in Public Spaces: Background to the Study

The existence of safety concerns for women in general and girls in particular in the Indian context does not necessitate specific reiteration. Violence against girls in public spaces is a widespread phenomenon. It pervades both urban and rural areas and the changing manifestations of the problem require new insights into constraints in the approach to tackle these.

The primary intention of the discussion initiated through this chapter is to review policy and academic literature on safety of the girl child in public spaces in India. In doing so, it will trace conceptual trajectories and try to garner the tensions therein, as well as follow policy conceptions and glean inconsistencies. It will also examine the interaction between these two streams of writing and assess the extent to which the former translates into the latter.

Be it on the streets or in public transport, on way to school or at marketplaces, harassment appears in

the form of lewd remarks, physical assault or sexual assault, and even rape. At times, the spaces which are assumed to be safe for a girl child like a school also turn out to be a site of violence against girls.

The everydayness of this problem has instilled a sense of fear in the minds of girls which is harmful to their mental, emotional and social development and results in a range of violations of their rights.

Policy efforts acknowledge that such violations impinge on the freedom of girls and women to pursue their aspirations through education or career or recreation, access entitlements or participate in public life. The United Nations Commission for the Status of Women (CSW57 – 2013) identified various forms of sexual violence against women and girls (SVAWG) in public spaces as a distinct area of concern, and called on governments to prevent it. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has set “the elimination of all forms of violence against all women and girls in public and private spheres” as a specific goal (Target 5.2).

The New Urban Agenda of 2016 commits to promoting a safe, healthy, inclusive, and secure



environment in cities and human settlements for all to live, work, and participate in urban life without fear of violence and intimidation. However, any effort at addressing the issue requires a clear illustration of the terrain we seek to navigate. The next section outlines the nature of the problem in its current form.

1.2. Contours of the Matrix: Intersections of Policy, Community and Safety

The attempt to outline the nature of the issue in its empirical and statistical manifestations is based on national trends derived from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS), the National Sample Survey (NSS), the Census of India and the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) reports. An indication of the international picture can be gleaned from

data provided by three significant reports, viz. *Hidden in Plain Sight: A Statistical Snapshot of Violence against Adolescent Girls* (UNICEF, 2014); *A Familiar Face: Violence in the Lives of Children and Adolescents* (UNICEF 2017) and *Motherhood in Childhood: Facing the Challenge of Adolescent Pregnancy* (UNFPA, 2013).

Children constitute more than a third (39 per cent) of India's population as per the latest census. Girl children constitute less than half (48 per cent) of this population. While factors contributing to the lack of a safe environment for children in India are numerous, and often intertwined with structural and institutional dynamics of society, the focus of this study is on the issue of safety of the girl child in public spaces. The documentation compiled in this section is hence centred on issues of harassment against girls and related survey results, on the question of safety within public spaces.

1.2.1. The National Picture: Data trends



The rate of crimes against children has risen from **13.23** per cent in 2013 to **24** per cent in 2016 (NCRB 2016). Approximately **35** per cent of the reported offences against children are under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, including child rape (NCRB 2016). This confirms to a trend, highlighted in a 2007 study by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, as **53.22** per cent children reported sexual abuse and **69** percent reported physical abuse (MWCD 2011). The rate of conviction is **30.7** per cent in all cases of crimes against children (NCRB 2016)



The NCRB statistics are a grim depiction of the steep rise in crimes against children, with the reported all India incidence being **89,423** cases in 2014, **94,172** cases in 2015 and **1,06,958** cases in 2016. This includes **1,775** victims of murder, **224** victims of 'attempt to murder', **56,300** victims of kidnapping, **16,695** instances of girls being kidnapped under compulsion for marriage and **2,488** minor girls reported as under procurement (NCRB 2016).



Several structural and institutional factors further complicate girls' access to public spaces. NPAC 2016 acknowledges that a majority of boys and girls (**60-90** per cent) in the age group **17-19** years suffer from Anaemia (Annual Health Survey 2013-14). **49.84** percent (Rural – 67.32, Urban – 12.63) households practice open defecation and the percentage representation is higher for SC/ST households (Census 2011). Open defecation is a rampant reality of the rural, with **52** per cent of rural and **7.5** per cent of urban households practising it.

Child marriage is another fallout of lack of safety in public spaces as honour of the girl is a matter of concern to many Indian parents and they end up marrying their daughters before the age of 18. However, lack of safety is not the only reason, there are various other reasons like poverty and dowry, which compound together and a girl is married before 18 years of age. India has the largest population of child wives of any country in the world (Khanna et al 2013). The most recent Indian Census (2011) reported that nearly 17 million children and young people between the ages of 10 and 19 – 6 per cent of the population in this age group – were married, with girls constituting the majority (76 per cent) (Singh and Vennam 2016). In 2014, Save the Children in India published a landmark report highlighting the urgent need to consider the overall development of girl children as the primary focus of policy, and the need to move away from their primary treatment as mothers or wives. The report, titled *'The World of India's Girls' (WINGS) 2014*, clearly laid out the extent of child marriage and its harmful implications on the overall development of

girls. According to the fourth round of the National Family Health Survey NFHS-4, 26.8 per cent of the women aged 20-24 years got married before the age 18 years.

This has also been brought out by the Young Lives study, a collaborative research project on childhood poverty spanning 15 years and involving 12,000 children in India, Ethiopia, Peru and Vietnam. The Round 4 quantitative survey data of the Young Lives study highlighted the persistence of child marriage in Older Cohort children in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana: 37 per cent of the girls (N=179) got married by the age of 19 years (including those widowed and divorced) and 28 per cent were married before they turned 18.

1.2.2. Perception of Safety: Some earlier studies

A number of studies and surveys have been conducted to understand the perception of safety in public places. However almost all of these studies are restricted to urban areas and focus



on understanding the perception of safety of women, not necessarily the safety of girls. A survey conducted in New Delhi by ICRW found that only 5 per cent of respondents said they felt “safe” or “very

The rate of crimes against children has risen from 13.23 per cent in 2013 to 24 per cent in 2016

safe” in New Delhi’s public spaces and 73 per cent of respondents said that women and girls face sexual aggression in their own neighbourhoods. Also, 63 per cent of women said they fear going outdoors after dark and more than 20 per cent said they avoided going outdoors alone altogether for fear of harassment. In effect, this implies that one in every five women chooses not to engage in public life because of the fear of lack of safety (ICRW 2014).

Understanding the lack of safety at different public places is also important. A survey conducted by Akshara (2012), a women’s NGO that works towards gender sensitisation in Mumbai, has documented that the city’s women increasingly feel unsafe in all its public spaces -- be it railway platforms, subways, skywalks, inside buses, at bus stops, in the market place, open grounds and even on the beach. There are a number of factors that contribute to the increased sense of lack of safety in public places. A Study on ‘Violence Against Women in Public Spaces in Ranchi and *Hazaribagh*’ in Jharkhand, published by Jagori found that among female respondents, nearly 48 per cent in Ranchi and 41 per cent in Hazaribagh see their city as unsafe or very unsafe (Jagori 2016).

In an attempt to develop a draft strategic framework for the safety of women and children in Delhi, the Ministry of Women and Child Development, UN Habitat and Jagori conducted a survey in the city about perceptions of safety and vulnerability among women who are in public spaces. A crucial finding of the survey was that the maximum number of reported instances of violence took place in daylight, altering the understanding that night is the unsafe time for women to be out in public. Harassment, however, remains a reality, irrespective of societal assessments of what is a safe time or an unsafe time. The survey also highlighted

infrastructural aspects of the problem, including lack of adequate lighting, badly designed public lavatories and waiting shelters and lack of cleanliness (Jagori 2011).

Lack of safety also leads to results in curtailing the right to education as families prefer to withdraw their daughters from schools rather than earn ‘dishonour’ as a 2013 story reported by The Guardian indicates. Being forced to resort to open defecation due to a lack of toilets is a cause of discomfort for girls, especially adolescents. It is also accompanied by an increased risk of molestation and sexual violence (Save the Children 2014), as is illustrated from two incidents of girls being raped while out to relieve themselves in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh in 2014 (Independent 2014).

Lack of safety becomes an important contributing factor in the parents’ decision to marry their children before they turn 18 due to the parent’s fear of sexual assault and/or girls’ choosing to begin sexual activity (ICRW and Plan Asia Regional Office 2013). These findings echo another study in South Asia by Raj et al. (2012) that noted that early marriage protects girls’ marriageability, which can be destroyed by premarital sex, whether it occurs through sexual violence or through choice. There are marked pressures towards marriage at an early age among girls to minimise the risk of, and dishonour associated with, ‘improper’ sexual conduct (Singh and Vennam 2016).

1.3. Understanding Policy: The Girl Child in Indian Policy Frameworks

Global commitments to address violence against children have reached an all-time high with the integration of relevant targets into the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the international community in September 2015. Towards integrating the SDGs into India’s child development policy, five goals and eleven targets specifically address violence and abuse, trafficking, sexual and other types of exploitation, harmful practices such as child marriage and child labour (including use of children in armed conflicts) along with promotion of safe public spaces, safe and non-violent learning environments and birth registration. While most of the policy frameworks on children in India do not specifically address the girl child, the SDGs acknowledge the need for special attention on this



front by stating that it targets to eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation, and to eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

The element of protection of children from abuse, providing child rights and ensuring a safe environment for children has been an element of policy prescription since the National Child Policy of 1974. It also features in every action plan for children adopted by the government in the years 1979, 1992, 2005 and 2016. India has passed various child-centric legislations such as the Juvenile Justice Care and Protection Act (2000) and the new Juvenile

The NCRB statistics are a grim depiction of the steep rise in crimes against children, with the reported all India incidence being 89,423 cases in 2014, 94,172 cases in 2015 and 1,06,958 cases in 2016.

Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act of 2015, establishment of the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) (2005), the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (2006), the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (2009), the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act (2012), and Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act, 2016.

The lack of disaggregated data on the condition of children in India is recognised by the government in the latest action plan (MWCD, 2016). Mapping of child vulnerability by the Childline India Foundation is an important step towards addressing this gap. The Plan also points out that the percentage of child budget has decreased from 5.71 per cent in 2008–09 to 3.32 per cent in 2015–16 (BE), resulting in limitations on incorporating concerns of child safety in urban development, labour and other areas of policy intervention.

The lack of an integrated approach to policy on the safety of the girl child in public spaces is evident

from this discussion. Safety considerations usually target women in public spaces but neglect the girl child. Three approaches characterise most policy on women's safety: the first features the approach of urban crime prevention and the provision of safe cities: the second features empowerment frameworks for women and the third focuses on the creation of women-friendly cities. The spilling over of the public and the private into each other and the impact this has on safety, particularly for the girl child, seldom receives attention within policy frameworks. On the other hand, at the level of policy designed for children, one sees discrimination and neglect of the structural and institutional specificities that apply specifically to the girl child. Sadly, perception of safety, or its lack thereof, is often not considered as important in designing interventions.

1.4. Conceptual Lineages of the Public, the Girl Child and Safety

This section aims to evaluate the conceptual understandings of key terms, as well as to study how these are integrated into policy and related discussions.

The relationship between considerations of safety and the girl child is mediated by structural, cultural and normative frameworks of society. Academic understanding, policy implementation and programme intervention have been enriched by the acknowledgement of the inter-related nature of these frameworks. The intersecting nature of these factors necessitate a consideration of the structural nature of patriarchy, which manifests itself at the level of norms and institutions on the one hand, and deeply exacerbates varied forms of inequality on the other. For instance, the existence of gendered expectations of behaviour which in turn impact individuals' actions in society is now one of the basic foundations of feminist theory.

However, theorists have attempted to extend this framework to demonstrate the impact of gendered expectations on societal understandings of space, occupation and honour - three concepts that are relevant to this discussion on safety. In other words, the consideration of the question of safety as a standalone problem limits our comprehension of it. Any careful calibration of the issue requires the identification and acknowledgement of how varied forms of inequality are exacerbated by patriarchy and differentially impact girls belonging to varied strata of society.



1.4.1. The Public and the Private

The constitution of normative spaces of the inner and the outer and the restriction of women to the realm of the inner despite their active role in production and reproduction assumed salience in the Indian context during the colonial period. The location of family/national honour in the sexual purity of the woman leads to the justification of child marriage and the justification of Sati. Independent India has seen several aspects of these discussions resurface in contemporary debates on sexual and gender-based violence, with women and girls always being held accountable for the attacks on them.

'The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women' and the 'Beijing Platform for Action' address violence against women according to the site, or setting, where it occurs: in the family; within the general community; and perpetrated or condoned by the State (UN 2016). It is important to remember that these are not water-tight compartments, as many forms of violence against girls occur in multiple settings. For

example, violence against girls as a result of moral policing involve both the family and the community and are often condoned by the State. Trafficking offers another example of violence against girls that involves family, community and the State and crosses state, national and international boundaries. Different forms of violence against girls may be linked to, or reinforce each other. (Soumya 2012)

The centrality of the public/private divide on women's freedoms sometimes has startling implications, even statistically. Patel (2010) points out that the explanation for the high number of incidents of kidnapping/abduction recorded for girls in the age group of 15-18 is that this was the response of agitated parents of adolescent girls who chose to elope with a partner of their choice. Recording incidents of eloping as abduction/kidnapping is a legal strategy often used/misused by parents/guardians to regain control over their adolescent girls and young women, using the power of law and the state machinery.

In the light of the preceding discussion, it is essential to address the problematic of the public. It has been

documented that violence against girls in the private sphere has received some, if not adequate policy and research attention. It can also be stated that there exists some policy framework to tackle the question

Several structural and institutional factors further complicate girls' access to public spaces. NPAC 2016 acknowledges that a majority of boys and girls (60-90 per cent) in the age group 17-19 years suffer from Anaemia

of violence in the public. However, the multiple ways in which the private seeps into considerations of public behaviour is an area that has received limited research or policy attention. The continuity between the public and the private in assessing real and perceived safety issues, and how structure plays a role in both is inevitable in any genuine attempt to understand the issue. The phenomenon of lack of safety needs to be understood as a manifestation of both, and policy needs to be evaluated in terms of their response to both. It is this aspect that this study attempts to address through its inquiry.

1.4.2. Girlhood and Adolescence

The National Policy for Children 2013 (NPC 2013) explicitly recognises that children are not a homogenous group and their different needs need different responses, given especially the multi-dimensional vulnerabilities experienced by children in different circumstances. It denotes the shift from a needs-based to a rights-based approach to children, and categorically states that every child has universal, inalienable and indivisible human rights. It also has as its guiding principle the idea that every child has the right to a dignified life, free from exploitation. Safety and security of all children is integral to their well-being.

The lack of specific treatment of adolescent girls as a specifically vulnerable section within the policy has meant that questions of safety have been addressed only in the context of childhood or

womanhood for most female citizens (Patel 2010). There is no denying that there are laws, policies, programmes, schemes, norms and standards that are favourable to adolescent girls. However, since there is a growing recognition of adolescent girls as a distinct group only in recent years, much of this body of law, policy and programmes is ensconced in the language of developmental needs of children and women, and in recent years, of youth. This phenomenon is further complicated by the layers of vulnerability faced by adolescent girls belonging to different socio-economic locations. However, conceptual and methodological challenges in documenting harassment against children including underreporting of harassment, absence of comparable frames of data across nations and the inadequacy of data sets in capturing the essence of the issue impose restrictions on the assessment of the issue.

1.4.3. The Essence of 'Safety'

What then is the essence of safety? A survey of the literature reveals that two aspects are central to



any meaningful conception of safety in the current juncture. The first of these is evidently a reduction and eventually absence of gender-based violence and crime, and a reduction in the fear of crime in public places. This includes, first of all, creating safe public spaces, where girls can move freely. The differential use of public spaces by different sections of the population needs to be understood and incorporated into elements of infrastructure design and community and commercial practices in public. Transport facilities, basic infrastructure, lighting, public lavatories, hospitals and law and order machinery are all ancillary to this aspect of safety.

Thus the second and often neglected aspect of safety is the sense of self, freedom and dignity that girls must feel while being in public. These in turn are products of a diverse set of factors, including the ability to work and earn a decent income, freedom from poverty, access to basic and essential health and sanitation facilities and social security measures. Freedom from harassment also forms a crucial element of this aspect. Girls' safety thus has to be an all-encompassing concept which includes all strategies and tools which can reduce violence against girls, as this has implications on their rights to mobility, education, employment, health, etc.

1.5. Analytical Significance of Perception of Safety in Public Spaces: Situating the Study

The present study attempts to address the crucial lacunae by simultaneously exploring perceptions of safety among girls in public spaces along with the private unfolding of its many implications. Through its detailed and careful calibration of the ideas of both safety and public/private, it provides valuable insights from the point of view of victims on the structures that perpetuate a culture of vulnerability and victimhood. Its consideration of public space comprehensively captures cultural norms of behaviour, general sociabilities and constraints imposed by socio-economic locations for adolescent girls. Aspects of mobility and public infrastructure are documented in tandem with normative expectations of behaviour, enabling a deeper understanding of their coincidence, an aspect that is

often not discussed or acknowledged in policy.

Most importantly, the study captures perceptions of safety in public spaces and its lack thereof among respondents and probes deeper into diverse aspects of such perception, enabling a deeper understanding of survival strategies and the role of experience in the devising of such strategies. The study also documents perceptions about safe persons to communicate with. Finally, the study documents the perception of safety in virtual public spaces, enabling the capture of another dimension of publicness that has now become inextricable to any assessment of safety.

1.6. Definitions pertinent to the study

Terminological clarifications and a set of key terms that are pertinent to the data analysed in the study are presented below.

1.6.1. Defining public space

UNESCO defines public space¹ as an area or place that is open and accessible to all people, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, age or socio-economic level. These are public gathering spaces such as plazas, squares and parks. Connecting spaces, such as sidewalks and streets, are also public spaces. In the 21st century, some even consider the virtual spaces available through the internet as a new type of public space that develops interaction and social mixing.

In India, there is no clear definition except for a legal definition (Section (4) of the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act, 2003), which says:

“Public Place’ is defined as any place to which the public has access whether as of right or not and includes all places visited by general public namely auditorium, hospital building, railway waiting room, amusement centres, public offices, court buildings, educational institutions, libraries, coffee houses, canteens, banks, clubs and also open spaces surrounding hotels/ restaurants, etc.”

¹Inclusion Through Access to Public Space

<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/urban-development/migrants-inclusion-in-cities/good-practices/inclusion-through-access-to-public-space/>

For the purpose of our study, public space in the urban context includes:

1. *Restaurant, shop, mall, store, local market or other place of business.*
2. *Public building.*
3. *Public parking lot.*
4. *Highway, road, street, lane or sidewalk.*
5. *Open fields.*
6. *Public toilets.*
7. *Public park or other public grounds.*
8. *The common areas of a building containing four or more separate dwelling units, including a corridor, elevator, lobby, and stairwell.*
9. *Place used for public resort or amusement, including an amusement park, golf course, race track, sports arena, swimming pool, and theatre.*
10. *Education institutions including schools, colleges and public libraries.*
11. *Place of public worship.*
12. *Inside public transport like bus, metro, trains.*
13. *Place or building used for entering or exiting a public conveyance, including an airport terminal, bus stands, bus terminals, dock, railway station, subway station, and the parking areas, sidewalks, and other grounds and structures that are part of a public place; and*
14. *Cyber space.*

Public space in the rural context includes:

1. *Streets, footpath and unpaved village roads used regularly for commuting (incl. bus stops and rail stations).*
2. *Market places, including village haats.*
3. *Education institutions including schools, colleges and public libraries.*
4. *Agriculture fields.*
5. *Inside public transport of any form.*
6. *Any open spaces in rural and urban areas used for open defecation.*
7. *Any places used regularly for any social gathering like cinema theatres, concerts, etc; and*
8. *Any public space used for routine exercise and/or play – like parks, jogging paths, and stadia.*

1.6.2. Defining harassment

For this study, the term harassment has been used to explain violence in public space. Harassment is also understood as abuse in the following terms:

- Verbal abuse or harassment (such as lewd commenting, whistling, angry shouting).
- Physical abuse or harassment (such as inappropriate touching, non-sexual assault, snatching of possession).
- Visual abuse or harassment (such as staring, stalking, leering, obscene gesticulation).
- Sexual abuse or harassment (sexual assault even rape) and,
- Emotional abuse or harassment (such as humiliation in the presence of peers, cyber stalking, cyber bullying).

1.6.3. Defining Child Marriage

Child marriage is a marriage in which at least one of the parties is a child. Based on the Convention of the Rights of the Child, a child is 'every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier'. For this study, this definition is used for child marriage. However, child marriage has also been used as early marriage in some contexts.

1.6.4. Defining 'Safety' in Public spaces

For this study, safety has been defined as absence of fear of harassment (physical, sexual, social, psychological and emotional) in public spaces.

1.7. Chapters and their content

The context of the study has been laid out in the preceding sections of this chapter. In the chapters that follow, presentation of data gleaned from the study will be discussed systematically. Chapter Two elaborates on the methodology adopted in the study.

Chapter Three addresses concerns of perceived safety in public spaces by exploring the perspectives of adolescent girls about the issue. The chapter navigates through the nature of interaction of girls with public spaces and highlights the particular problems they identify with these spaces. Important findings in this chapter hint both towards problems well acknowledged in the literature, like infrastructure as well as trends that are less studied



like the threat of sexual assault along with abduction being one of the predominant fear among girls while being in a public space.

Chapter Four explores the perspectives of various stakeholders enabling a deeper assessment of the attitudes on the issue of safety. The chapter explores the attitudes of adolescent girls themselves, adolescent boys as well as of families on the question of safety of girls in public spaces. The main findings of the chapter corroborate the existing understanding about gendered norms leading to restrictions in mobility of girls and women and the role of these perceptions in perpetuating a climate of lack of safety for girls.

In an attempt to understand the coping mechanisms available to the adolescent girls, Chapter Five illustrates the support systems employed by them to this end. It also looks at infringement of the rights of the girls due to safety concerns. The chapter highlights fair degree of scepticism that girls harbour about confiding in most stakeholders – be it family or law enforcement machinery or any other stakeholder.

Chapter Six considers instances of violations of rights of girls who got married prior to becoming 18 years of age. The chapter highlights important trends of rights violations like denial of mobility to girls, discontinuation of education, which have a correlation with concerns of safety among other factors.

Chapter Seven evaluates some of the efforts made by state and non-state actors in addressing concerns of safety of the girl child. The findings indicate that even within these interventions, a spectrum of opinion on the ideal approach to safety can be detected. These range from paternalistic approaches which seek to regulate the mobility of girls in the name of safety to approaches that call for a change in societal mind set.

Lastly, chapter Eight presents a set of recommendations that have emerged from the process of collecting data from the field as well as interacting extensively with various stakeholders.

CHAPTER 2

Research Methodology

This chapter details the outline of the aim and objectives that guided this study and the design employed to realise the same. Save the Children's research team employed a systematic plan for conducting the study, drawing on both qualitative and quantitative research methods.

2.1. Objectives of the research

This study was conducted with the aim of understanding and documenting the perceptions of safety of girls in both, urban and rural areas and the implications of these perceptions on the compromise of their rights, including child marriage. The study also explored the perceptions of girls about their safety in public places and the mechanisms they adopted when they perceived themselves to be unsafe. In order to have a holistic understanding of the situation, the study also looked at the perception of boys who are both perpetrators as well as protectors, and parents. Boys and parents can also play important roles in addressing the problem of lack of safety of the girls. It needs to be emphasised that the study is focussed on the perception of safety in public spaces and not actual incidents of harassment.

The total urban sample was from 30 cities of varying sizes. The rural sample came from 84 villages across 12 districts.

The broad objectives of the study are as follows:

- a) To review the literature and identify current concerns, issues, laws and policies, available infrastructure and services, programmes and interventions related to safety of girls across public spaces and to understand the implication of these on their rights.
- b) To provide an in-depth understanding of the perception of safety of girls in the context of

public spaces in both rural and urban areas and identify the factors that make girls feel unsafe across these spaces.

- c) To gain insights into the perception of other stakeholders (especially boys) about safety of girls across public spaces.
- d) To identify the various response mechanisms adopted by girls when they perceive themselves to be unsafe.
- e) To understand the implications of girls' perception of lack of safety in public spaces, on their access to various rights (mobility and education).
- f) To explore and understand the link between perception of lack of safety of girls at these spaces and early marriage of girls and consequent violation of their rights.
- g) To provide an in-depth understanding of government, administrative and civil society interventions, mechanisms, infrastructure and services in place to address the issue of safety of girls and identify some of the best practices.
- h) To recommend effective measures for improving the safety in the public spaces identified by girls during the study and also to strengthen the provisions under various schemes and policies at national, state and local level.

2.2. Research methodology

2.2.1. Research methods

As has been pointed out in the previous chapter, the issue of safety and its perception is intricately

linked to structural and institutional aspects of society. Discussions on issues concerning research methods within the realms of gender studies have indicated the limitations imposed by the collection of quantitative data and its analysis in unravelling layers of these phenomena. With this in mind, the research team adopted a mixed method approach for this study. This involved the use of a combination of quantitative and qualitative tools, mainly representative quantitative surveys, focus group discussions (FGDs), in-depth interviews (IDIs) with stakeholders and key duty bearers, and analysis of civil society interventions. A detailed research log frame is attached as Annexure 1.

The sample was not meant to represent a pan-India picture but to draw an overall sense of the prevailing perception on the issue of safety of girls in public spaces in only six states. Therefore, the quantitative survey involved a structured questionnaire survey

covering 5359 respondents across urban and rural segments, consisting of 3128 adolescent girls (aged 11-18 years), 1141 adolescent boys (aged 15-18 years), 248 young, married girls (aged 19-22 years) who were made to marry early, and 842 parents of adolescent girls.

The total urban sample was from 30 cities of varying sizes. The rural sample came from 84 villages across 12 districts. The research team conducted 40 FGDs with a similar set of respondents. These provided greater depth to the pattern that emerged through the quantitative data. A series of in-depth interviews with various stakeholders representing duty bearers, civil society organisations and academics were also conducted. The impact of perception of lack of safety on the adolescent girls, including the girls married before 18 years of age, has been documented in greater detail by capturing case studies.



The sample was spread across different geographical zones and different settlement typologies across urban and rural India. Each of these axes of selection is elaborated upon in the following subsections.

2.2.2. Defining the Sample

As per the requirement of the study, the sample was selected using the non-probability sampling technique on the basis of geographical location and required primary stakeholders. It was done to explore the phenomena of perception of safety of girls in public spaces and the dynamics involved in it.

The survey covered a total of 5359 respondents across urban and rural segments, including 3128 adolescent girls.

The segmentation considerations are as follows:

2.2.2.1. Geographical segmentation

- One state was chosen from each of the six zones, that is East, West, North, South, Central and North-east zones, based on a composite index using relevant indicators (as mentioned in section 2.3).
- The following strata was used for redistribution of the sample within the chosen states:
 - o Large cities, viz. super metros, metros and state capitals.
 - o Medium and small towns (those between 50,000 and 5 lakhs).
 - o Large villages located closer to the district HQ and a population of above 5000; and smaller villages with less than 1000 population.
- While the first category (India's super metros) stood self-selected for each state, two more centres were selected from each of the other categories on the basis of population as well as economic profiles. These constituted the **urban sample** for the study. The latter was considered important as an economically vibrant environment allows for more interaction of

its citizens (including girls) with public spaces by virtue of accessing schooling, workplace commuting as well as social interaction.

- Two districts were covered from each state for obtaining the **rural sample**. The district selection was done purposively, to represent the major SCRs (socio cultural regions) of each state as well as cover those with a higher recorded incidence of crime against women (this was based on data from NCRB and child sex ratio data from 2011 census).
- For the rural sample, 3 large and 4 smaller villages were selected from each sample district randomly while ensuring the presence of a market as well as an elementary/secondary school within their catchments.

2.2.2.2. Respondent segmentation

The following respondent segments were identified to be part of this study:

1. Adolescent girls (aged 11-18 years) living in rural and urban households.
2. Adolescent boys (aged 15-18 years) living in rural and urban households.
3. Married women (aged 19-22 years) who have been subjected to child marriage (before they turned 18).
4. Parents of adolescent girls.
5. Law enforcement agencies and officers looking after specialised cells mandated to address the safety of women and children.
6. Officials from local self-governments (different levels) and specific wings/departments of local administration/municipalities who are responsible for maintenance of public spaces as well as formulating policies and projects related to the safety of women.
7. Allied service providers who are relevant to the core constituency of this study, such as the staff manning the Child Helpline, officials of the public transport departments, etc.
8. Officials from statutory bodies.
9. Senior officers and programme staff from Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) active in this field.

2.3. Selection of states

For the selection of states, a composite index was developed. The indicators used for developing the index are given in table 2.1 below:

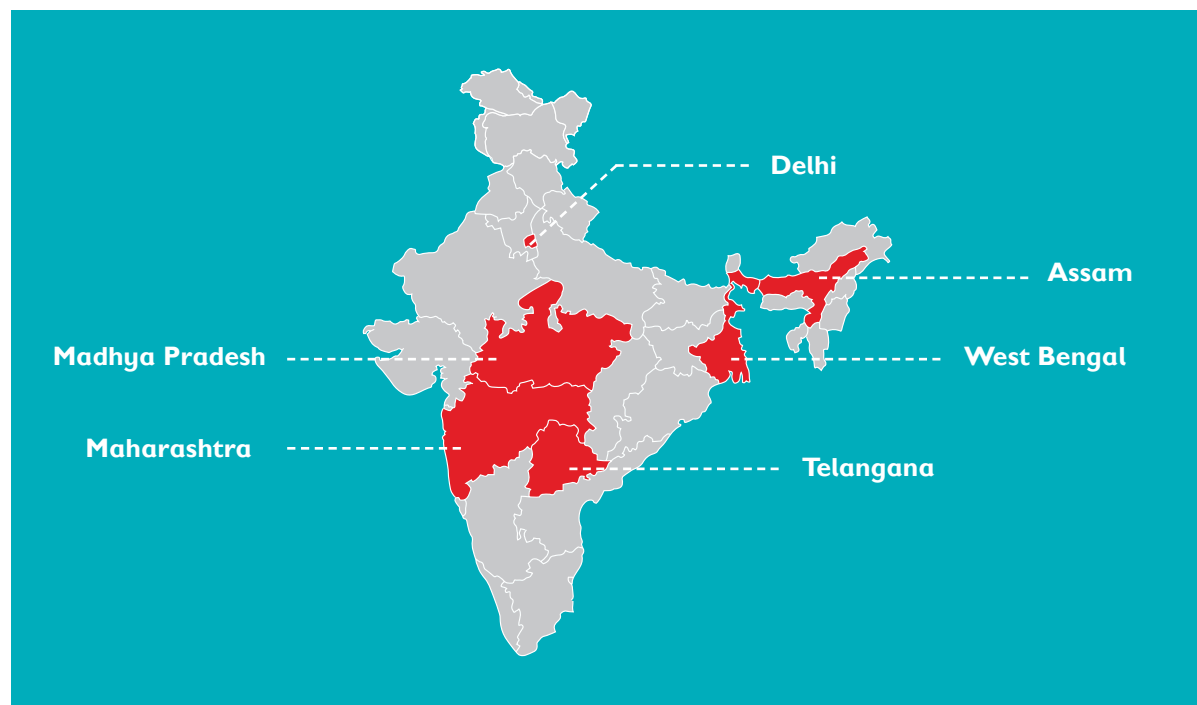


Table 2.1
Indicators for state selection

Indicator	Narrative
Inverse of child sex ratio	This is number of male children aged 0-6 years per 1,000 female children aged 0-6 years, where higher values indicate greater disparity against females (Census of India, 2011)
Rate of crime against women	This is the total number of registered cases of crime against women for every 100,000 females (NCRB, 2016)
Women age 20-24 years married before age 18 years	It reflects the prevalence of child marriages (NFHS 4, 2015-16)
Women who have ever experienced spousal violence	Spousal violence is taken as a proxy indicator for the general status of women in society with higher values indicating lesser respect and a higher risk of being subject to harassment and violence in public places (NFHS 4, 2015-16)
Women who worked in the last 12 months and were paid in cash (2015-16)	This is a proxy indicator for women's interaction with public spaces – the assumption being that higher values indicate a greater propensity of women being out of their home to work and thereby, a higher probability of harassment in public spaces (NFHS 4, 2015-16). The 'Normal Female Work Force Participation Rate' was not taken as this includes unpaid family workers who could be working at home or in the fields with family.

The process for developing the composite index, tables for value of each indicator along with a table for adjusted Z scores are provided in Annexure 2.

The states with the highest values in the composite measure, were selected for the study. The rationale behind selecting the worst performing states was to understand the perception of safety in states where there is greater violence against women. Since this study is based on public spaces, therefore it was important to understand the frequency of access to these spaces. Hence the composite measure also included an indicator which shows greater interaction of women with public spaces.

The states selected through the process for undertaking this study were **Assam** in the Northeast zone, **West Bengal** in the East

zone, **Madhya Pradesh** in the Central zone, The **National Capital Region (NCR)** in the North zone, **Telangana** in the South zone and **Maharashtra** in the West zone. Though Manipur scored highly to be the selected state for the study from the Northeast, it was decided to choose Assam because it had a larger availability of choices when it came to typologies of urban areas.

2.4. Selection of districts for the rural sample

2.4.1 Constructing the selection

For selection of districts to sample the rural respondent, once again, a composite index was developed for each district within each sample state. The indicators used for developing the index for district selection are given in table 2.2 below:

Table 2.2
Indicators for selection of districts

Indicator	Description
Number of cases registered in the district (per lakh of population)	<p>A summation of the number of cases registered in each district:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dowry death. 2. Assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty. 3. Insult to the modesty of women. 4. Rape. <p>Source: NCRB, 2013</p>
Inverse of child sex ratio	<p>This is essentially number of male children aged 0-6 years per 1000 female children. Inversing is necessary to make both indicators unidirectional.</p> <p>Source: 2011 census</p>



2.4.2. Process for selection of districts

Districts were selected on the basis of a normalised composition of two criteria: a) districts falling within the top 33 per cent based on their composite index value; and, b) districts which represented the major socio-cultural regions (SCR) of a state.

Here, it needs to be noted:

1. For the north zone, the National Capital Region was the chosen geography from which district selection has been done (NCR consists of 22 districts, 13 from Haryana, 7 from UP and 2 from Rajasthan, apart from Delhi itself. The districts of Delhi were not considered as the state was self-selected for the urban sample as it was a super metro).
2. SCR classification was done far before the state of Telangana came into existence. The present state of Telangana and its districts were all under a single SCR called Telangana under the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh state. Hence, a SCR-based selection could not be done in Telangana, but care was taken not to select adjacent districts.

3. In most zones, districts housing a metropolitan city have been avoided in case the constituent metro was already selected for urban sample.



The selection results have been given in table 2.3 below:

Table 2.3
Selected districts of each state

State	Selected district	SCR
West Bengal	Malda	Darjeeling Hills
	Bankura	Rarh
Maharashtra	Yavatmal	Vidarbha
	Bid	Marathwada
Madhya Pradesh	Shahdol	Baghelkhand
	Bhind	Bundelkhand
Telangana	Khammam	Telangana
	Nalgonda	Telangana
Assam	Darrang	Brahmaputra
	Hailakandi	Cachar
NCR (excluding Delhi)	Sonipat	Haryana
	Alwar	Rajasthan

Adjusted Z scores of top one-third districts after normalisation of each indicator are given in Annexure 3.

2.5 Selection of cities and towns

Three types of urban settlements have been selected:

1. The metropolitan city, which stand self-selected if their constituent state is part of the sample (super metro or state capital).
2. Relatively larger Class 1 towns (cities that are not state capitals and have a population between 300,000 to 500,000 and with clearly identified slum areas) which are industrial

townships, or an education township, or a hospitality or healthcare hub. Such townships and hubs were considered since women in such cities were more likely to have greater opportunities to interact with public spaces on a regular basis for work, education, and leisure.

3. Smaller towns of population between 50,000 to 200,000, but preferably a district growth centre which is also a municipality or a small municipal corporation.

Three towns were selected from the first two categories and two towns from the third category.

The selection of cities for each state is given in the table 2.4 below while a table with more details of each selected urban centre is given in Annexure 4.

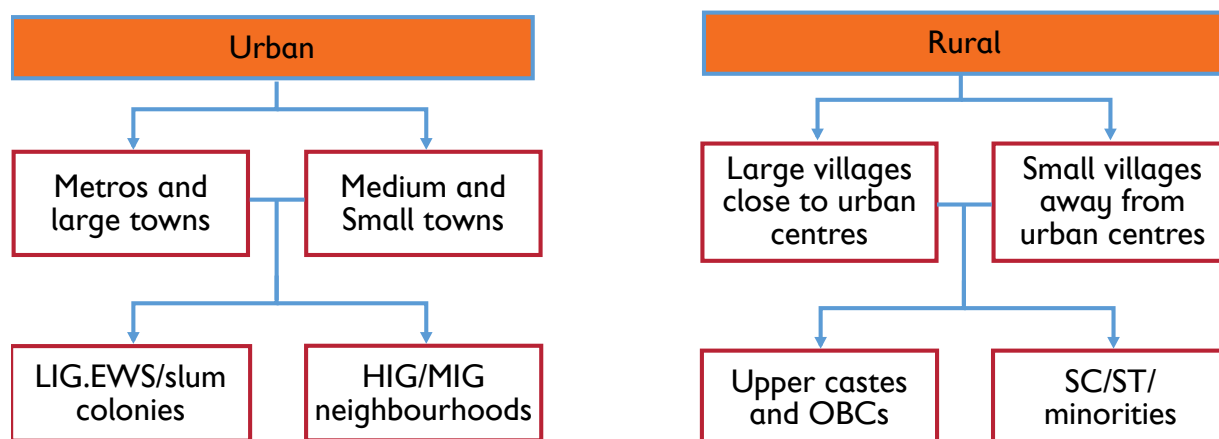
Table 2.4
Selected cities and towns

State	Metropolis/ state capital	Class I towns		Smaller town
West Bengal	Kolkata MC	Asansol MC	Malda MC	Kalyani Municipality in Nadia district Bishnupur in Bankura district
Maharashtra	Mumbai MC	Nanded MC	Ulhasnagar MC	Baramati municipal council in Pune district Lonavla in Pune district
NCR	Delhi and New Delhi	Ghaziabad MC	Rohtak MC	Modinagar MC in Ghaziabad district Gohana Municipal council
Telangana	Hyderabad MC	Nizamabad MC	Warangal Municipal corporation	Siddipet MC in Siddipet district Khamman municipality Khamman district
Madhya Pradesh	Indore MC	Gwalior MC	Ujjain	Nagda municipality in Ujjain district) Shahdol municipality (district HQ)
Assam	Guwahati MC	Silchar MB in Cachar district	Jorhat Municipal Board	Bongaigaon MB Mangaldoi municipality (district HQ of Darrang

2.6. Sample covered and distribution for quantitative survey

2.6.1. Stratification plan for quantitative survey

The following schematic diagram depicts the sampling distribution plan.



2.6.2. Sample covered

Table 2.5
Summary achieved sample

		Total	Category total
Adolescent girls	Urban	1821	3128
	Rural	1307	
Adolescent boys	Urban	704	1141
	Rural	437	
Parents	Urban	423	842
	Rural	419	
Married girls	Urban	124	248
	Rural	124	

Table 2.6**Achieved sample per state**

			Assam	Delhi/ NCR	Madhya Pradesh	Maha- rashtra	Telangana	West Bengal	Total
Adolescent girls	Urban	Sample	350	350	350	350	350	350	2100
		Achieved	322	270	331	272	356	270	1821
	Rural	Sample	225	233	216	216	226	216	1332
		Achieved	194	218	236	237	222	200	1307
Adolescent boys	Urban	Sample	116	117	117	117	116	117	700
		Achieved	116	120	119	116	115	118	704
	Rural	Sample	67	67	67	67	67	67	400
		Achieved	70	78	76	69	68	76	437
Parents	Urban	Sample	67	67	67	67	67	67	402
		Achieved	71	71	67	68	67	79	423
	Rural	Sample	68	72	67	67	68	67	402
		Achieved	70	72	70	67	68	72	419
Married girls	Urban	Sample	17	17	17	17	17	17	102
		Achieved	22	20	18	20	20	24	124
	Rural	Sample	17	17	17	17	17	17	102
		Achieved	22	15	23	22	20	22	124

2.7 Respondent Selection Protocol

2.7.1. Interviews at households

2.7.1.1. Urban

Within each city, wards were identified which primarily represent HIG/MIG neighbourhoods as well as those wards with a large presence of LIG/EWS and slum populations. This was done with the aid of the Urban Local Body (ULB) offices and research team's office staff located across most of these ULBs.

Upon segregation of wards, wards corresponding to each of the categories were randomly selected to target the quota sample. Within each ward, starting points were selected randomly (at least 5 starting

points per ward) and a listing exercise was done to identify households with eligible populations for seeking consent/assent. It was expected to do no more than 10 full interviews per starting point, but the listing size varied depending on availability of eligible populations and receipt of consent.

Interviews of parents, married girls and a smaller proportion of adolescent boys and girls (maximum of 30 percent) were also carried out. These interviews were done within the privacy of their residences.

2.7.1.2 Rural

A notional social map was made of the village after consulting local opinion leaders/representatives of PRIs in the rural areas identified for the study. The

sample was drawn separately from affluent *mohallas* (localities) as well as marginalized settlements (*Harijan Bastis*) to ensure that the study reflects perspectives from both settlement groups. The number of starting points in smaller villages were not more than three while the number of starting points in larger villages were not less than five.

2.7.2. Interviews in schools

Schools located close to or within identified wards where local residents send their wards were identified and the administration was approached and informed of the purpose of study. The Headmaster's permission was sought to send the consent letters via students from grades 6-12 to their homes to be signed by parents. The research team's phone numbers were given along with the consent letters so that parents could seek any clarification before providing their consent. The students who came back with the signed consent forms were approached for assent and were interviewed within school premises. They were interviewed during the recess period.

2.8 Sample distribution for qualitative research

A total of **40 FGDs** were conducted during the course of this study, involving the same target

segments: adolescent girls, adolescent boys, girls who were married early and parents of adolescent girls. In-depth interviews were conducted with relevant stakeholders such as functionaries/officials from various government departments and agencies like women and child development, rural development, NCPCR, SCPCR, police, Child-line and local self-government. Functionaries from Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) and experts dealing with safety of girls in public spaces were also interviewed.

2.9 Stakeholder Consultation Meets

Three stakeholder meetings were held in the cities of Mumbai, Hyderabad and Kolkata for sharing the key findings of the study and getting recommendations from stakeholders for enhancing the safety of the girls in public spaces. These were attended by SCPCR chairman (in Maharashtra), police officers and staff, Child-line staff, CWC members, NGOs working on child rights, academics and Child Champions.

2.10 Approval from Ethical Review Board (ERB)

All research protocols, data capture instruments and consent forms were thoroughly vetted and cleared by an authorised ethical review board.

CHAPTER 3

Living in Fear – Perception of Safety in Public Spaces



96 per cent of adolescent girls interact with some form of public space at least once a week by virtue of going to school, while 45 per cent also interact with a public space while on their way to private tuitions after school.



38 per cent interact with public space in exercise of their social lives, generally leaving their homes to meet with or to go out with friends.



Travelling in public transport gave the highest sense of risk perception across both urban (47 per cent) and rural (40 per cent) centres as respondents said they feared for their safety.



One in three adolescent girls are scared of traversing the narrow by lanes of their locality as well as the road to go to their school or the local market.



Over one in four adolescent girls fear they could be abducted, physically assaulted or even raped while venturing into public space.



Nearly three in five girls feels unsafe in situations where the public place is overcrowded. 53 per cent feel unsafe when there is inadequate lighting.



One in four adolescent girls in rural India feels unsafe when they use open spaces/ agricultural fields for open defecation at dawn.



53 per cent urban girls from HIG/MIG colonies were more scared to take public transport, as compared to 44 per cent urban girls from LIG/EWS/Slums.



58 per cent of adolescent boys and 52 per cent of parents are of the opinion that it is not safe for girls to take a public transport in the evening.



Around 90 per cent of adolescent girls who are exposed to stories on sexual assault on women in the media have started to become more careful about where they go in public.

3.1. Introduction

The prevalence of violence against girls and women in public spaces has been discussed in detail in the first chapter. The everyday nature and normalisation of these events has also been highlighted across spatial and temporal categories. Specific concerns related to the issue of perceived safety in public spaces are addressed in the first set of findings that are presented in this chapter.

This theme is further explored by addressing concerns of girls with respect to their interaction with public spaces, specific assessment of spaces that are considered unsafe, particular concerns about implications of being in these unsafe spaces and the understanding around changes in the nature of these spaces, if any, over a period of time. Each of these themes is discussed in detail in the sub-sections that follow.

UN Women (2010) observes that planning and designing safe public spaces for girls and women means creating public spaces with features that enhance women's safety and feelings of safety and detract from features that cause women's insecurity and feelings of insecurity. Planning and designing safe public spaces for girls and women thus requires constant attention to physical and social characteristics of the space. It also requires constant evaluation of the social and physical implications of the planning and design process. The planning and design of a space has the potential to reinforce

gender inequality and/or to advance gender equality – or to aggravate the inequality. For this reason, the planning and design process is a crucial facet of creating safe cities for girls and women.

In the context of this backdrop, the present chapter looks at how adolescent girls from different walks of life and living in diverse settlement typologies interact with public spaces. The chapter then ventures on to explore the perceptions of these young girls, adolescent boys and parents on what constitutes unsafe places and what makes such spaces unsafe. The concluding part of the chapter deals with allied issues such as the impact of enhanced media coverage on the issue of atrocities against women in public spaces and the emerging threat of cyber-bullying.

The structure of data presentation and its analysis (in this chapter as also in the remaining chapters) can be divided into two main categories. Firstly, perceptions and behaviour through the lens of settlement typology, i.e. urban and rural India. Further, within urban and rural, it considers the size of settlements. In some instances, further analysis has been made by looking at the key socio-economic variables which may act as a differentiator towards perception of safety of girls in public spaces. These background variables consist of colony typologies (HIG/MIG colonies and residents of LIG/EWS/slum localities) in urban areas and broad social groups in both urban and rural areas (upper caste, OBC, and SC/ST households).

Secondly, an effort has been made to understand if micro environment (locality where they are staying) could possibly play a crucial role in the perception of safety within an urban setting. In rural areas, the caste structure, and the access and restrictions that come with it, could be a key determinant of perceptions. However, it is being clarified in the beginning that such data where significant differences were not found has not been included in the chapter.

3.2. Interactions with Public Spaces

3.2.1 Usual places of interaction within public spaces – including cyber space

The first aspect being presented is how adolescent girls from different walks of life interact with public spaces when not accompanied by an adult member of the family. The research team analysed this with the assumption that, to a certain extent, lifestyles of adolescents will vary across urban and rural India, and that would, in a significant way, determine how girls access public places across urban and rural India. Also, as increasing number of people, especially youngsters, are using cyber space, the same has been considered as a public space in this study.

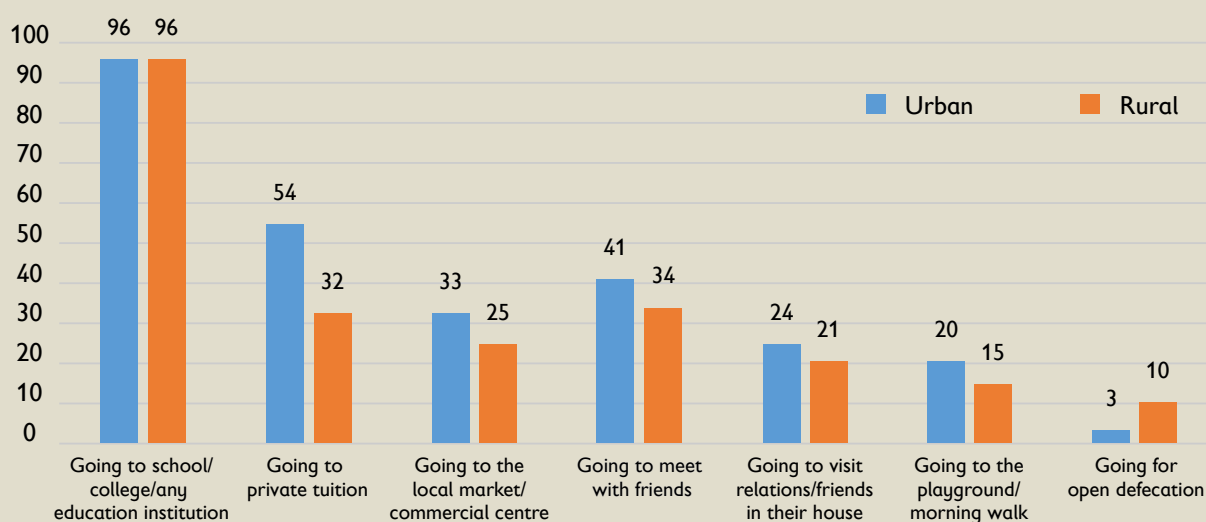
Since the age group targeted for this segment consisted of girls aged 11-18 years, it is plausible

that ‘going to school’ emerged as the most important reason for interacting with the public space. Although comparatively lower, the other two important reasons were ‘going out with friends’ and ‘going to private tuitions’ after school hours. The following figure (3.1) depicts the findings.

Apart from the fact that most adolescent girls contacted and interviewed as part of the study were school goers (and hence the high proportion of reporting), a clear distinction can be seen between the pattern of usage of public spaces for girls across urban and rural India. For instance, a significantly higher proportion of urban girls attend private tuitions (54 per cent) as compared to those in rural areas (32 per cent). Given that most tuition classes are after school hours; this implies that many return home after dusk. This does introduce an element of fear and risk in their lives when they return from their tuitions unaccompanied.

Most girls of this age across states might not be required to run errands like going to the local market on their own, as is clear from the above data. This could indicate that parents or the girls themselves feared for their safety and hence never went to the market. Nevertheless, the mall-going culture in urban centres is a possible reason for a somewhat higher percentage reported from urban

Figure 3.1
Adolescent girls and how they interact with public spaces



Base: Urban = 1821; Rural = 1307



areas as compared to rural India (as is evident from the graph showing visits to the market/commercial centres or meeting/hanging out with friends).

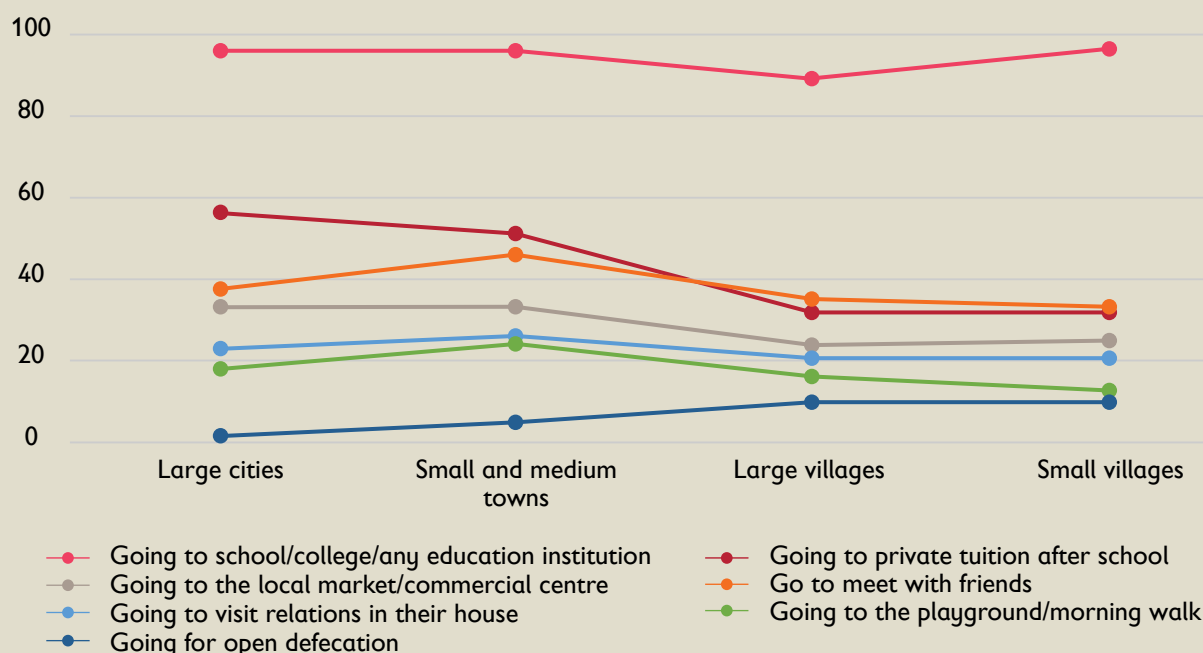
As evident from the findings, interaction in a public playground or park seems to be very limited (20 per cent in urban and 15 per cent in rural). This could be attributed to a large extent to the fear factor arising from the presence of unwanted elements in these areas. Much of the times ill maintenance (in terms of inadequate lighting, cleanliness not being maintained, overgrowth of weeds etc.) of these areas leads to the presence of these people. The practice of open defecation is more in rural areas (10 per cent) compared to urban areas (3 per cent) where it is primarily limited to respondents who were living in slum colonies, where individual household toilets are a rarity as also access to community toilets is limited. In either case, inferences drawn from FGDs show that there is a fear associated with such places. Girls going for

open defecation, both in rural as well as urban areas, are afraid to use the community toilets as the doors do not shut properly at times; or the lock is broken from inside; or windows are broken or are at a height that others can peep into the toilet.

The following figure (3.2) depicts the usual interaction of adolescent girls in public places further broken down by nature of settlement type.

The data shows that the frequency of interacting with the public space is maximum due to the fact that girls go to school or college across all settlement typologies. Private tuitions are another important factor dictating interaction with public space that is related to education. It is highest in the larger cities and metros. Going to meet friends and going to the playground may have some overlapping response but it is clearly higher among girls from the small and medium towns. Frequency of interaction of these girls with the public space is also owing to visits for tuition, which is comparatively higher than the large and small villages.

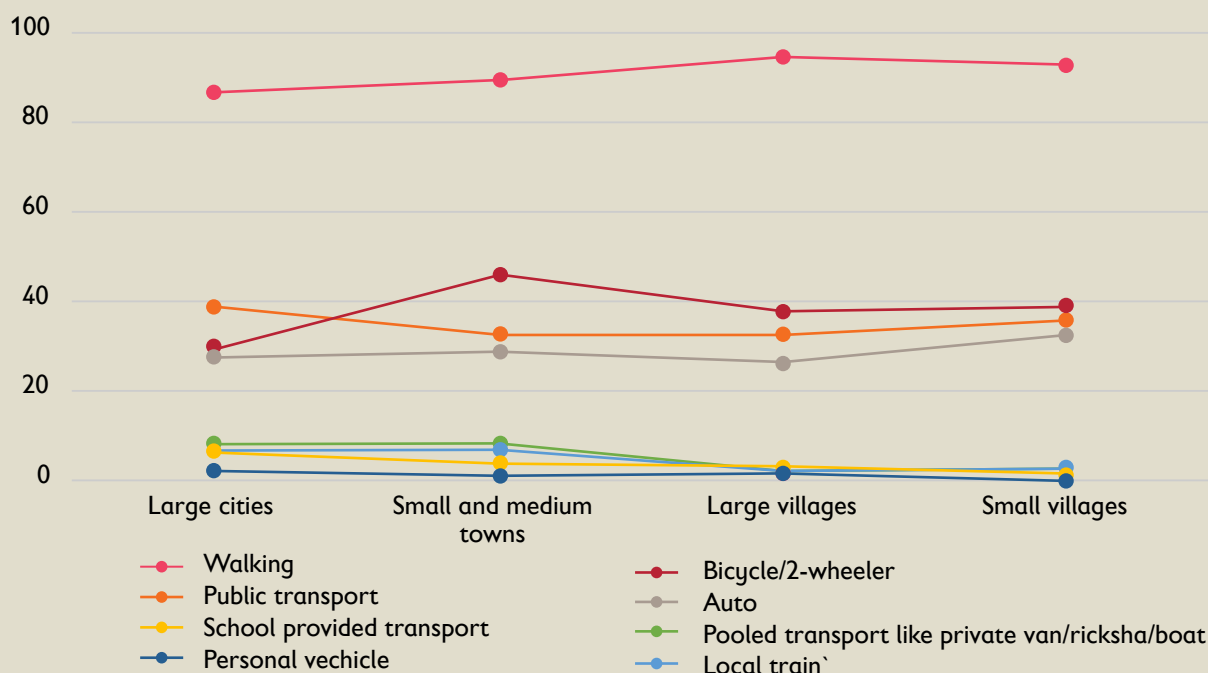
Figure 3.2
Interaction with public places across settlement typologies



Base: Large cities = 1207; Medium and small towns = 614; Large villages = 763; Small villages = 544

Figure 3.3

Usual modes of transportation used by adolescent girls while travelling in public space (in %)



Base: Large cities = 1207; Medium and small towns = 614; Large villages = 763; Small villages = 544

3.2.2. Usual method of commuting within public spaces

There are many ways by which people commute in public spaces. This is usually multi-modal in people's lives. However, some modes are prone to be more vulnerable for young girls than others, and these vary across urban and rural areas. It is interesting to note that the usual mode of commuting is usually a function of distance and circumstance. The above figure (3.3) depicts the findings from the survey.

As illustrated through the data, differences across the modes of transport, are very evident. Public transport (mostly bus), cycle and auto seem to be among the most preferred option across all settlement typologies. Cycling among girls in small and medium towns is a more pronounced phenomenon as the vehicular traffic is comparatively less, besides the fact that the other options of public transport are not so prevalent. Walking remains the most used mode of commuting across all settlement typologies.

3.3. Perception of unsafe public spaces

This section captures an important aspect of the study, as it outlines the public spaces that adolescent girls perceive as being unsafe. All respondents had been asked to consider and report about any public place that they find more unsafe than others, where they feel uncomfortable and, possibly, even scared when they have to be there. The section below details out the findings for the same.

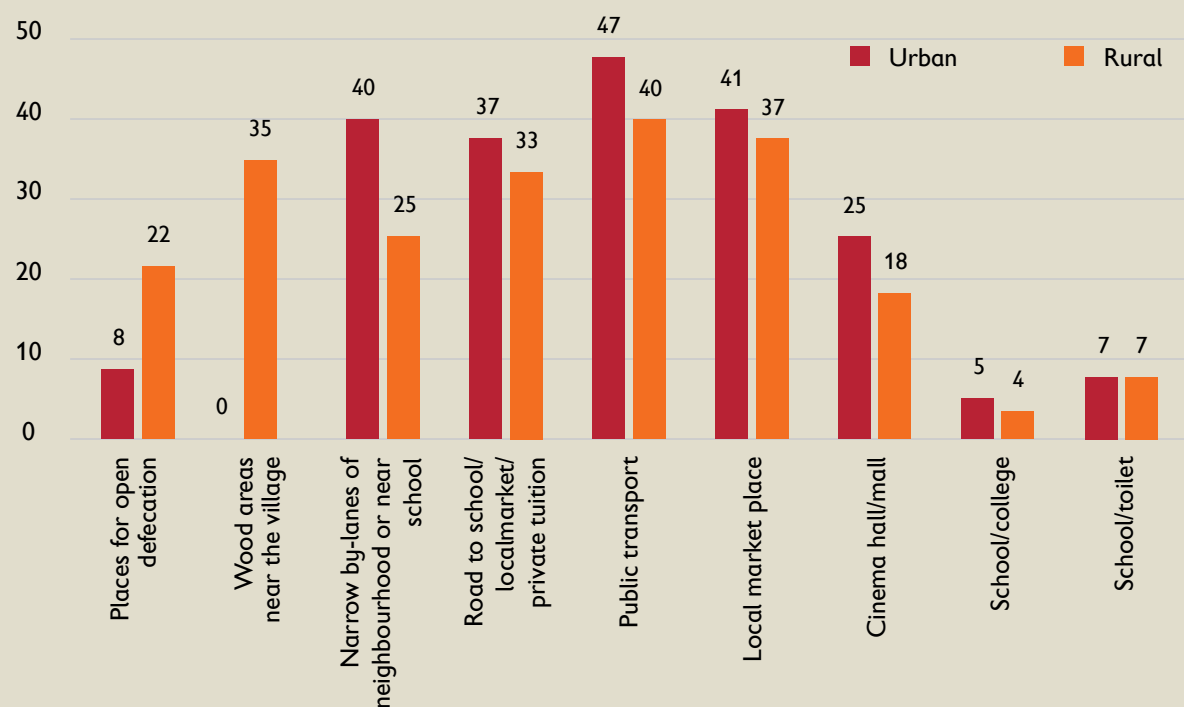
3.3.1 Perception of unsafe places across urban and rural areas in the studied states

The following figure (3.4) depicts spaces which adolescent girls feel are unsafe for them to be present in or poses a certain degree of risk for girls across urban and rural areas in the studied states.

The above data reveals a similarity of the spaces and circumstances (with minor variations) that adolescent girls, irrespective of where they reside,

Figure 3.4

Spaces perceived to be unsafe across urban and rural areas (in %)



Base: Urban = 1821; Rural = 1307

are scared to step into. Travelling in public transport gave the highest sense of risk perception across both urban (47 per cent) and rural (40 per cent) centres as respondents said they feared for their safety. This was followed closely by commuting to the local market (41 per cent in urban and 37 per cent in rural) and also the passing through the narrow by-lanes of the neighbourhood or near the school (40 per cent in urban and 25 per cent in rural). Across both settlement areas (37 per cent in urban and 33 per cent in rural), the usually traversed road to school or local market and the local market itself, was also perceived as unsafe.

38 per cent interact with public space in exercise of their social lives, generally leaving their homes to meet with or to go out with friends.

In fact, the data suggests, most girls were as highly uncomfortable with crowded spaces as they were with regular streets which they had to use to commute regularly. Notable among these trends was the fact that the highest perception of being unsafe was public transport where, once again, the issue of dense gathering of strangers – accompanying the fear of molestation – makes girls of this age feel vulnerable.

At this juncture, the study further looked at whether adolescent girls' micro environment also acts as a differentiator when it comes to choice of locations where they feel unsafe. The assumption being made here was that different spaces assume differential levels of risk for girls living in larger cities as against smaller towns, or between large and more developed villages and smaller ones from the hinterland. Significantly, it must be mentioned here that seven per cent of those interviewed from both, urban and rural settings, felt unsafe in the environment of their school toilets. This was particularly higher in medium and small towns.

This is significant as toilets, are supposed to be enclosed for both, privacy and safety. The research team also tested to see whether girls from more solvent (relatively better off) and upper income neighbourhoods had fears of different sets of spaces as against those from EWS/slum localities because of the environment in which they reside.

Finally, the research also looked at whether the idea of safety in public spaces differs between different caste groups. The research team looked at how girls from the upper caste and OBC homes viewed the idea of safety in public spaces as compared to those coming from more disadvantaged and marginalised communities. The following figure (3.5) presents the findings.

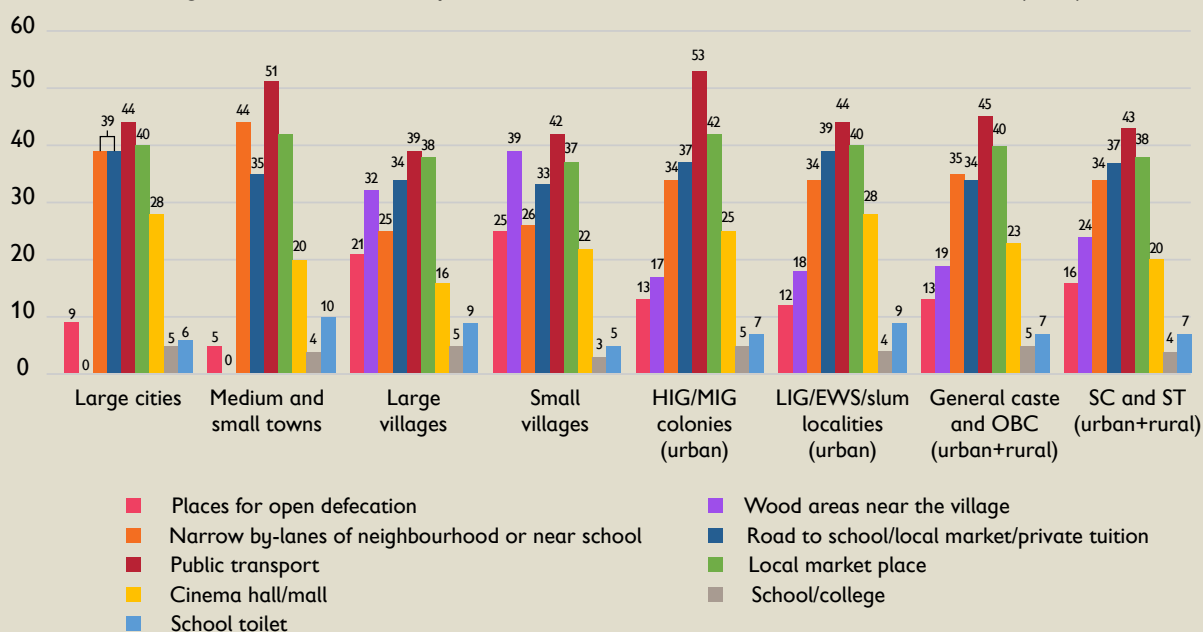
The responses when segregated across micro environments seem to follow a trend which was similar to urban and rural areas in general. Being uncomfortable in crowded environments like public transport or markets cut across all categories. There were, however, variations to be observed. For instance, girls from HIG/MIG households are

more scared taking public transport than other girls. A possible reason could be that these girls lead a more cocooned life without the required level of resilience and therefore feel relatively more threatened.

Similarly, feeling unsafe in cinema halls or a mall was highest among girls from large cities, especially so among girls coming from the marginalised segments and living in low income colonies. A plausible explanation for this could be that these girls from the slums or EWS fear that their complaints may go unheard in a place which is occupied by the relatively better placed – class wise and caste wise, as they are at an advantageous position. Maybe for similar reasons, SC and ST girls find the school and the road to the school more unsafe compared to general caste and OBC girls.

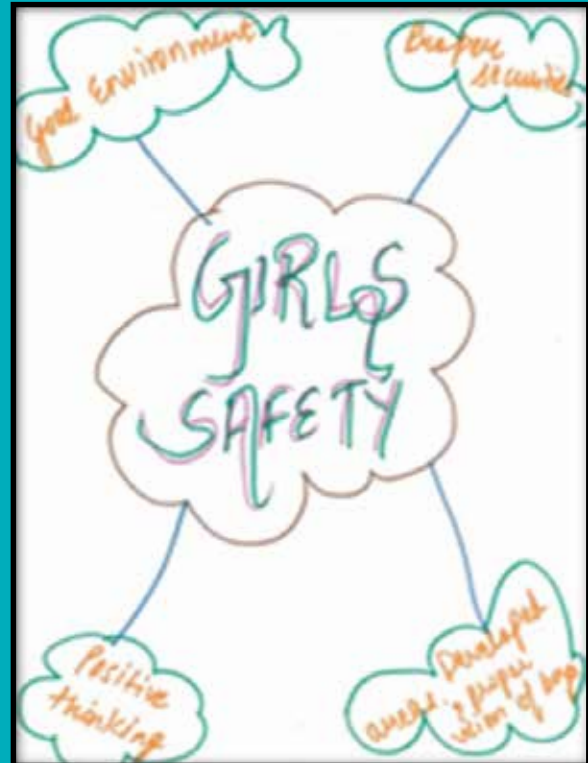
FGDs carried out to supplement the survey revealed that interaction of early adolescent girls (EAGs) with public spaces was limited to schools, parks and cinema halls, always accompanied by

Figure 3.5
Perceived spaces to be unsafe across micro environments (in %)



Base: Large cities = 1207; Medium and small towns = 614; Large villages = 763; Small villages = 544; HIG/MIG = 1110; LIG/EWS/Slum = 711; General + OBC = 810; SC/ST = 497

WHAT COMPRISES SAFETY OF GIRLS ?




Safe environment, positive thinking and attitude. Need to change patriarchal ways and by making it a gender just society...

GIRLS SAFETY
DON'T TELL GIRLS TO BE AN ; TELL YOUR BOYS TO RESPECT GIRLS.

Girls are the bright future of World. Don't spoil them, give them freedom to reach high heights and to lighten their dreams of life.

WE WANT WIFE
WE WANT MOTHER
SO, WHY WE DO NOT WANT GIRL ?



Source : Expressions of girls

parents or some relatives. Late adolescent girls (LAGs) also frequent malls and metro stations and trains (in metro cities), markets, railway/stations, tuition classes, public conveyance like buses, trains etc. They constantly meet new people at these places and are therefore more prone to facing harassment by men and boys. Opportunities for social interaction increase as adolescents mature -- these are seen as occasions with threats by adolescent girls and their parents alike.

3.3.2 Stand out characteristics of specific unsafe spaces

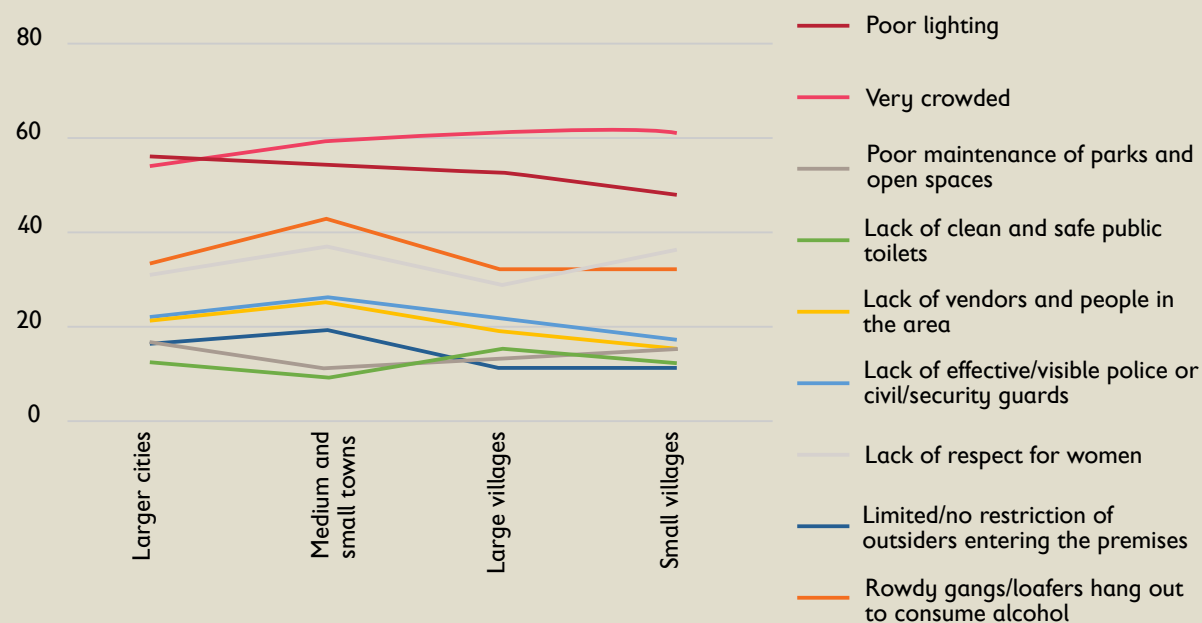
This section has been designed to dwell into the specific features or characteristics which make girls perceive some places as more unsafe than some others.

As seen in figure 3.6, at a general level, the higher ranked reasons as to why girls found some places to be unsafe seemed to be fairly similar across urban and rural areas and across settlement typologies,

though with minor variations. While overcrowding and lack of maintenance of parks and open spaces were important issues in smaller towns and rural areas, these did not emerge as a major issue in larger cities. In fact, the major issues in the larger cities were deserted streets/localities, which was also a cause of worry in the smaller towns and the rural hinterland. Lack of police personnel was an issue that cuts across all categories of settlements, as also the issue of unclean toilets for girls.

At this juncture, it was thought pertinent that this study tries to map what makes specific places seem unsafe for adolescent girls. As this study has already discussed in the earlier segments, there are specific public spaces that adolescent girls perceive to be unsafe. Against those identified places, the research team mapped out the stand out characteristics which makes them unsafe as reported by the respondents. The findings have been tabulated below (tables 3.1 and 3.2), separately for urban and rural areas.

Figure 3.6
Characteristics of unsafe places as perceived by adolescent girls from urban and rural India (in %)



Base: Large cities = 1207; Medium and small towns = 614; Large villages = 763; Small villages = 544

Table 3.1
Standout characteristics of unsafe spaces in urban areas

Spaces perceived as being unsafe	Reasons behind why they are perceived as being unsafe			
The narrow by-lanes of the neighbourhood or near the school/ workplace	Lack of vendors and people in the area	Poor lighting	Lack of effective/ visible police or civil/ security guards	Poor maintenance of open public spaces
The road to the school/college/ local market/ private tuition	Lack of effective/ visible police or civil/security guards	Very crowded	Rowdy gangs/ loafers hanging out to consume alcohol and drugs	Men who are there do not respect women
Public transport	Very crowded	Men who are there do not respect women	Lack of effective/ visible police or civil/ security guards	Inebriated men/ rowdy gangs
The local market	Lack of effective/ visible police or civil /security guards	Very crowded	Limited/no restriction of outsiders entering the premises	Lack of clean and safe public toilets
In Cinema halls/ malls	Rowdy gangs/ loafers hanging out to consume alcohol and drugs	Very crowded	Men who are there do not respect women	

Table 3.2
Standout characteristics of unsafe spaces in rural areas

Spaces perceived as being unsafe	Reasons behind why they are perceived as being unsafe		
The narrow by-lanes of the neighbourhood or near the school/ workplace	Poor lighting	Poor maintenance of open public spaces	Lack of vendors and people in the area
The woods near the village	Lack of vendors and people in the area	Poor lighting	Rowdy gangs/loafers hanging out to consume alcohol and drugs
The local market	Very crowded	Lack of effective/visible police or civil/security guards	Limited/no restriction of outsiders entering the premises
Public transport	Limited/no restriction of outsiders entering the space	Very crowded	Lack of effective/visible police or civil/security guards
The road to the school/college/ local market/ private tuition	Rowdy gangs/ loafers hanging out to consume alcohol and drugs	Lack of vendors and people in the area	Men who are there do not respect women

As seen in the above tables (3.1 and 3.2), a few of the features cut across multiple spaces identified as unsafe, viz. poor lighting, lack of visible policing/guards, or being overly crowded. Contrary to the latter, and especially in rural areas, the sparse areas with very few people like open fields (especially at dawn) or the adjoining woods are perceived to be unsafe. Any congregation of 'rowdy' men prone to being inebriated or consuming drugs was also a major reason cited for making specific spaces, like the usual commuting routes to school and tuition, public gatherings, and even buses, to be perceived as unsafe.

In overcrowded places, potential perpetrators get a sense of anonymity within the crowd and also an excuse of space constraint, while perpetrators get a window of opportunity to commit crime sans third party resistance or witnesses in deserted and empty streets. Hence these are perceived to be as high risk zones. The threat perception decreases when the girls are in a group - with their family or friends.

*“When it is dark we don't like our daughters to be out. The problem is that as compared to day time by evening, around 5-6 pm, there aren't many women in the market. Only men are seen. At that time, even if we dare to go, we can't think of letting our daughters go to the market.”
Mother from Delhi*

Further, during FGDs, it was often expressed that presence of police/security guards and cameras inhibit any misbehaviour by men and boys. The perception of being unsafe as soon as they cross the threshold of their houses was deep-rooted in their minds, perpetuated by their parents, relatives, friends and well-meaning people who continuously remind them of the unsafe conditions of public spaces. Hence for the girls the concept of 'safety' is related to their free mobility, without any restriction of time, dress or actions:

*“Safety for me would be when I am able to move alone outside like a boy does – at any time, wearing whatever I want – without any restrictions of parents or raised eyebrows of society.”
... Adolescent girl from urban NCR*

*“I want to speak without any fear and tension in front of anybody”
Adolescent girl from rural Telangana*

Most adolescent girls had mentioned that the main reason for feeling insecure in public places was the attitude of men and boys towards girls and women. Many reasons to this effect were cited from Delhi to Assam, rural areas to urban. 'Outsiders' (North Indians) and congregation of people from other faiths were mentioned as people who make them feel unsafe in Maharashtra (urban small town) and Telangana respectively. However, for most girls,



One in three adolescent girls are scared of traversing the narrow by lanes of their locality as well as the road to go to their school or the local market.

friends of opposite sex of other religious faiths do not scare or alarm them, though they were quick to add that elders or others in the community may not like such a thing and it may result in one of them getting harmed.

The neighbourhood by-lanes or school/workplace in both rural and urban areas, though seen as familiar, were identified as unsafe by the adolescent girls. Likely presence of strangers and ruffians was one of the reasons for these zone to be unsafe, especially during night. Girls believed that people in the neighbourhood would look for their own safety first rather than helping out a girl in distress. Mothers also pointed out the apathy of bystanders who refuse to act in favour of the girl/woman being harassed.

“The grocery store owner knows that the ruffians standing around his shop make us nervous. But he does not say anything because of the reputation and safety of his own shop.” Adolescent girl from urban Ujjain

A couple of young girls in a small town of Madhya Pradesh confessed to reciprocating in kind to boys who harass girls.

“We kick or slap the boys who harass girls, even if we do not know the girl. This way at least the boys will learn some lessons” ... Adolescent girl from Madhya Pradesh

The presence of men in groups anywhere, whether in the market, on the streets, in and outside colleges, in buses or in trains was considered unsafe. Parks and public toilets were identified as neglected, unsecured spaces used by alcoholics and drug

addicts, and hence unsafe. Similarly, recreational centres like clubs were considered to be drinking hubs frequented by men with rather heinous intentions and therefore unsafe. Public transport like buses (not in M.P. where the buses are divided into men and women zones) and trains were identified as unsafe by adolescent girls and their parents because of the proximity to ruffians who often take advantage of crowds and touch and grope girls and women. Adolescent boys said that public transports are not safe as a perpetrator could run away in a moving vehicle like train, metro or bus.

“Those who do such things quietly slip off after the offence and it is difficult to identify them later.” Adolescent boy from urban NCR

The time of the day, the frequency of travel and also information of their visits are some factors that make public places unsafe. Nights, absence of lights and frequent visits to some places were pointed out by all girls as determinants of unsafe situations. Some girls even mentioned that they do not communicate information of their visits to many people for reasons of safety.

“We often change our route to tuition classes if we see that boys are following us.” Adolescent girls from urban NCR small town.

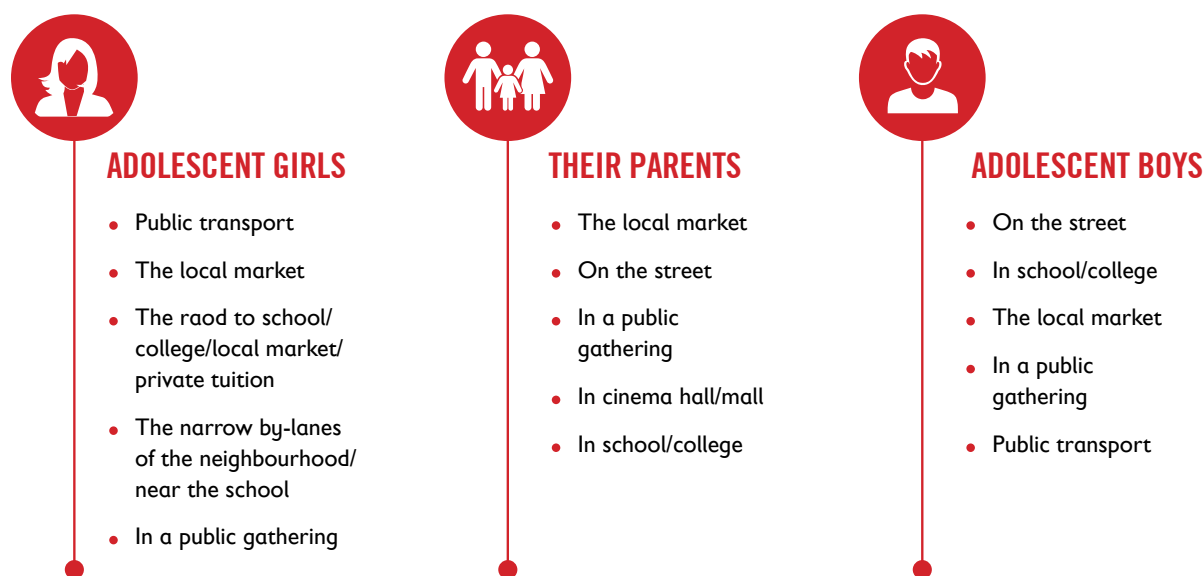
“There are lots of cases of eve teasing inside the metro. Teasing happens even when the girls are standing at the bus stop. So we get scared. That is why I always accompany my daughter. As long as she is inside the college, I stay outside. As soon as her college gets over, I bring her with me.” Mother from Delhi

3.3.3 Perception ranking of unsafe places among different respondent categories

The study so far has reviewed what adolescent girls from different walks of life perceive to be unsafe public spaces. It is a given that mitigating this feeling of lack of safety and making them feel protected is,

Table 3.3

Risk perceptions at public places among different respondent categories by rank



to a large extent, a responsibility that needs to be shouldered by parents and the immediate family, besides, of course, the larger community and the State. So it is assumed that the perception of the girls should be in consonance with their parents so that they can help their daughters.

On the other hand, it is the adolescent boys who, by virtue of being peers, can also be protectors or first responders. Yet, anecdotal evidence (from media) clearly reminds us that they can also be the perpetrators of violence and similar actions that go to strengthen girls' perception of being unsafe. In either case, it is also important to know whether what boys perceive to be unsafe spaces for girls is in consonance with the perceptions held by the primary stakeholders – the girls themselves. The above table explores whether there is any convergence of thought when it came to comparing the perception of safety among girls, their parents, and adolescent boys. The findings clearly revealed a different picture.

The above table (3.3) provides the list of unsafe places reported by each respondent category in descending order of the number of times they have featured in each list. It is clear that there is notable divergence in thought across different interest groups on the issue of unsafe spaces. While most adolescent girls feel unsafe in public transport, especially a public bus, this was not

among the top places identified by parents and adolescent boys. Further, while girls actually feel unsafe in the narrow by-lanes of the colony they stay in, this issue was not among the top 5 cited by parents or adolescent boys. This lack of convergence is significant, and perhaps indicative of a limitation in interaction between adolescent girls and their parents and peers regarding their fears and insecurities when they venture out of home.

3.3.4. Current levels of risks for girls within locality as perceived by parents and adolescent boys

Adolescent boys and parents of adolescent girls were asked whether they thought it was safe for adolescent girls from their locality to venture out in a public space or use public transport alone during evening hours.

The data revealed that around three in five adolescent boys felt that within their own neighbourhood also, it was unsafe for girls to take the public transport during evening hours. Similarly, as high as half the parents felt that it was risky for adolescent girls to take the public transport at night in their ward or *panchayat*. These prevalent views are clear testimony to the fact that the situation is not conducive for adolescent girls to venture out after dark.



53%

Of boys from large and medium towns felt it is unsafe for girls to take public transport at night where they live

65%

Of boys from small towns felt it is unsafe for girls to take public transport at night where they live

60%

Of boys from large and developed villages felt it is unsafe for girls to take public transport at night where they live

57%

Of boys from small villages felt it is unsafe for girls to take public transport at night where they live



51%

Of parents from large and medium towns felt it is unsafe for girls to take public transport at night where they live

59%

Of parents from small towns felt it is unsafe for girls to take public transport at night where they live

48%

Of parents from large and developed villages felt it is unsafe for girls to take public transport at night where they live

49%

Of parents from small villages felt it is unsafe for girls to take public transport at night where they live

3.3.5 Perceived safe places within immediate environment

The survey had also asked adolescent girls to list the places where they felt completely secure and protected and where they were likely to take refuge when they were in distress. The following figure (3.7) provides the findings.

The survey reveals that well over 90 per cent of the adolescent girls in both urban and rural India, considered home where their parents are, to be their safe place to go to in case of any trouble. Interestingly, 10 per cent of the girls in larger cities, including the metros, did not feel the same. Teachers (even the female teachers) and friends are not trusted enough by the girls. However, trust in these agents is still more than the general trust in law enforcement agencies. This is merely a commentary on the prevalent perception among adolescent girls regarding what they consider their safe sanctuaries.

Though adolescent girls cannot determine if the conditions have become more unsafe in the recent past, they are certain that it has certainly deteriorated since their mothers' time. They mention that society has become more open and lets the girls go out or return late (only in metro cities), still if anything untoward happens the comments like "we told you so" are the most

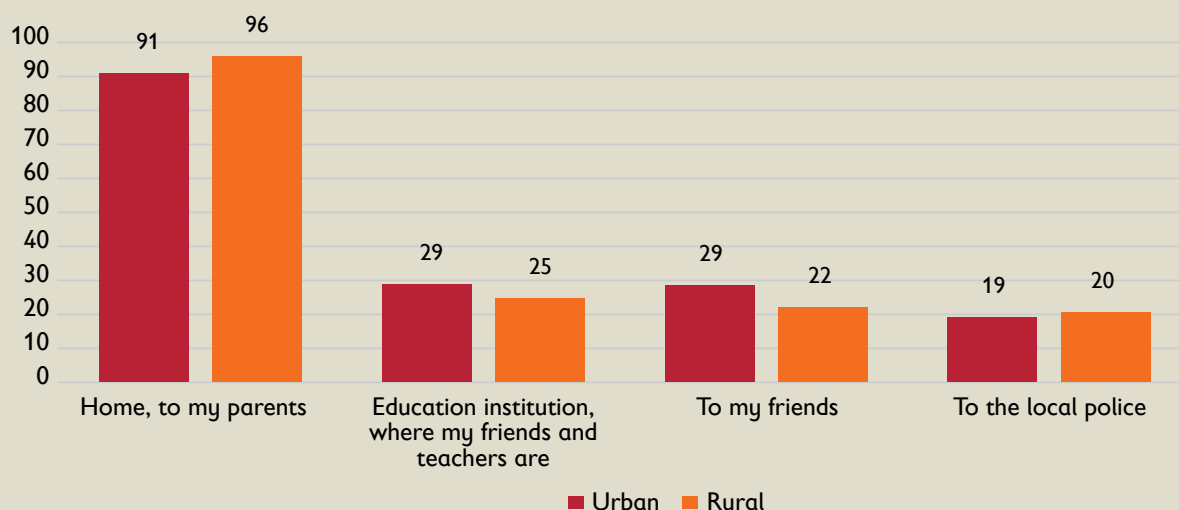
common. Mothers echoed the same thought during the FGDs, mentioning that though it has always been unsafe for girls, there is an accelerated decline in safety currently.

"When we were growing up, we played with boys, interacted with them openly, without fear of being scolded or punished. We didn't worry about any of our male friends misbehaving with us." Mother from a small urban town, Maharashtra

There were also concerns about the change in the community behaviour.

"Girls can be little difficult to look after because of the restrictions one has to place on them because of their safety. But, generally speaking, boys are today just as much at risk as girls. Earlier parents could leave children in the care of family members and neighbours. The community instinctively watched over each other. That feeling has gone."
Parents from urban Maharashtra

Figure 3.7
Safe sanctuaries for adolescent girls from urban and rural India (in %)



Base: Urban = 1821; rural = 1307

3.4. Personal safety concerns of girls while in 'unsafe place'

3.4.1. Safety concerns of girls living in urban and rural areas of the studied states

This section specifically seeks to decipher the extent to which adolescent girls are fearful while in unsafe public spaces, i.e. what they feel would actually happen to them if they find themselves alone in such spaces. This is an important dimension of this study as it goes beyond identification of unsafe places and

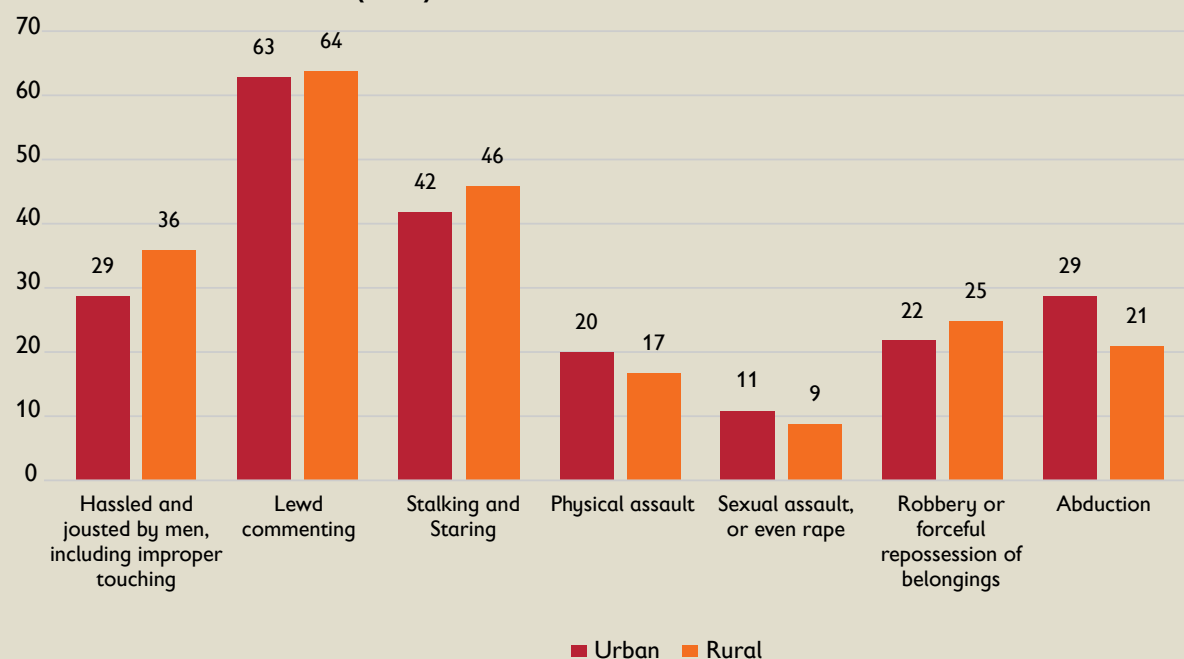
Over one in four adolescent girls fear they could be abducted, physically assaulted or even raped while venturing into public space.

explores the degree to which adolescent girls feel scared of their personal safety. The findings have been presented below in figure 3.8.

The figure (3.8) below reveals that almost two out of three adolescent girls fear being verbally abused as the worst form of harassment that makes them feel unsafe, followed by stalking and staring and being jostled or touched inappropriately in public. This was consistent across both urban and rural India. What may be specifically noted is that especially in urban areas, nearly 20 per cent of the girls felt that they could be physically assaulted in public spaces and 11 per cent feared rape. If one considers the fact that nearly 30 per cent of the girls interviewed in urban areas and 21 per cent in rural areas fear being abducted while out of home, and the fact that abduction cases in most instances result in sexual abuse or worse, the fear of physical harm was actually quite high in the minds of adolescent girls. All the above statements could be suggestive of complete apathy of the bystanders towards such an episode of harassment.

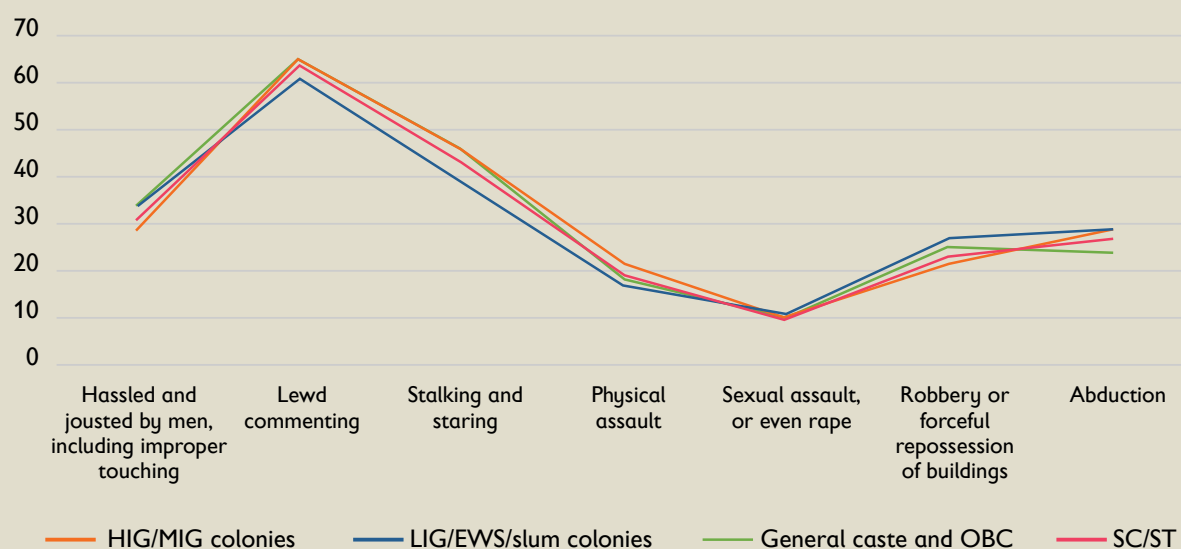
Figure 3.8

Safety concerns for adolescent girls when they are in unsafe public places of urban and rural areas of the studied states (in %)



Base: Urban = 1821; Rural = 1307

Figure 3.9
Socio-economic profile as an influencer of perceived safety concerns (in %)



Base: HIG/MIG = 1110; LIG/EWS/slum = 711; General + OBC = 810; SC/ST = 497

In conjunction, it was tested to assess whether the extent of insecurity was also influenced by micro environments like locality of residence, or their social background. The above figure (3.9) presents the findings.

The data indicates that socio-economic background was not a significant differentiator when it came to safety concerns. The dimensions of their fears and apprehensions while in public space remain similar, irrespective of whether the girls were living in gated urban communities or in low income slum settlements, or whether they belonged to general castes or OBCs or were from the more marginalised SC/ST families.

The degree of perceived lack of safety reportedly increased when girls went out alone in the dark of the night. Most girls, both in their early and late adolescence, refrained from admitting the worst forms of harassment (rape, molestation, murder) that has taken place with them or with someone known to them and restricted themselves to only the degrading stage of lewd commenting, whistling and touching. Though none of them reported having faced the worst forms, their fear is based on the

stories they have heard and news reports they have viewed on TV. Possibility of kidnapping of young girls was a great fear among adolescent girls in both, rural and urban areas from Assam, West Bengal, NCR and Madhya Pradesh.

There is more fear due to perception of fear than actual experience. The perception of fear has been accentuated as mentioned earlier as well, by hearing and reading about the incidences in the media. However, responses to the questionnaire and discussions during FGDs underline that they do not know anyone in their locality or village who has experienced, first-hand, such extreme forms of violence. Hence the fear of entering a public place because of lack of security is limited to undesired activities like staring, stalking, catcalling and touching.

3.5. Views on the state of safety of girls in contemporary society

3.5.1 Perceived changes over last 3 years

In terms of economic development, India is poised to become the fifth largest in the world, improving living conditions of the poorest and contributing in

Figure 3.10

Proportion who feel safety of girls in public has not improved in their locality as compared to 3 years ago



Base: Adolescent girls: 3128; Adolescent boys: 1141; Parents: 842

no small measure to global growth over the last decade, accounting for about 10 per cent of the world's increase in economic activity since 2005 (World Economic Forum, 2015).

Yet, this period also witnessed a rise in crime against women. According to the National Crime Records Bureau, as many as 39 crimes against women were reported every hour from across the country in 2016 – up from 21 a decade ago. The rate of crime against women was 55.2 in 2016. In comparison, it was 41.7 in 2012. Incidents of rape have gone up by 12 per cent as 34,651 cases were registered in 2015 which went up to 38,947 cases in 2016

Secondary data clearly demonstrates the rise in the incidences of crimes against women in the country, especially in the urban areas. Logically, therefore, the research attempted to study the trends with respect to the safety of girls. Adolescent boys, girls and parents were asked whether the state of safety of girls has changed for the better or worse in their ward/panchayat over the past three years. This helped the research team examine whether the perception of the key stakeholders match the reality on the ground, or whether the increasing number of incidents is a direct function of rise in the number

of complaints being lodged, which indicates greater awareness and empowerment and/or more efficient policing.

It was observed (figure 3.10) that adolescent boys from large cities and small villages were comparatively more certain that there was an improvement in the safety of girls in their localities. However, 53-60 per cent of the boys across settlement typologies believed that the situation has not improved. With parents, this was between 65-68 per cent. On the other hand, it was the girls who were least impressed with the situation, with 72 to 80 per cent across settlement typologies believing that the local area has not become safer for them in the last three years. Girls from the smaller towns were a little more positive, but the boys as well as the parents were less happy with the situation. One possible reason could be greater media coverage and increased focus in general public on the problem of safety of girls. Parents and boys feel that the situation is improving while girls who bear the consequences of this problem do not see much improvement on the ground. This explains why they have a higher negative perception than parents and adolescent boys.

Parul's story

Parul Halder, a resident of the Kumartuli slum in North Kolkata, is a 9th grade student. Her father is a craftsman engaged in making idols of gods and goddesses. Over the years, the streets of Kolkata have become unsafe for girls of her age, she says as she often overhears her parents discuss how one of the safest cities in the country has now become unsafe for women, especially by night.

Her father accompanies her to her school and tuition every day, except during the days leading up to the main festivals when he has to work overtime to fulfil orders. In such occasions, her parents ensure that she goes out in a group with at least another girls for company. She is also upset by the behaviour that she is subjected to in public places by men/boys – “The way they glance and try to come near me is very irritating,” she says.

Parul is outspoken, and generally very independent. Her parents often scold her for this, warning her that her outspokenness will land her in trouble one day. She is of the opinion that being a girl puts her in a disadvantageous position – as she not only has to take care of herself, but also has to care for everyone else in the family. She feels that a girl has to work a lot harder than a boy.

In fact, a girl is judged by a different yardstick as compared to boys, Parul feels. For instance, while Parul was returning from school in the company of her closest friends, Swapna and Mitali one day, a gang of motorcycle-borne boys from the local college brushed past them, passing lewd comments. The girls were shaken by this experience and rushed back home. An outraged Parul immediately related the incident to her parents. But, to her surprise, her father insisted she change the route to school. He desisted the idea of complaining to the police, arguing that the victim was her friend, not Parul herself.

Unable to accept this and realising that her protests fell on deaf ears as her father refused to allow her or anyone else from the family from getting involved, Parul felt a sense of shame and guilt – especially to be able to face Swapna when they met the next day. To her utter surprise, her friends Swapna and Mitali said that they had not brought up this issue with their parents fearing a backlash. In fact, Swapna had tried to convince her, arguing, “We live in a slum area, so what do you expect? Nothing really bad has happened so why get other people involved?”



3.6. Cyber space as a public space

As mentioned in the beginning of this report, cyber space is an increasingly frequented public space in the lives of young people, especially so, in urban areas. The growing reach of the internet, the rapid spread of mobile information and communication technologies (ICTs) and the wide diffusion of social media have presented new opportunities of learning and rapid economic growth. Yet, at the same time the internet is also being used as a tool to inflict harm on girls and women. Cybercrimes against girls and women is emerging as a global problem with serious implications for societies around the world (UN Broadband Commission for Digital Development 2017).

According to National Crime Records Bureau's 2014 report, juveniles (under 18) were around 6 per cent of the total arrested for cybercrimes. The relative anonymity that the Internet offers provides young people a cushion to the awkwardness of adolescence. Yet, peer pressure to conform often manifests as risky online behaviour.

The anonymity and the pressure from peers ensues in the shape of cyber bullying – at times involving

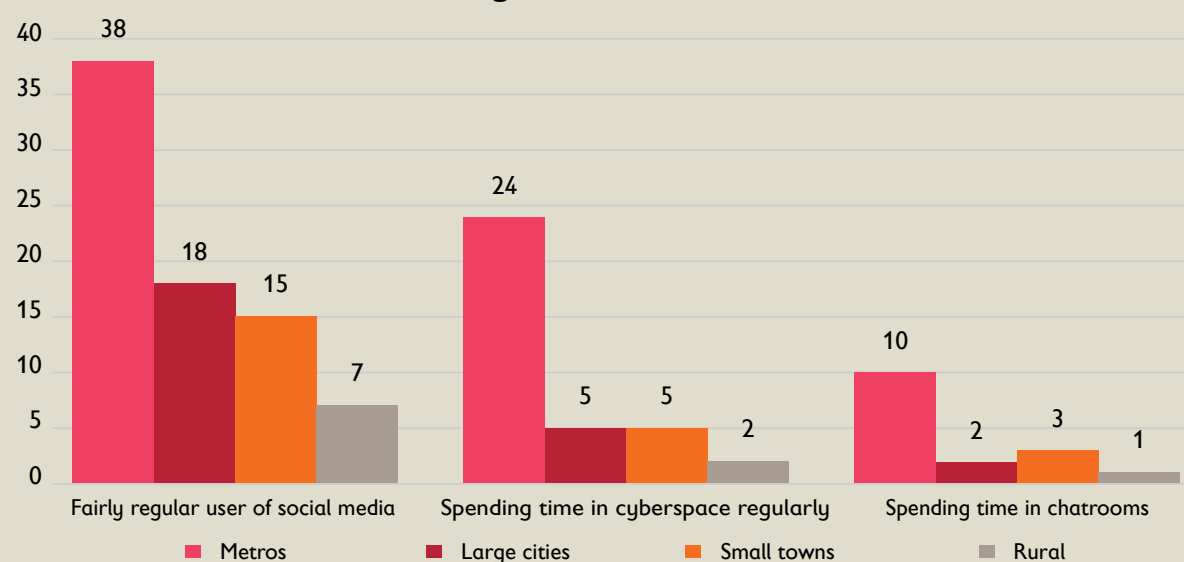
the spread of rumours, at other times threatening or passing lewd remarks meant to intimidate others, and even exploring the internet's vivid visual fluency to the extent of indulging in body shaming. Adolescence is an emotionally vulnerable age and these actions can leave their young minds with a serious impact.

Adolescents are in a unique stage of their lives where they understand technology really well, but they are often unaware of the pitfalls. Discussions with the Cyber Cells at various state police departments tell of the same story – training and awareness generation have little or no impact. "Girls listen attentively and the next moment start taking selfies. They do not know about the harms that can be caused from pictures on Facebook and from profile information in the cyber world," said an officer of Kolkata's Cyber Cell.

The survey also looked at the social media behaviour of adolescent girls, and whether or not they are aware of the basic safeguards.

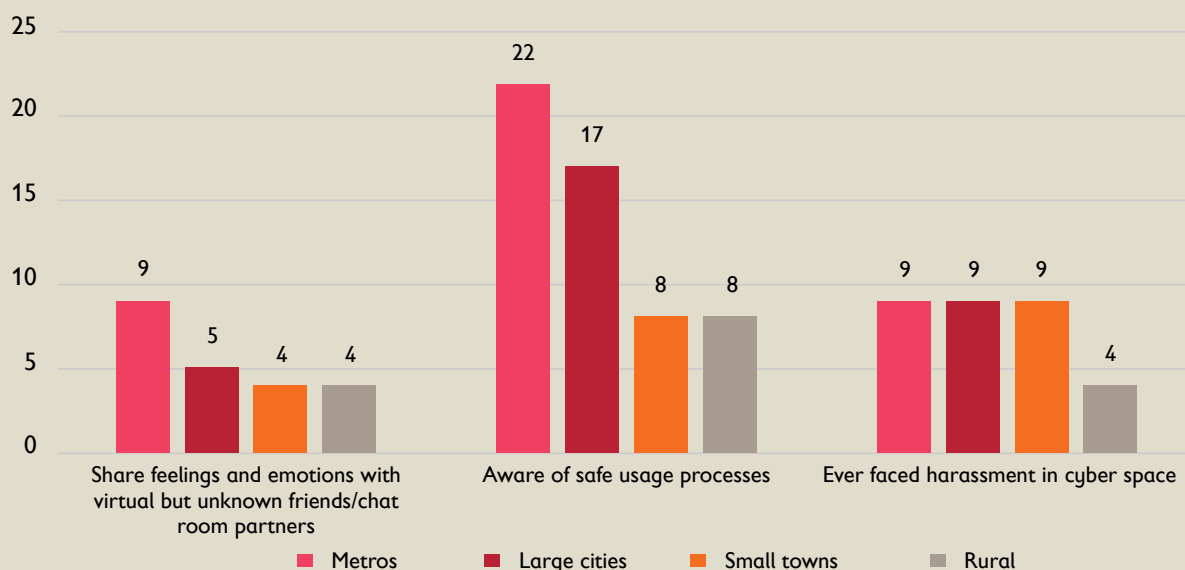
The survey (figure 3.11) revealed that while adolescent girls in large cities spent considerable time dabbling in social media (two out of five do it

Figure 3.11
Social media behaviour of adolescent girls



Base: Metros: 203; Large cities: 138; Small towns: 71; Rural: 56

Figure 3.12
Exposed to the risk of harassment



Base: Metros: 203 Large cities: 138; Small towns: 71; Rural: 56

regularly, while one in four spends several hours a day in cyberspace), the phenomenon is still confined to metros and large cities and has not percolated down to smaller settlements and the rural countryside, possibly because of unavailability of smart phones and other access issues.

Among those girls (figure 3.12) who did spend time exploring cyber space and using social media, the proportion who claimed to be aware of basic safeguards and firewalls was very low, thus exposing the vast majority to Cybercrime. The fact that nearly one in 10 girls who uses social media did report of being harassed in cyber space, reinforces the fragility of the situation.

Girls in Telangana mentioned social media (e.g. Facebook) to be a source of anguish for girls as they fear that photographs and other details posted in the girls' accounts can be misused. They further said that easily available pornographic video clips are often viewed by boys who then get ideas for harassing girls. Adolescent boys corroborated these thoughts and said that boys use social media to harass girls by deceiving the girls in the name of love and misusing photographs of their intimate moments and blackmailing them. However, other girls and

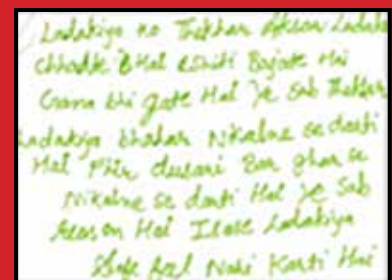
NGO leaders view mobile phones as a potential safety device and do not recommend them to be taken away from adolescent girls.

“Though parents take away the mobile phones from girls in a bid to keep them away from the dirt and threat over the internet, it should be provided to all girls with a safety app. In times of need, mobiles can be a great safety device.”
..... Gender activist from an urban NGO

3.7. Media and its impact (digital and print media) on the adolescent girls

A research study conducted using Media Cloud – an open-source media analysis platform developed by the MIT Media Lab and the Harvard Berkman Klein Centre -- found that since the December 2012 gang-rape of Nirbhaya in Delhi, there has been a rise in coverage in the Indian news media (Shah, 2016) on issues concerning safety of girls and women, particularly pertaining to sexual harassment and

WHAT MAKES SPACES UNSAFE FOR GIRLS?



The “threat” of comments and physical attack by men/boys as a girl moves away from home, alcohol, public spaces, railway stations, lonely roads and crowded places, open defecation...

Source : Expressions of girls





violence against women. This could also be a reflection of some degree of awareness building as well.

This study also attempted to understand the impact of media coverage on the adolescent girls. The adolescent girls were first asked as to whether they

were exposed to such stories. Overall, 85-90 per cent of all adolescent girls living across the different settlement typologies were exposed to such media stories. Most of the adolescent girls themselves have become more conscious about their safety as shown in the table (3.4) below.

TABLE 3.4
Impact of exposure of adolescent girls to media stories on sexual harassment and violence against women (in %)

	Urban	Rural
 I have become conscious now about my safety and have begun being careful about where I go	93	96
 I don't pay much attention to these reports as they are overhyped	7	4
Base	1821	1307

3.8. Conclusion

This chapter attempted to understand the perceptions of safety among adolescent girls and associated stakeholders with a specific focus on public spaces. The results corroborate several trends that have been observed in other contexts, particularly with respect to concerns around public infrastructure, including transport. It also underscores the threat of physical violence which can also be sexual in nature, as the predominantly emerging concern for adolescent girls in accessing public spaces.

The trends that emerge from the survey indicate both infrastructural as well as institutional

constraints in ensuring safety. However, the disparity in the consideration of a space as safe among adolescent girls on the one hand and the rest of the stakeholders on the other is a significant pointer to the larger structural dynamics that can influence any attempt to address this concern. This concern is in turn related to gender norms and the role expectations on women in general and girls in particular.

The following chapter examines the extent to which gender stereotypes shape the perceptions of boys and parents and how they influence the concerns for safety of the girl child.



- Across all the studied urban and rural areas, frequency of interaction with the urban space is maximum due to the fact that girls go to school or college. Public transport happens to be the most preferred option for travel. However, travelling in public transport comes with the highest sense of risk perception across both urban and rural centres, and across all categories.
- Deserted streets and localities are a cause of worry in large cities, small towns, large and small villages. While the lack of maintenance of parks and open spaces was an important issue in small towns and rural areas; unsafe public toilets are a cause of worry in the larger cities.
- Two out of three adolescent girls fear being verbally abused as the worst form of harassment that makes them feel unsafe, followed by stalking and staring and being jostled or touched inappropriately in public. This was consistent across both urban and rural India.
- The degree of perceived lack of safety reportedly increases when girls go out alone at night, in the dark. The main reason for feeling insecure in public places was the attitude of men and boys towards girls and women.
- Lack of faith in police personnel was an issue that cuts across all categories of settlements.
- From among girls who did spend time in cyber space and used social media, the proportion of those who claimed to be aware of basic safeguards and firewalls was found to be very low.

CHAPTER 4

Gender stereotypes and perceptions of adolescent boys and parents on safety of girls in public spaces



More than 50 per cent of adolescent boys and around 50 per cent of the parents felt that the streets are the most unsafe space for the girls.



Dense gathering was cited as an important reason for making public spaces unsafe by three out of five boys and two out of five parents.



Nearly three out of ten adolescent boys feel that girls are generally taking away their jobs. Over one in four boys feel that the government is more concerned about the rights of girls and not doing anything substantial for boys.



Above 60 per cent of boys agree with the view that it is the woman who is responsible to cook, wash and take care of the home and the family.



Nearly 6 out of 10 mothers feel that it is the wife's duty to look after the infants and old and sick people in the family.



One in three boys held an opinion that slapping a woman to reprimand her is appropriate.



One in three boys and two out of five parents see an active role of women in some harassment cases by provoking the offender. One in three boys was of the opinion that a woman is responsible for putting herself in a situation where she was raped.



Two in five boys hold the opinion that if there is no evidence that a girl has fought back, it's difficult to term this a rape.



As many as half of the boys and as many of parents of adolescent girls are of the opinion that the best way for girls to be safe is that they should avoid certain public spaces or they should simply avoid going out after dark.



Among all four settlement typologies, adolescent boys from medium and small towns showed a lower degree of regressive trends compared to boys from other typologies.



One in three adolescent boys feel that girls should avoid wearing certain type of clothes while going out in public spaces.



Nearly 60 per cent of the girls feel that elders are policing them under the guise of concern.

4.1. Introduction

The previous chapter examined the interaction of adolescent girls with public spaces and the factors that underpin the perception of public spaces being unsafe. This chapter examines underlying gender stereotypes of adolescent boys aged between 15 and 18 years and parents of adolescent girls. Simultaneously, this chapter explores the implication of such gender stereotypes on the safety of girls in public spaces.

'Perception of safety for the girls' among the boys, parents and even the girls themselves has to be contextualised within the norms and patterns of societal behaviour. Harmful gender and social

norms perpetuate stereotypical expectations from girls. Such expectations, in turn, influence the behaviour of adolescent boys and men towards girls in public spaces, and impact fulfilment of the aspirations of girls. Bearing this in mind, the present chapter also captures perceptions and prejudices among adolescent boys and parents on the roles of girls, which includes exploration of aspects like safety of girls in public spaces getting compromised when girls are seen as taking on roles (like employment) which differ from their socially accepted gendered roles and thus perceived as a threat by the adolescent boys. It also includes appropriate measures to ensure safety of girls in public spaces by primary stakeholders.



4.2. Predispositions among adolescent boys in the studied states

4.2.1. Perception of unsafe places across urban and rural areas

The following figure (4.1) depicts spaces which adolescent boys feel are unsafe for girls in the urban and rural areas in the studied states

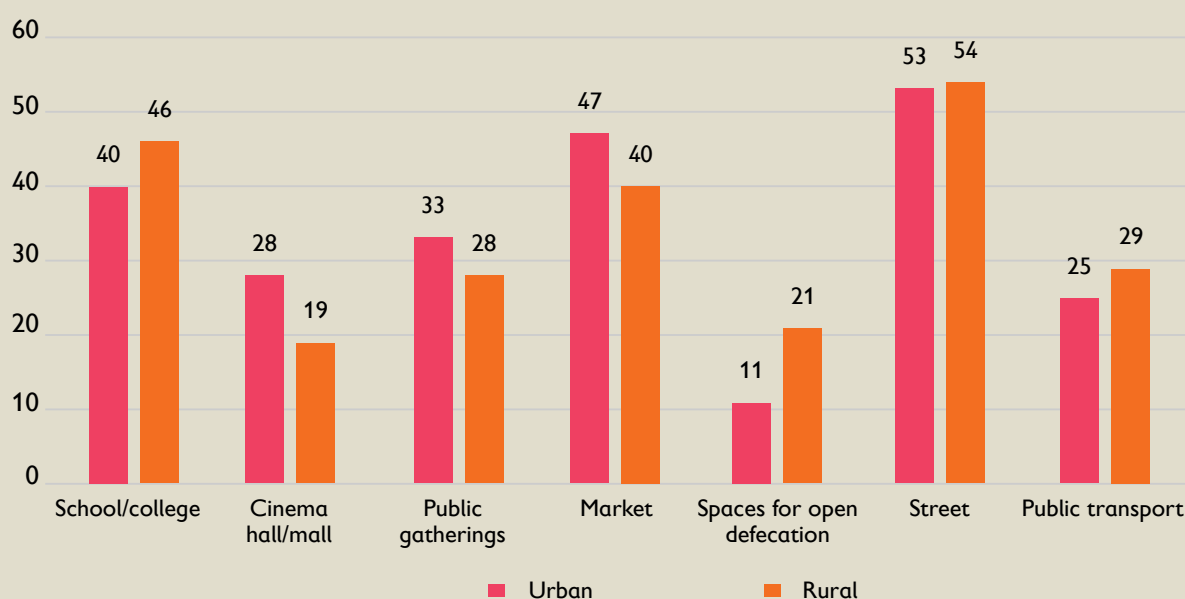
Dense gathering was cited as an important reason for making public spaces unsafe by three out of five boys and two out of five parents.

The data given in figure 4.1 reveals that more than 50 per cent urban and rural adolescent boys felt the streets are the most unsafe space for the girls. More than 40 per cent boys responding to the survey felt that the local market and the premises of educational institutions were unsafe. This was

followed by public gatherings (33 per cent urban and 28 per cent rural), public transport (25 per cent urban and 29 per cent rural) and cinema halls and malls (28 per cent urban and 19 per cent rural). 11 per cent urban boys and 21 per cent rural boys felt spaces for open defecation were unsafe for girls.

The study further looked at the reasons given by boys as to why they perceive these spaces to be unsafe for girls (figure 4.2). Dense gathering was cited as an important reason by 56 per cent of urban boys and 60 per cent of rural boys which corroborated with findings in figure 4.1 wherein one out of three boys said public gatherings were unsafe. Again, 37 per cent urban boys and 31 per cent rural boys (figure 4.2) felt the presence of rowdy people consuming alcohol made these places unsafe. So it is the presence of boys/men which is being perceived as unsafe for girls, by the boys. Combined with this is the importance of lighting in the public spaces. 56 per cent of urban boys and 49 per cent of rural boys mentioned that poor lighting is a cause for public spaces being unsafe. Absence of people is perceived as a problem when poor lighting is linked with deserted streets or roads. 23 per cent of urban boys and 17 per cent of rural boys cited the absence of vendors in the area as

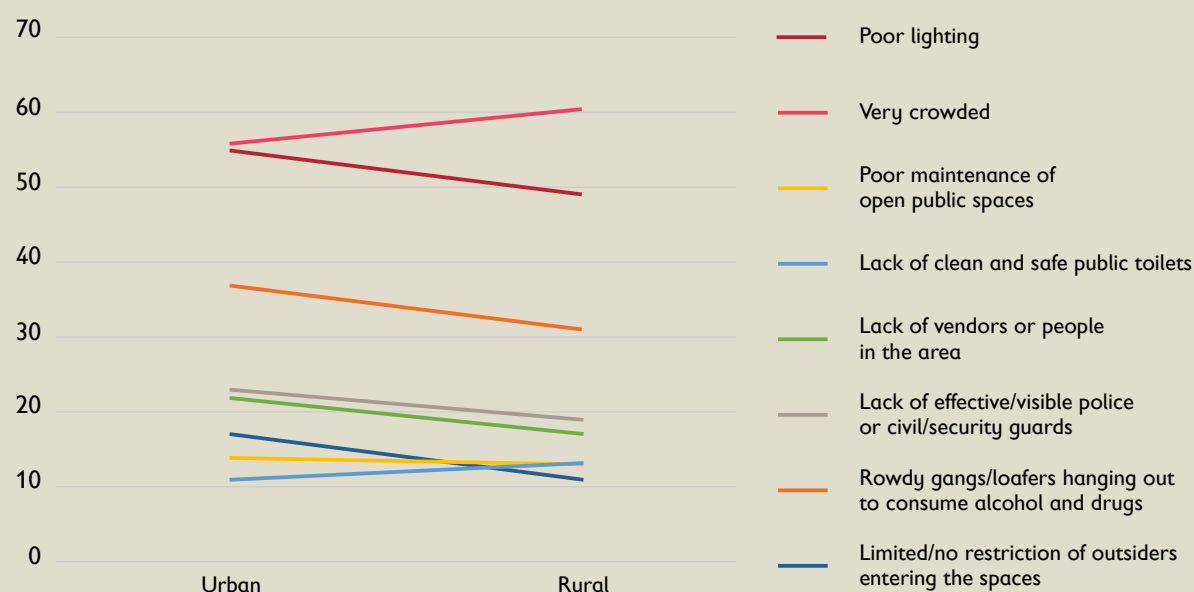
Figure 4.1
Spaces which boys feel are unsafe for girls (in %)



Base: Urban = 704; rural = 437

Figure 4.2

Reasons given by boys as to why they perceived these spaces to be unsafe (in %)



Base: Urban = 704; rural = 437

problematic. Lack of police patrolling and absence of effective guards was mentioned by 23 per cent urban boys and 19 per cent rural boys.

It is quite clear that the presence of boys/men is the biggest threat to girls' safety in public spaces. But it is not possible to wean them away from these spaces as they also have to occupy these spaces to access their various rights. It may be recalled that almost 60 per cent of all the adolescent girls interviewed during the study also quoted dense gathering to be the biggest problem for safety of girls in the public spaces (in chapter 3). Here, it is important to reiterate that occupancy on streets, roads and most public spaces is gendered and the stress is on the need to understand the underlying causes of the linkage between the presence of men/boys and the safety of the girls in these public spaces. The present study first looks at the prejudices harboured by the boys against girls. Next, it looks at the position of women in their households and examines if there is any link between the two as it is understood that the process of socialisation has a lot of bearing on the predispositions one develops.

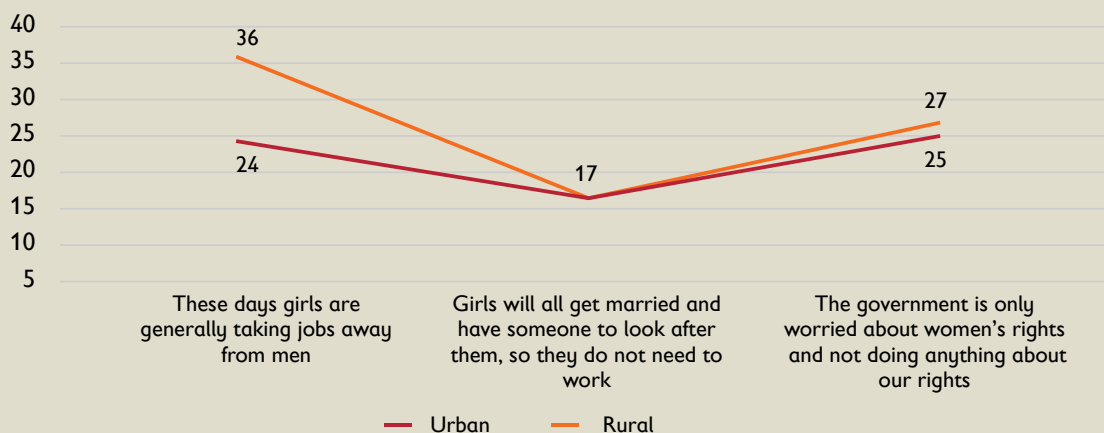
4.2.2. Prejudices among adolescent boys towards girls

Attitudinal predispositions of adolescent boys regarding prejudices they have against girls in a similar stage of life has been explored here. The inquiry was made through three statements (figure 4.3) read out to the respondents. These statements were based on what boys perceive about the role of girls as economic actors. The respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed to each of the statements and also to what extent.

The survey results show that a quarter of the boys in urban areas and over a third of them in rural areas were wary of the fact that girls were taking away their jobs. The threat perception was higher (more than one in three boys) in rural areas. Boys do not approve of the economic agency of women as they feel (about one in five boys) that they would be married and looked after by someone. In other words, women do not need to have a job and boys are main bread winners of the family. Also, one in four boys across urban and



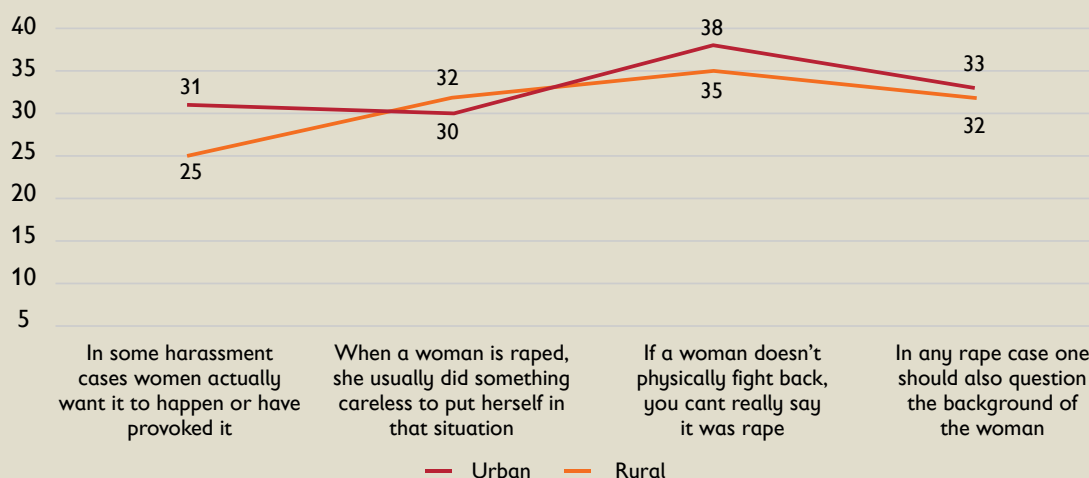
Figure 4.3
Prevailing prejudices of adolescent boys towards adolescent girls
(in % who agreed)



Base: Urban = 704; rural = 437

Figure 4.4

**Prevailing prejudices of adolescent boys towards adolescent girls
(in % who agreed)**



Base: Urban = 704; rural = 437

rural areas, also feel that the government was giving too much of attention to fulfilling girl's/women's rights and not doing enough for the rights of boys/men. It may be noted that boys, both in rural and urban areas, perceive that government policies are biased in favour of girls and that could be possibly infringing on the economic opportunities that were previously only for boys.

Further inquiry was made through four more statements based on what boys perceive about the role of any girl in an episode of harassment and also rape. Figure 4.4 depicts the same.

The study points to a significant number of boys seeing a definite role of women in inviting trouble onto themselves. The survey shows that almost one in three boys blame the woman for having provoked some instances of harassment. Again in both urban and rural areas, one out of three boys were of the opinion that a woman is responsible for putting herself in a situation where she was raped. Also about two out of five boys felt that an offence cannot be termed as a rape if the woman does not physically fight back. Over 30 per cent of the boys participating in the survey felt that it is important to check the background of a woman in a rape case

to determine whether or not she is of sound moral 'character'. These findings indicate the boys' inability to perceive the need of girls to access public spaces without fear of any kind of harassment. It further reflects limited understanding by boys that public spaces should have enabling factors for everyone to access their rights, including girls. For them, these issues are more episode-centric and can be curbed if girls take enough precautions.

This mind-set is perhaps rooted in the way power is displayed in their homes and how they see the position of women in their homes. To obtain an understanding of this, the study also looked at the position of women in their household.

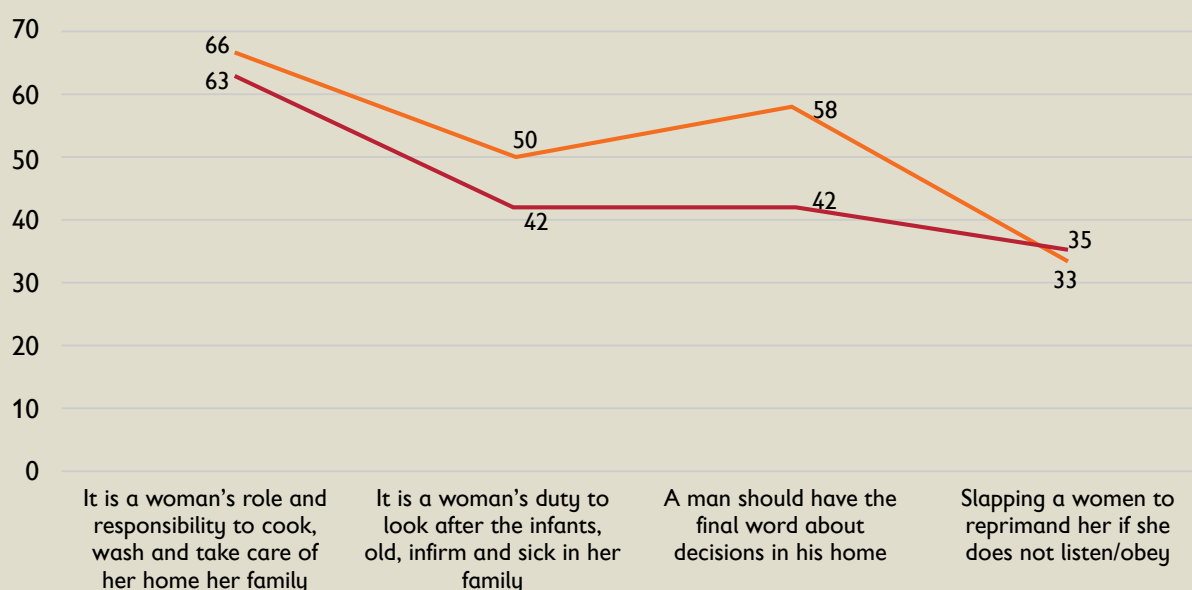
4.2.3. Perception regarding position of women

Perception of boys regarding position of women has been looked at from a viewpoint of stereotypical roles ascribed to women and men within households. Data in figure 4.5 provides the proportion of adolescent boys who were inclined to agree, to each of the given statements.

It was observed that 63 to 66 per cent of boys across both, urban and rural centres, agree with the view

Figure 4.5

Views of adolescent boys on the position of women (in % who agreed)



Base: Urban = 704; rural = 437

that it is the woman who is responsible to cook, wash and take care of the home and the family. This in effect means that close to two out of three boys across urban and rural India held the stereotypical notion that the most important role of a woman is within the walls of her household. This is also complemented by 42 per cent boys in urban areas and 50 per cent boys in rural areas of the studied states agreeing to the view that it is the woman's duty to look after the infant, old, infirm and the sick.

As the graph illustrates, one in three adolescent boys were of the view that slapping a woman as corrective action was appropriate. Almost half of both, rural and urban adolescent boys agreed that a man should have the final word about decisions in his home. Looking at these indicators collectively helps comprehend that about half of the adolescent boys have stereotypical notions of the position of women vis-à-vis men. According to them, men have material as well as decision-making rights over women.

The above analysis was repeated once again but this time, disaggregated by the size of the

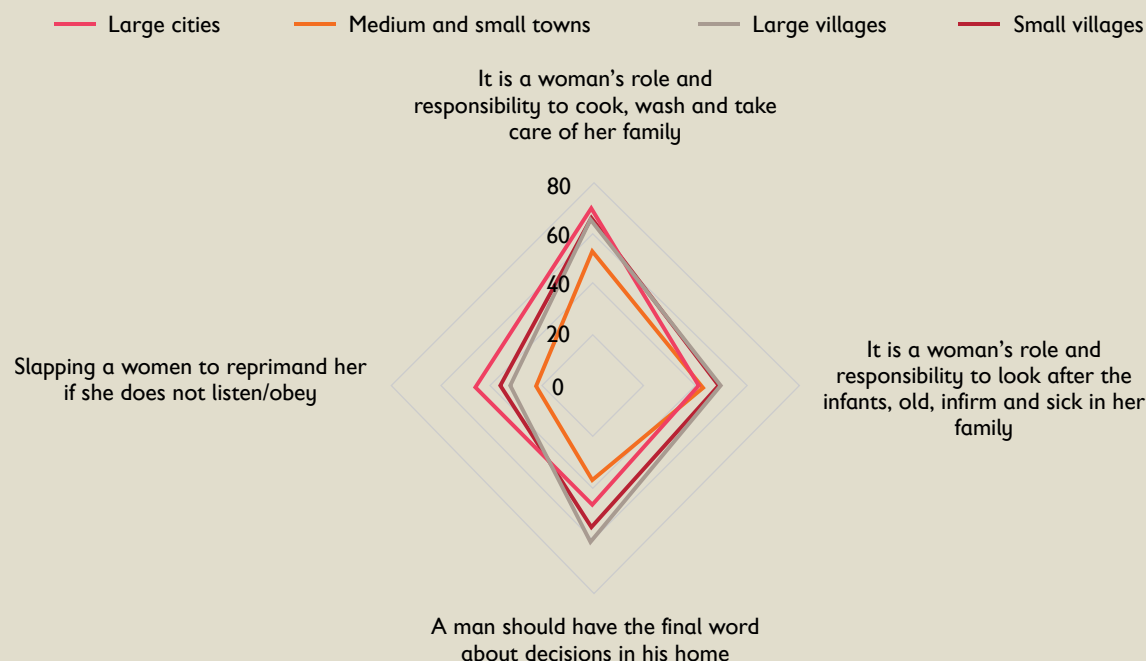
settlement. The findings have been depicted in figure 4.6 (next page)

The data reveals that among all four settlement typologies, adolescent boys from medium and small towns showed a lower degree of regressive trends compared to boys from other typologies. Overall perception places men at an advantageous position over women. It is the men who control the households. Boys in their adolescence, form these opinions from what they see at home and elsewhere around them. It is possible, this mind-set is carried forward by them to the larger public domain where they cannot consider that girls have equal rights as them and also that the dignity of girls need to be respected and maintained.

However, during the FGDs with adolescent boys facilitated by the study team in all the states, some of the boys did acknowledge that the attitude of society was not fair towards girls. Many were of the opinion that girls are intrinsically weak and need protection from a male – family or friends.

Figure 4.6

Views of adolescent boys on the position of women within household by settlement size (in % who agreed)



Base: Large cities = 403; small towns = 301; large villages = 246; small villages = 191

“There is a need to protect girls because they are physically weak and soft hearted. Girls should always be accompanied by someone for them to be safe. They feel safe in the presence of boys.”Adolescent boys, rural West Bengal

“Insecurity is always there for girls whether in deserted areas or crowded places...wherever she goes, the brother has to be responsible.” Adolescent boys from rural Madhya Pradesh.

While many agreed that girls cannot be held responsible for the unsafe conditions in public places, their dress code was a bane of contention. Everyone believed that girls should dress appropriately while accessing public spaces.

“If girls wear short and fashionable clothes, it could provoke men to harass them.” Adolescent boys from urban Assam

Some of the boys participating in the FGDs felt that a girl's choice of attire has no relation to her safety. But when probed further, it emerged that they would not allow their own sisters to wear tight or short dresses in public spaces.

“If you create the right atmosphere at home, then boys will behave properly in public as well. But if they are made to feel superior and feel they can get away by misbehaving with women/girls, no matter what the girls wear, it will be commented on.” Adolescent girl from Delhi

4.2.4. Determinants of perception among adolescent boys

A scientific measure of the degree of influence that different independent variables (background or profile variables that define a respondent) have on the perceptions held by boys has been extracted using logistic regression. For the construct of this analysis, a set of statements created to measure the current attitudinal predispositions among adolescent boys have been taken as outcome or dependent variables. These statements were regressed against

the following independent variables to determine the influence of the latter on the former:

The outcome of the logistic regression analysis provides the strength of the individual independent variable in determining the perception of adolescent boys with respect to various issues that define the position of women.

Odds ratio value above 1.0 implies rejection of the statements (dependant variables that define perception) while values less than 1.0 imply acceptance. Assuming that where an Odds ratio of

Table 4.1

Dependent and Independent variables to measure perception of boys

Dependant variables	Independent variables
<p>Perception about the role of girls/ women as economic actors</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. These days, girls are generally taking jobs away from boys. 2. Girls will all get married and have someone to look after them, so they do not need to work. 3. The government is only worried about girls' or women's rights and not doing anything about the rights of boys. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard of living Index based on asset ownership in a household (solvent households with asset ownership above mean vs poorer household with asset ownership below mean). • Education of chief earner of the family (more than primary vs. less than primary). • For urban: Type of urban locality where residence is (HIG/MIG colonies vs. LIG/ EVS/slum localities). • For rural: Social background (general caste and OBC vs. SC/ST). • For urban: Size of settlement (larger cities vs smaller towns). • For rural: Size of settlement (large vs small villages).
<p>Perceptions regarding the role of girls/women in an episode of harassment, including rape</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. When a woman is raped, she usually did something careless to put herself in that situation. 5. In some harassment cases women actually want it to happen or have provoked it. 6. If a woman doesn't physically fight back, you can't really say it was rape. 7. In any rape case one should also question the background of the woman involved. 	
<p>Perceptions regarding the stereotypical role of a woman in a household</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. A woman's role and responsibility is to cook, wash and take care of her family. 9. A man needs to have the final word about decisions in his home as he is the breadwinner. 10. A woman's role and responsibility is to look after the infant, old, infirm and sick. 	

Figure 4.7

Result of logistic regression depicting Odds Ratios for urban areas for adolescent boys

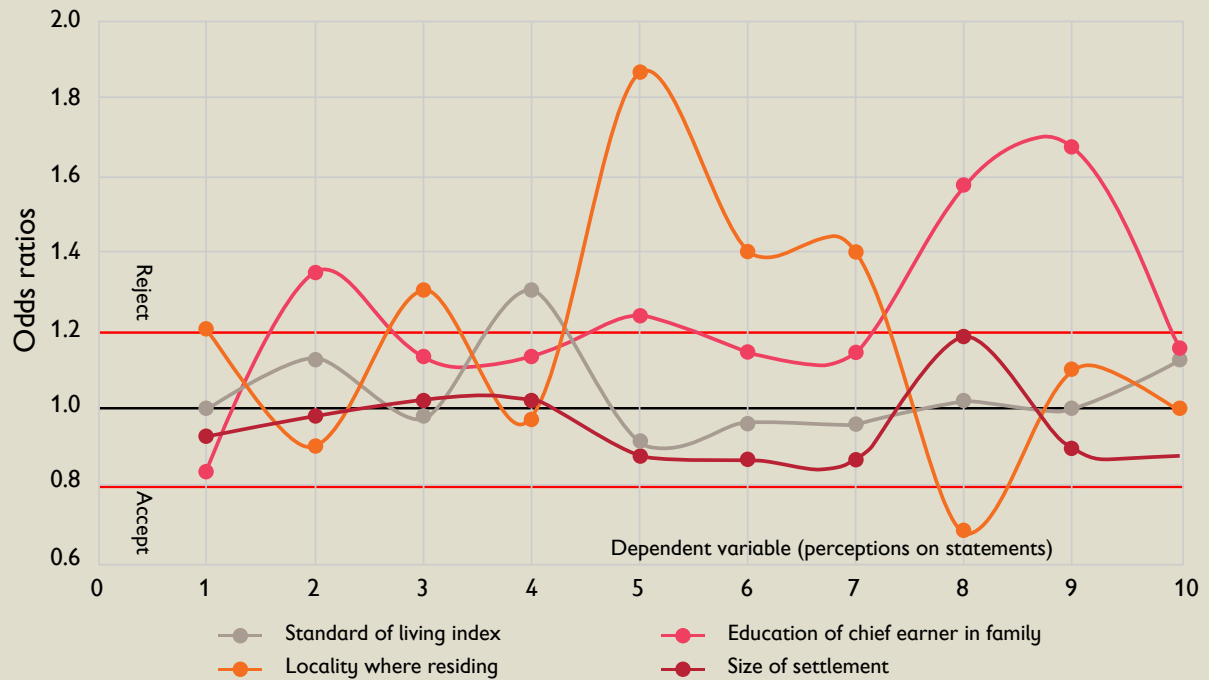
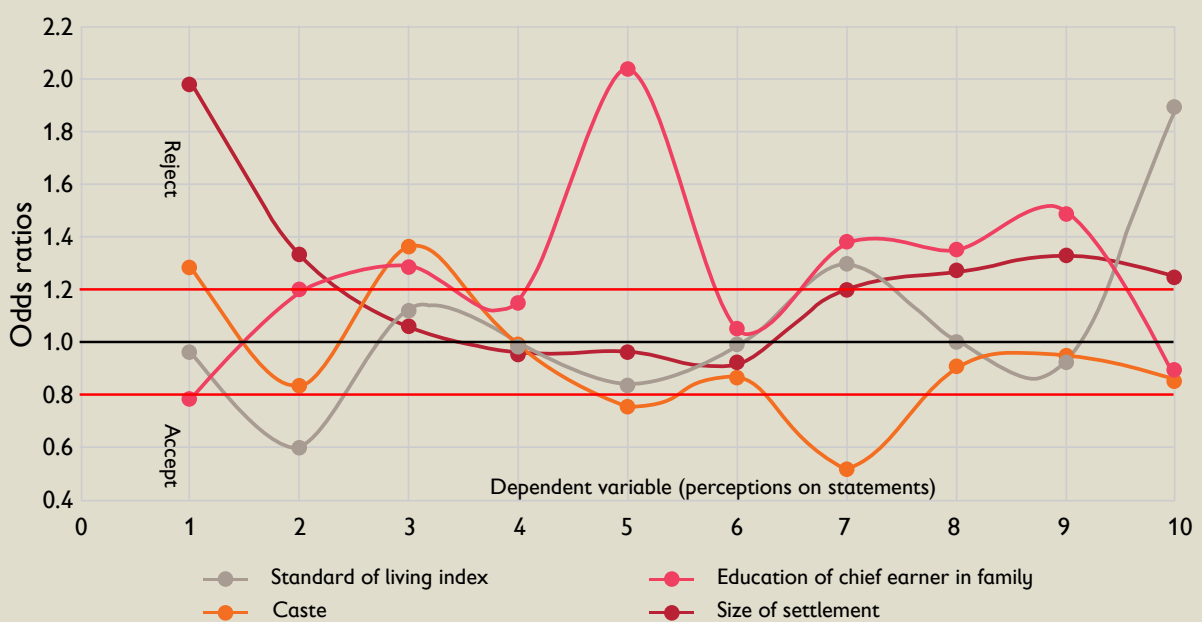


Figure 4.8

Result of logistic regression depicting Odds Ratios for rural areas for adolescent boys



± 0.2 (or 20 percentage points) from normal (1.0) represents statistically significant influence of an independent variable on the dependant variable, the following conclusions can be drawn for adolescent boys hailing from urban areas:

In urban locations, the locality they reside in (HIG/MIG colonies or LIG/EWS/slum neighbourhoods) and the education background of their household's breadwinner (educated above or below primary level) have a significant influence on shaping perceptions among boys regarding their views about girls. The data revealed that boys living in HIG/MIG colonies are statistically more likely to have a more empathetic view regarding victims of sexual assault than those from LIG/EWS/slum localities who tend to be critical of the victims and their 'moral character'.

Similarly, (as seen in figure 4.7), boys living in homes where the breadwinner is educated beyond the primary education level are more likely to have a more liberal and less stereotypical outlook towards the role of a woman as a wife and a mother, as compared to a gender stereotyped outlook displayed by boys from households with lower education. The education level of chief earner and the fact that the family stays in a High/Middle Income Group settlement have possibly resulted

in greater exposure of the boys to a more liberal attitudes. Since women in such families are more likely to be economically empowered as compared to their counterparts in Lower Income Groups settlement, this could have also influenced the perception of boys. The findings show that wealth and size of the settlement (large cities vs. medium and small towns) did not play a significant role in shaping the perception of boys.

Similarly, the education of the main breadwinner (and perhaps the decision maker) of the family in rural areas was a significant determinant of the perceptions that prevail among the adolescent boys. The data clearly revealed that while boys from educated households were far more likely to reject the notion of question/blame the girl subjected to sexual assault, they were also far more inclined to reject gender stereotypes than boys from uneducated households. Possibly the behaviour of an educated father is more liberal towards the girls or women of the household which might have resulted in the boys getting exposed to less prejudiced attitudes. Further, in rural India the social background of the respondents was also found to be a significant influencer of how they view girls and women.



The study finds that boys belonging to the general caste and OBC households show greater likelihood to reject the notion that girls are an economic threat for boys, but at the same time, they were far more inclined to question/blame the women and girls who were victims of sexual harassment, as compared to those from SC and ST homes. Unlike in urban India, here the size of the settlement from where the respondent came is a clear determinant of perceptions. Boys coming from villages with a population of more than 5000 and close to the district headquarters had the advantage of being brought up or living in key growth centres and trading points in the rural economy. This physical proximity is likely to give more exposure to the residents to less stereotypical attitudes about women and girls. On the other hand, boys from relatively affluent or solvent households in rural areas are more inclusive in their mind-set than those from poorer homes. This is unlike the observation in urban areas.

4.3. Predispositions among parents of adolescent girls in the studied states

4.3.1. Perception of unsafe spaces across urban and rural areas

The figure 4.9 (next page) depicts spaces which

parents feel are unsafe for girls in the urban and rural areas in the studied states.

Almost one out of two parents perceived market and street to be among the most unsafe spaces for the girls (like the adolescent boys did). Two out of five parents perceived public gatherings to be unsafe for girls. School or college premises seemed unsafe to 34 per cent urban parents and 37 per cent rural parents. This was followed by cinema halls and malls (33 per cent urban and 18 per cent rural), public transport (26 per cent urban and 20 per cent rural) and spaces for open defecation (11 per cent urban and 14 per cent rural).

Perceived reasons given by the parents which compromised the safety of these spaces for girls were further analysed. It was found that parents (66 per cent urban and 61 per cent rural) also perceived the presence of a crowd to be a barrier in safety of girls, like the boys and the girls themselves. Poor lighting and presence of rowdy people consuming alcohol were also perceived to be important reasons for spaces to be unsafe.

Further the study looks at the prejudices parents have towards adolescent girls as it is understood that these lead to the formation of the mind-set of the boys as well as the girls.

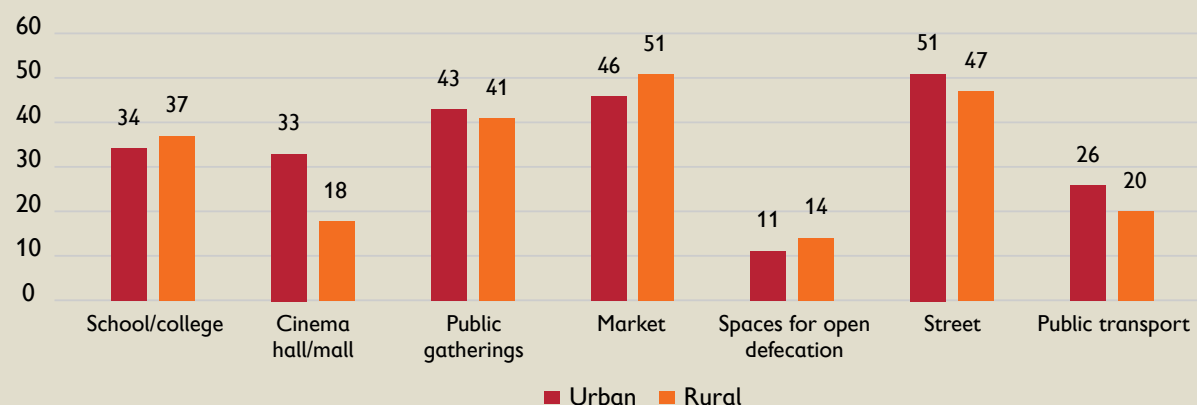


4.3.2 Prejudices among parents towards adolescent girls

Attitudinal predispositions of parents regarding prejudices they have against girls has been explored here. The inquiry was made through four statements (figure 4.11) which were read out to the respondents. These statements are based on what parents perceive about the role of girls as economic actors. Respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed to each of the statements and also to what extent.

More than 50 per cent of adolescent boys and around 50 per cent of the parents felt that the streets are the most unsafe space for the girls.

Figure 4.9
Spaces which parents feel are unsafe for girls (in %)

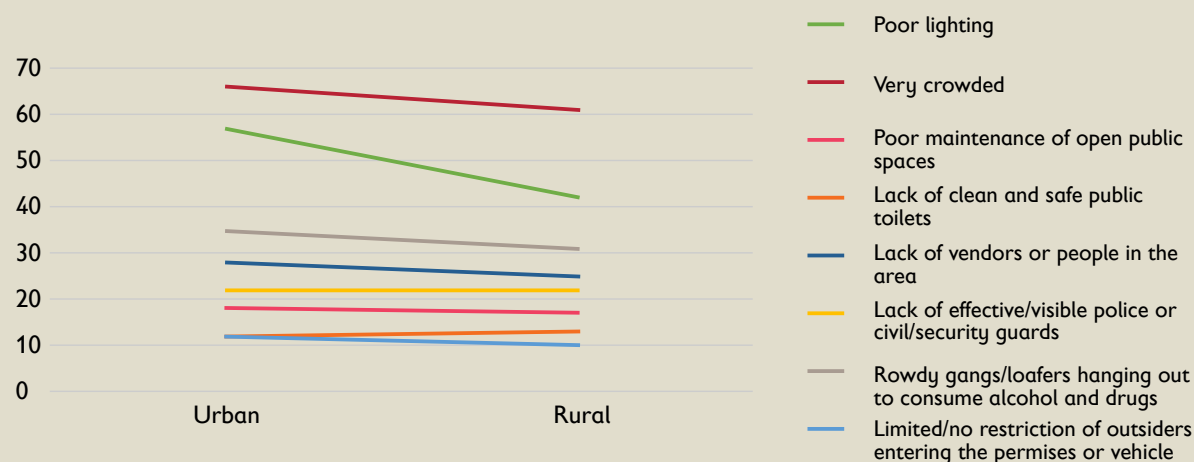


Base: Urban = 423; rural = 419



Figure 4.10

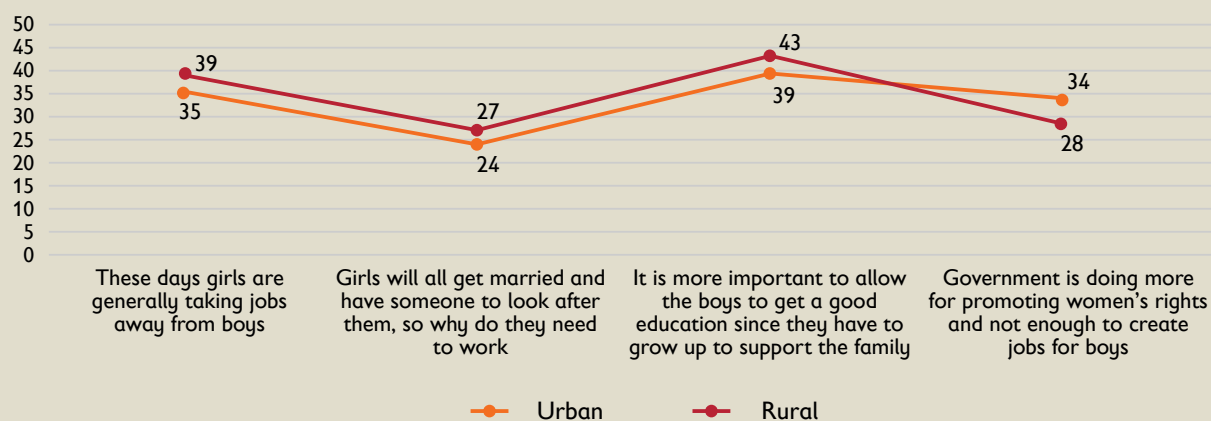
Perceived reasons given by parents as to why these spaces are unsafe (in %)



Base: Urban = 423; rural = 419

Figure 4.11

Proportion of parents who agreed to the given statements across urban and rural areas of the studied states



Base: Urban = 423; rural = 419

The views of the parents corroborated with that of the adolescent boys. 35 per cent of the parents from urban areas and 39 per cent of the parents from rural areas felt that girls are taking away jobs from boys; and 24 per cent urban parents and 27 per cent rural parents felt that girls do not need to work as they would all be looked after by someone after

their marriage. Two out of five parents felt that it is more important to allow boys to get a good education since they have to eventually earn and support the family. This demonstrates that in the view of the parents, the economic agency of boys is much more relevant than that of the girls. Data further says that almost two out of five parents



Summer Garden

FLOWER

Girl

are unhappy with the fact that the government is doing more to promote girls' rights rather than create jobs for boys.

Data was further disaggregated by the size of the settlement. The findings have been depicted in figure 4.12 below.

It is clear from the figure 4.12 that gender stereotypes persist in a large section of the population, in both rural and urban contexts. Parents in large cities and large villages are more concerned about girls taking away jobs and government not doing much to create jobs for boys. Likewise, parents from medium and small towns are also worried about prospects of employment of boys. Apart from prejudices about the role of girls' as economic actors, two other statements on the role of girls in any episode of harassment was also asked (figure 4.13).

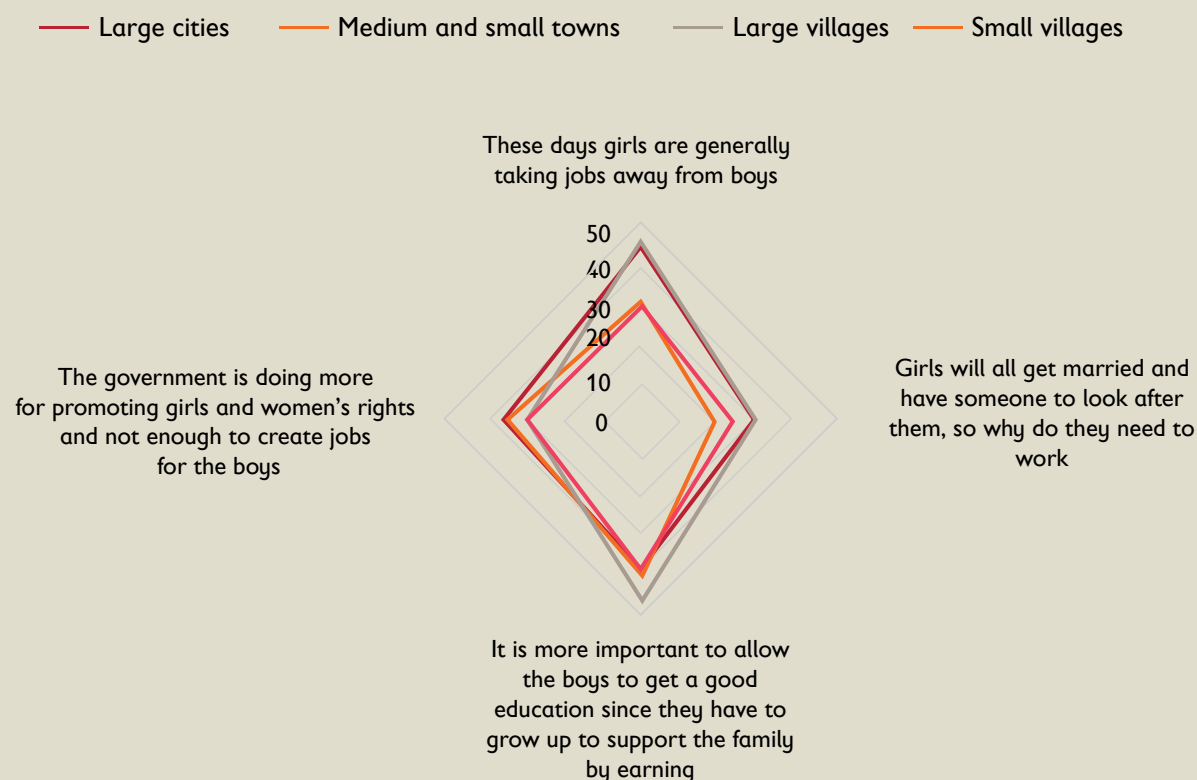
Two out of five parents in both rural and urban areas perceived an active role of girls in some of the harassment cases. 33 per cent urban parents and 25 per cent rural parents participating in the study felt that the background of the woman involved should be checked to ascertain her 'character'.

Data was further disaggregated into mother and father's view separately in the figure 4.14.

It is important to note that the number of mothers who agreed were far more than the fathers with two out of five mothers believing that incidents of harassment can be avoided if girls or women do not provoke the boys/ men. These mothers also felt that women of 'loose moral character' have higher chances of being raped. The perception of the mothers was found to be more regressive than the fathers in the studied sample.

Figure 4.12

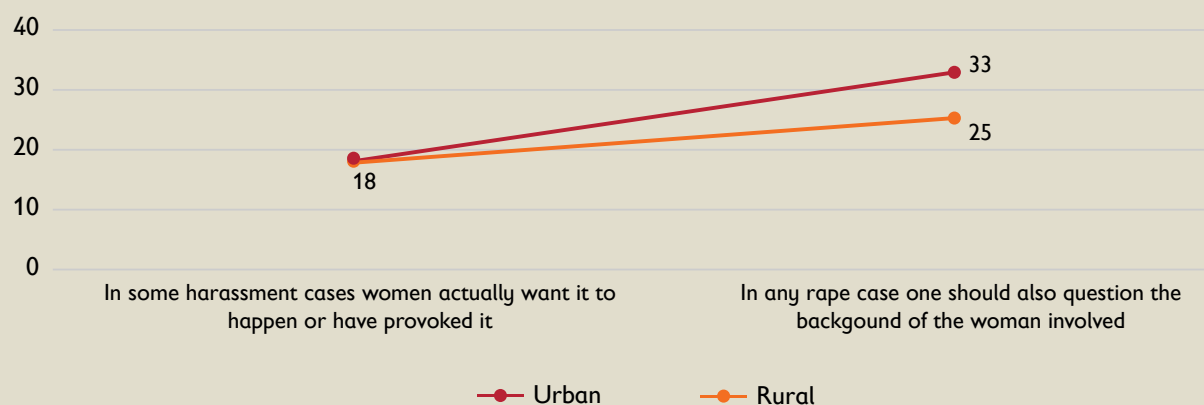
Proportion of parents who agreed to the given statement across settlement typologies



Base: Urban = 423; rural = 419

Figure 4.13

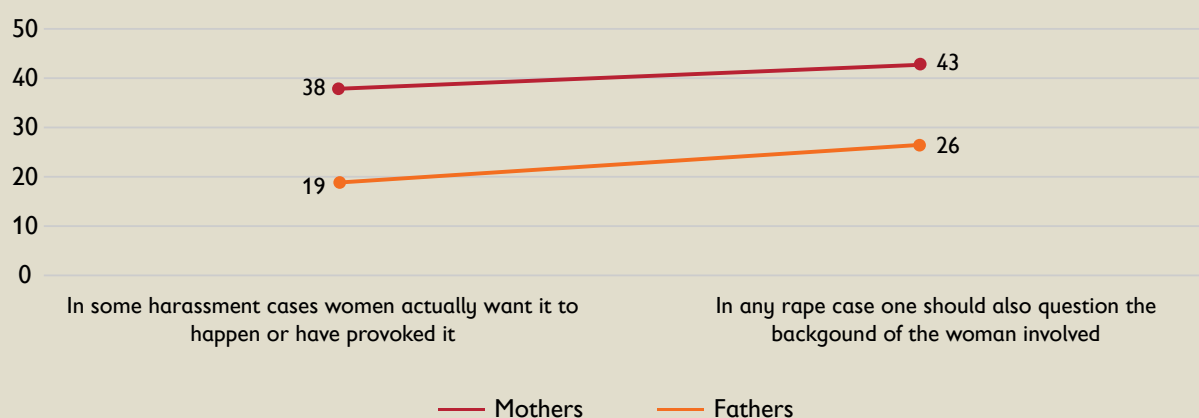
Proportion of parents who agreed to the given statements across urban and rural areas of the studied states



Base: Urban = 423; rural = 419

Figure 4.14

Proportion of mother and father who agreed to the given statement



Base: Fathers = 295, Mothers = 547

Lopsided societal norms have always favoured boys. Adversity in the sex ratio in India has clearly indicated that sons are preferred over daughters and considered more precious. This social phenomenon has been reiterated by parents, time and again. More often than not, girls are seen as burden by their parents, and hence neglected. It is in this context that this study also sought to investigate whether or not the current attitudes displayed by the boys regarding how they viewed the girls is passed on from their parents. Hence

the predispositions carried by the parents were ascertained.

4.3.3 Predispositions among parents regarding role of women

The following figure (4.15) depicts findings from the survey on the mind-set of parents of adolescent girls on the position of a woman at home.

More than one out of three parents in both urban and rural locations agree that it is a woman's role

Figure 4.15

Proportion of parents who agreed to the given statements across urban and rural areas of the studied states

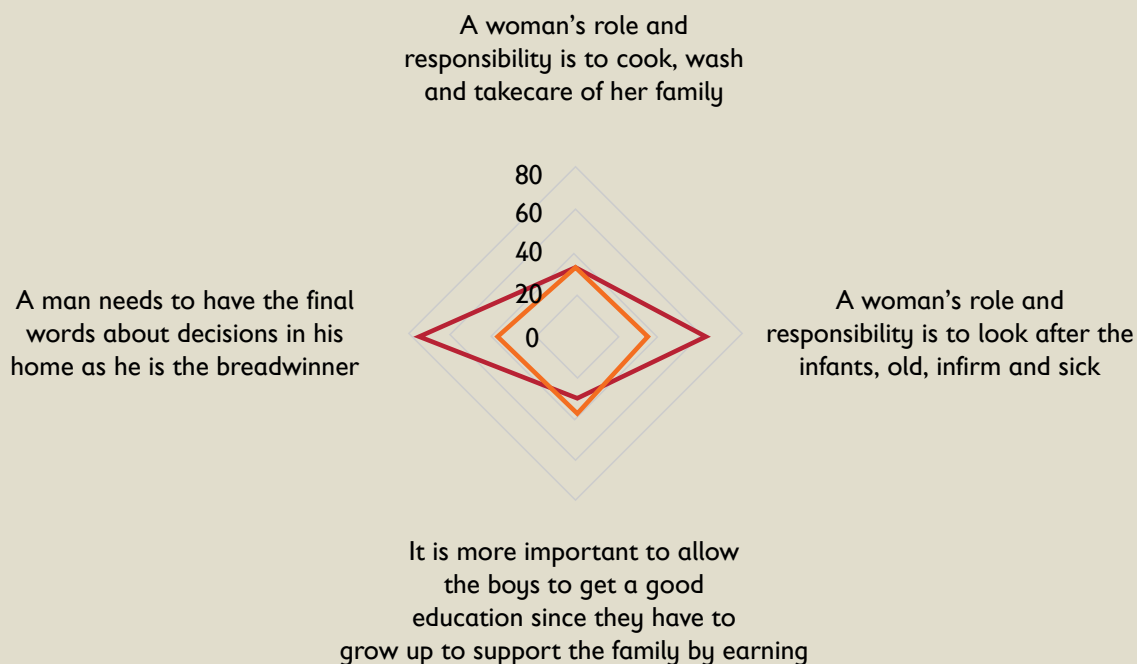


Base: Urban = 423; rural = 419

Figure 4.16

Views of mothers and fathers on the role of girls within household (proportion agreeing)

— Mother — Father



Base: Father = 295, mother = 547

and responsibility to do all the household chores. But, in the same vein, they feel that it is the man who has all the power vested in him for taking important decisions as he is the one who has economic agency.

The above data was seen from the perspective of the father and mother separately as shown in figure 4.16.

The data in Figure 4.16 above depicts a majority of mothers (more than 60 per cent) expressing



the opinion that it was their duty to look after the infants and old and sick in the family. A large number of mothers (about 75 per cent) were also in agreement with the fact that men necessarily need to be the key decision-makers as they remain the family's main breadwinners. However, it was also clear that not as many fathers endorsed such a point of view. It may be a reflection of resigned fate of most of the mothers. It is a possibility that most of the mothers participating in the survey might have already gotten used to a life of subjugation and subservience and what they were actually describing was only a reiteration of their state of being. Also, their inability to break away

from the biased attitudes could be resulting in them reinforcing the same with their daughters and sons.

4.3.4 Determinants of perception among parents of adolescent girls

As was done for adolescent boys, a similar analysis was done for parents to identify specific determinants which possibly govern perceptions and views of parents towards the position of women in society in general and a woman's role within the family in particular. As before, this part of the analysis involved running a logistic regression using nine perception-based dependent variables and location of residence, community, economic well-

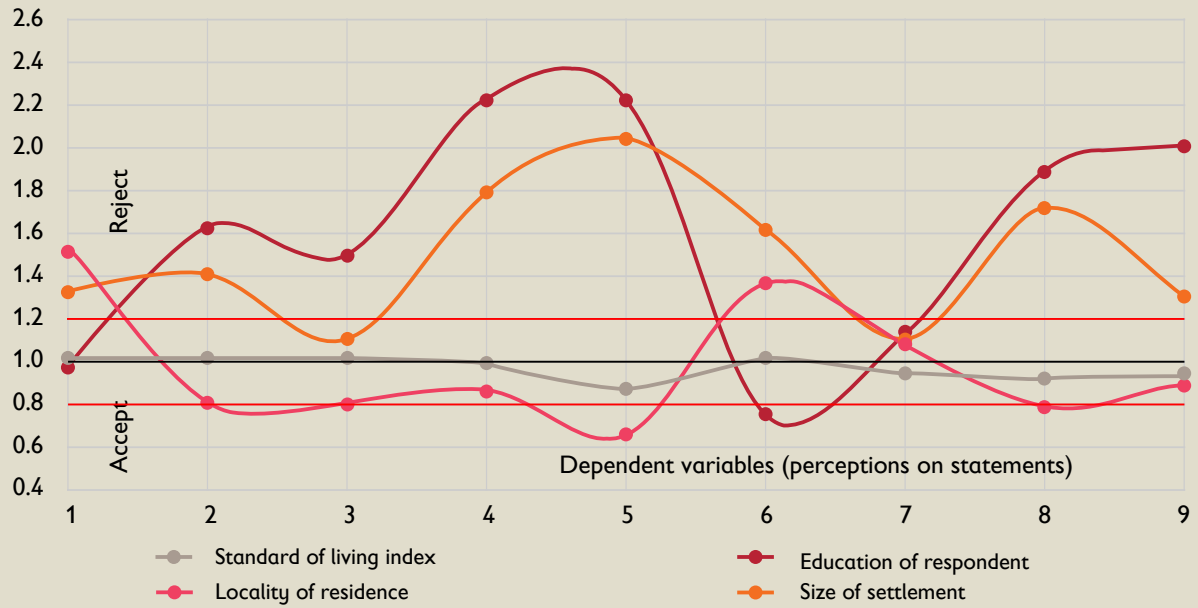
Table 4.2

Dependent and Independent variables to measure perception of parents

Dependent variables	Independent variables
<p>Perception about girls as economic actors</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. These days, girls are generally taking jobs away from boys/men. 2. Girls will all get married and have someone to look after them, so they do not need to work. 3. The government is doing more for promoting girls' and women's and not enough to create jobs for the boys. <p>Perceptions regarding the role of girls/ women in an episode of harassment even rape</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. In some harassment cases women actually want it to happen or have provoked it. 5. In any rape case one should also question the background of the woman involved. <p>Perceptions regarding the role of a women in the household</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. A woman's important role and responsibility is to cook, wash and take care of her family. 7. It is more important to allow the boys to get a good education since they have to grow up to support the family by earning. 8. A man needs to have the final word about decisions in his home as he is the breadwinner. 9. A woman's important role and responsibility is to look after the infants, old, infirm and sick. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Standard of living Index based on asset ownership in a household (solvent households with asset ownership above mean vs poorer household with asset ownership below mean). 2. Education of responding parent (more than primary vs. less than primary). 3. For urban: Type of urban locality where residence is (HIG/MIG colonies vs. LIG/EWS/slum localities). 4. For rural: Social background (general caste and OBC vs. SC/ST). 5. For urban: Size of settlement (larger cities vs smaller towns). 6. For rural: Size of settlement (large vs small villages). 7. Gender of parent (mother vs. father).

Figure 4.17

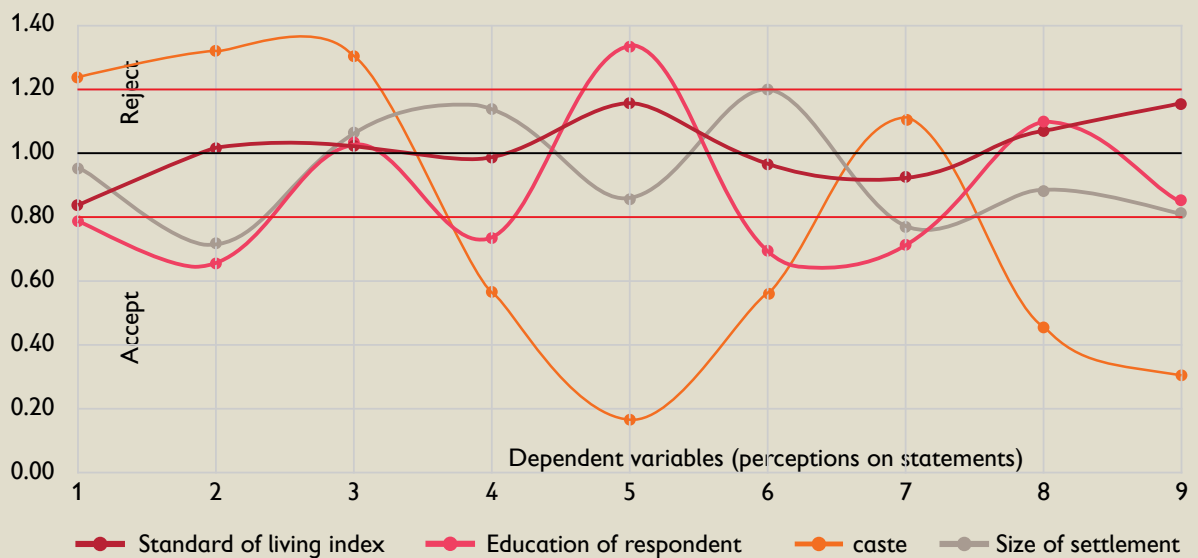
Result of logistic regression depicting Odds Ratios for perceptions of parents in urban areas



Base: Urban parents = 423

Figure 4.18

Result of logistic regression depicting Odds Ratios for perception of parents in rural areas



Base: Rural Parents = 419

being and the gender of parent as independent variables. The findings have been presented below:

The above findings have thrown up similarities with the findings from adolescent boys. For instance, here too education level of respondent, settlement size, and to a lesser extent, the nature of their residential localities are strong determinants of their perceptions. The derived odds ratios clearly suggest that better educated parents as well as parents from larger cities were more positive and accommodative regarding girls and their financial independence. Likewise, they were far more empathetic with victims of sexual abuse instead of being judgemental.

The figure above points to the fact that parents from rural India behave differently to those from urban areas. Here the only significant determinant seems to have been community, but the nature of influence was different. For instance, here one can find that upper castes and OBC parents were far more sympathetic towards girls and their struggle for economic independence but they were more critical of the 'character' of a rape victim, at least significantly more than those parents from the backward and marginalised sections of society.

Further, upper caste and OBC parents endorsed a stereotypical role of a woman in the household, more than those who were from SC/ST communities.

It is clear from the above discussion that gender stereotypes strongly prevail in the mind-set of parents and hence the mobility of the girls is restricted. Due to safety concerns, these stereotypes further impinge on the lives of the girls. Therefore, it becomes important to gauge whether the aspirations of the daughters regarding higher education or employment is met by the parents or not. The next section explores the same.

4.4. Parents as an enabler for pursuing aspirations

4.4.1. Outlook of parents regarding higher education for their daughters

The present study allowed for developing some insights into how Indian parents feel on the question of providing higher education opportunities for their daughters and their perceptions regarding their daughters becoming self-reliant. Instead of directly inquiring about their perceptions on higher education



A father's concern for safety

Raghuram, a resident of Baghlingampally, Hyderabad, lives in a MIG colony with his two children – a son aged 14 years and a daughter, Shanti, aged 15 years. He is very fond of his daughter and compares her to Goddess Laxmi. Raghuram is of the firm opinion that daughters are more obedient than sons. After he lost his wife two years ago, his daughter has been not only taking care of the household but also helps her brother with his studies. He is determined to provide equal opportunities to both his son and daughter to make something out of their lives.

The locality the family lives in has witnessed a few incidents of girls being stalked. In one case, a girl was attacked by a stalker who hurled acid at her (fortunately though, nothing happened to the girl). Following this episode, Raghuram worries for his daughter's safety, especially when she is late on her way back home from her evening tuitions. He is also concerned about her traveling in a crowded bus. The concerned father bought his daughter a mobile phone to keep her safe and remain in touch. But he understands that this is not enough.

Over the past few years Raghuram has seen a transformation in his daughter. After the stalking incidents, his daughter had refused to go to school

on her own and had to be dropped to school. He is aware that she has been reading about the sexual atrocities aimed at girls and also knows they talk about these in school. He feels that his daughter has also become guarded and genuinely apprehensive. He has also noticed that she no longer goes outdoors unless absolutely necessary. In fact, he can't remember when was the last time her friends had come over or she had gone to her friend's house.

Raghuram is of the firm belief that schools have to teach their girl students the art of self-defence, perhaps in collaboration with the police. Also, he wants his daughter to be formally trained on how to responsibly use the social media. While he does not regret giving Shanti a mobile phone and is aware that she knows how to access free Wi-Fi at places and has a fairly large list of friends on her phone, he is apprehensive she could be stalked or bullied over cyberspace – a fact he has recently come to know from an awareness campaign that was aired on TV by the government. He often feels rather helpless that while his daughter has changed her lifestyle to avoid too much of interaction in public space, this is forcing her to be more active in cyber space and thus leaving her open to other forms of abuse which he himself is unable to control or prevent.



Table 4.3

Proportion of parents who have had their daughters express a desire to go in for higher studies or even join a job after 18 years of age and start earning (in %)

Urban		Rural		Urban		Rural	
Larger cities	Smaller towns	Large villages	Small villages	HIG/MIG colonies	LIG/EWS/slum localities	General caste and OBC	SC and ST
81	61	67	58	68	64	65	63

for girls, the line of inquiry employed was to first see whether their daughters have ever expressed a desire to them to pursue higher studies. The above table 4.3 provide the survey findings on the matter.

Four out of five parents in large cities have had a conversation with their children, allowing their daughters the space to express any interest in higher education or employment. It is a different case in the other settlement typologies. Around two-thirds of the parents reported that their daughters had expressed their interest in higher studies to them.

Of all the parents who have had their daughters express a desire for higher studies, close to three out of four in urban areas had felt inclined to encourage the same. This proportion was lower

in rural areas, and considerably so in smaller villages. Similarly, parents from larger cities came across as being more supportive of their daughters' aspirations than the ones from smaller towns.

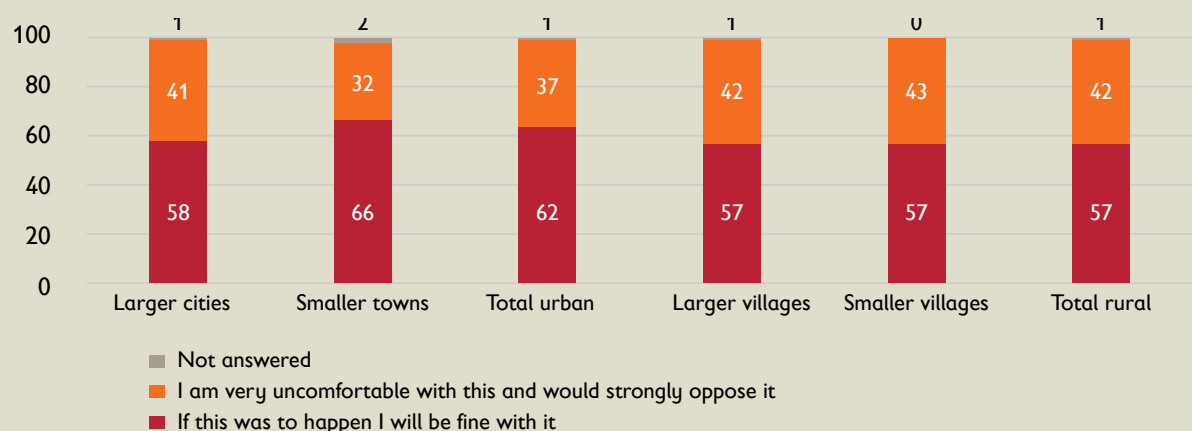
The qualitative findings revealed that while most parents, across states, wanted to provide for good education for their daughters, some parents succumbed to societal norms and reported that their community (caste) would not approve of girls going for higher education.

4.4.2. Outlook of parents regarding employment for their daughters

This segment looks at whether or not parents would be inclined to agree to the notion that girls need to be

Figure 4.19

Proportion of parents who would be comfortable if their adolescent daughter joins an employment (in %)



Base: Larger cities = 220; smaller towns = 203; large villages = 236; small villages = 183

encouraged to join some employment at a young age (post 18 years of age), even though it could mean that she might have to work for long hours and alongside men of different ages. The survey found the following:

The survey data (figure 4.19) clearly indicated that around half of the parent respondents from across all settlement typologies would be comfortable with the notion of their daughters starting employment but close to 30 per cent would be very uncomfortable with the notion and oppose it. The same query was also run

against colony typologies in urban areas and community in rural areas. Even though the variations in perception of parents living in HIG/MIG colonies varied considerably as compared to parents from more marginalised neighbourhoods, with respect to being comfortable with the possibility of their daughters working side-by-side throughout the day with boys and men in a job, the acceptance was slightly lower in rural India with community playing no differentiating role. The following section looks at whether socio-economic profiles of respondents' influenced perception outcomes.

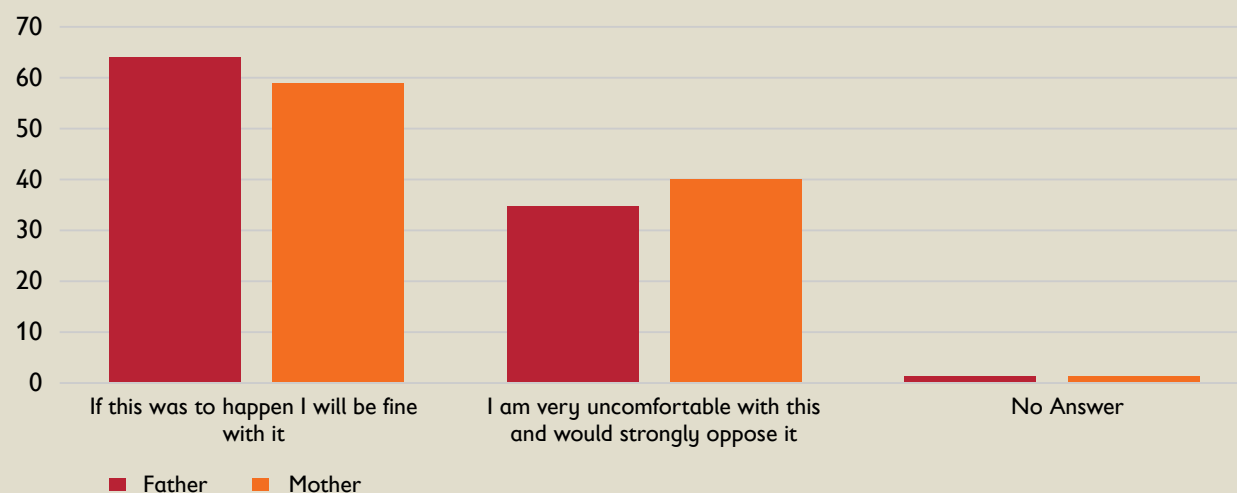
Table 4.4

Socio-economic profile as an influencer of perceptions among parents regarding their degree of comfort with their daughters joining employment at an early age (in %)

	Urban		Rural	
	HIG/MIG colony	LIG/EWS/slum locality	General caste and OBC	SC and ST
If this was to happen I will be fine with it	69	55	58	56
I am very uncomfortable with this and would strongly oppose it	30	43	41	44
No answer	1	2	1	0

Figure 4.20

Proportion of fathers and mothers who would be comfortable with their daughters working alongside men in a job



Base: Father = 295, mother = 547

Within the urban milieu, over half the parents living in lower income colonies, including slum settlements, reported that they would not be comfortable with their daughters joining employment at an early age, but this proportion was much lower among the more affluent/solvent households. However, in rural India, community does not seem to have influenced the perception on this issue.

At this juncture, it was further investigated as to whether or not the responses offered by mothers and fathers differed significantly. Of a total of 842 parents who participated in this survey, around 35 per cent were fathers while 65 per cent were mothers. The data points to the fact that majority among both would have been fine with it.

Rural families were more conservative regarding their daughters working in a male dominated environment as compared to their urban counterparts. However, the safety of their daughter remained highest on their list when they looked for colleges and jobs; preferring to send their daughters to institutions that were not co-educational or had separate transport arrangements from the area of their residence.

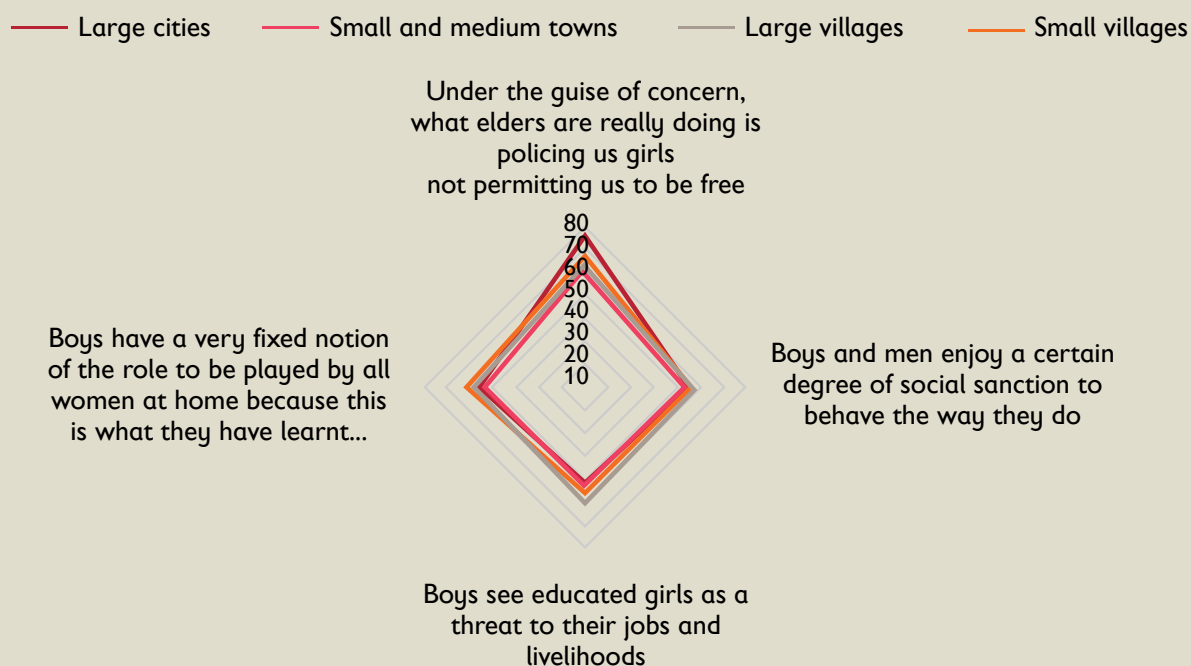
Above 60 per cent of boys agree with the view that it is the woman who is responsible to cook, wash and take care of the home and the family.

4.5. Opinion of girls on the stereotypical notions about them

It is pertinent to understand the perception of adolescent girls on the stereotypes that are prevalent in the society and examine whether the girls are subservient to the stereotypes or they think otherwise. This was gauged through four statements to which they had to agree or disagree. Figure 4.21 presents the proportion of girls who agreed to the statements.

Except in large villages where three out of five girls perceive that their freedom is curtailed in the guise of the elders' concerns, the proportion is about three girls out of five in other settlement typologies. On

Figure 4.21
Views of girls on the social stereotypes



Base: Large cities = 1207; small and medium towns = 614; large villages = 763; small villages = 544



the other hand, boys and men enjoy a certain degree of freedom as felt by almost 50 per cent of the girls. Again, same number of girls perceive that boys tend to have a fixed notion of the role to be played by the girls and women and this is a notion passed down to them by the parents and grand-parents. That is why girls feel boys do not approve of the role of a girl as an economic actor. About two out five girls are of the opinion that boys see educated girls as a threat to their livelihood sources. Adolescent girls do understand the restrictive boundaries they are forced to adhere to and the stereotypes that are being carried forward by the parents and boys that limit their progress. They also see a certain degree of social sanction in the behaviour of the boys. Therefore, it is important to understand in this context the measures that can be taken by the girls to keep themselves safe in the public spaces.

4.6. Opinion on what measures girls need to adopt to be safe in public spaces

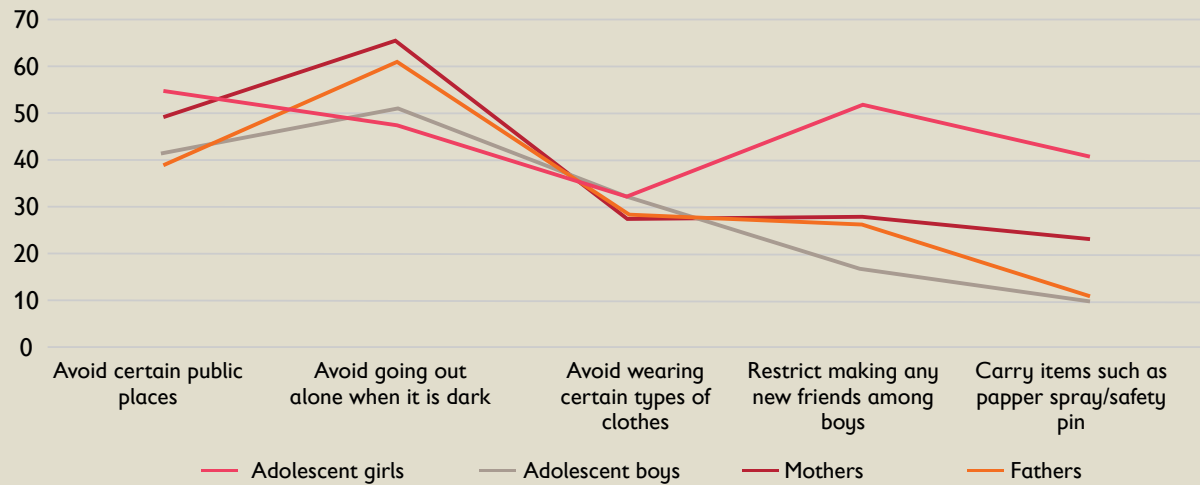
Adolescent boys, parents of adolescent girls and girls themselves were asked about the essential

safety measures that girls need to adopt for their own safety in public spaces. The intention was to understand the influence of gender stereotypes on acceptable preventive measures. It was also aimed at understanding the compromises involved in these measures in terms of denial of rights to girls and acceptability of same to the primary target group, i.e. the girls themselves.

Fathers and mothers preferred restricting the movement of girls in public spaces after dark (Mothers – 66 per cent; Fathers – 61 per cent) as a solution. More than 50 per cent of adolescent girls considered not initiating friendship with strangers as a safety enhancing measure. Carrying pepper sprays is an option for 41 per cent of girls. On the other hand, the thought of carrying pepper sprays and safety pins was not endorsed by boys or fathers. The findings highlight existing gender stereotypes that have an influence in deciding what measures girls need to adopt to be safe in public places, as while more girls are inclined to take measures that show their active agency parents and boys are inclined to passive measures which ultimately put restrictions on their freedom and aspirations.

Figure 4.22

Opinion among different stakeholders on appropriate measures for girls to be safe in public places (in %)



Base: Adolescent girls = 3128; adolescent boys = 1141; mother = 547; father = 295

Figure 4.23

Opinion of adolescent girls on appropriate measures for girls to be safe in public spaces across settlement typologies (in %)



Base: Large cities = 1207; small and medium towns = 614; large villages = 763; small villages = 544



The study also looked at the views of adolescent girls, across different settlement typologies.

Avoiding certain public spaces has been cited by more than 50 per cent of the girls from each type of settlement. This willingness on the part of a large number of girls to avoid going to certain public places and also going out alone after dark shows that girls feel that they have no choice but to accept these restrictions on their movement. The concept of carrying defensive equipment along with oneself was endorsed by all categories but more so among urban girls. This shows that girls in urban areas are more likely to use their agency than restricting their movements as compared to girls from rural areas.

4.7. Conclusion

The above sections clearly point to the gendered notions harboured by boys and parents by virtue of perpetuation of gender stereotypes. Obvious fallouts of the same have also been deliberated upon. Some of the arguments have also cogently pointed towards the role of the women and girls themselves in validating the notions of men and boys.

The next chapter will take a closer look at the support mechanisms available to the girls and also the fallouts of reaching out to support mechanisms.

- Be it urban or rural areas, boys harbour gender stereotypes. However, on the issue of decision making at home, urban residents demonstrated less gender stereotypical expectations of the role of the women than their rural counterparts.
- Boys seemed aligned when posed with the question if slapping a woman a few times as a reprimand was a violent action.
- Boys living in villages were wary of the fact that girls are taking away their jobs, especially those living in larger villages where the aspirational quotient is likely to be in line with the urban areas. This is complemented by the findings that a higher proportion of boys from smaller villages seemed to believe that government is giving too much attention to fulfilling the entitlements of women and not doing enough for men. However, parents from large cities and large villages (as against small towns and small villages) were far more vocal regarding boys losing out jobs to girls.
- While many agreed that girls are not responsible for the unsafe conditions in public places, their dress code was considered an issue of concern with everyone believing that girls should dress appropriately while going to the public spaces.
- Across both, rural and urban centres, more than 60 per cent boys agree with the view that the primary role of women in the society is that of taking care of her home and family. Also, mothers overwhelmingly felt that it was their duty in life to make the necessary sacrifices to keep the family together. However, boys living in homes where the chief earner is educated beyond the primary education level are statistically more likely to have a less gender biased outlook towards the role of a woman as a wife and as a mother, as compared to a more gender stereotyped outlook carried by the boys from households where the chief earner is not educated beyond primary education.
- In rural areas education of the main bread-earner (and perhaps decision maker) of the family was a significant determinant of the perceptions that prevail among the adolescent boys. The data clearly reveals that while boys from educated households are far more likely to reject the notion of questioning/blaming the girl subjected to sexual assault, they were also far more inclined to reject gender stereotypes than boys from uneducated households.
- Boys living in HIG/MIG colonies are statistically more likely to have a more empathetic view regarding victims of sexual assault than those from LIG/EWS/slum localities who tend to be critical of the victims and their 'moral character'.
- Community was a very strong differentiator in the rural set-up when it came to endorsing or rejecting gender stereotypes. The data clearly revealed that boys as well as parents from SC/ ST households had a comparatively more positive outlook towards women and their larger role within society than general or OBC households, who remained more conservative.
- Among parents too, education level of respondent, the nature of their residential locality and the settlement size were strong determinants of their perceptions. Educated respondents (educated beyond primary) were less likely to carry a more regressive outlook about girls and their struggle for economic independence, perception regarding women subjected to sexual assault and whether they were perpetrators and not victims.
- Girls endorsed the idea of avoiding going out after dark or avoiding certain public spaces. But they were unhappy with the restriction placed on their movement. Girls in urban areas came across as being more likely to use their agency in terms of using some defence equipment like pepper spray, than restricting their movements as compared to girls from rural areas.

CHAPTER 5

Support Systems for Adolescent Girls and infringement of their Rights due to Safety Concerns



72 per cent of the adolescent girls from urban areas in the studied states said that they would confide in their mothers when they face harassment in a public space. This compares with 68 per cent girls in rural parts of the country.



One in three adolescent girls also mentioned that they would confide in their close friend. Teachers, school staff and local police do not feature significantly as their confidants.



30 per cent of the parents were either unsure or did not think that their daughters would readily open up to them if they are subject to harassment in public spaces.



Nearly two out of five adolescent girls who did not say that they would confide in their parents, felt that if their parents do come to know about an incident of harassment, they will, in all likelihood, stop them from going out alone and also restrict their movement outside of home.



42 per cent of parents surveyed as part of this study feel that parents like them are likely to regulate their daughters' movement in public spaces if they came to know of any incidence of harassment experienced by their daughters. Over 50 per cent agreed that they will probably end up scolding their daughters for letting this happen.



About 40 per cent of the adolescent girls and more than 50 per cent of the parents believe that if they did go to lodge a complaint, the reaction of the local police would range from blaming them to reluctance in entertaining their complaint.



About 20 per cent of adolescent girls and 11 per cent of parents had some awareness about the statutory bodies like CWCs and JJBs; and also the child helpline.

5.1. Introduction

The current chapter tries to understand the different support systems that are available to adolescent girls and the coping strategies employed by them. Support systems include parents, siblings, friends, relatives and teachers. This chapter tries to gauge the importance of these people in a girl's life in times of crisis and makes a detailed analysis of her support system – whether she confides in them or not; whether or not she is able to garner support for herself and gains enough comfort from them.

A society's misogynistic undertones translate into a fear of the repercussions of reporting harassment, especially physical assault and sexual assault. This fear proves to be an obstacle at every step for adolescent girls; ranging from the fear of being blamed for inviting attention, being blamed for letting the harassment come their way, being ostracized and living with stigma to the fear of their own safety. Studies have also shown that one of the primary reasons women don't come forward to report sexual harassment is shame (Engels, 2017).

For all the above, the role of supportive parents and close family becomes paramount. The importance of being able to confide in parents, siblings and others in the family in times of such crisis could, and often is, the difference between the perception of being secure and safe or feeling completely defenceless.

In the context of the above, this chapter looks at the circumstances that govern the likelihood of adolescent girls confiding in others if faced with harassment outside their homes, and their preferred support systems if and when they find themselves in an unsafe situation in a public space. It also looks at likely confidants of married girls within and outside their immediate families. This chapter also seeks to decipher why some girls would prefer not to discuss the issue of harassment with anyone and why some would avoid speaking to their families altogether. In this context, the chapter goes on to look at parents as immediate support systems for their daughters and whether their socio-economic background influences the choices made by girls on support systems.

The next part of this chapter deals with perception of girls regarding efficacy of local law enforcement as well as the awareness of adolescent and parents of the child helpline. The concluding part of the chapter deals with suggestions put across by girls from urban and rural India for long- and short-term

interventions pertaining to what the government needs to do to make public spaces safer for them.

5.2. Preferred support systems of girls who might find themselves in duress

Adolescent girls participating in the survey were asked to state whether they would come out and confide in someone if they were to be subjected to any form of harassment while outside of their homes. The data reveals that four out of five would indeed do so and this was consistent across settlement typologies as well as socio-economic profile of respondents.

5.2.1. Immediate confidants of adolescent girls within and outside of immediate family

The adolescent girls who did report that they would confide in others if such an incident was to happen to them were asked to state as to who would probably be their immediate confidants to whom they would go to report such an incident.

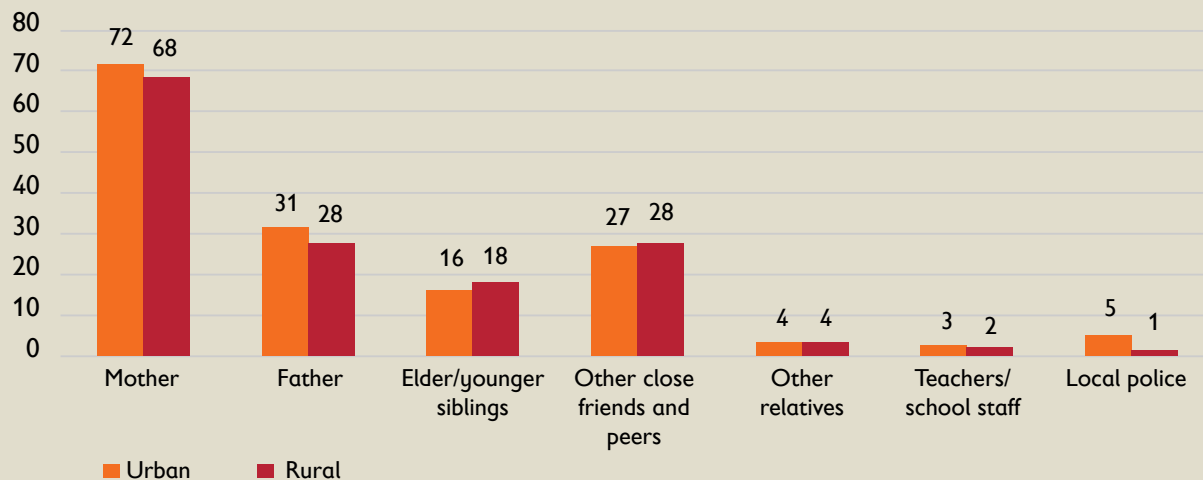
The figure 5.1 below depicts the data in details

The study suggests that the most likely person that the young girls would confide in were their mothers (72 per cent in urban, 68 per cent in rural). Fathers (31 per cent in urban, 28 per cent in rural) and close



Figure 5.1

Likely confidants with whom adolescent girls would feel comfortable in discussing if they were harassed (in %)



Base: Urban = 1821; rural = 1307

Views of an adolescent boy

Dipak is a first-year college student in West Delhi. He lives in a nuclear family with his parents and a twin sister in a government housing complex. In his free time, he likes to watch movies. The twins share more than the same birthday – there is sibling love and his sister confides in him if she faces any problem. But the Dipak at home is very different from the Dipak outdoors. While he understands that the existing environment in Delhi is not safe for women, he opines that a few rotten apples are giving boys a bad name. *“The newspapers have no concrete news to sell; that’s why they will write anything to sensationalise small incidents. Nirbhaya was a bad incident, but nothing as big has happened after that.”*

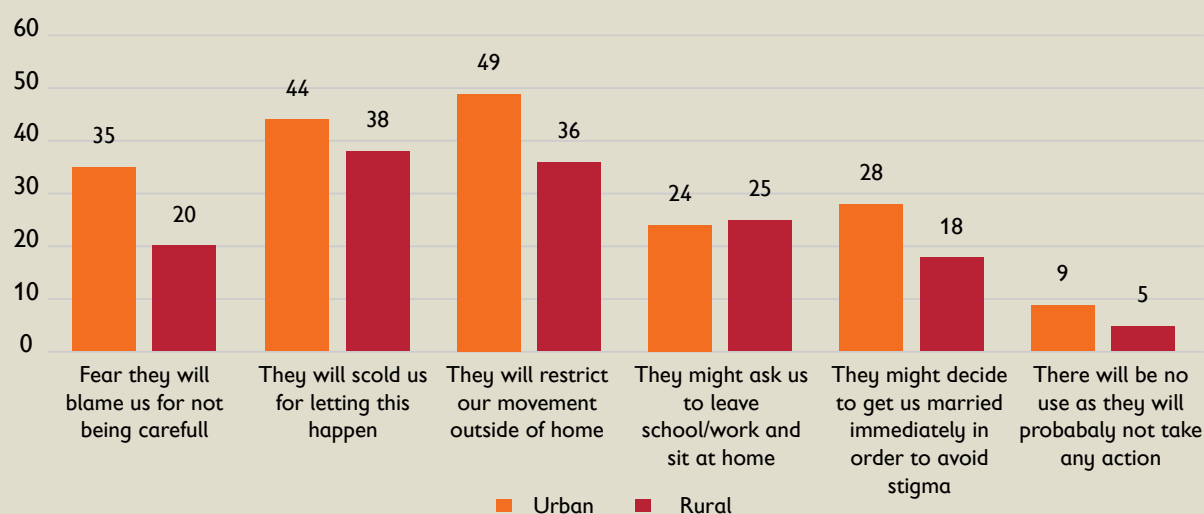
Dipak was not being defensive. Much to the contrary, he accepts that alcoholics and unruly people loaf freely in public space in his city and

that generally, such people are not intimidated by the presence of policemen, unlike what he has seen in Mumbai where people fear the police. Yet, in the same vein, he airs his opinion: *“Girls in the North Campus (of the Delhi University, where he studies) and even other campuses completely change when they join college. My father never allowed my sister to dress the way they do. I am not a conservative boy but sometimes even I get shocked. So you see, there is no point in blaming the boys alone.”*

In his friends’ circle, the prevalent opinion is that very often, the problem happens because of mixed signals. He says, *“Sometimes a boy would assume that a girl is asking to have a good time because of the way she behaves or how she comes across in a group. But she has the right to claim that the boy has misread the signals and cry foul. Boys have no such safeguard.”*

Figure 5.2

Reasons behind why some girls would prefer not to discuss (in%)



Base: Urban = 1821; rural = 1307

friends (27 per cent in urban, 28 per cent in rural) were the next ones they would confide in. The data revealed that maximum number of girls, across all settlement typologies had reported that it would probably be their mothers they would confide in, but about a third also mentioned that they would tell their fathers as well. This would probably be because of the prevalent patriarchal structure and also because girls hesitate to discuss their intimate matters with their fathers.

One in three adolescent girls also mentioned that they would confide in their close friend. These responses were consistent across all settlement typologies as well as socio-economic profile of the respondents. Teachers, school staff and local police do not feature significantly as their confidants.

5.2.2. Reasons why some girls will avoid sharing their experience within their own family

A few adolescent girls (27 per cent in urban areas and 20 per cent in rural areas) mentioned that they would probably not report such an incident to any of their family members. They were asked why they would choose not to do so and probed

through multiple choices of answers. The results obtained have been put in the figure 5.2 above.

The fear of their movement being restricted (49 per cent in urban, 36 per cent in rural) or being reprimanded (44 per cent in urban and 38 per cent in rural) were cited as two important reasons across the centres for girls not reporting an undesired experience they might encounter.

The data indicated that the three primary reasons cited by girls living in urban areas ranged from being scolded and blamed for letting this happen to restricting their movement outside of home. It was not very different in rural India where the primary reasons cited were the likelihood of being scolded as well as restriction in movement. It may be noted that overall, close to one in four girls harboured the opinion that they might be asked to drop out of school. What is also important to note is that adolescent girls living in larger cities were more insecure than others, with close to 30 per cent stating that they feared they might be asked to drop out of school or even get married off immediately to avoid any stigma.

Qualitative finding showed that parents even try to stop their daughters from taking part in extra-curricular activities because that would entail going

to different places outside of school. Such fear of curtailment is a reason why the daughters avoid speaking about the problem.

“My daughter plays kabaddi which we do not like. I have tried stopping her many times from going to different places with the team to play, but she does not listen.” Mother from urban Madhya Pradesh

The girls were also asked to speculate as to what would happen if their parents did come to hear of an incident of harassment from someone else. The results, more or less, matched the reasons given as to why some might never confide in their parents to begin with, viz. restrictions in going out alone, and being accompanied by someone every time they step out of home (figure 5.3).

Only one in three girls in urban areas and one in four girls in rural areas did believe that parents would end up lodging a complaint with the police. This indicates that most believed they would

probably try and mitigate the issue within the family. The survey also revealed that the above trends observed across urban and rural areas of the studied states, remain the same even if the data is disaggregated across size of settlements, as depicted in table 5.1 (next page).

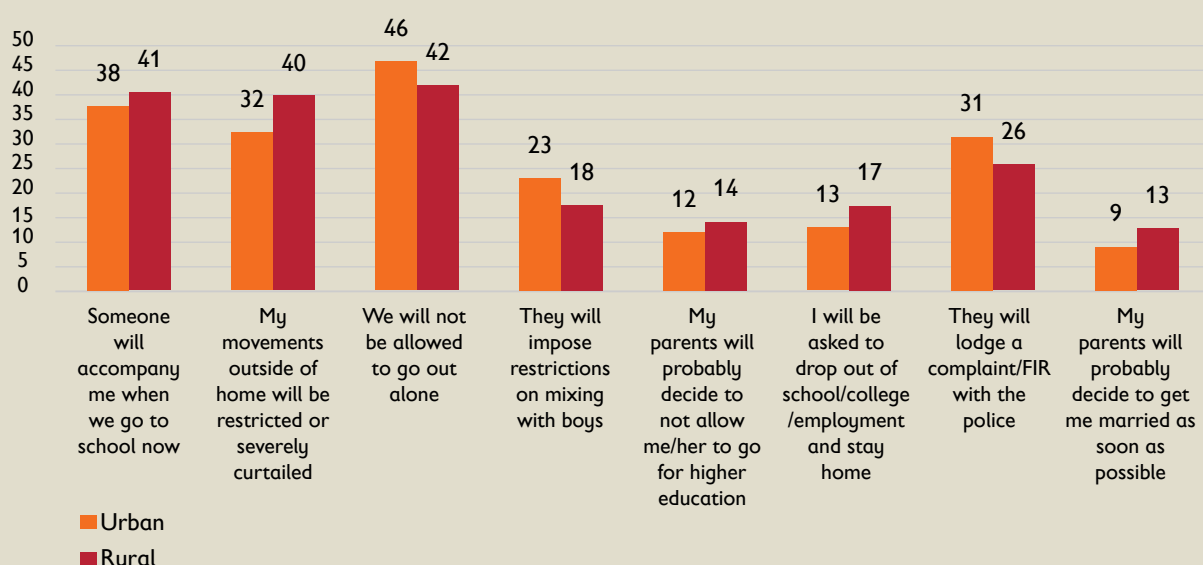
Qualitative research findings revealed that parents, especially the mothers, are the first choice of most adolescent girls for sharing their experiences. But on deeper probe they accepted that it would not be easy to share their experiences even with their mothers as they feared that their mothers would punish them.

“I keep a watch on my mother’s mood. When she seems to be in a good mood I share my experience with her to escape the consequences.” ... Adolescent girl from urban (metro) West Bengal

When investigated for their reasons for not sharing their experiences with their fathers, it was revealed that the girls did not think of him as one who could

Figure 5.3

Opinion of adolescent girls on what they think would happen if their parent did come to know they had been subjected to an incident of harassment



Base: Urban = 1821; rural = 1307

Table 5.1

Opinion of adolescent girls on what they think would happen if their parent did come to know that they had been subjected to an incident of harassment (in %)

	Urban		Rural	
	Larger cities	Smaller towns	Large villages	Small villages
Someone will accompany her/them when on way to school	36	42	40	42
Her movements outside of home will be restricted or severely curtailed	29	37	41	39
They will not be allowed to go out alone	46	48	41	43
Parents would impose restrictions on mixing with boys	26	21	17	19
Parents would probably decide to not allow her to go for higher education	12	13	14	15
She will be asked to drop out of school/college/employment and stay home	12	16	16	19
Parents would lodge a complaint/FIR with the police	31	31	24	28
Parents would probably decide to get her married as soon as possible	10	7	11	15
Base	1207	614	763	544

appreciate the situation – fearing he would jump to conclusions, blame his daughter and impose restrictions on her movements, or take a harsh action.

Another reason many girls cited for not sharing their experiences with fathers and brothers is that they would start fighting with the boy who harassed them, in turn blowing the incident out of proportion. Besides, in many a household, fathers stayed out of the house for long hours – a reason the girls cite for not being able to share anything with them. Few girls even mentioned that they preferred sharing it with close female relatives like aunts who stayed with the family and were friendlier with them.

“My father returns very late at night. He is out most of the time and he hardly speaks to me. So I share most of my issues with my mother only..” ... Adolescent girl from Delhi slum

Outside the home most of them talked to their friends if they were in trouble in school. Girls relied on their inner circle of friends and peers – sharing their experiences and seeking advice. They feared for their experience getting publicised, word reaching their parents and the consequent stigma.



“We feel scared and ashamed of ill-repute. Also, if word spreads around, then parents would also know and they will scold us.” ... Adolescent girl from urban Telangana

Sometimes such information is also shared with a neighbourhood boy or a classmate who can be trusted with a hope that he can help resolve the issue with the boys harassing the girl.

“Sometimes girls tell us about their problems and we go and talk to the boy creating the problem ... Sometimes if the boy is good in studies then he has the advantage as he helps others during exams and can refuse help to those boys creating problems.” ... Adolescent boy from rural Madhya Pradesh

5.3. Parents as support systems

In order to understand the importance of parents as a support system for adolescent girls in times of unsafe situation in public spaces, the first line of inquiry involved understanding whether parents

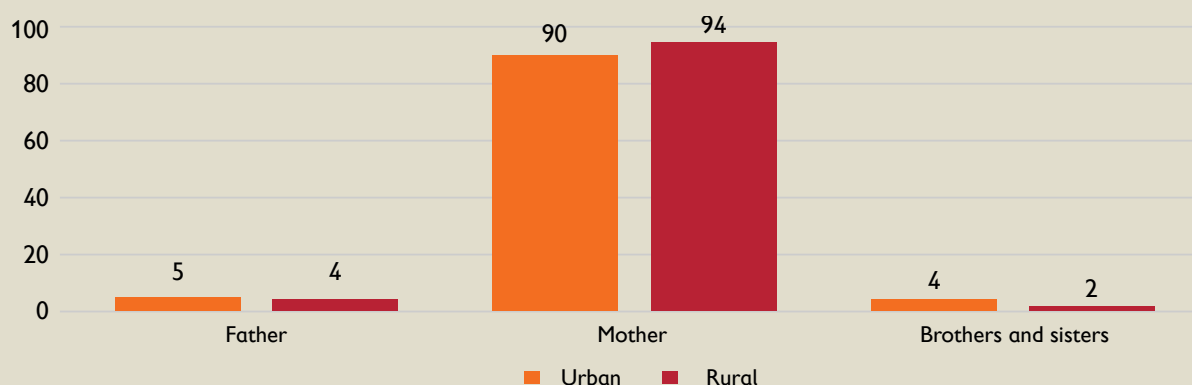
themselves felt that they were the most likely confidants for their daughters when it came to discussing personal issues. As shown in figure 5.4, the popular opinion was that it is the mother who is assumed to be the closest confidant on all matters personal (about 90 per cent in both urban and rural). The general agreement was that it was not going to be the father (less than 5 per cent in both urban and rural).

Subsequently, the plausible reasons for not confiding in the parents was enquired and it was found that the fear of being reprimanded was the most cited reason across both, rural and urban typologies.

The figure 5.5 (next page) depicts the results in detail.

The findings appear very similar across both urban and rural space with over 50 per cent of the parents nursing the opinion that their daughters might not open up after being harassed because they feared that they will be scolded by the parents for the incident, while 40 per cent thought that it's because they felt they will be blamed for not being careful and that their movement outside of home would be somehow restricted. These views were very much in line with what the adolescent girls themselves had stated to be the primary reasons as to why some girls would hesitate to report any incidence of harassment to their parents.

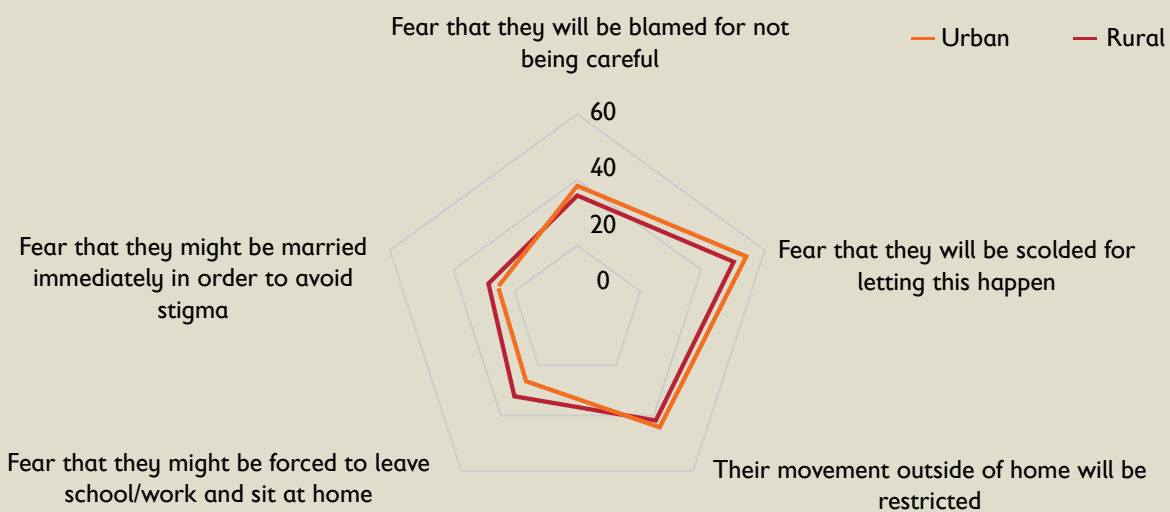
Figure 5.4
Perception of parents as to whom their daughter confides in on personal issues (in %)



Base: Urban = 423; rural = 419

Figure 5.5

Views of parents as to why many girls who face harassment in a public space do not discuss such incidents with their elders and/or parents (in%)



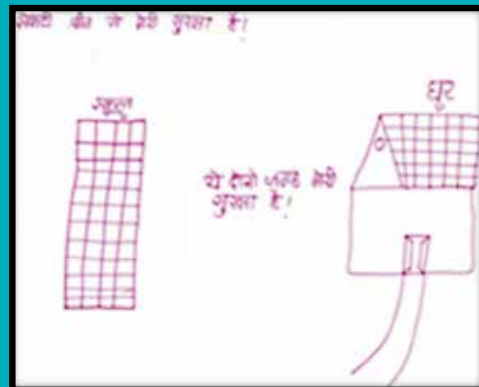
Base: Urban = 423; rural = 419



SAFETY IS IN MY OWN HANDS



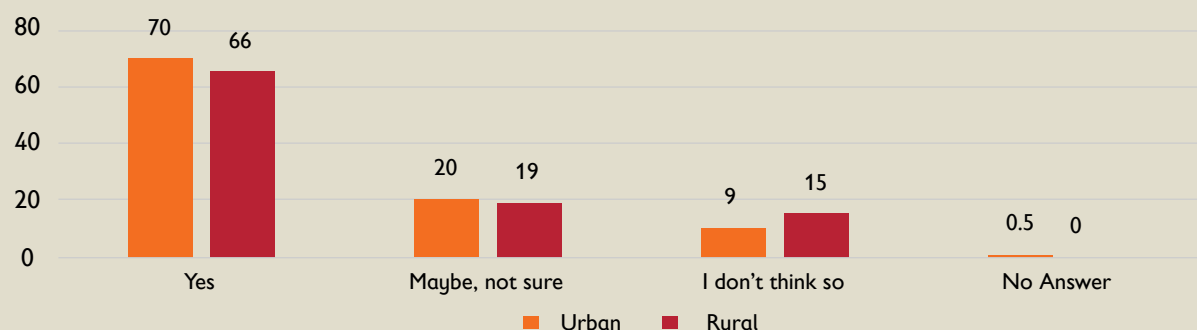
Self-defence, being on time, at school, at home, use of private toilets make girls feel safe...



Source: Expression of girls

Figure 5.6

Opinion of parents regarding whether they believe they would be taken in confidence by their daughters if such an incident was to happen to her in public space (in %)



Base: Urban =423; rural = 419

The next line of questioning was more direct; parents were asked whether they believed they would be taken in confidence by their daughters if an incident of harassment was to happen to them in a public place. Surprisingly, not everyone was confident that they would be taken into confidence by their daughters. In fact, 29-34 per cent of the parents (figure 5.6) were either unsure or did not think this could happen.

There was a difference of attitude among the fathers, across the six states as disclosed during the FGDs. Some were indifferent on the issue of their daughters sharing of incidences (that led them to feel unsafe) with them likely because of the patriarchal mind-set. This hindered a response from many fathers. They mentioned that it was their wives who were more informed about such incidents and they only interfered to resolve a situation, if need be. Many others were deeply concerned about their daughters' safety and were open to discussion and any new information.

Some mothers mentioned that they use many tactics to get information from their daughters – they sometimes ask for information directly (even though it seems like an investigation), sometimes they use other channels like daughter's friends or close relatives with whom she shares personal details or sometimes get information from the school during parent-teacher meetings. Also, obedience among girls is considered to be of great value by the parents.

“My daughter tells me everything. She is a ‘good’ girl.” ... Mother from rural West Bengal

While the girls felt that sharing is only to keep the parents informed, parents view sharing as a step towards problem resolution. Many parents knew that their daughters did not share the full account of any incidence of harassment that might have happened because the girls felt that they were grown up, able to handle their problems and their belief that they should not involve their parents in their affairs.

5.4. Perceptions regarding local law enforcement as a support base

A large number of crimes in India, especially in the bigger cities, go unreported, and police refuse to register most complaints of sexual harassment, according to the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (2015). This study also looked at the perception of the girls regarding Police as a support system.

As figure 5.7 (next page) shows, large number of adolescent girls participating in the survey were wary of the local law enforcement. 35 per cent or more across most settlement typologies (48 per cent in large cities) felt that the reaction of the local police was much less than desired. Across locations, girls were of the opinion that the police would not take

Figure 5.7

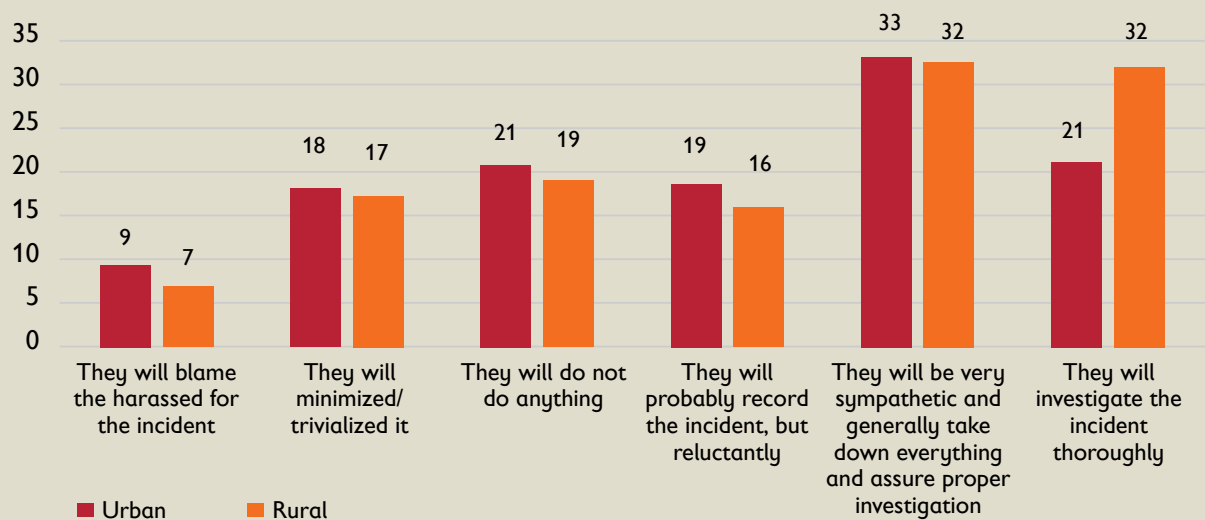
Opinion of adolescent girls on usual reactions of the local police if a girl goes to them to lodge a complaint against harassment (in %)



Base: Large cities = 220; small cities = 203; large villages = 236; small villages = 183

Figure 5.8

Opinion of parents as to usual reaction of the local police if a girl goes to them to lodge a complaint against harassment (in %)



Base: Urban = 423, rural = 419

any positive steps to redress their complaints – they would either blame the victim, or trivialize the event, take no action, or not act upon their complaint in the event they recorded it.

The parents of adolescent girls as seen in figure 5.8, were perhaps even more wary about the local police with 50-65 per cent across locations sharing their opinion that the police would not work to redress their complaint (they would either blame the victim, or trivialize the event, take no action, or even if they did take a statement, would probably not act upon it). The reluctance to rely on the police was mostly observed in the urban areas.

Some girls, especially those from among early adolescent girls, mentioned during the FGDs that they would call the police if they found themselves in an unsafe situation but most late adolescent girls would exercise the option of calling a friend or parents when in need. Adolescent boys also agree with the early adolescent girls and mention that police should be contacted immediately for legal help like filing the FIR. But they also felt that the police do not respond in time.

“Police always comes late. By the time they come at least a few skulls are already fractured (colloquial usage for fist-fights).” ... Adolescent boy from urban (metro) NCR

5.5. Awareness of statutory bodies and CSOs where girls could seek justice against harassment

A majority of the girls were not aware of government statutory bodies like Child Welfare

Committees (CWCs), Juvenile Justice Boards (JJBs) or local Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) that can be approached for redressal against harassment. In fact, on an aggregate (refer table 5.2) only around 20 per cent of the total sample of adolescent girls claimed to have some awareness of such platforms. Awareness among parents was even lower. Only 11 per cent of the total sample of parents had any such information.

1098 is the universal child helpline number across all Indian states. Huge resources have been invested in making the general public aware of this helpline. In reality, however, the survey found the awareness to be relatively low among both, adolescents as well as their parents as shown in table 5.3.

Though everyone expressed concern about unsafe public spaces for girls, there was low awareness on the means to resolve this problem. During the FGDs, it was realised that nearly everyone was aware of the police helpline 100, but very few had any knowledge of women helpline, Childline or any CSOs they could access in the event of any need, especially to aid adolescent girls. Though the police helpline (100) does not promise anonymity to the caller, people still relied on this helpline because of two primary reasons: first, the response of the police in 100 is effective – “they almost always come when a complaint is made” -- and second, this saves them time and effort in identifying and visiting a physical police station to get immediate help.

The trust deficit in the policing and judicial systems was evident during discussions. Besides, adolescent girls, their parents and brothers felt that finally it is the ‘name’ of the family and the girl which will be negatively affected – providing an iteration of ‘family honour’ that accompanies girls and women. Most of them were against going to the police because they

Table 5.2

Awareness among adolescent girls and their parents of statutory bodies or voluntary organization whom one can approach to lodge a complaint against harassment (in %)

	Urban		Rural	
	Larger cities	Smaller towns	Large villages	Small villages
Awareness of adolescent girls	23	28	15	19
Awareness of parents	15	14	9	8

Table 5.3

Proportion of adolescent girls and parents who were correctly aware of the child helpline (in %)

	Urban		Rural	
	Larger cities	Small towns	Large villages	Small villages
Correct recall by adolescent girls	28	30	25	30
Correct recall by parents	20	16	22	13

were considered insensitive. It is also perceived that the process involves lot of time and resources and, in the end, damages the reputation of the girl.

5.6. Suggestions given by adolescent girls on action needed to be taken by the state and civil society to promote safety of girls in public spaces

As part of a concluding exercise during the survey, all adolescent girls were asked to provide three suggestions on what needed to be done by the administration as well as civil society to make them feel safer while in public space. The data suggests that most girls wanted quick solutions to the pressing issue of safety rather than rely on a more long-term social change in behaviour of men as well as their parents across urban and rural India.

The solutions that adolescent girls from urban India participating in this survey came up with during the interactions have been presented below in table 5.4, in the order of preference:

The solutions that the adolescent girls from rural India who participated in this survey came up with during the interactions have been presented below in table 5.5 (next page), in the order of preference:

All adolescent girls agreed that they should have the right to free mobility and a sense of safety in public places. However, with unsafe conditions being so rampant for the girls, they first explored immediate solutions.

Nearly every participant, in both rural and urban areas, mentioned the deployment of street lights, CCTV cameras, police and security guards in public places including roads, intersections and markets.

Table 5.4

Solutions provided by adolescent girls from urban areas

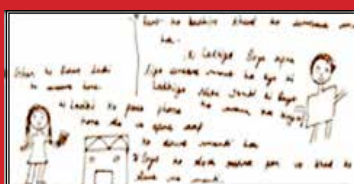
CCTV cameras need to be placed everywhere	Relatively high priority
More police need to be deployed everywhere	
Provide functional street-lights everywhere	
Place the whole city under security alert	
More lady police constables need to be deployed everywhere	Relatively moderate priority
Girls should take self-defence training	
Law should be strict and justice need to be served quickly	
Increase number of police stations	

Table 5.5

Solutions provided by adolescent girls from rural areas

More police need to be deployed everywhere	Relatively high priority
CCTV cameras need to be placed everywhere	
Provide functional street-lights everywhere	
More lady police constables need to be deployed everywhere	
Ban alcohol shops and bars, especially near education institutions	Relatively moderate priority
Place the entire locality under security alert	
Increase number of police stations	
Girls should take self-defense training	

WHAT CAN MAKE SPACES SAFE?



Mobiles with girls, knowing #1098, security guards, being in a group, accompanied by an older person, being given spaces on the streets...

Source: Expression of girls

Some girls added that deployment of the above were only the means but not the end (safety of girls), therefore increase in the number of gadgets or security personnel should be followed by active monitoring cells which should work to catch and punish the miscreants.

“They should have some device connected with the CCTV cameras which would send information to the police as soon as it detects a situation in which a girl or a woman is being troubled.” ... Adolescent girl from urban (small town) Madhya Pradesh

Across states, most adolescent boys who had sisters felt that safety of girls meant providing protection to them. Patriarchal attitude was seen among the fathers of some of the girls, as also among adolescent boys who maintained that girls should either not go outside or in case they go, should be accompanied by men.

“It is best for girls to go out with brothers or fathers. They need to be protected.” ... Adolescent boys from urban (small town) Maharashtra

Adolescents, both boys and girls, revealed that confident girls were not harassed. Self-defence as a measure to increase self-confidence of girls was advocated by adolescent girls and many other stakeholders like parents, government officials, NGO personnel and even adolescent boys. Adolescent girls demanded self-defence courses like karate and judo to be compulsorily conducted by schools for all girl students of all ages, free of cost. They also suggested that if any girl is harassed, she should confidently speak up against such behaviour and let the harasser know that she is capable of fighting back.

5.7. Conclusion

An adolescent girl facing harassment in public space is, more often than not, faced with restrictions on herself rather than provided a solution to the problem. In other words, the problem is seen in the girl rather than in the public space. There is a fair degree of scepticism among girls from all locations, but especially among those residing in large cities that elders blatantly use the excuse of safety to rob the girls of their freedom. In fact, for most girls it is the threat of being ostracised by society which is more worrisome than the actual exposure to harassment in public spaces.

- By and large, most adolescent girls mentioned that if they were to be harassed in a public space, they would discuss it at home, but primarily with the mother. For the few who would hesitate to go public, the determining consideration seems to be fear of imposition of restrictions on their movement outside of home, as well as fear of being blamed and scolded by parents for whom the threat of a social scandal is more distressing than the support their daughter would be expecting in this moment of crisis.
- The most common response to harassment which girls expected to emanate from their own homes would involve immediate loss of privileges, especially venturing out of home and interact with others, including schoolmates, or at best, being allowed out into public spaces only when accompanied by elders.
- Trust on local law enforcement was not universal, most parents still carried a notion that the police would take an inordinate long time to act, if at all. However, this distrust was not ubiquitous, with the police having a far greater standing in the rural milieu than in urban areas. The chasm that exists between the protector of the law and the protected needs to be addressed.
- Awareness of statutory bodies like CWCs and JJBs was low, as was the knowledge of the child helpline.

CHAPTER 6

Evidence of the violation of rights seen from the eyes of girls married as children



About one in five parents believes that it is better to get daughters married early rather than take the risk of something happening with her on her way to school/work/any public space.



As high as 16 per cent of the married girls were of the opinion that their parents had felt that it was not safe for a girl of their age to be travelling the distance to attend school – even when accompanied by friends.



One in three parents feel that after a certain age, it is risky to allow their daughters to go to school or go to work on a regular basis on her own.



43 per cent of the girls were going to school when they got married. Only 13 per cent of them could go on to study further.



Nearly three in ten girls who were students at the time they got married feel that they missed out on getting a full education because they got married.



Parents from LIG/EWS/slums displayed a more (41 per cent) conservative outlook towards education and employment of girls in comparison to parents from HIG/MIG neighbourhoods (36 per cent).



Over 80 per cent girls in urban areas and 66 per cent girls in rural areas of the studied states were of the opinion that girls who get married at an early age are forced to forfeit many of their aspirations and dreams they had for themselves.

6.1. Introduction

From a very early age, children are exposed to the notion that women are the weaker sex and it is the responsibility of the men of the house to protect and uphold their dignity. Therefore, it is this over-protective, and often over-bearing attitudinal predisposition of the parents (as detailed in the previous chapter) that leads to restrictions on movement of girls outside of their home (also captured in the previous chapter), and its fallout in the form of various rights violations. The present chapter takes a closer look at some of these rights

violations experienced by girls who were married as children, viz. discontinuity of education and freedom of social interaction, besides liberty and the dignity to nurse aspirations. It was gauged best to analyse these issues from the perspective of those who have undergone these violations.

It was understood from secondary data (presented in chapter one) as well as from the field that safety concerns do lead to early marriage of the girl child, divesting her of her rights to education, freedom of movement, etc. With marriage, the mantle of her ownership shifts from the father to the husband with more rules of social obedience. The experiences



of young girls (aged 19-22 years) who had been subjected to child marriage were captured to arrive at an understanding of how unsafe public spaces have influenced the course of their childhoods, indeed lives. This chapter first explores the circumstances that might lead some parents to consider early marriage for their girls. Child marriage leading to education discontinuity and compromised aspirations have been dealt in detail in the next section.

6.2. Implications of safety concerns of girls in public spaces and child marriage

6.2.1. Relationship between parents' safety concerns for girls and child marriage.

An important mandate of the study was to explore the implication of perception of safety concerns to incidences of child marriage by indirectly exploring parental views on the issue. The possible factors that might influence parents' views on early marriage was measured through three proxy variables, viz.

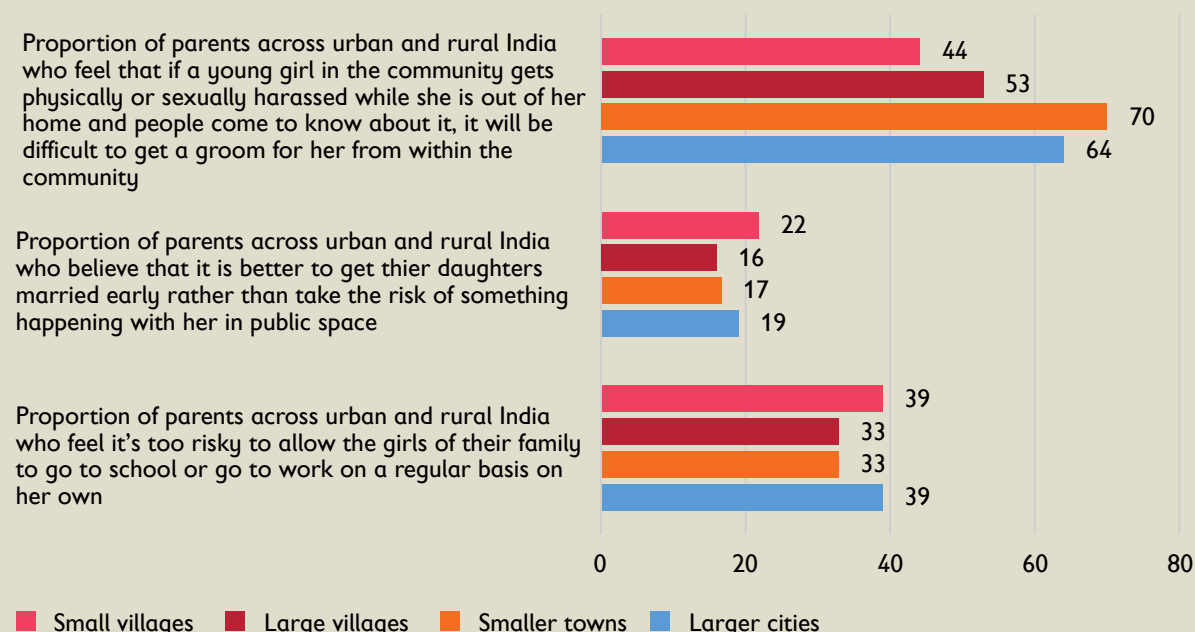
1. Whether they believed that if a young girl in the community gets physically or sexually harassed while she is out of her home, and people come to know about it, it will be difficult for her parents to get a groom for her from within their community;
2. Whether they believed that it is better to get their daughters married early rather than take the risk of something happening with her on her way to school/work/any public space; and,
3. Whether they believed that after a certain age, it's too risky to allow the girls of their family to go to school or go to work on a regular basis on her own.

The findings have been presented below in figure 6.1:

The below data clearly indicates that between 30 and 40 per cent of parents across different settlement typologies harboured an opinion that after a girl attains puberty, it was risky for a girl to go to work or school on her own; a much lower proportion (15-20 per cent) of parents felt that it is better to get them married off rather than risk something happening to an adolescent girl while

Figure 6.1

Proportion of parents that could possibly justify child marriage (in%)



Base: Larger cities = 220; smaller towns = 203; large villages = 236; small village = 183

in public space and face the resultant social stigma. The incidence of such a mind-set was relatively higher in larger cities than the smaller towns. It was important to note that two in three parents in urban areas felt that it would prove to be difficult to get a girl married if she was physically or sexually harassed and word got around about it. This attitude was seen less often among participants in the survey from rural India.

6.2.2. Socio-economic profile as a differentiator of prevalent attitude on child marriage and its linkages with safety concerns for girls

In order to assess whether socio-economic profile of parents influence their views on child marriage, the following variables were used:

- Gender of respondent (mother or father)
- Caste (in case of rural)
- Locality (in case of urban)

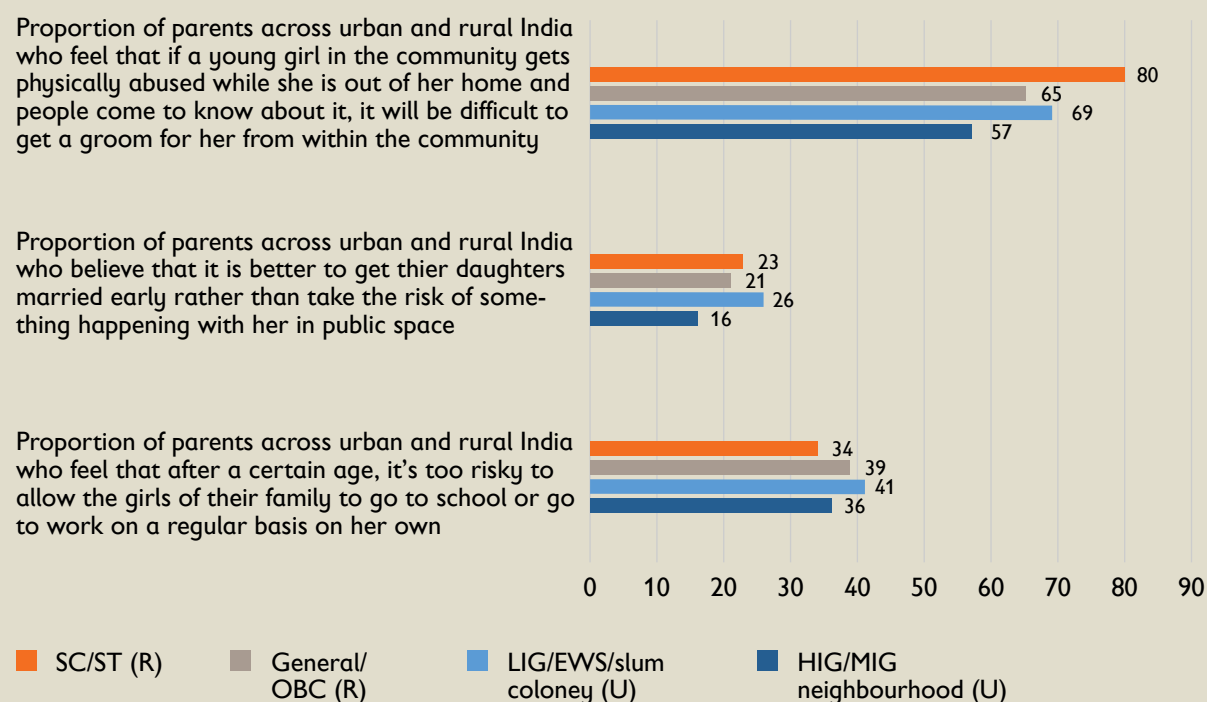
The results have been presented below in figure 6.2.

There are clear trends being revealed by this data. First of all, the survey revealed that less affluent families (LIG/EWS/slums residents) (41 per cent) displayed a more conservative outlook towards education and employment of girls in comparison to those from higher income households (residents of HIG/MIG neighbourhoods) (36 per cent). This was significant as economic compulsions negate conservative attitudes and girls are not looked at as something to shield away but rather as productive labour to contribute to the family's income in lower income households.

Further, a much lower proportion of parents from higher income urban households (16 per cent) harboured the opinion that it was better to get their daughters married early than risk social stigma, as compared to parents from marginalised households (26 per cent) in urban areas. It was noteworthy that such a conservative view was

Figure 6.2

Background Profile As A Differentiator Of Prevalent Attitude On Child Marriage (In %)



Base: HIG/MIG = 289; LIG/EWS/slum = 134; General/OBC = 228; SC/ST = 191;

harboured primarily by the fathers and not so much by the mothers. It was observed that the fathers were more conservative than the mothers on the issue of daughters going out for their education or employment after they reached a certain age. In essence, what they are conveying is that they would probably be more mindful of the possible fallout and social stigma should their daughter get harassed in the public space, rather than appreciating her aspirational needs. The incidence of similar outlook was more among the OBCs followed by the SC & STs in the rural areas. It was observed to be comparatively lower for the general caste and OBC in the rural areas.

Across focus groups, nearly every participant knew of someone aged below 18 years (sometimes as low as 13) who was married off because her parents came to know that she had spoken to a boy and were worried she would elope. The girls, across categories and states, were of the opinion that access to safe places is a right, and their progress is stunted in its absence. They were not allowed to do things freely like boys and being married off early was a consequence.

“If a girl is married off early...she is made to work at home and is physically and verbally abused...she can’t complete her education...can’t learn new things...can’t take up a job.”
Adolescent girl from urban West Bengal

According to late adolescent girls from Assam, forcing girls to marry before their maturity is perceived to play havoc with their health, physical or mental.

“Child marriages will mean that her health will suffer, she might also have menstruation cycle-related problems, she also faces mental trauma.” ...
Adolescent girl from urban Assam

Few mothers (urban Madhya Pradesh) asked why 18 should be the minimum age of marriage. They argued that girls at 18 were still young and immature and were yet to complete their college education to take up a job and become independent. They shared their own experience and regretted

having not done anything worthwhile in their lives because their parents thought that they should be married early. Others empathised with their daughters and felt that early marriage was not a solution.

“Early marriage leads to early pregnancy, and then they can’t handle their family...their childhood gets ruined...she will always remain tense... so it’s better to get her educated and then get her married at proper age.”
Mother from urban Delhi

Adolescent girls in Kolkata were of the opinion that child marriage ends a girl’s ‘life’.

“She will have no career...so she will have no self-confidence, no freedom, and no choice of her own. She will have to listen to others all her life.”
Adolescent girl from urban West Bengal

Some parents from Delhi/NCR, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, who did not agree to early marriage of girls, had mentioned that they had to continuously guard their daughters and keep explaining the moral values they should carry with them at all times.

“I taught my girls how to behave in presence of men and boys and that they should stay away from them before marriage.” Mother, NCR (rural)

“We do not curtail their freedom to study but girls can be little tougher to look after because of the restrictions one has to place on them because of their safety.” Mother from urban Maharashtra

While boys in rural Assam considered child marriages wrong for both girls and boys, some of them also held the opinion that girls should ideally spend more time indoors, as it is unsafe outdoors. Parents in general were also of the opinion that girls were more unsafe if they came from poor families. This prompts many poor households to get their

daughters married early. This also helps them in fulfilling their social obligation. Since many parents felt that getting their daughters a good match was their social responsibility, parents fulfil it as soon as they find a suitable groom so that their daughter goes off to 'her' home.

“People think, if safety is an issue, let’s just get the girl married. Once there is a mangal sutra around her neck she will be safe on the streets. That’s not entirely true, but that’s how people think.”... Childline, Mumbai

While harassment by boys prompted parents to impose restrictions on the mobility of girls, this rarely reduced the size of the problem and parents are forced to ensure that their daughters are accompanied by someone every time they step out of homes. All of this, they argued, were factors that are encouraging early marriage for girls.

“Parents prefer to get their daughters married at an early age (child marriages) because they are worried about their safety... with such things as teasing and even vulgar abuse being hurled at them, it becomes very dangerous” Adolescent boys from Telangana

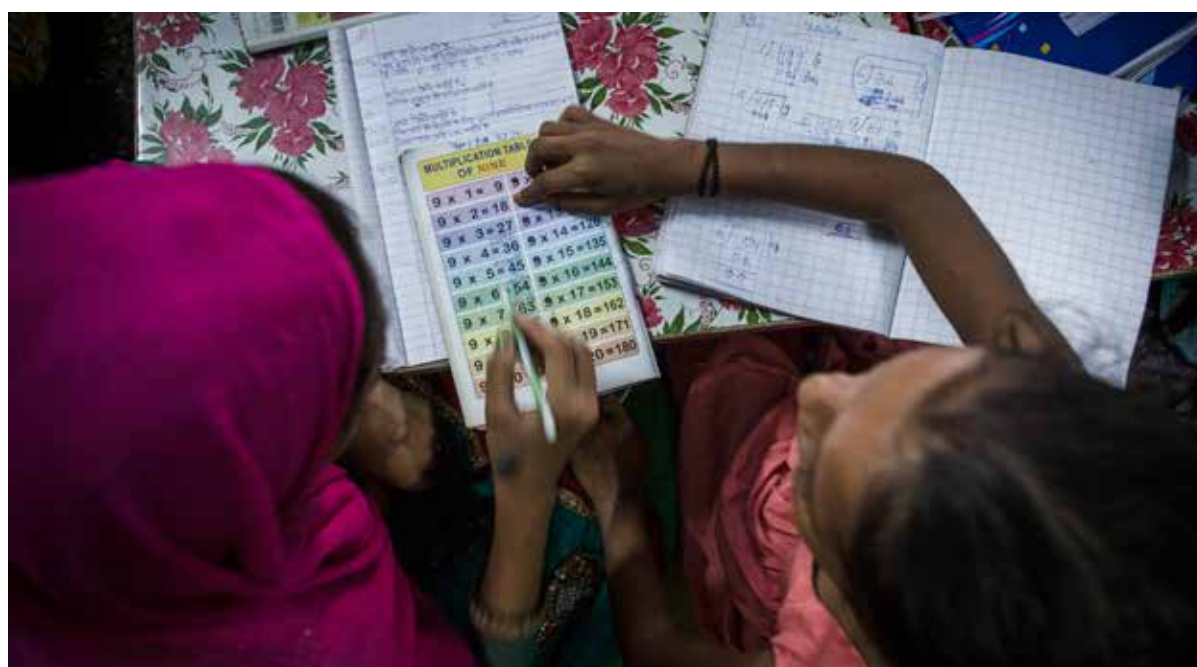
Some parents from urban Telangana further said that girls seldom get to choose their partners.

“A girl has 50 per cent say in her marriage. But we parent bulldoze our girls saying he is a good match, a perfect boy, it will be a good life.” Father from Telangana

Discussions with women married before 18 brought forth their anguish at not being able to continue their education and become financially independent. It was mentioned repeatedly in the FGDs that their new life in their husband’s home became very difficult because they were not able to do domestic chores as was expected of them because they were either inadequately trained or just did not have the physical capacity at such an early age; many had complained of domestic violence and restricted mobility.

“I came for this meeting thinking you will be able to tell me how to end this regular beating that I get at my husband’s house.” Woman married before 18, rural NCR

The above narrative clearly displays the mind-set of parents who would restrict the movement of girls out of home, into public spaces, as they fear



Married as a Child

Ruksana Begum, a resident of Guwahati, Assam was married as a 13-years-old child. By the time she turned 18, she was already a mother of two young children. Child marriage is an accepted custom among the migrant community from Bihar from where she comes, especially as families live in poverty.

Ruksana had just passed out of 8th grade at the time of her marriage. The school she went to, in a remote corner of Darbhanga district, was a co-educational one, and ever since she turned 12, she often overheard her parents discuss the unsafe external environment, getting her to discontinue her education and get her married. She was yet a child and could not comprehend the urgency – she recalls she had loads of fun while in school, mixing with friends and learning new things.

When Ruksana summoned the will to ask her mother why her father was searching for a groom, she was told of its inevitability: “It is not safe for you to travel to school. Also in our community, an educated girl is a liability because we can’t find boys who would be willing to marry someone who is more educated than them.”

Her children are now 7 and 5 years of age and caring for a family has restricted her movement to the confines of her home. Her only source of entertainment is watching television – it brings the outside world to her living room and she compares her life with that of the characters of the soaps she follows. For instance, she likes how the protagonist of her favourite TV serial, ‘Sasural Simar Ka’ is able to stand up for his wife. It offers her an altered mirror because nothing like this ever happened in her life – her husband is a school dropout who went no further than his 6th grade – and given that she has passed her 8th grade before being forced to drop out of school, this disparity is a point of discontentment at home.

Ruksana harboured aspirations to work after she completed her education. But after marriage she has had to compromise on her dreams, especially with her familial responsibilities. She now waits for her children to grow, so that she can convince her in-laws to allow her to apply for a government loan to start a small tailoring business from home.



harassment in public space would bring dishonour to the family. It would also make it difficult to get a groom for her. In other words, getting her married early would save her from public disgrace and save the family from disrepute. The axe falls on a girl's right to education and also employment since it is considered risky to go out. The next section looks at the issues of discontinuity of education as a consequence of early marriage.

6.3. Rights violations in the form of education discontinuity

Save the Children (2017) in its article titled 'How Education Can Change the Lives of Underprivileged Children' observes that when it comes to education, girls lag behind boys significantly. The article surmises that this situation arises due to the patriarchal mindset of a lot of families in India. Girls are often viewed as future housewives and family caretakers (see also Chapter 4). They are often deprived of higher education and in some cases even school education. Being educated gives an equal opportunity to women to be skilled workers who could use their learning as a boon that would additionally help improve the future of their families and communities.

Studies have shown that better educated women tend to be healthier, participate more in the formal labour market, earn more, have fewer children, marry at a later age, and enable better health, care and education for their children – should they choose to become mothers. Furthermore, in an article 'Girls

One in five parents believes that it is better to get daughters married early rather than take the risk of something happening with her on her way to school/work/any public space.

not Brides (2018)', detailing the various impact of child marriage, it was observed that while it is not clear if child marriage causes school dropout or vice versa, it is clear that child marriage often means the end to a girl's formal education. It supports this argument by making the following three conclusions:

1. When a girl gets married, she is often expected to drop out of school.
2. When a girl is out of school, she becomes more vulnerable to child marriage.
3. Returning to school can be difficult for married girls.

For the purpose of this study, the issue of discontinuity of education is dealt with by looking at whether a significant proportion of girls who got married while still in school did not have the opportunity to take up studies again. It also looks at whether this is tantamount to a violation of their rights, because it can be assumed that given

Table 6.1
Status of education pre and post marriage (in %)

	Urban	Rural
Percentage of girls who were out of school when they got married	58	56
Percentage of girls who were in school when they got married	42	44
Base	124	124
Percentage of girls who could continue with their studies post marriage	13	13
Proportion of girls who had thought of re-joining school post marriage	49	30
Proportion who had actually discussed this wish with their in-laws/ husband	23	19
Base	53	55

a chance, these girls harboured a clear intention to study further and make something out of their lives. The section will also look at whether this compromise has left the married girls with a deep sense of regret.

The survey data revealed that of the 124 married girls interviewed across cities and towns, 42 per cent had been going to school in urban areas at the time they had gotten married. Among the 124 married girls interviewed in rural India, this proportion was slightly higher, i.e. 44 per cent. The mean age of the girls when they got married was 14 years in urban areas and 13 in rural areas which when they should have been in middle school (grade 6 – 8).

The table 6.1 (earlier page) gives an overview of the education status of the currently married girls at the time of their marriage and what has happened subsequently.

The above table helps in arriving at the following broad conclusions (the small sample size does not help in making precise statistical estimates, only generalised observations on trends). Also the trends given below is only based on the girls who were going to school at the time of marriage:

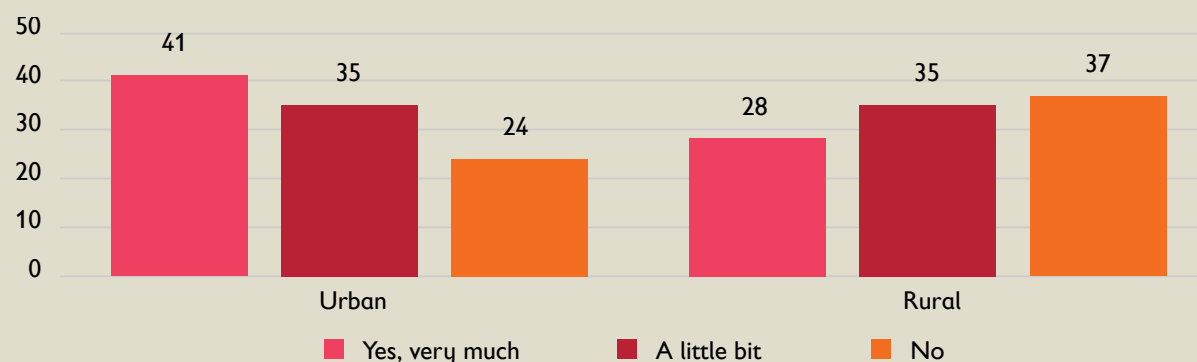
1. Two out of five girls were studying when they got married, mostly at the secondary grades (8th to 10th) but some even at higher secondary.

2. The proportion of girls who managed to continue their studies in the years following their marriage is just around 13 per cent (out of girls who were studying) in urban as well as rural India.
3. Very few married girls actually raise the question of their discontinued studies with their husband and in-laws (and that too primarily in urban areas) and even fewer are given the permission to do so.

Child marriage leads to discontinuity of education, which is a clear violation of child rights by UNCRC. However, the impact of this discontinuity can be best gauged through measuring whether these girls harboured aspirations for higher education and even beyond that i.e. getting employed. The following figure elaborates.

The data in figure 6.3 is fairly conclusive. Three in four girls living in urban areas and just over three in five in rural areas rued the fact that they were forced to miss out on getting a full education because of their early marriage. The study further unearthed that if they had been allowed to study further, 36 per cent of the girls would have studied till graduation while 19 per cent would have done a technical diploma/vocational course after completing school. 70 per cent of these girls from the urban areas and 80 per cent from rural of the studied states expressed that they wanted to become employed after they had completed their studies. It is thus clear that early

Figure 6.3
Whether girls who got married early feel that they missed out on getting a full education because they got married (in %)



Base: Urban = 53; rural = 55



marriage has robbed these girls of their aspirations of becoming financially independent citizens.

The girls who were active students when they got married were asked to opine as to what were the reasons for their early marriage and discontinuing their schooling. As high as 16 per cent of the married girls were of the opinion that their parents had felt that it was not safe for a girl of their age to be travelling the distance to attend school – even when accompanied by friends. Around one in five cited the reason for discontinuing their schooling to be the disinterest of their in-laws in letting them re-join school which was the primary factor in dropping out altogether. The above finding indicates that safety concerns do play a significant determinant of denial of rights to education.

43 per cent of the girls were going to school when they got married. Only 13 per cent of them could go on to study further.

To this end, the survey also sought information as to why some married girls never entertained the thought of re-joining school post marriage or had never expressed the wish to their in-laws. The answers have been reported in the table 6.2 below:

Going back to all the interviewed married girls who were subjected to child marriage, the survey

has found that 66 per cent of the married girls interviewed during the course of the survey had some friends who were still pursuing higher studies. When asked as to whether they felt they got left out from getting a full education because they got married, a very high proportion had reported that indeed they did. Being confined to their homes doing domestic chores created a sense of stagnation and discontentment. Being married is almost perceived to be a ‘finality’, with little scope for a better future. Life is demarcated into two phases – ‘pre-marriage’ and ‘post-marriage’, with the latter being associated with an imposition rather than a choice where the girls have little option but to be resigned to their fate.

“We don’t go out; we stay at home Nowadays we do not have enough friends either. Before marriage we used to travel but now we have to look after the children and cook. My husband also restricts me in doing many things by saying ‘don’t do this’ and ‘don’t talk to them’” -- Woman (Married before her 18th birthday) from urban Assam

However, the trends across urban and rural India were different. While the highest proportion of urban residents (48 per cent) had a great degree of regret over the fact that their educational aspirations had to be compromised, the majority of married girls living in rural India (72 per cent) had little or no such regrets.

Table 6.2

Reasons why some girls never considered re-joining school post marriage (in %)

	Urban	Rural
In this community, married girls do not venture out of home and go to a public place without escort	33	14
I/they felt that further studies will be a waste of time as I will have to remain a home maker	100	14
My children were too young and needed to be looked after	0	43
Base	76	89

6.4. The issue of compromised aspirations

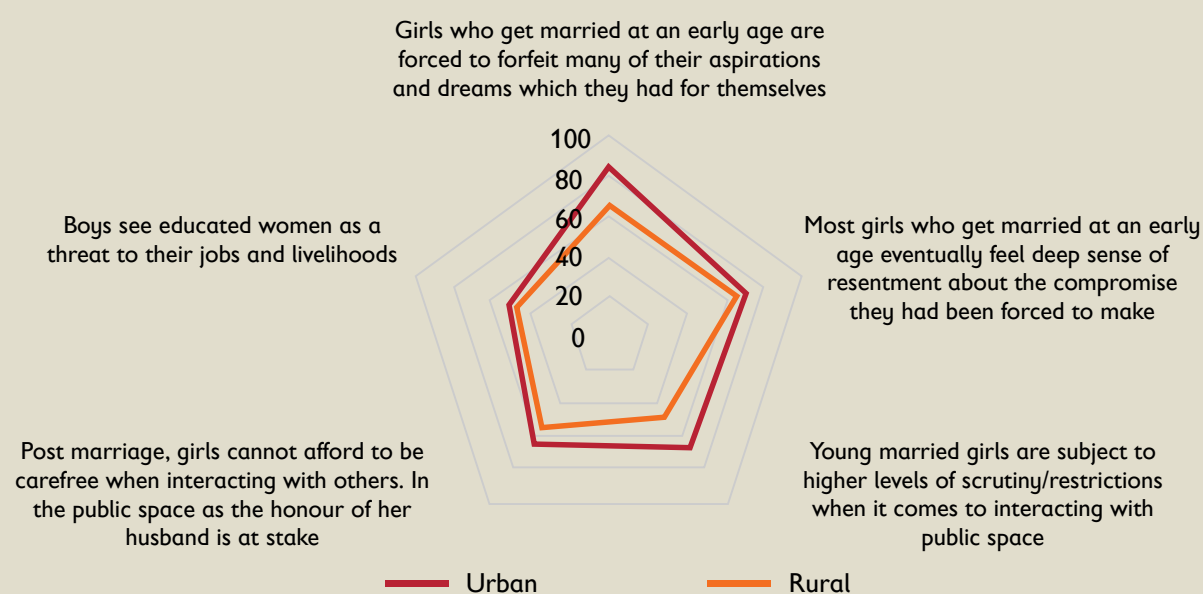
Many human rights, including education, employment and freedom of movement are infringed upon with lack of safety in the public spaces. As understood in the above section, unsafe public spaces make a significant contribution to child marriage. Consequences of child marriage have lasting effects beyond adolescence. The young girls struggle with the adverse health effects of getting pregnant too young and too often. Lack of education and economic independence, domestic violence and marital rape are some of the other observed problems.

There was a specific line of inquiry in the research where the study attempted to arrive at a holistic understanding of what sacrifices young girls (aged below 22 years) who got married before attaining legal age had to make because of their early marriage, but this time, from their own point of view. The construct was that a series of statements defining various situations in the life of

a young married girl were read out to them and they were asked to consider whether what was being said was applicable to their situation in life or not. If applicable, then they were deemed to be in agreement with the statements and if not, then they were in disagreement. The extent of agreement or disagreement was captured through a Likert scale (a scale used to represent people's attitudes to a topic). The findings have been presented below in figure 6.4.

Over 80 per cent girls in urban areas and 66 per cent girls in rural areas of the studied states who got married early were of the opinion that girls who get married at an early age are forced to forfeit many of their aspirations and dreams they had for themselves. The generic trend was the higher proportion of urban girls who married before 18 had a deeper sense of regret than their rural counterparts (except perhaps, on the issue of boys seeing girls as a threat, where the proportion was even and around 50 per cent). What was perhaps counter-intuitive was that a significantly higher proportion of married girls

Figure 6.4
Opinion of married girls on various ways early marriage had impacted their aspirations and lifestyle (proportion of married girls who agreed against each indicator)



Base: Urban = 124; rural = 124

living in urban areas felt that they were subjected to a higher degree of scrutiny and restrictions when it came to interacting in public space, than their rural counterparts.

Another view of the compromises is that girls who marry at a very young age are forced to adapt to the restrictions imposed on their movement. For this, the girls were asked to consider a typical week in their lives and consider some of the usual things they did before they got married and whether they continued to do those things even after marriage or have restrictions been imposed.

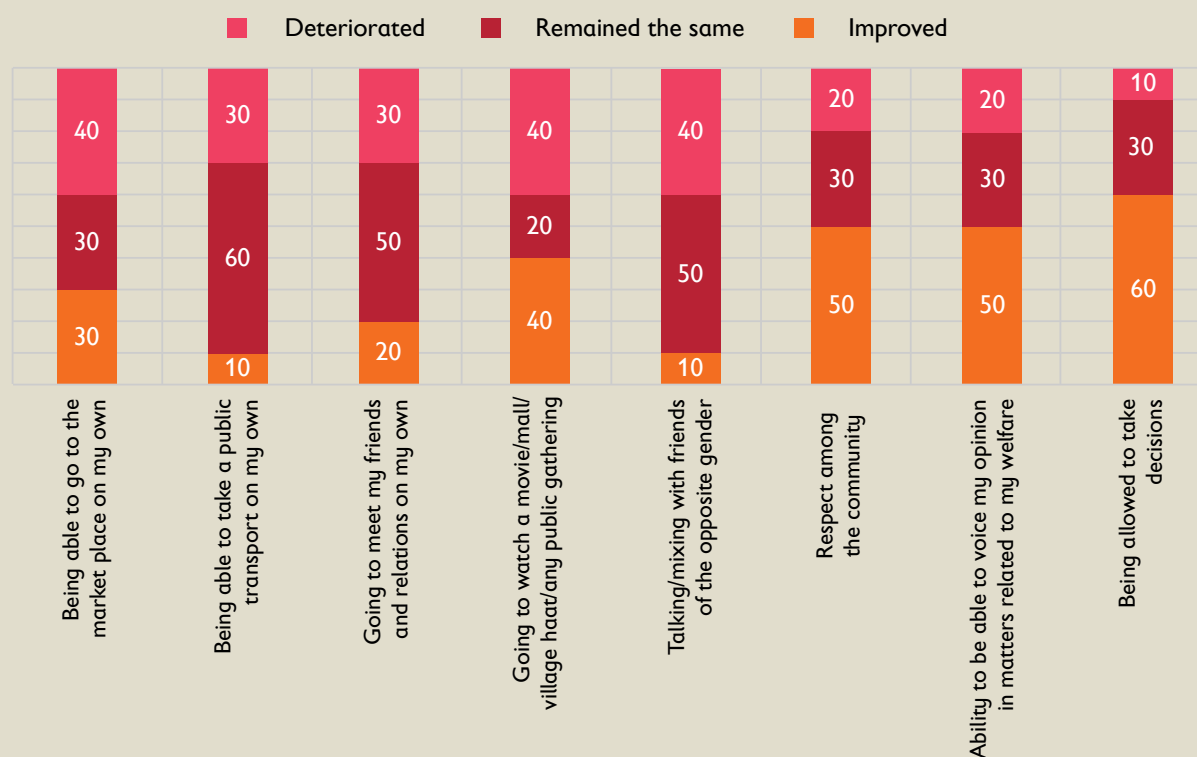
Going to the market place at her will or to the movie/mall and interacting with friends of the opposite gender were seen to be the two most important areas that deteriorated post marriage. However certain situations are observed where things have improved post marriage. The principal among them are: being in a position of decision

making, perception of higher respect within the community and being able to voice opinions in matters related to her welfare.

Detailed findings are presented in figure 6.5 below.

One can clearly see that matters of freedom of mobility or being allowed interaction with others outside of home have clearly become restrictive post marriage and this is where one can see a clear violation of rights. 30-40 per cent of the married girls had reported that their ability to socialise – go out and watch a movie or go to a public gathering, go to the local market and even mixing with friends of the opposite gender -- had come down after they got married. This clearly indicates that life after marriage for most girls has not been easy. While most of them are appreciative of the fact that over time, their voices are heard in their homes, yet the downside has been significant. Most had to admit that they have had to curtail their freedom

Figure 6.5
Manner in which life has changed for young girls before and after marriage



Base = 248



of movement, or their freedom to meet and make new friends. Restriction on their mobility is an infringement on their right.

However, there are several areas where things seem to have improved for girls after marriage. For instance, the respect she has earned as a married woman in the community was certainly more than when she was an unmarried adolescent. Significantly, most of these girls had felt that they are now 'allowed' to take decision, something they were

denied when they were unmarried. However, the nature of those decisions and the topics on which she was allowed to be a decision maker moved around day-to-day affairs within the household.

During the FGDs, not all women had painted a dismal picture of their in-law's home; few had also mentioned that after marriage, the in-laws had insisted on her continuing her education. But the prevalent opinion of most married girls was that post marriage, there was just no time to study after

completing all the work in the house, like cooking, cleaning, taking care of the child and the elderly.

All parents without exception agreed that girls have a right to safety in public places. They expressed that the consequences of lack of safe public places for girls, impacts both the girls and the parents who feel that they are helpless to meet their daughters' aspirations for a better life.

“Girls become depressed – we stop their education, put restrictions on their mobility, send boys or we go out but don't send girls, not at all after 6 pm. We send them only with someone accompanying them or make use of online markets instead of sending girls out” ...Parents from urban Telangana

According to Childline in Kolkata, efforts have been made to create an atmosphere for girls to resist social and family pressure to agree to child marriage. The problem of child marriage has been adequately tackled in certain areas through the combined efforts of community leaders and the authorities. The discussions brought to light instances of girls refusing early marriage in Kolkata. But such efforts need to be replicated and

scaled up for there are limited platforms that exist that allows adolescent girls the agency to ascertain their will and resist forced and early marriage.

“When we were young, we wanted to study, do jobs, become doctor or teacher or engineer. But since we got married off we could not pursue our dreams.” Woman (married before 18), from Assam

The above is a telling statement which summarises the feelings of many girls, across states, who were married off before they turned 18. All the women married before 18 participating in this study stated that their opinion was never sought at the time of marriage.

6.5. Conclusion

After trying to get an understanding of support systems available to the girls and the fall-out of safety concerns on girls in the preceding chapter, this chapter has attempted to investigate whether safety concerns could be one of the reasons for child marriage or not, for girls. Also the impact of early marriage leading to education discontinuity and curtailed ambitions was discussed in detail.

- It is clear that a large segment of girls who are subjected to child marriage also end up with losing their right to education. But, at the same time, it can also be seen that girls who marry by the time they are 13 or 14 years old are pulled out of the education system while still in school. This could imply curtailed mobility leading to dropout from school.
- That the discontinuation of education has a strong link with safety concerns is established – married girls could recall that this was one of the key reasons why they were asked to drop out of school.
- Married girls who are young enough to remember their life before marriage are resentful of many things, including the fact that they have had to forfeit their dreams and aspirations, or the simple fact that their disposition is subject to far more scrutiny than the boys when they venture out into public space.
- Life after marriage for girls has been different from their pre-marriage days. While some appreciated the fact that over time, they have some agency at home, most agreed that they have had to restrain their freedom of movement, or their freedom to meet and make new friends.

CHAPTER 7

Good Initiatives and Innovative Practices

7.1. Exploring Alternatives: Documenting Good Initiatives and Innovative Practices

Safety of girls in public spaces is an important concern in both urban and rural context of the country. During the last few years, a number of initiatives have been made to address these concerns. Several of them are ideas that have been conceived and successfully tested by key duty bearers from individual states as well. There are also initiatives that are being designed and driven by civil society organisations, as well as responsible corporates. The following section documents these efforts.

7.2. State-Initiated Measures

Over the past few decades, state policies have begun to address the issue of safety and security of women, though they continue to lack specific consideration for the girls as particularly vulnerable on the question of safety. However, some examples of proactive interventions exist, which can be models for interventions across different regions in the country.

7.2.1. The Nirbhaya Fund¹

A key initiative taken by Government of India in recent times to specifically address the issue of safety of women and girls in public spaces is the setting up of the Nirbhaya Fund. This was set up in 2012 as a non-lapsable kitty, to be administered by the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance. The Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) is the nodal Ministry for appraising/recommending the proposals/schemes to be funded under the Nirbhaya Fund. MWCD will also review the progress of the schemes with the line Ministries or Departments.

The Empowered Committee of Officers under the Chairmanship of Secretary, MWCD, is an inter-ministerial committee which appraises and

recommends various proposals/projects proposed by different Ministries/Departments/States. Under Nirbhaya fund, 18 proposals amounting to Rs.2195.97 crores have been received so far, out of which 16 proposals amounting to Rs. 2187.47 crores have been appraised and recommended by the Empowered Committee.

7.2.1.1. Major projects that have been cleared for funding

a) One-stop crisis centres for women and children

Popularly known as Sakhi Centres, the One Stop Centre (OSC) Scheme is being implemented across the country since 1 April, 2015. OSCs are meant to facilitate access to an array of services, including medical aid, police assistance, legal aid and counselling to victims of assault. It is a one-stop facility located in proximity to a medical facility. This has already been piloted in Jaipur and is awaiting release for funds for scaling up. 186 OSCs are approved to be set up in the country.

b) Mahila Police Volunteers

The Mahila Police Volunteers (MPVs) scheme is a joint initiative of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Women and Child Development, envisaged to create a link between police authorities and the local communities in villages through women police volunteers specially trained for this purpose. Haryana has become the first state to launch the Mahila Police Volunteer scheme in December, 2016.

c) Emergency Response Support System

Emergency Response Support System with a total cost of Rs.321.69 crores, aims to integrate all emergency numbers with 112 with state of art technology. ERSS is a unique and single helpline number that integrates all existing important emergency helpline numbers in one platform.

¹<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=157727>

d) Integrated Emergency Response Management System

This project of the Indian Railways has been approved to provide round the clock security to women passengers in 983 Railway Stations by strengthening of Security Control Rooms of Railways with 182 Security Helpline, Medical Facilities, RPF and police, installation of CCTV cameras, etc. The cost of the project is Rs. 500 crores.

e) Chirali

Friends Forever (Chirali) is a scheme to constitute Community Action Groups in seven districts of Rajasthan covering a total of 2071 Gram Panchayats for a period of three years, i.e. from 2016-17 to 2018-19, with the objective of creating an enabling environment that will support girls and women to move freely and make use of choices, spaces and opportunities for their overall well-being. The cost of the project is Rs.10.20 crores.

7.2.2. Women Helpline Scheme²

The Scheme for Universalisation of Women Helpline (WHL) is intended to provide 24 hours immediate and emergency response to women facing harassment through referral (linking with appropriate authority such as police, OSC, hospital) and information about women-related government schemes programs across the country through a single uniform number.

The Department of Telecommunication has allocated short code 181 to all States/UTs which is being used by some States/UTs such as Delhi, Chandigarh, and Chhattisgarh as Women Helpline. States/UTs need to adopt this short code 181 as Women Helpline (WHL). It is envisaged that this number would be compatible with all the existing telecommunication channels, whether providing post/pre-paid mobile or landline services through any public or private network i.e. GSM, CDMA, 3G, 4G, etc.

Under the WHL Scheme, the States/UTs will utilise or augment their existing women helplines through a dedicated single national number with the following objectives:

- To provide a toll-free 24-hours telecom service to women affected by violence seeking support and information.
- To facilitate crisis and non-crisis intervention through referral to the appropriate agencies such as police/Hospitals/Ambulance services/ District Legal Service Authority (DLSA)/ Protection Officer (PO)/OSC. And,
- To provide information about the appropriate support services, government schemes and programmes available to the woman affected by violence, in her particular situation within the local area in which she resides or is employed.

7.2.3. Initiatives by Police for Girls' Safety³

The police in Barackpore, West Bengal, have been very responsive to the issue of girls' safety and have a successful initiative of carrying out sensitisation programmes in schools. This comes under their community policing initiative. The school sensitisation visits include:

- Teaching self-defence.
- Telling girls to be self-aware and self-reliant.
- Sharing the phone numbers of all senior officers in the local Commiserate.

Police websites for each Commiserate have also been updated with information on who to approach, including phone numbers of all officers. Under the sensitisation drive, the police department realised that a major component should be the training and sensitisation of traffic police – as traffic police is the first point of contact in most cases. Police officers in traffic police are taught to pro-actively listen to the complaints and refer the same to the nearest police station. The police have also placed complaint boxes in all schools and colleges – it is called 'moner kotha' (words from the heart). The keys for these boxes are available only with police and hence, children can raise issues with complete anonymity.

There are a total of 66 all-women police stations in the state. These police stations exclusively investigate crimes against women and focus particularly on dowry and domestic violence cases,

²<http://www.newincept.com/women-helpline-scheme.html>

³This was discussed by the ACP, Barrackpore Police Station during the Stakeholder Meet in Kolkata on 11th January 2018.



RIYA, DELHI, 17 YRS

Delhi's girls will vouch for the unsafe conditions in its public spaces. "Unsafe' is the normal – beyond just an expression of vulnerability out there, it gropes their minds.

To that extent, Riya is like any other Delhi girl – who always feels unsafe. In fact, Riya's trauma enveloped her both on the streets and within the four walls of her home, as an alcoholic father made life tough for the family. Her mother faced the worst and Riya knew she would have to protect herself if she wanted to change her situation in life.



Save the Children's Children's Group in the Jahangirpuri slum of Delhi came as the cushion she needed. Riya began getting trained on self-defence skills and eventually became a trainer herself. Soon, she was to organise self-defence workshops for girls in her neighbourhood.

She has also conducted self-defence training workshops along with personnel of Delhi Police. Talking about her journey she says, "I was able to build my confidence after learning how to defend myself and now I want to spread that message to girls in my community."

Riya is another Child Champion who has managed to change the situation at her home and has also influenced lives of other girls in the community as she is a true leader and is one of the #Champions4Change.

abduction and sexual offences. The women police stations located in Kolkata Municipal Corporation and other urban areas have three female police personnel each — two constables and a sub-inspector. Women personnel have also been deployed at the radio flying squad that is stationed at night to respond to any crimes against women.

Many of these stations also have a child corner, envisaged to shield the children when their mothers or fathers came in for filing a complaint or as accused to be questioned under lockup.

7.2.4. Pink police patrol scheme⁴

The Kerala police launched the 'Pink police patrol scheme' in 2016, with a view of enhancing the presence of female police personnel in public places for the special protection of women and children. Based on the idea of deploying trained women personnel in urban areas that are known to be unsafe, the pink police deploy a motorcade with at least three police personnel at any point between 8 am and 8 pm.

The vehicles are equipped with GPS tracking devices and are constantly in touch with the control room.

⁴<http://www.keralapolice.org/kerala-police/innovative-initiatives/pink-police-patrol>



Cameras installed on the front and rear sides of the vehicles relay visuals to the city police control room continuously and enable those concerned to deploy additional forces to various areas whenever necessary. The presence and active intervention of these personnel is in areas that see increased movement of women, like the beginning and end of office/work/school hours, premises of educational institutions and bus stops, etc.

The scheme has been lauded by women who travel on a regular basis to work. However, two problems have been pointed out. The first of these is the time-bound availability of the patrol, reinforcing the binary of safe and unsafe times for women to be out in public. The expectation that women should be back in the private zone before eight at night implies that the state does not consider itself responsible after a culturally sanctioned 'appropriate time' for women's public presence. The second problematic aspect has been the increasing incidence of moral policing by some officers of the pink patrol, which has led to restrictions on the use of public space by consenting adults for spending time together.

7.2.5 . Safety measures in Public Transport⁵

Women's Safety in Public Transport is one of the key challenges across India. The transport authorities in a number of states are taking various measures to make public transport safe and comfortable for women. The steps taken by these transport departments include:

1. Installation of CCTV Cameras and Live GPS Tracking.
2. Reserving Coach for ladies in local trains and Metro.
3. Operating special Ladies Buses and dedicated cab fleet (She Taxi).
4. Creation of Safety Apps and panic buttons.
5. Separated sections for women in buses with reserved seats.

Along with the above initiatives it is important for city planners and law enforcement departments to

⁵These initiatives were discussed during the Stakeholder Meets at Mumbai, Hyderabad and Kolkata between January 9th to 11th, 2018

work in tandem to ensure safe and accessible first and last mile connectivity, safe passenger facilities at bus stops, safe boarding and alighting (many schools have started an app informing parents of the movement of their wards 'to and from' school like Delhi Public Schools in New Delhi).

7.3. Non-State Initiatives

Among the significant non-state interventions in recent times are several initiatives notable for the diversity in their approach. The following section seeks to highlight some of these best practices with the hope that these initiatives will inspire others to innovate and seek solutions to the issue of safety of girls.

7.3.1. Safetipin App⁶

Safetipin is a mobile application which collects information about public spaces. At the core of Safetipin is the safety audit that measures nine parameters, including lighting, the state of the walk path, as well as the presence of people and specifically women on the streets, the availability of

police, public transport and 'eyes on the street'. Each audit appears as a pin on the map and is used to compute the safety score of an area.

Safetipin has been designed both as a tool in the hands of individual women who can access information about safety in the city and as a method of collecting data on a large scale for city authorities to use for better planning and governance. An individual user can conduct a safety audit, pin places where she feels unsafe or has faced any form of harassment. She is also able to see all the information that has been uploaded by others and make informed decisions about moving around the city safely. Women (and men) can see the safety score of any place in the city and can also use it when they visit new cities. For the city authority, Safetipin provides large-scale data and a platform for interaction with citizens on their safety concerns. In order to help city governments, Safetipin data is shared with recommendations. Thus the app is able to show dark areas, unsafe areas, deserted areas and how these can be improved.



⁶<http://safetipin.com/about/whatsSafetipin>

7.3.2. Beti Zindabad campaign⁷

'Beti Zindabad' campaign was launched by ActionAid in 2013 with the aim of ending sex-based discrimination and violence against girls at birth and after. The campaign uses a combination of legal, advocacy, sensitisation and administrative routes to achieve its stated goal. Through a combination of RTI, monitoring, sting operations and media reportage, the campaign seeks to bring pre-natal sex determination and sex selective abortion under strict vigilance of the law. At the level of advocacy, the attempt has been to encourage state governments to evolve policy that addresses the issue of safety not only through specific measures like policing, but also general policy support for women's employment, land rights etc. The campaign also seeks to foreground the understanding of women's and children's rights as human rights, and encourages local governance bodies to incorporate this understanding in their policy framework. The campaign has succeeded in over 550 gram sabhas in furthering its aim, across the states of Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh. The campaign focuses on collaborating with different levels of community and institutional actors in evolving synergistic strategies for tackling the issue of safety.

7.3.4. Report by Indian Women Network⁸

A list of recommendations was made by the 'Indian Women Network', a platform under the Confederation of Indian Industry for ensuring safer urban spaces in the city of Trivandrum for women. The recommendations traverse five important areas on intervention, namely infrastructure and public safety, public transport, police intervention and support, technology and sensitisation. The report is remarkable for the diverse range of women it brings into its purview (working women, girls, students, tourists, migrants) as well as the diverse range of circumstances (educational spaces, tourist locations, cinemas, public transport, bus stops, unlit roads) it acknowledges as being threats to safety. The report is concrete in terms of identifying specific safety threats at specific parts of the city, and provides

a vulnerability assessment of urban geography, enabling more effective intervention from the state.

7.3.5. Blank Noise⁹

A volunteer run effort based in Bangalore called 'Blank Noise', emerged as a response to harassment of women and girls on the streets, in 2003. The campaign is famous for a range of creative strategies it has employed to encourage women and girls in public places to acknowledge and confront harassment. 'Blank Noise' uses a combination of technology, active solidarities between women and girls in any given public space in the event of harassment, and capacity building in tackling the issue.

'Blank Noise' aims to create a safe space to share experiences of sexual harassment. It is committed to mobilising citizens as 'Action Heroes', individuals who want to create a safe space and are committed to tackling and shifting the fear-based relationship women have been taught to have with their cities. The campaign has used a combination of strategies to build an environment where women and children can express their anxiety about being in public without fear of being rebuked. The campaign's focus on encouraging women and girls to reclaim their right to occupy space has found resonance in similar campaigns across several cities in India, including 'Why Loiter' in Mumbai and 'Pinjra Tod' in New Delhi.

7.4. Collaborative Alternatives

The third set of interventions involves collaborative efforts between state, non-state, international actors and corporates.

7.4.1. Partners for Prevention¹⁰

Partners for Prevention, an initiative that brings together the expertise of four UN agencies along with State and civil society actors in preventing violence against women and girls is significant for its focus on partnering with men and boys in ending harassment. The UN agencies that form the base of this initiative are UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women and UNV Joint Regional Programme for the prevention of VAWG. Phase one of the project focussed on generation of

⁷<https://www.actionaidindia.org/campaigns/beti-zindabad/>

⁸<http://cii.in/WebCMS/Upload/IWNSafetyProposalforprintfinal.pdf>

⁹<https://www.thebetterindia.com/67337/blank-noise-jasmeen-patheja-bengaluru-women-india/>

¹⁰https://info.undp.org/docs/pdc/Documents/BRC/Signed%20P4P%20II_Pro_Doc_Signed_UNDP-UNFPA-UNWomen-UNV.pdf

knowledge and data on the issue, and phase two focuses on communication and sensitisation.

The most significant attempt in this effort is to understand the nature of masculinities and its relationship to violence across Asia. The website reports on their pilot initiative of the UN Multi-Country Study on Men and Violence, which carried out a household survey between 2010 and 2013 on men's perpetration and experience of violence. The countries included were Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Papua New Guinea.

7.4.2. Safe City Free of Violence for Women and Girls¹¹

A comparable initiative combining academic and advocacy potential to create safer spaces for women and children is the 'Safe City Free of Violence for Women and Girls', a joint initiative of the NGO Jagori, Department of Women and Child Development, Government of Delhi, UNIFEM South Asia Regional Office and UN Habitat, Nairobi. The campaign is also based on understanding the problem using academic means, capacity building and outreach to several groups such as students, resident welfare associations, city planners, community groups, youth groups, men's groups, women's special interest groups (working with minority and marginalized communities), working with government departments of education, police, transport, urban planning and others and the communication and dissemination of such information to other agencies working on similar issues across the country.

7.4.3. GPower Initiative from Child in Need Institute¹²

'GPower' – short for girl power – is an innovative digital solution jointly developed by Accenture with the Child in Need Institute (CINI). It won the Vodafone Foundation 'Mobile for Good' 2015 award in India for women empowerment and inclusive development. 'GPower' focuses on enabling underprivileged girls make a healthy transition from childhood to a productive adulthood by addressing key issues such as school drop-out, child marriage and trafficking. The solution's assessment system

pulls together the power of social, mobile, analytics and cloud technologies to identify and predict beneficiary vulnerability trends in a continuous manner. The solution empowers adolescent girls by helping them identify and cope with vulnerabilities, counselling as per need and linking vulnerable girls with the available social welfare services. At the society level, 'GPower' sensitises and builds awareness in the community about behaviours that could be harmful to the girl child.

'GPower' revamps the data collection process by empowering community facilitators to register a beneficiary on-the-go through a mobile device and electronically capture beneficiary data on key parameters such as education, protection, health, and nutrition status. The solution then ensures quick transmission of data to centralised servers using cloud-based technology, and the analytics-based functions process the data to provide insights on potential vulnerabilities of adolescent girls in real-time. This enables CINI to proactively intervene immediately, facilitate access to the most relevant services from government flagship programs to mitigate the vulnerabilities and ensure a better future for the underprivileged children.

The principal behind the app is the creation of a composite weighted index consisting of indicators that define vulnerability. Each girl child within a community is graded on the basis of this index. Some of the key vulnerability indicators used for the construct included:

- Whether or not the girl child goes to school.
- Whether the father is an alcoholic.
- Where the girl child is being brought up by a single parent.
- Number of siblings and their gender.
- Age of marriage of elder sister.

The status of each girl child in the village is constantly updated by local volunteers using the app and, based on the findings, their vulnerability status is assessed. 'GPower' currently works with over 6000 families in 20 villages of Murshidabad and South 24 Parganas, two resource-poor districts of West Bengal.

¹¹http://www.jagori.org/wp-content/uploads/2006/01/Strategic_Framework.pdf

¹²<https://newsroom.accenture.com/news/accenture-and-cinis-digital-solution-gpower-receives-vodafone-foundations-mobile-for-good-2015-award-for-women-empowerment-and-inclusive-development.htm>



KAVITA, RAJASTHAN, 16 YRS

A first generation learner, 15-year-old Kavita is an inspiration for all the girls in her village in Dungarpur district of Rajasthan.

Education was a distant dream for her because the school was 7 kilometres away from her home. Her parents were reluctant to send her so far, fearing that it would not be safe for her to travel alone as no one could accompany her. Save the Children identified her

as an out-of-school child and ensured that she was enrolled in school. She was linked to other students living close by so that she could travel with them. Her parents were also introduced to the school principal and teachers.

Kavita's school enrolment was a first step and, as she started attending school, other girls from her village followed suit. She is another one of Save the Children's #Champions4Change.



7.4.5. Himmat App developed by Delhi Police¹³

Commuters in New Delhi can access Delhi Police's mobile safety application for women 'Himmat'. It is a mobile application which was launched by the Delhi Police through which women can alert the police and five friends or family members, in case of any emergency. When a passenger taps the distress call option, a 30-second audio and video recording from the phone is relayed to the authority.

For this, Delhi Police has joined hands with Uber, a taxi aggregator. Delhi Police hopes to increase the reach of the application. In the first phase of partnership, Uber will develop a permanent in-app access for 'Himmat' app, including a link to download it from the app store.

The second phase will allow users to directly access the 'Himmat' app from within the Uber app. As Sanjay Baniwal, Special Commissioner Police, Women Safety, said: "Through this partnership with Uber, we believe more women riders in Delhi will be sensitised about the availability of this assistance at hand. In addition to the Emergency Button in the Uber app, riders will now have one more touch point to access the police helpline in case of an emergency."

This is Delhi Police's first partnership with a technology company to intensify its focus on the safety of women in the city. With this partnership, 'Himmat' will now be accessible to lakhs of women riders in one go. The 'Himmat' app, which was launched by the Delhi Police in 2015, has over 31,000 registered users with over 90,000 downloads.

7.5. Conclusion

Some states have started initiatives for promoting the safety of girls like Kerala's 'Pink Police Patrol Programme' or the 'Chirali: Friends Forever' scheme initiated by the government of Rajasthan. Other states need to take similar initiatives. A number of innovative practices like Blank Noise campaign or Safetipin App have been designed by civil society organisations. Such innovative practices need to be replicated and scaled up. If need be, these should be contextualised as per the local conditions. Collaboration between different stakeholders has been another positive feature of a number of initiatives such as 'Himmat' app. In a similar vein, there is also a need for greater partnership among different stakeholders to complement efforts and create models for promoting the safety of girls in public spaces.

¹³<https://tech.economicstimes.indiatimes.com/news/mobile/uber-ties-up-with-delhi-police-to-enhance-women-safety/59915436>

CHAPTER 8

Recommendations and the Way Forward

Interaction in public spaces is a crucial component for the development of girls in their early and late adolescence as they prepare for a life of adulthood. The opportunity and ability to interact in public spaces enable them to get their education, exchange ideas and thoughts with their friends and peers, and offer overall development. It is essential for the girls to develop a world view, to pursue a career, or even go out for recreation or run errands. Such exposure is paramount for girls to become self-confident in their interaction with the world outside their homes, and also to become capable to pursue gainful employment and become self-reliant.

But public spaces, while bringing opportunities, are also accompanied with the spectre of fear and abuse. In a patriarchal societal structure like India's, where gender stereotypes are more of a norm than an exception, women and girls face visual, verbal, physical and emotional harassment and abuse too often. This omnipresent threat thrives on the fact that many victims and their families prefer anonymity over confrontation because of the fear of fallouts that are both threatening and beset with

stigma. As a fallout of this safety concerns, many young girls are robbed of their aspirations and forced to remain at home or even forced into child marriage.

Policy makers, planners, civil society organisations, key duty bearers and families thus need to do all they can to ensure women and girls access their right to public spaces. It is important to establish that girls have as much rights as boys to live a life of dignity, free from fear, impositions and insecurities. Till the time this iniquitous situation is erased or at least reduced to a significant level, it is suggested that a consolidated effort is made to create an environment conducive for the safety and security of the girls.

8.1. Key findings that need redressal through immediate as well as systemic means

A. Fear of open spaces and also of crowded spaces: One in three adolescent girls surveyed were scared of traversing the narrow by-lanes



of the locality, as well as the road to go to school or the local market. In urban areas three out of five adolescent girls were scared of traversing the narrow by-lanes of their locality as well as the road to go to their school or the local market. In rural areas one in four adolescent girls felt unsafe when using open spaces/agricultural fields for open defecation. Nearly three in five girls reported feeling unsafe in situations where the public place was over-crowded.

Political parties and public representatives should prioritize and advocate for girls' safety and ensure more effective use of public funds controlled by them.

- B. Inadequate lighting:** 60 percent of adolescent girls expressed feeling unsafe in streets or other public spaces with inadequate lighting.
- C. Apprehension of using public transport:** Adolescent girls felt scared in over-crowded buses, trains, metros, local trains etc. as they feared inappropriate touching and groping. 58 per cent of the adolescent boys and 52 percent of the parents of the interviewed girls shared that it was not safe for girls living in their neighbourhood to take a public transport in the evening.
- D. Fear of physical and sexual abuse:** Over one in every four adolescent girls perceived the threat of being physically assaulted, including getting raped, while venturing into public spaces, while one in three expected to be inappropriately touched or even stalked.
- E. Perception of adolescent boys:** Nearly half of the boys interviewed were of the opinion that men must have the final word in all decisions. One in three boys held an opinion that slapping a woman to reprimand her should not be interpreted as violence. One in three adolescent boys felt that girls should avoid wearing certain types of clothes while going out in public spaces.
- F. Limited family support systems for adolescent girls:** Nearly two out of five adolescent girls who did not say that they would confide in their parents, felt that if their parents do come to know about an incident of harassment, they will, in all likelihood restrict their movement outside of home. Over 50 per cent parents agreed that they will probably end up scolding their daughters for letting this happen; and 42 per cent feel that they are likely to regulate their daughters' movement in public spaces if they came to know of any incidence of harassment experienced by their daughters.
- G. Gender stereotyping among boys and parents which has implications for safety of girls in public spaces:** One in three boys and two out of five parents saw an active role of women in some harassment cases by provoking the offender. As many as half of the boys and as many of parents of adolescent girls were of the opinion that the best way for girls to be safe is that they should avoid certain public spaces or they should simply avoid going out after dark.
- H. Implication on child marriage due to lack of safety:** One in five parents surveyed believed that it is better to get their daughters married early rather than take the risk of something happening with her on her way to school/work/any public space. Nearly three in ten girls who were students at the time they got married expressed their feeling of having missed out on completing their education because they got married. Three out of four married girls subject to child marriage had admitted, that they had to forfeit many of their aspirations and dreams.
- I. Absence of bystander support:** According to the adolescent girls, their support systems outside their homes were also not substantive. Mothers of the adolescent girls shared that they do not expect bystanders to get involved in offering assistance if something were to happen to them on the roads.
- J. Inadequate support from the Police:** 40 per cent of the adolescent girls believed that the reaction of the local police station (in the event of their going and lodging a complaint) would range from either blaming the complainant or showing acute reluctance in recording the complaint.
- K. Lack of awareness of Childline number, and also of Government statutory bodies:** A majority of the girls were not aware of government statutory bodies like Child Welfare

SALEHA, MAHARASHTRA, 15 yrs

Teenager Saleha Khan of suburban Mumbai's Govandi slum is an idol for other girls in her community for the resolve she has demonstrated to pursue her education.

Govandi lies in Asia's biggest dumping ground and the life expectancy here is close to half of India's average life expectancy. The lack of safe drinking water and the shoddy sanitary conditions are aggravated by the toxic gases from mountainous heaps of garbage in the neighbourhood.



Govandi's physical environment is further aggravated by its unsafe streets. Girls in their teens would discontinue their schooling because their families feared for their safety. This was the case with Saleha – her parents decided she should discontinue her education once she finished with the 8th grade.

Young Saleha would have none of this and so she decided to convince her friends to accompany her to school – the strength of numbers helped convince their parents and made it possible for them to attend school.

For Saleha, the idea of their strength in numbers was beyond mathematics – it turned into a lesson in life-skill manoeuvring to negotiate the circumstances she and other young girls like her were in.

Saleha is today a #Champions4Change, which is a Save the Children initiative for identifying and nurturing young leaders. She encourages other girls in her community to complete their education and then pursue higher education, guiding them on how to negotiate the unsafe settings of the lanes and by-lanes of Govandi.

Committees that can be approached for referral to appropriate authorities for redressal against harassment. In fact, only around 20 per cent (on an aggregate) of the total sample of adolescent girls claimed to have some awareness of such bodies. Awareness among parents was even lower, only 11 per cent of the total sample of parents had any such information. Awareness of the Childline (helpline for children) number (1098) was also very low.

- L. Media reportage:** Around 90 per cent of adolescent girls who were exposed to stories on sexual assault on girls and women in the media, have started to become more careful about where they go in public spaces.

8.2. Key Recommendations

The findings of the study and also various stakeholders who were consulted during the course of this study suggest that there is an urgent need for building awareness among the parents to treat their daughters at par with their sons. Socialisation patterns should be such that boys and girls get enough space to interact with each other and are able to understand the needs and aspirations of the other. Equality should be hemmed in their everyday upbringing so that it becomes a natural part of their existence. However, it is not an easy task to achieve as it requires sensitising the parents and grandparents who are conservative and stereotypical in their mind-set. It is understood that these

can be achieved through long-term sensitisation programmes run by various agencies. These have been discussed in detail under various themes below. By the time, these processes have a meaningful impact, short-term measures to enhance the safety of the girls in public spaces need to be considered.

The recommendations that have been put forth in this chapter are in line with the ideas and suggestions that were gathered from a large number of stakeholders who were consulted during the course of this study, including duty bearers implementing various schemes meant for protection of children, civil society organisations implementing different initiatives for girls, police officials including those manning cyber-crime divisions and women and child-friendly police stations, members from NCPCR and SCPCRs, activists, academics and children (especially girls).

Safe public infrastructure and transport must be ensured:

- CCTV's to be installed across all street/by-lanes and critical locations like markets, cinema halls, malls and important roads and their maintenance ensured. CCTV recordings to be maintained for minimum three months period.
- Free, safe, hygienic, functional and 24 x 7 accessible public toilets for women, preferably operated by female staff, should be provided in public spaces, including highways, in cities, towns and rural areas.
- Safe public transport for women be ensured through installing CCTV cameras, GPS and SOS button to alert the police control room and sensitisation of drivers and conductors.

SABITRI, ODISHA, 16 YRS

Wrapped in traditions and gender complexities, Sabitri's is a story of grit.

She was born in Bandaguda – a tribal village in a remote corner of Odisha, home to acute poverty and far from the influence of the government.

Her family forced her to quit school after she finished her 10th grade examinations, due to their financial constraints, but also because they felt that going to school was beset with risks. Furthermore, her family wanted to get her married while she was yet a child, just so that it would insure her life, and ensure safety.

At this juncture in her life, Sabitri attended a life-skills training organised by Save the Children. Chosen as a Discussion Leader within the session by her own peers, she realised what she needed to do to change the course of her life. With the help of her peers and the strength of the Children's Group organised by Save the Children (of which she was a part), she stood up against her marriage, arguing that "child marriage" were against the law and prevented young girls from developing as individuals. She also spoke to the groom's family and made them understand the evils of child marriage.

Sabitri has worked with the panchayat, the local self-governing body and has prevented two child marriages in her community. She continues to spearhead the movement against social evils. She is a Child Champion, part of Save the Children #Champions4Change.





Where possible, girls/ women-only transport services should be started by state governments ,especially on routes serving educational institutions like schools and colleges.

- A mobile phone based citizen's feedback mechanism that provides an opportunity to

There is a need to simplify the process of approval of Projects for Nirbhaya Fund and develop measures for proper utilisation of funds.

citizens to provide feedback to local government institutions about the lack of safety in public space. This should enable any citizen to inform the authorities about a public space where he/ she feels unsafe and also the characteristics that

make it unsafe. This could be on the lines of the government's own Swachh Bharat Abhiyan that relies on citizen feedback through Swachh app.

- All public spaces should have proper functional lighting. A review of the existing facilities needs to be done to identify the dark spots. In areas that have extensive power cuts in summers, option of alternative sources of energy such as solar lighting should be explored.

Effective policing is essential:

- Police should regularly patrol various parts of the city, especially vulnerable spaces, highways, public parks and educational institutions, offices.
- Police beat/patrol team should be available through-out the city and towns, with emphasis on ensuring greater presence of women police officers in the team.
- Representation of women in the police force should be increased to encourage reporting by women and for sensitive investigation.



- Patrol vans to be equipped with conferencing facility to report the case to magistrate for fast track redressal of reported cases.
- Complaint boxes should be placed in public spaces with a nodal officer responsible to review these complaints and take necessary actions as per established, standard procedures.
- ‘By-standers’ engagement to be enhanced by making them aware about their rights and providing them protection against perpetrators of crime.
- To enhance the confidence of the community in the police, they should organize frequent meetings with children through schools, community and resident welfare associations. Further, the police should promptly address the issues and challenges brought out in such meetings.

Involvement of traffic police in any incident of harassment to be assured:

- Traffic Police could play significant role as first responders of incidences of harassment on the roads, in public transport, autos, taxis or any other vehicles. It is imperative that they undergo training and sensitisation on appropriate behaviour and protocols of being first responders.
- A special component needs to be devised in their refresher training courses where they would be trained to proactively listen to complaints and refer to the local police station.

Active community engagement must be encouraged:

- Community Support mechanisms like self-help groups, children’s groups and, mothers’ groups need to be engaged in creating a strong support system for the adolescent girls.
- Community-based watch guard systems including shopkeepers/traders, residents, RWA, CPC should be set-up and made functional to ensure that they become the “eyes and ears” of the police for the safety of girls in public spaces.
- Resident Welfare Associations and Mohalla Samitis need to be sensitised to ensure that all local vendors (including guards manning the entry/exit gates of societies and public parks) are made aware about the safety of girls.

- Effective child-friendly reporting and redressal systems should be developed at the community level and widely publicised.
- Toll free help-lines numbers such as “Childline”, “Police” and others should be published widely and regularly. These numbers should be displayed at various public spaces, including educational institutions and markets. The Government should ensure that the lines are functional and that trained persons answer promptly and are able to take the necessary action.

Gender sensitisation of service providers :

- All drivers, conductors and helpers of public transport, including those from private cab aggregator services like Uber and Ola, should undergo mandatory induction programme on safety of girls .
- Ensure inclusion of gender sensitisation and girl’s safety component in induction and in-service training programmes of local self-governance authorities, Integrated Child Protection Scheme functionaries, Aanganwadi workers, ASHA workers, ANMs, doctors and other health workers.
- Gender sensitisation and safety of girls in public spaces should be part of the curriculum at the B.Ed. and M.Ed., as well as on-the-job training, induction and refresher training programmes of teachers and other in-service personnel

Gender sensitisation of children, family and community:

- Awareness and gender sensitisation of children (both boys and girls), parents and care givers, grandparents on gender issues and girls’ safety needs to be ensured.
- Life skill education should be mandatory as part of the curriculum for all children in schools. Child-friendly and gender sensitive literature should be made available to children to make them aware of their rights. It could be in the form of comics, a form that could be both educative as well as entertaining like Amar Chitra Katha or other such comics.
- Children’s participation should be facilitated to mobilise the children, families and communities around the work of girls’ safety.

- Parents Teacher Meetings (PTMs) could be used to create awareness on gender sensitisation, and to encourage having open discussions with their children on gender equality, raising their voices against harassment.
- School Management Committees (SMCs) should be sensitised on issues of girls' safety . They should ensure that measures to ensure girls' safety is part of the school development plan and is effectively implemented.
- Large scale sensitisation campaigns by local self-governance institutions and service providers should be launched on safety of girls in public spaces which include information on facilities like Childline.
- Mass awareness building campaigns on girls' safety in public spaces should be run in print and electronic media as well as social media.
- They should also be involved in sensitisation of relevant state actors on components of safety in public spaces; and undertaking monitoring, research and advocacy with state actors and policy makers to ensure effective design and implementation of initiatives for safe public spaces for girls and women.

Media engagement must be strengthened:

- Capacity building programmes need to be organised at district, state and national level for sensitisation of media on safety of girls, sensitive reporting ,followup and on the role of bystander involvement in helping a girl in distress.
- Sensitisation efforts should also aim at sustained reportage of incident of harassment against a girl till the judgment is delivered. Wider publicity of convictions is needed.
- Success stories of bystanders playing an important role in helping/mitigating the situation of a girl in distress and steps taken by various stakeholders to improve the situation should be shared regularly with the media.
- Field visits of media persons, round table meets of senior editors and regular press briefings may be undertaken.

Effective utilisation of financial resources is essential:

- Political parties and public representatives should prioritise and advocate for girls' safety and ensure more effective use of public funds controlled by them.
- There is a need to simplify the process of approval of projects for Nirbhaya Fund and develop measures for proper utilisation of funds.
- Concentrated efforts need to be made to mobilise additional resources from corporates, philanthropists and other social development initiatives on girl safety issues.
- Strong mechanisms to be developed to ensure effective utilisation of the earmarked resources to make public spaces safe for girls and women.

Concentrated efforts need to be made to mobilise additional resources from corporates, philanthropists and other social development initiatives on girl safety issues.

- Short video series on safety of girls in public spaces can be created and shared with the communities through panchayat and ward representatives.
- A component on safety of girls in public spaces should be integrated with activities and programmes of NSS. For example, it can be integrated in programmes aimed at creating an awareness for improvement of the status of girls. NCC, Bharat Scouts and Guides (BSG), Nehru Yuvak Kendras (NYKs) should be made key stakeholders in the campaigns and awareness generation.

Strong civil society action must be mobilized :

- Civil society actors should be actively involved for capacity building and awareness generation of adolescent girls, boys, families, communities on gender issues.

8.3. Conclusion

Public spaces are perceived to be unsafe by the adolescent girls and also by their families for various reasons. These reasons lead to fear and hence impact the lives of these girls in various undesirable

ways as their right to mobility, education and employment are affected. Therefore, it is strongly advocated that it is the duty of the State, community and family to create enabling conditions to ensure safety of girls in public spaces so that they can live a life of dignity. It is sincerely hoped that a concerted effort by all the stakeholders of the society would result in making this world a better place for girls.

Since the fragility of safety of girls in public spaces has found a place in both public discourse and civic action, it is time to take action speedily. Several Government-sponsored and civil society initiatives that promise to secure the rights of the girls have begun. The allocations made under the Nirbhaya

Fund is one such initiative which, if strategically designed and effectively implemented, can contribute to making public spaces safe for adolescent girls and women.

Development of applications for girls for increased vigilance and providing emergency response is another positive step. Along with the short-term solutions to address safety in public spaces, there is a need to make concerted efforts at family, community and societal levels to challenge and transform deeply-embedded stereotypical gender norms to prevent violence against adolescent girls and ensure their safety and their rights as equal citizens.



Annexures

Annexure 1: Research logframe

Research questions	Specific areas of inquiry	Research protocol
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the current concerns, issues, laws and policies, available infrastructure and services, programs and interventions related to safety of girls across public space and what are the implications of the above on their rights? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current concerns globally on the issue of safety of women in public space • Definition of 'Public space' • Definition of 'Safety of girls' and forms of harassment • Laws and policies in place to directly address the issue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive literature review • Review of available records in public domain • IDIs with key duty bearers • Interviews with experts on public safety.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the perception of girls about their safety at different public spaces and what are the factors that govern their perception of safety at these spaces? 	<p>Interaction with public space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature of interaction with public space on a regular basis • Usual modes of commuting for reaching different destinations, in group or alone • Fear of harassment (verbal, visual, physical, sexual, emotional) that have been experienced – most often; last time • Type of activity engaged in (or proceeding to be engaged in) when faced with harassment/ • Whether harassment is one-off or a regular event • Ranking of personal safety risk concerns when associated with a particular public area/facility • Whether harassment goes beyond gender and involves other triggers like religion, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structured questionnaire survey among Primary Target Groups (PTGs) • FGDs with PTGs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which spaces are perceived to be unsafe by girls and what key measures will contribute to enhanced safety and inclusiveness for girls? 	<p>Specific public places that girls feel more uncomfortable or unsafe and avoid</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasons why girls feel unsafe in specific public spaces – negative personal experience or indirect influence • What is the 'safe place' for girls where they can go to feel secure? • Situation(s) where they find themselves to be most vulnerable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structured questionnaire survey among PTGs • Free expression: Drawing

- What are the responses of girls when they perceive themselves to be unsafe across spaces? Who do the girls approach when they perceive themselves to be unsafe and what is the response of those whom they approach? What has been the outcome of that response?

Reactions to being harassed

- Emotional reactions to being exposed to harassment in any form within public space (feel humiliated, angry, etc.)
- Steps taken (in particular situations) or adjustments made to avoid being harassed again
- Whether girls ever retaliated upon being harassed in a public space and nature of retaliation (verbally, walked away, used an app to lodge a complaint, sought help from others, approached police)
- Reasons behind not reporting incidence to police, at home, at schools, to peers

Role of bystander and familial support base

- Nature of assistance received from bystanders.
- Stakeholders in their lives whom they can confide in about their fears and safety concerns
- Whether the incidence/experience of being harassed is discussed at home
- Reactions at home and whether this reaction is that of sympathy, active support, or apathy
- Nature of conflict mitigation steps usually suggested by family
- Whether sharing of experience is more with peers than with family members
- Whether decisions on active response involves peer advice or family advice, or both

The fear of social stigma

- Under the guise of concern, do girls feel that they are policed - not permitted to go out at all, not stay late at work, not allowed to go out at night for purposes of pleasure, dress and behave 'decently'
- What is the biggest fear, being harassed, or being ostracised by society?
- Does societal judgment influence the decision to report incidence or take action?
- Do they feel that boys/men enjoy a certain degree of social sanction to behave the way they do?

Role of the police

- Whether police is seen as an important and trustworthy stakeholder
- Perceived role of the police as against actual role played
- Are the local law enforcement agencies helpful, supportive and proactive, or do they end up blaming the girl, trivialising the incident or remain inactive?

- Structured questionnaire survey among PTGs
- FGDs with PTGs
- IDIs with Duty Bearers
- IDIs with KIs within NGO and research community
- Discussions with community and with FLWs

- **What is the perception of other stakeholders about the girls' safety (especially boys)?**

Perceptions of adolescent boys/parents/ community leaders

- Extent of empathy towards the plight of girls who experience harassment in public places
- Incidence of having ever participated (in a group or individually) in harassing a girl within public space
- Whether mild harassment (defined by them) is just friendly banter and should not be considered objectionable
- Whether they believe the problem is being hyped by the media
- Whether they appreciate the need for concerted action
- Whether boys ever worried that this may happen to girls in their family
- Whether community in general and adolescent boys in particular hold a regressive attitude about relations between men and women
- Women's rights at the cost of men's rights
- The need to assess the character of the victim before jumping to definitive conclusions about rape and harassment
- Whether society in general and boys in particular hold a degree of prejudice against girls, w.r.t.
 - Role definitions at home
 - Right to be reprimanded or punished
 - Decision making at home
 - Compromises she is expected to make in order to keep her family together
- Whether they believe that harassment can be avoided if girls are willing to take certain precautions
- Whether adolescent boys believe that harassment is something that will remain and it is up to parents to decide whether to limit a girl's interaction with public space
- Effective measures that can be taken for improving the safety of girls while they commute across public space

- Structured questionnaire survey among boys
- FGDs with boys
- FGDs with caregivers of PTGs
- Discussions with community and with Asha and Aanganwadi workers.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the implications of lack of safety at these spaces for the denial of rights to girls such as dropping out from school, early marriage and restricting the aspirations? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature of life altering decisions that adolescent girls are forced to take because of risk posed in public commuting • To what extent does fear of harassment and the following scandal force parents to resort to early marriage of their girls? • Whether girls subject to early marriage feel that their aspirations were curtailed prematurely – and how • Whether girls subject to child marriage still harbour a sense of resentment about the compromise they had been forced to adopt • Whether safety concerns limit an adolescent's access to higher education/employment • Whether married girls are subject to higher levels of scrutiny/restrictions when it comes to interacting with public space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structured questionnaire survey among PTGs • FGDs with PTGs • IDIs with duty bearers • IDIs with key informants within NGO and research community • Discussions with community and Asha and Aanganwadi workers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does perception of lack of safety of girls at these spaces contribute to the families' decision to get a girl married early? If yes, then what are the pathways and factors that lead to this decision? Besides lack of safety what are the other factors that push the family to arrive at this decision and what are the consequent violations of their rights? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent do parents feel overprotective about their adolescent girls' every time they go out of home? • What steps do they take to limit the exposure/risk of harassment on the girls of the family? • To what extent would parents encourage an open discussion with their children on the matter of harassment of girls in public spaces? • What are the likely measures that parents of adolescent girls would take if faced with the problem? • Are parents conscious of the implications of lack of safety at these spaces for the denial of rights to girls and are they willing to make the compromise? • What proportion of parents are more worried about scandals than future aspirations of their girl child? • What are the effective measures that can be taken for improving the safety of girls while they commute across public space? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structured questionnaire survey among PTGs • FGDs with PTGs • FGDs with caregivers • IDIs with community key informants

<p>What is the status of availability, accessibility, quality and usage of government, administrative and civil society interventions, mechanisms, and infrastructure and services for addressing the issue of safety of girls across public spaces, and gaps there in?</p>	<p>From girls and parents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the extent of awareness of specific measures being taken by the local, regional, national government to promote women’s safety in public places? • What is the extent of knowledge of helplines and other bodies that can be approached for grievance redressal, and source of awareness? • Do girls and their parents feel that they will get quick justice from approaching these services? <p>From key duty bearers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether specific steps have already been initiated to address safety concerns of girls/women in public spaces, including increased patrolling, street lighting, CCTV cameras, activating women cells with lady constables, etc. • Initiatives (out-of-the-box) taken on pilot basis by different municipalities/state governments/Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) that have been making a significant impact on making life safer for women in public places • What are constraints in current help structures? • How to better utilise what is available? 	<p>Structured questionnaire survey among PTGs and parents</p> <p>FGDs with PTGs</p> <p>IDIs with duty bearers</p> <p>IDIs with secondary stakeholders</p>
<p>What are the effective measures that can be taken for improving the safety of girls taking into account the current provisions under various schemes and policies?</p>	<p>All Respondents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do the girls themselves want that needs to happen for them to feel safe in public spaces? • What do the parents/ caregivers want that needs to happen for them to feel assured that their girls should be reasonably safe while interacting in public spaces (going to school, tuition, work, travelling in a bus, shopping)? • Given current resources (manpower, logistics, finances), what do the duty bearers feel are immediate steps that can be taken within existing legal/administrative frameworks to increase safety? • What initiatives need to be scaled up to widen area coverage and what needs serious rethinking and remodelling? • What should be a long term strategy by the state to tackle the issue, both at societal, judicial and infrastructural level? • Are there specific hurdles that need to be systematically removed to make an impact? 	<p>Structured questionnaire survey among PTGs</p> <p>FGDs with PTGs</p> <p>IDIs with KIs within NGO and research community</p> <p>Discussions with community and with Asha and Aanganwadi workers</p> <p>Consultative workshops</p> <p>IDIs with duty bearers</p> <p>IDIs with community key informants.</p>

Annexure 2: Composite index for selection of states

Step 1: Data for all the indicators was collected against each state of the country (Delhi was the only Union Territory to be included) and all the values were normalised [(Indicator value for a state – mean value of that indicator for all states) / Standard Deviation]. This helped make each indicator scale-free and comparable across all states;

Step 2: The normalised ‘Z’ scores were then multiplied by 100 and then added to 500 to arrive

a whole number which is easier to understand and compare (similar exercise is done for displaying SAT scores);

Step 3: States with the highest values (meaning states that performed the worst in their region) were selected. However, it must be recognised that all indicators were given equal weights.

The results of the construct of the composite weighted index is given below.

Table A.1

Value of each indicator used in the composite index for state selection

States	Inverse of child sex ratio	Crime Against Women	Women married before 18	Experienced Spousal Violence	Women who worked in the last 12 months and got paid in cash
Unit	Ratio/ 1000	Number	Percentage	Percentage	Percentage
North					
Delhi/NCR	1152	184.3	13	26.8	21
Haryana	1138	75.7	18.5	32	17.6
Himachal Pradesh	1029	37.4	8.6	5.9	17
Jammu and Kashmir	1125	57	8.7	9.4	12.4
Punjab	1117	39.7	7.6	20.5	18.5
Rajasthan	1078	81.5	35.4	25.1	18.6
Uttarakhand	1038	28.2	13.9	12.7	15.5
South					
Andhra Pradesh	1007	62.3	32.7	43.2	48.2
Karnataka	1028	41.6	23.2	20.5	29.1
Kerala	923	53.4	7.6	14.3	20.4
Tamil Nadu	1004	17	15.7	40.6	30.5
Telangana	1012	83.1	25.7	43	45.2
Central					
Chhattisgarh	1009	44.8	21.3	36.7	36.8
Madhya Pradesh	1074	65.5	30	33	29.9
Uttar Pradesh	1096	34.8	21.2	36.7	16.6
East					
Bihar	1089	27.9	39.1	43.2	12.5

States	Inverse of child sex ratio	Crime Against Women	Women married before 18	Experienced Spousal Violence	Women who worked in the last 12 months and got paid in cash
Jharkhand	1055	40.2	38	34	24.8
Odisha	1021	81.9	21.3	35.2	22.5
West Bengal	1053	73.4	40.7	32.8	22.8
West					
Goa	1028	39.9	9.8	12.9	23.6
Gujarat	1088	26.3	24.9	20.1	30.2
Maharashtra	1076	54.8	25.1	21.4	28.9
North East					
Arunachal Pradesh	1066	62.1	23.5	30.6	17.1
Assam	1044	148.2	32.6	24.5	17
Manipur	1015	20.8	13.1	53.1	40.9
Meghalaya	1011	24.5	16.5	28.7	35.9
Mizoram	1025	30.9	10.8	17	29.3
Nagaland	1074	8	13.3	12.7	22.3
Sikkim	1124	17.6	14.5	2.6	19.9
Tripura	1042	68.2	32.2	27.9	26.3

Table A.2

Adjusted Z scores after normalisation of each indicator for state selection

States	Inverse of child sex ratio	Crime Against Women	Women married before 18	Experienced Spousal Violence	Women who worked in the last 12 months and got paid in cash	Total Score
North						
Delhi/NCR ¹	633	854	417	502	456	2861
Haryana	738	558	472	545	418	2731
Himachal Pradesh	533	454	373	330	412	2101
Jammu & Kashmir	657	507	374	359	361	2258
Punjab	703	460	363	450	428	2404
Rajasthan	587	574	642	488	429	2719
Uttarakhand	582	429	426	386	395	2217
South						
Andhra Pradesh	460	522	615	637	755	2987

States	Inverse of child sex ratio	Crime Against Women	Women married before 18	Experienced Spousal Violence	Women who worked in the last 12 months and got paid in cash	Total Score
Karnataka	439	465	519	450	545	2418
Kerala	403	497	363	399	449	2111
Tamil Nadu	450	398	444	615	560	2468
Telangana	649	578	544	635	722	3128
Central						
Chhattisgarh	391	474	500	583	629	2578
Madhya Pradesh	510	530	587	553	553	2734
Uttar Pradesh	551	447	499	583	407	2487
East						
Bihar	469	428	679	637	362	2575
Jharkhand	439	461	668	561	497	2626
Odisha	455	575	500	571	472	2573
West Bengal	421	552	695	551	475	2694
West						
Goa	453	461	385	388	484	2170
Gujarat	582	424	536	447	557	2545
Maharashtra	571	501	538	458	542	2611
North East						
Arunachal Pradesh	385	521	522	533	413	2374
Assam	407	756	614	483	412	2671
Manipur	467	409	418	718	674	2686
Meghalaya	389	419	452	517	619	2397
Mizoram	389	436	395	421	547	2188
Nagaland	450	374	420	386	470	2100
Sikkim	418	400	432	303	443	1997
Tripura	418	538	610	511	514	2590

¹As decided by the expert committee, the entire NCR was considered as a single geographical unit

Annexure 3: Normalised Composite Index scores for Selection of Districts

Table A.3

Adjusted Z scores of top third districts after normalisation of each indicator for district selection

State	Qualifying district	Value	SCR
West Bengal	Darjeeling	1267	
	Coochbehar	1089	
	Uttar Dinajpur	1069	
	Jalpaiguri	1047	
	Malda	1044	<i>Darjeeling Hills</i>
	Bankura	1033	<i>Rarh</i>
Maharashtra	Yavatmal	1250	<i>Vidarbha</i>
	Bid	1189	<i>Marathwada</i>
	Thane	1129	
	Navi Mumbai	1118	
	Wardha	1091	
	Washim	1068	
	Pune	1059	
	Aurangabad	1052	
	Amravati	1042	
	Osmanabad	1032	
	Buldhana	1023	
Madhya Pradesh	<i>Shahdol</i>	1388	<i>Baghelkhand</i>
	<i>Bhind</i>	1588	<i>Bundelkhand</i>
	Morena	1586	
	Gwalior	1544	
	Datiya	1521	
	Shivpuri	1518	
	Chhatarpur	1506	
	Sagar	1487	
	Vidisha	1485	
	Sheopur	1485	
	Raisen	1482	

State	Qualifying district	Value	SCR
	Ashok Nagar	1481	
	Tikamgarh	1479	
	Panna	1470	
	Guna	1466	
	Bhopal	1464	
	Hoshangabad	1463	
Telangana ²	Khammam	1211	Telangana
	Nalgonda	1113	Telangana
	Nizamabad	1065	
	Karimnagar	1024	
	Adilabad	1005	
	Hyderabad	992	
	Mahbubnagar	988	
	Medak	973	
	Warangal	823	
	Rangareddy	805	
Assam	Darrang	1584	Brahmaputra
	Dhubri	1270	
	Barpeta	1232	
	Nalbari	1137	
	Kamrup	1131	
	Dhemaji	1104	
	Dibrugarh	1061	
	Hailakandi	1050	Cachar
NCR (minus Delhi)	Gurgaon	1216	
	Sonipat	1149	Haryana
	Alwar	1112	Rajasthan
	Rohtak	1102	
	GautamBuddh Nagar	1097	
	Karnal	1097	
	Panipat	1052	
	Gurgaon	1216	

²Child sex ratio values are not available for the new carved out districts of Telangana. This study has taken into account the census 2011 child sex ratio values for the original 10 Andhra Pradesh districts from which Telangana state was created.

Annexure 4: Selection of Towns

Table A.4
Selected towns

State	Metropolis/ state capital	Class I towns		Smaller town
West Bengal	Kolkata MC	Asansol MC (industrial township with pop of 1.2 M and 32.6% slum population)	Malda MC (3.24 L urban agglomeration population; relatively high minority population, large slum population in the English Bazaar municipality)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kalyani Municipality (education township with population of 1 L; in Nadia district) 2. Bishnupur (religious tourism destination with population of 67 K; in Bankura district)
Maharashtra	Mumbai MC	Nanded MC (pop of 5.5 L, is a textile hub, an education hub and a major tourist spot; has 246 slum settlements)	Ulhasnagar MC (6.4 L population, It is a centre for the production of rayon silk, dyes, ready-made garments, electrical / electronic appliances, centre of denim industry)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Baramati municipal council (population of 0.8 L; is an industrial hub, incl. Piaggio plant and MIDC estate) is in Pune district 2. Lonavla (in Pune district, has a population of 55K; is a major tourist destination)
NCR	Delhi and New Delhi	Ghaziabad MC (3 M population, with sex ratio at 880; has one of the highest crime rates in the country; city has a very low safety index value.	Rohtak MC (industrial and education hub, pop. of 3.74 L; 11% of whom live in slums)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Modinagar MC (pop. of 1.8 L, is primarily an industrial and trading hub) in Ghaziabad district, which has one of the highest crime rates in the country 2. Gohana Municipal council (population of 1.2 L; houses the BPS Women's University, the first in north India)
Telangana	Hyderabad MC	Nizamabad MC (industrial hub and major medical services hub; pop. of 3.1 L; the city has 83 slums)	Warangal Municipal corporation (pop of 1 M; designated smart city, is also the 2nd largest grain market of Asia; the city also has a sizeable slum population)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Siddipet MC (pop of 1.1 L, it's a tourist and religious destination), in Siddipet district 2. Khamman municipality (1.8 L), is the district HQ of a historically important Khamman district

Madhya Pradesh	Indore MC (2 M population, is the commercial capital of the state; has 712 notified slums and 5.9 M slum dwellers)	Gwalior MC (1.9 M population; it is the state capital with the government offices, many educational institutions)	Ujjain (is a holy city known for religious tourism, pop of 5.1 L and slum population of 34%, 139 slums; high density of population)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nagda municipality (pop of 1 L, it's an industrial town in Ujjain district) 2. Shahdol municipality (district HQ with a population of 89K)
Assam	Guwahati MC	Silchar MB in Cachar district (pop of 2.3 L; 80% ethnic Bengali population; ONGC operational hub and other major industries, large tea estates); Kalibarichar, one of the largest slums in Assam, is in the middle of the city	Jorhat Municipal Board (pop of 1.5 L; one of the 2 sunshine cities of Assam as declared by central govt.; cultural capital of Assam)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bongaigaon MB (pop of 1 L, commerce and industrial hub and gateway to North East Frontier Railway zone); 2. Mangaldoi municipality (district HQ of Darrang with pop of 43K)

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ANM	Auxiliary Nurse Midwife
ASHA	Accredited Social Health Activist
B.Ed	Bachelor of Education
BE	Budget Estimates
CDMA	Code Division Multiple Access
CWC	Child Welfare Committee
ERSS	Emergency Response Support System
EWS	Economically Weaker Sections
FIR	First Information Report
FLW	Field Level Worker
GPS	Global Positioning System
GSM	Global System for Mobile communications
HIG	Higher Income Groups
HQ	Head Quarters
ICRW	International Center for Research on Women
JJB	Juvenile Justice Board
KI	Key Informants
LIG	Lower Income Groups
M.Ed	Master of Education
MB	Municipal Board
MC	Municipal Corporation
MIG	Middle Income Groups
NCPCR	National Commission for Protection of Child Rights
NCR	National Capital Region
NFHS	National Family Health Survey
NPAC	National Plan for Action for the Child
NSS	National Service Scheme
OBC	Other Backward Classes
PRI	Panchayati Raj Institutions
PTM	Parent Teacher Meeting
RPF	Railway Protection Force
RTI	Right to Information Act
SC	Schedule Castes
SCPCR	State Commission for Protection of Child Rights
SMC	School Management Committee
ST	Schedule Tribes
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
USB	Universal Serial Bus
UT	Union Territories
VAWG	Violence Against Women and Girls

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Head Office: 1st & 2nd Floor, Plot No 91, Sector- 44, Gurugram – 122003 | Landline: +91 124 4752000
Fax: +91 124 4752199 | Webpage: www.savethechildren.in