



How safe are we?

*Report of Youth led Safety Audit
conducted in Sonapat, Haryana*

Preface

For more than a decade, PRIA has been working in Haryana on the issue of women's leadership and ending violence against women, the most recent intervention being the violence against dalit women.

When newspapers broke headlines in December 2012 of the brutal gang rape of a young paramedic student in a moving bus in the heart of the city, it also marked the beginning of a new era in the movement for ending violence against women. When entire families were seen joining the protests that erupted across the city the next day, it was clear; violence against women was no longer a woman's issue alone.

But when the anguished cries of youth who were leading the protests echoed "Enough is enough, no more crimes against women", the entire country and indeed the world sat up to listen to their voices. It was evident that youth were the new agents of change.

Immediately after this, PRIA went ahead to launch the youth led Kadam Badao Campaign in Sonapat, Haryana after several discussions with urban and rural youth in this district. Kadam Badao Campaign was launched with the purpose of providing youth with a platform to make their voices heard in influencing change. Its objectives were:

- To support youth leadership in campaigning to address VAW
- To promote institutional accountability of universities, colleges, schools, panchayats, municipalities and government offices in ensuring safety for women and girls
- To build a multi-stakeholder coalition that supports youth initiatives in this campaign

The campaign recognises youth as the primary social changes actors and fosters this youth leadership to campaign on the issue of ending violence against women.

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Abbreviations

UN: United Nations

VAW: Violence Against Women

KBC: Kadam Badao Campaign

Glossary of terms

Sarpanch: The word 'Sar' means head and 'panch' means five, put together; they mean the head of the five member village level statutory institution of local self-government called the panchayat (village government). This individual is elected by all the people of the village. The sarpanch, together with the other elected '*panchas*' or members constitute the panchayat. The sarpanch is also the focal point of contact between government officers and the village community.

Animators: Animators are the field facilitators responsible for field level community work for PRIA projects

Hamlets: Hamlets are settlements usually clustered around castes. In most cases, the settlements of the upper castes will be situated around the main resources of the village and the hamlets belonging to the lower castes will be situated further away

Chaupal: A chaupal is traditionally a central place of gathering, usually situated in the middle of the village. It is also a popular venue for community led activities in the villages such as the gram sabha, marriage parties, political rallies etc. The aanganwadi is situated in/near the chaupal in most of the villages

Paro or Molki: These young women mostly from Assam, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Odisha, who are sold off as brides against their will. They are known in Haryana as paro or molki ('molki' literally means 'one who has a price') — the terms used for women who have been purchased in other states and brought to the region

1. Introduction

According to a definition given by UN Habitat, women's safety involves "safe spaces". It further adds that "Space which causes fear restricts movement and thus the community's use of the space. Lack of movement and comfort is a form of social exclusion. Conversely, space can also create a sensation of safety and comfort, and can serve to discourage violence. Therefore planning and policy around safety should always involve and consider women..... Women's safety means a safer, healthier community for everyone. (UN Habitat , 2008)

Today, while there is wide acceptance that violence against women in the private sphere is a violation of a woman's human right, yet

Sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence in public spaces are an everyday occurrence for women and girls around the world—in urban and rural areas, in developed and developing countries. It remains a largely neglected issue, with few laws or policies in place to prevent and address it.” (UN Women , 2014)

Sexual harassment, eve teasing, rape and sexual assault in the public spaces such as academic institutions, roads, playgrounds, market places, water sources and hamlets have become so much a part of the everyday lives of women and girls that it almost seems "normal".

Unsafe public spaces restrict the freedom of movement of women and girls to participate in school, work and recreational activities including access to essential services such as water and health services.

There are a growing number of researches on the safety of women in urban spaces. Much of the research for safety audits has been done in urban settings and university campuses. (Dame & Grant, 1996) But little is to be found on the safety of women in rural spaces.

There are three main principles which guide women's safety audits:

- 1) Women are considered experts on their own environment and safety;
- 2) Safety audits encourage local and context-specific solutions to issues of insecurity; and

- 3) Safety audits promote partnerships and joint solutions between women and their local governments. (UN Women , 2012)

As a first step to addressing the issue of violence against women in Sonapat, it was important to understand the extent and contours of the issue in the rural space. The local level animators, along with youth members of Kadam Badao conducted a safety audit in 20 villages, 20 community level schools and 2 universities in Sonapat. While it was important to understand the safety issues for girls in these spaces, there was also a felt need to understand the attitudes and mindsets existing within individuals residing within these spaces as key factors that impacted on women's safety.

Specific findings of the safety audits have been categorised under the headings of safety audit and attitude assessment.

2: Objectives of the study

The safety audit across all 20 villages where PRIA had launched the KBC was conducted with the following objectives:

- To understand what kind of spaces are considered safe or unsafe within the villages and schools in the campaign area
- To determine the underlying attitudes and mindsets of key stakeholders around the issues of women's safety and violence against women
- To use the key findings to raise awareness on the issue of VAW with institutions of governance both in communities and educational institutions. The data so gathered would be analysed from the perspective and position of the final campaign

3: Study Area



The safety audit covered the entire campaign location. It was conducted in 20 villages of 5 blocks in Sonipat district.

Campaign area					
Block	Kharkhoda	Gannaur	Murthal	Gohana	Sonipat
Villages	Rohna	Laleli	Rajpur	Mohana	Rehmana
	Rohat	Bhogipur	Kami	Gadi Hakikat	Mahra
	Jharothi	Rajlugaddi	Bhurri	Khanpur Kalan	
	Anandpur	Shehzadpur		Kasandi	
		Sandalnewada			
		Sandalkhurd			

A safety audit was also conducted in 22 educational institutions including 20 schools and 2 universities. Among the schools, there were 9 private and 11 government run institutions. Of these 17 of were co-educational, 1 all boys school and 2 all girls schools. Among the two universities, one was a private

coeducational institution and the other was a government run women's university.

S. No	Name of institution	Affiliation Status		Student status	
1	P.S Public School	Private		Co-educational	
2	Bal Kalyan Bhogipur	Private		Co-educational	
3	Sunrise Public School, Sandalkhurd	Private		Co educational	
4	Government Senior Secondary School, Rajpur		Government	Co-educational	
5	Government Senior Secondary School, Rajlugarhi		Government	Co educational	
6	Happy Model School, Anandpur	Private		Co educational	
7	Gyandeep School, Rohna	Private		Co educational	
8	Government High School, Rohna		Government		Boys
9	Satnam Vidya Mandir, Rohat	Private		Co educational	
10	Arya High School, Rohna	Private		Co educational	
11	Government Senior Secondary, Rohat		Government	Co educational	
12	Satyarth Prakash Vidyapeeth, Mohana	Private		Co educational	
13	Government High School, Mohana		Government	Co educational	
14	Government Senior Secondary, Mahra-		Government	Co educational	
15	Government High School, Sandal Kalan		Government	Co educational	
16	Government Senior Secondary School, Karevdi		Government	Co educational	
17	Government Senior Secondary Mahavir Prasad Jain School, Shehzadpur		Government	Co educational	
18	Government High School, Rohna		Government		Girls
19	Kanya Gurukul		Government		Girls
20	Green Valley Public School, Kami	Private		Co educational	
21	OP Jindal Global University	Private		Co educational	
22	Bhagat Phool Singh Mahila Vishwavidyalaya		Government		Girls

The fact that many of the youth group members of the Kadam Badao Campaign lived and studied in these locations was the primary focus for the selection of these locations of the study, as it gave easy access to these institutions.

4: Study approach and methodology

As is in all PRIAs programmes, participatory research methodology was largely relied upon for conducting this safety audit.

Participatory Research is a data collection system that is useful when there is a need to quickly understand the reality of the community. It places emphasis on the empowerment of the community by collecting data from their point of view. In short, the views of the people are given priority in this methodology. It is an empowering process simply because the external team is not considered as the ones that holds and gives all the knowledge during the exercise. It is empowering because in this approach, the participants of the study “own” the process and results of the exercise. Power is a central theme in this type of research and determines the extent to which people participate in determining their own futures.

If we stop to think for a minute, we find that unequal gender systems are systematically perpetuated and reinforced all around us, at home, in society, at work, in organisations, and across nations throughout the world. Power and control rests in the hands of a few (mostly men), who use their powers to advance their own economic and political interests, usually at the cost of the interest of others who are less powerful (usually women). The powerless that are mostly women ultimately come to believe in and accept the systems of inequality and injustice, as the natural order of things, without question or analysis. Socialisation from infancy further instils values and attitudes which make all of society; both men and women take these systems for granted as those aspects of reality which cannot be changed. (PRIA & ILO, 2013) The resultant patriarchal systems, norms and processes find men dominant in social, economic and political spheres – the productive roles. Women on the other hand are left with roles that are deemed secondary to those of men, the reproductive roles, including cooking, cleaning and taking care of the young, the sick and the aged. These fairly watertight compartments are socially deemed to be natural and do not allow either of the sexes to cross over and explore their potential to the fullest.

Such a social order gives rises to various forms of discrimination, of which the most prevalent is violence. Violence against women is globally one of the most tolerated forms of human rights violation. No communities are immune to its impact. Socially constructed ideas of what it means to be a woman, man, girl,

or boy are based on dominant one-dimensional ideas of femininity and masculinity and intersect with age, class, caste, race, ability, and geographic location. All of these factors influence a woman's experience with violence. This violence both reflects and reinforces inequalities between men and women, and compromises the health, dignity, security, and autonomy of its victims. The effects of violence against women on communities and societies are not just devastating, but they also result in reduced productivity, and in perpetuation of cultures of silence and impunity in respect of violence against women. (Tandon & Priesler, 2014)

And in the absence of systems of mutual support, these women tend to stay submissive and voiceless. Their aspirations are bound by a feeling of subjugation, low self-concept and feelings of dependency and vulnerability.

Participatory research is an educational intervention in this direction. It gives inspiration to do something about this helplessness, submissiveness and feeling of inferiority that has made women accept control and injustice. It serves the interests of the oppressed, those who are dispossessed, unorganised and powerless. It seeks to prove that girls and women are capable of bringing about change.

Thus, the importance of participatory research is based on the fact that it:

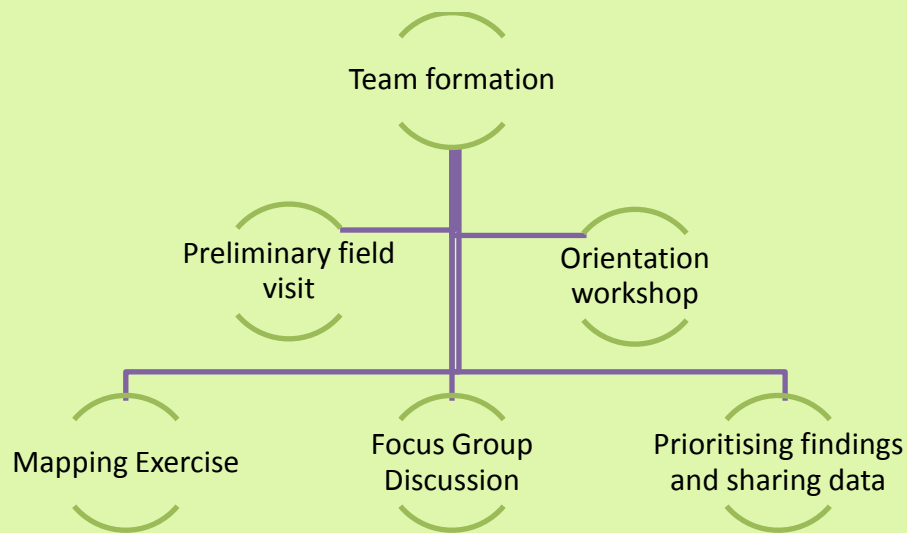
- Is aimed at creating an experience of personal and collective change, thus strengthening people's understanding that change is possible, within one's self and at the level of the group.
- Encourages participants to question what they have always accepted, to critically examine their own experiences and to derive insights through analysis. This process enables them to discover and exert their latent powers for constructive action.

It recognises and validates authentic and accurate knowledge of girls and women, boys and men; which is based on real experiences, and synthesises it with fresh insights and restructured concepts based on the analysis of experience. The new body of knowledge thus created leads to a powerful sense of ownership and a willingness to transform the reality.

As an approach to social change, it was envisaged that while this methodology would enable youth to learn appropriate methods to conduct research for social transformation; at the same time it would also foster ownership of the

data so generated with the view of ensuring sustainability to the work so begun. It was envisaged that the participation of youth, especially the young girls in such a study, in which they own the process and the data so generated would be an empowering experience for them.

5: Steps that were taken while conducting the safety audit



5.1: Team Formation

A team was created which consisted of members of youth groups and PRIA facilitators. Since the exercises were based on capturing expressions and experiences of the community, the team that was created consisted of members of the youth groups, stakeholders from the community. The maps were prepared by the animators¹ from PRIA with the help of Anganwadi workers, the sarpanch and school teachers.

Each member of the PRIA team was given a well - defined role and s/he was expected to perform the role and the responsibility that was assigned to them.

¹ Animators are the field facilitators responsible for field level community work for PRIA projects.

While the PRIA team remained common in all the audits, the youth members and stakeholders changed according to the structure and presence of the youth group in that particular village or academic institution.

The composition of the facilitation team for conducting the safety audit was made up of:

- A team leader or facilitator who was a PRIA program person. This individual also played the dual role of being an Interviewer or the one who asked the questions
- Two documenters who were PRIA animators
- One observer who had the task of writing a report which was based on a reflection of the whole process. This individual was a PRIA program person in this case.



Mapping exercise with boys: facilitator and 2 documenters from PRIA

5.2: Preliminary field visit

A preliminary field visit was conducted to:

- Seek permission from the relevant authorities
- Ensure full participation by the community
- To conduct a formal orientation and planning meeting with the elected representatives, community leaders and the facilitation team to discuss the purpose, process and the methodology that is going to be adopted.

5.3: The orientation workshop

The primary objective of this workshop was to build a common understanding among the key people (youth leaders, programme facilitators) about the purpose, process and the methodology that is going to be adopted. While organising this meeting, make sure that you include both girls and boys. The orientation workshop should briefly cover the following:

- Why is this process beneficial for the village?
- What are the processes and steps?
- Role of the different members of the team



Village mapping exercise: before safety mapping



Youth group members transferring the village map onto paper for safety audit analysis

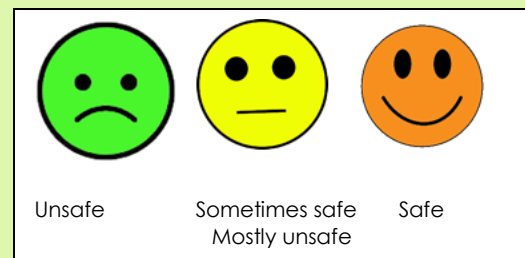
5.4: Mapping exercise

The realities of men and boys are different from that of women and girls. Separate groups were created for boys and girls in order to capture each of their unique experiences.

Each group was asked to identify safe, unsafe and moderately safe spaces for girls within their village, school or university with the help of an appropriate mood sticker by looking at their village map.

The following mood stickers were used during the mapping exercise:

- Smiling mood sticker to identify a safe space. These were spaces that girls felt comfortable going to even when alone. Being in these spaces did not induce a



feeling of fear or of being scared.

- Sad mood sticker to identify an unsafe space. An unsafe space was described as a space where girls could not venture to during the day or night, alone or in groups. Being in these spaces made them feel afraid, tense and unhappy.
- Moderate mood sticker to signify a space which is sometimes safe and sometimes unsafe. These were spaces that girls can go to with a group of friends or with their mothers. They would not however venture into these spaces alone.



Safety audit maps made by boys (above) and girls (below) of Rehmana village

5.5: Focus Group Discussion

Since one of the major thrusts of Kadam Badao Campaign is its focus upon changes in the attitudes of both men and women whom the campaign addressed, it was vital at this stage to assess the same from the perspective of both men and women. A questionnaire that had been field tested was used to guide the discussions for this assessment.

Focus group discussions were used as a forum to deepen the understanding of issues that have emerged from the safety mapping exercise. It was also an opportunity to form an understanding of the inherent attitudes and behaviours that exist within the men, women, boys and girls in the community.

Focus group discussions were held separately in four different types of groups: men, women, girls and boys.



Focus group discussion with men

5.6: Review and analysis of data

This was a crucial stage in the formulation of the campaign plans. Information was collated in this stage for the purpose of analysis. All the maps and diagrams that have been recorded in the form of replications on paper/charts or photographs by the recorder were displayed on the walls and two team members had the role of documentation of the responses from each group discussion.

Students of the universities supported in the collation and analysis of the data along with the animators and other facilitators from PRIA field and head office.

An important part of the process of participatory research is the sharing of findings of the study with the community. The findings of the study were shared through a twofold process:

- In the first, the study findings were shared with the youth groups in each village. They categorised the findings and identified 1 or 2 key issues that they considered to be priority areas and were to be dealt with first.
- The findings of the study along with the recommendations were also shared with the sarpanch of each village by the animators and youth group members who participated in the process.
- The same process was followed in academic institutions.



Review and analysis of data from safety audit by university students

6: Specific Findings from the community level study

6.1: Findings from the safety audit mapping exercise

All places are unsafe

25% of girls and 5 %boys said that their entire village was unsafe. They reported that the environment of the village is so unsafe that there is no space within the village where girls are not followed, commented upon and exposed to sexual harassment In the discussions following the safety mapping, women said that while they too get harassed within the village, their daughters being younger and more vulnerable are at a greater risk to molestation and sexual harassment. Some women also shared that they live in perpetual fear of the possibility of being raped whether during day or night in the fields, in lonely places and even in their own homes by relatives or visitors.

Some men on the other hand disagreed and said that villages are perfectly safe for the girls. A few boys too felt that "bad things" only happen to women in the cities. In their view, in the villages, girls are safe as no outsider is allowed to enter the village. They said that girls have nothing to fear inside the villages as they are



crowded and it is only in lonely, dark or isolated places that girls faced the possibility of violence.

Religious places of worship

Data collated from the village level safety audits has shown that 50% girls feel unsafe in and around the temples of their village. Usually temples are a source of major caste based disputes in Haryana, in which Dalits are routinely and frequently denied entry into places of worship.

In a study conducted by PRIA (PRIA, 2011), in the Sandal Newada village of Sonapat, some Dalits shared about the ill-treatment and sexual harassment by the priest of the temple. In Gadi Haqiqat, entry of the lower caste to the one temple in the village had also been allowed but they are regularly taunted and commented upon when they entered the temples. .

“There are two temples in our village. One temple is moderately safe because it does not have a priest. However, in another sense, both temples are unsafe because there are boys standing outside the temples all the time. It makes us uncomfortable.”

(Bhogipur girls)

In Gadi Haqiqat village, girls have shared that there is overcrowding in the temples (both inside and outside the premises) with men and boys being present in large numbers. They also reported that several girls have been molested inside the temple.

Girls from Rohat, Sandal Newada and Sandal Khurd have reported that the behaviour of the priest of the temple was inappropriate. His presence also attributed in making the temples unsafe. Girls from Rehmana village also shared that the temple in their village is safe only when the priest is not present.

The response of boys was a sharp contrast. 70% of the boys felt that the temples were safe for girls as these spaces were always crowded and had plenty of people present there at all times. In Mohana, the temple was deemed to be safe for girls as it was situated near the police station. In some villages, boys felt that temples were unsafe for girls only because it was located outside the village and another 5% were of the opinion that the temples were unsafe only at night. They were unaware of issues of safety and security from the girl's perspectives and thought that presence of large numbers of people, including men was a factor that provided safety.

In crowded spaces, girls shared an over whelming feeling of being “seen” or watched. It left the girls feeling vulnerable as they reported having experienced higher amounts of molestation and sexual harassment in crowds.

Open areas in the village

Women have lived with feeling unsafe at certain times of the day and in certain places, for most of their lives. Results of the safety audit challenged two commonly believed myths. Firstly, that there is safety in numbers and the other that open areas are safe spaces because “everything can be seen”.

Open areas signified two things for the participants of the safety audit. It meant more people and crowds or isolated lonely spaces. Results of the safety audit have indicated that while girls do not feel safe in open spaces because of the fact that it is so lonely and isolated, the feeling of insecurity is particularly high

A report by Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) noted that, between October 2004 and February 2005, MSF health clinics in West Darfur treated 297 rape victims, 99% of whom were women. Almost 90% said that their rape had occurred outside a populated village, and 82% were raped while pursuing ordinary daily activities, such as searching for firewood or thatch, working in their fields, fetching water from river beds or travelling to the market. (House, Ferron, Somme, & Cavill, 2014)

when they are in crowded spaces in the open. The feelings of vulnerability exist for women in both situations.

Fields: Haryana being primarily an agricultural state, all villages are invariably surrounded by wide expanses of fields. Sometimes routes from one village to the next or to the town cut across these fields. While men tend to the fields, it is the women and girls who take the meals to the men in the fields. Since women and girls are also responsible for collecting fodder for the buffaloes and therefore large amounts of their time is spent in the fields.

All the girls who participated in the audit reported that the fields were unsafe as they are open, isolated spaces where men and young boys prefer to go to drink. The risks of girls increased with the levels of inebriation.

Some boys also did mention that the fields were unsafe for girls but only because they were far from the village. They felt that it was particularly unsafe at night as there are no lights in the fields.

“We want toilets at home. We want to be safe”

(Women - Rehmana Village)

The absence of toilets and open defecation are other factors that attribute to violence in the open fields, which women and girls regularly face in the rural contexts. Being by themselves in the fields in the dark makes women and girls easy targets to being sexually harassed, sexually assaulted or even raped by men. To avoid the risk of being seen relieving themselves during the day, women and girls are known to control their intake of food and water through the day; only venturing out in the dark to relieve themselves.

Young boys in Rehmana village said that there are many houses in their village that do not have toilets and women and girls are then forced to go to the fields to relieve themselves. Boys and men either wait for them in the fields or follow them there. They take pictures of the girls defecating in the open and begin harassing them and blackmailing them with threats to expose the same. Girls are severely harassed they said and there have also been some cases of rapes having occurred during these times.



Chaupal: 60% of the boys who participated in the audit felt that the chaupal² was safe for girls because it was situated in the middle of the village, had street lights in the dark and at the same time a place where most of the older men liked to spend their time.

However, the girls felt differently. They felt that the chaupal was only safe during the day up until 11:00 am in the morning, while the aanganwadi centre was open. It becomes an unsafe space as soon as the center closes. They said that the chaupal then becomes a gathering place for men and boys of the village. Old men gather there to smoke the hookah and play cards, and young boys gather there to sometimes drink and watch the girls passing by. When they see a girl, they begin playing loud obscene music on their mobiles to try and catch the attention of the girls with lewd remarks and whistling. Girls reported that they never venture near the chaupal after 11:00 am and in the evenings the risk increases manifold.

Night and day...

A public place can vary in many ways throughout the course of the day. It may be used by different groups of people at different times. It may be busy at certain times and isolated at others. It may be different during the day than it is at night. These differences can have a very different impact on the way we feel when we are in them.

For example, the street outside the pub in the morning is likely to be used by people going to and from work or shopping. At night however, the people most likely to be on the street are pub patrons. Alcohol consumption has now become a factor in the place. For many women, the area has become less safe.

A shopping mall during the day has lots of different people using it. Once it closes, it is often isolated and usually dark. A school between the hours of 9 am and 3.30 pm is usually lively and active. After 3.30 or during school holidays however, it may be isolated or dominated by a particular group of people. Women report that the experience of being in a place when it is busy is very different from when the place is isolated. (Lawlink)

² A chaupal is traditionally a central place of gathering, usually situated in the middle of the village. It is also a popular venue for community led activities in the villages such as the gram sabha, marriage parties, political rallies etc. The aanganwadi is situated in/near the chaupal in most of the villages.

Water source: There are several water sources in the villages of Haryana in the form of ponds, canals and hand pumps. At the outset while the relationship between water bodies and violence can seem to be weak, there is enough evidence today that links the two. Men loitering around at the water sources are a deterrent for women to fetch water. Since they are the ones who are responsible for fetching water for the home, not doing so in most cases then leads to violence at home. In the audit, girls have identified all water sources in the village as being unsafe, because of the presence of boys and men.

Girls of one school reported that their school is situated near the village pond. They spoke about how boys from their school leave their homes but rarely attend school. They stay back instead by the pond to drink and play cards with the older boys. Once school is over, these boys follow the girls as they make their way home passing lewd comments as they do so.

Boys on the contrary felt that the ponds were a safe space for girls as they had a good ambience and situated close to the village.

Roads: Roads were considered to be unsafe by girls primarily because of the presence of boys and the crowds. These roads were made more unsafe when there were alcohol shops on them. Rehmana village does not have a high school for older girls -they walk to another village to attend the school there. Three alcohol shops are situated on the exit road of the village which the girls have to cross every day. These girls consistently face sexual harassment from men standing around the alcohol shops everyday on their way to and back from school. Girls also felt that the roads were additionally unsafe because they were flanked on either side by an expanse of wide open fields.

Bus stops, crossroads (entrance to the village): Boys felt that the bus stops were not entirely unsafe areas. In their view, the presence of a crowd and older men provided a safety element to this space. Girls however opined that the bus stops are especially unsafe areas because people from other villages also frequent these spaces. In Mohana village, girls shared that the bus stop in their village also doubles as a commercial hub which houses several shops and also includes a police outpost. They reported that they are faced with sexual harassment at the hands of boys who loiter around. It did not help that the police personnel in the outpost situated in this junction are often seen drinking with the local men, including the sarpanch's own son and therefore seeking their assistance did seem to be an option.

Playgrounds and stadiums: Not all villages have a playground or a stadium. In villages where they do exist, girls felt that these were unsafe spaces. They do not go there because of the presence of men and boys. Many girls nurtured a dream to play sports, run and laugh with their friends. In reality, they are unable to do so. Not only because patriarchal mindsets demand that girls stay indoors and help with the household chores, but going out will also mean putting themselves at risk of eve teasing and harassment by boys. The boys on the other hand did not think the absence of girls in the play grounds was anything to be bothered about. It was normal for them to be present in these spaces, and for girls to stay away from these as dictated to by culture and tradition. They did not feel playgrounds were particularly safe or unsafe and they were viewed as recreational spaces for enjoyment and fun.



Hamlets³ : Very often when the schools, shops and the bus stands are situated on the outskirts of the village, students are required to walk across the entire village including other hamlets to reach their own homes, or schools. 10% girls were uncomfortable walking through other hamlets but felt safe in their own hamlet as it was familiar territory. 90% of the girls felt however, that all hamlets were unsafe. Their own hamlets were particularly unsafe because no action was ever taken against the boys and men who harassed them, as these were

³ Hamlets are settlements usually clustered around castes. In most cases, the settlements of the upper castes will be situated around the main resources of the village and the hamlets belonging to the lower castes will be situated further away.

spaces that belonged to them. Harassment from persons not living in these hamlets was considered as outsiders and therefore if they harassed women or girls it was viewed as having dishonored the village itself.

“We are not safe anywhere including in their own homes.”

(Girls)

Girls from Mohana village also reported that prostitution is high in their village. Because of this, the men and boys in their village seemed to have a general perception that all girls are available. Boys and men on the other hand were of the perception that all hamlets are safe because of the presence of men and old men. Boys also felt that the hamlets were safe as they were crowded.

Cemetery: Girls felt that cemeteries are isolated, so “bad” incidents are most likely to occur there. Men sit and drink there and it is also very easy to stay hidden in the darkness of the cemetery at night. But men disagreed however and added that cemeteries are safe for girls as it is a quiet place.

“We have to accompany our daughters when they are out in the open spaces, such as when they go to the fields to relieve themselves.”

(Women, Jharothi Village)

Closed spaces in the village

Sarpanch's house: The sarpanch of the panchayat or the village head is one of the most influential persons in the village. He/she are responsible for maintaining the peace, order and governance of the village. 33% reservation for women at panchayat level has been mandated by constitutional provisions of the 73rd amendment of the Panchayati Raj Act. Although this has made it easier for women to enter politics, the ability for her to exert her position as a panchayat member in the patriarchal system of her home and the panchayat is a much debated issue. 5 of the 20 villages that were audited have a female sarpanch. One would naturally assume that the homes of these female Sarpanchs would be safer than in other villages which are male headed. Girls, women and boys felt that the sarpanch's house was unsafe because of the presence of men and boys. Girls reported that it was more unsafe if the sarpanch had a son and he was present there with his friends. Additionally:

- Girls felt that the sarpanch's house is only safe when his wife is present. But the houses of the female sarpanch was also reported to be unsafe, as her husband is proxy and she is only the wife
- Girls also felt that the people found in the sarpanch's house were not very nice people. Since they are close to the sarpanch, these men also feel that they have the sanction to harass girls
- Boys in one village felt that the sarpanch's house was unsafe for girls because it was situated near the alcohol shop



- Men and women however added that the ambience in the sarpanch's house is bad
- Some boys were also of the opinion that the sarpanch's house was safe for girls because:
 - It is crowded
 - There is strong presence of men
 - There are streetlights near the house
 - One group even added that the sarpanch's house is safe for girls as he is giving up alcohol

Police station: Data from the safety audit revealed that none of the girls considered the police station to be a safe space. On the contrary, they marked it as being a highly unsafe space. Ironical, since the police have been stationed for the purposes of providing safety to the citizens of the community. Though most women and men agreed with the views of the girls that the police station

was an unsafe space, some boys were of the opinion that the police station was safe because it was crowded.

Men however did mention while that the police station is only safe for girls during the day. It is most unsafe at night as policemen get drunk in the station. Girls felt very strongly that “wrong happens” in the police station. Their experience has shown that a girl is likely to be harassed further if they approach the police with their problems.

“All wrong things happen in the police station only. Police men themselves drink and are found drunk sitting outside the police station passing comments at girls who are passing by. If we tell the sarpanch the sarpanch’s son himself is found with them”

Commercial establishments

Alcohol shops: considered to be the most unsafe safe by the girls in all the villages. While a fairly large number of boys on the other hand also felt that it was an unsafe space, some however did not see why girls would feel unsafe around the alcohol shops as men only bought the liquor at the shop. They also felt that the alcohol shops were unsafe for girls only at night. They agreed that drunken men outside the shops are prone to abuse and pass obscene comments at girls and women. Girls also said that they are scared of getting kidnapped and even raped if any man found them walking outside these shops alone.

“Once men drink they don’t spare anyone”

(Women, Karevdi Village)

Girls from 2 villages said that the **tea shop** in their village is unsafe because the owner stares. In other villages, the **barber’s shop, juice shop** and the **sweet shop** were also deemed to be unsafe by girls because of the presence of boys. They also felt that the **grocery shop** was unsafe because of the presence of boys. The boys on the other hand felt that the grocery shop was safe as the grocer’s wife

can sometimes be found sitting in the shops and there is also proper lighting outside these shops.

“The grocery shop in our village also sells alcohol. So even if we are going to buy any essential things for the house, we are bound to find men loitering around it, either drunk or coming to buy alcohol. We don’t feel safe going there.”



An alcohol shop in the village

While girls did not show the village **tyre repair shop** in their map, boys made a special mention of it in their maps. They added that girls have no business being around these kinds of shops and therefore were an unsafe space for them. Men on the other hand felt that the tyre shop was safe for girls because only old men can be found sitting around the area. Boys also felt that the **tailoring centre** was safe because it was dominated by women.

The **bank** in the village was an interesting addition to the map. Where boys have felt that the bank was unsafe for girls because boys stare at girls in banks; girls felt the opposite. They felt that banks are very safe because there are CCTV cameras and plenty of security in banks. Moreover, they felt that boys who are antisocial are not allowed to enter the premises.

Poultry farm and the pig farm were considered as an unsafe space by both the girls and the boys as they were isolated areas.

Other commercial establishments that were considered to be unsafe by girls were the **factory** and the **brick kilns**. Both these establishments are situated outside the village and were considered to be unsafe because it brought many migrant workers from outside to the village. Since there were only men who worked at both these places, girls felt that these were unsafe spaces to be in or around.

Medical facilities

Under medical facilities are been included the doctor's clinic, the health centre and the veterinary hospital. Girls said that the **veterinary hospital** is unsafe because of the presence of men.

Interestingly, girls from more than half of the sample size of the study said that the **Doctor's clinic** in their village was unsafe because unfamiliar people are present there, the doctor is a male and the ambience is not conducive.

The doctor is a male. He prescribes injections for everything and insists on giving them the injections only on their hip. "He scolds us when we insist that we want the injection in our arm."

(Girls – Rohana)

Boys on the other hand felt that the doctor's clinic was safe for girls as it was crowded and frequented mostly by women and children. Men joined them in saying that the clinic was only unsafe during the evening and nights as boys and drunkards are sometimes to be found sitting outside the clinic.

School

Schools here include both the private and government schools. The grounds of the government schools often double up as sports fields for the boys of the school as well as other boys of the village after the school is closed.

While a majority of boys and some girls felt that schools were moderately safe areas; 90% of the girls were of the opinion that the schools were by and large unsafe spaces especially after school hours because of the presence of boys.

Therefore girls hesitate to stay on in school after hours to study as a group, complete homework or even socially interact despite the fact that their homes are not conducive to all of these activities.

Boys also agreed and said that they felt that the girls in schools are afraid of male students as they are “abused” and harassed by them at school. Girls also reported that they are often stalked by boys from the school and some girls even mentioned that boys write “bad things” on pieces of paper and put it in their bags. They also said that post school hours, boys go to the school to play sports and it often becomes a place for drug use. Therefore these girls not only face the threat of harassment and actual harassment from their student peers but also from other boys of the village who come to their school.

6.2: Specific findings from the village level audit attitude assessment

Various kinds of violence faced by women

	Responses	Boys group	Girls group	Men group	Women group
1	Domestic violence within marriage	9	6	8	7
2	Violence in homes	13	12	15	12
3	Dowry – bride burning, abetment to suicide	13	13	8	13
4	Denial of education: Primary/Senior Secondary school	4	7	0	2
5	Control over choice of clothing	2	7	0	4
6	Lack of freedom in taking even small decisions: playing/sleeping/movement	7	11	2	8
7	Eve teasing: Verbal/nonverbal/visual- Street Violence	9	11	4	7
8	Physical molestation	9	9	6	6
9	Sexual assault/rape	6	10	7	4
10	Child marriage	4	6	1	2
11	Gender Discrimination	2	11	0	7
12	Trafficking	0	1	1	0
13	Female Foeticide	6	11	1	4
14	Kidnapping	0	1	0	2
15	Mental abuse	1	0	0	0
16	Abandoning wife	0	0	1	1
17	Custodial Violence	0	0	0	1
18	Acid Attack	0	2	0	0

A total of 18 forms of violence were identified by the 4 groups. Mental abuse, custodial violence and acid attack were identified as being the most infrequent forms of violence. The study also showed that domestic violence was the most common form of violence identified by all the groups. Eve teasing was the common form of violence that was reported by girls and more than 55% of girls felt that gender discrimination was also a form of violence. While 20% of women and 10% of boys also agreed with this view, men did not perceive the denial of education, decision making and control on clothing as forms of violence.

According to Global Voices, approximately 90% of the 200,000 humans trafficked in India every year are victims of inter-state trafficking and are sold within the country. The states of Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan are major destinations of trafficked 'brides'.⁴ However, it was surprising to note that trafficking was not identified as a form of violence or even discussed in any of the groups.

This is something that needs to be done because there is trafficking of young girls as well and there is a common thinking that they are doing it of their own free will. They do not understand the organised crime and syndicates behind human trafficking for sex work, bride buying etc.

A cultural preference for sons over daughters has skewed India's sex ratio in places like Haryana. As a result of female foeticide, there are about 861 women for every 1,000 men in Haryana, according to the last census. The national average is 927 women to 1,000 men.

Since there are not enough local women to marry, several thousand young women from all over India are sold-off to men in Haryana by touts. The going rate for buying a girl in the state is anything between Rs. 4,000 and 30,000 (\$88 to \$660) (Agal, 2006).

These young women mostly from Assam, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Odisha, who are sold off as brides against their will are known in Haryana as *paro* or *molki* ('*molki*' literally means 'one who has a price') — the terms used for women who have been purchased in other states and brought to the region.

The *molki* phenomenon is now so common that these areas even have common sayings that refer to the condition of these women — like the one that

⁴ <https://justiceforwomenindia.wordpress.com/tag/trafficking-statistics-in-india/>

says it's impossible to find a *paro's* grave as she is passed on from man to man and so does not stay in one place for long.

“We *paros* belong nowhere. We are treated like animals. If a man has to choose between leaving a local woman and one from outside, he kicks us out; if a man is in need of money, we are sold,” said Rubina, originally from Assam, who was forced into marriage at 16.

A study conducted by Drishti Stree Adhyayan Prabodhan Kendra revealed that out of the 10,000 households they surveyed in Haryana, over 9,000 married women were bought from other states. And according to the sarpanch of Luhinga Khurd village, it is easy to find at least 15 *Paros* in every village in Haryana.

The demand for ‘marriageable age’ girls is so intense that organised trafficking rackets have started operating in Haryana, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh,” said a 2013 report commissioned by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (Danish, 2014)

What type of girls face harassment?

	Responses	Boys groups	Girls groups	Men groups	Women groups
1	Girls who keep quiet	0	3	0	2
2	Those girls who do not study and do household work only	0	3	1	0
3	Girls belonging to poor families	0	10	1	7
4	Girls who speak out against harassment	1	1	2	1
5	Those girls who wear modern clothes(without dupatta, wear churidaar, hairstyles, sleeveless)	16	8	18	6
6	Any type of girls can face violence	3	11	0	11
7	Girls who ride bikes and are non-traditional	1	0	6	0
8	Girls who are confident, talk and laugh loudly	11	2	9	2
9	Girls are meant to be looked at	1	2	0	0
10	Girls with many male friends	6	1	4	0
11	Girls who are addicted to substances	0	0	1	1
12	Beautiful girls	2	2	0	1
13	Girls who travel outside/work outside	2	0	1	0
14	Happens in cities	0	0	1	0
15	One sided love affair (by boys)	9	2	2	2
16	Girls who are not under control	3	1	1	0

A common myth is that harassment only happens to indecently dressed women and respectable women don't get harassed. Boys from Haryana have expressed this view and this thinking is not limited to Haryana alone but as we can see from the information in the box it is a universal myth.

According to a study conducted in Egypt in 2008, 72% of women who experience harassment wear the hijab (head covering) or the *niqab* (full face and body veil). This percentage was about the same as the percentage of total women wearing the *hijab* and *niqab* in Egyptian society, which indicates that the average Egyptian woman gets harassed regardless of her clothing and appearance. (HarassMap, 2005)

In Haryana women are rarely seen in public spaces without a male escort or with their faces uncovered. Yet, according to a report tabled in the state assembly in February 2013; 5,955 cases related to crime against women were registered in 2012. Molestation cases in Haryana had jumped to 521 from 474 and 534 eve-teasing cases were registered in 2012 against 490 in the previous year. (The Times of India , 2013)

According to the responses of the safety audit, there is a perception that there is a higher likelihood that girls who do not conform to the stereotype are harassed. 80% of boys and 90% of men felt that girls who wear modern clothes are most likely to get harassed, a large 30% percentage of men and 55% boys felt that girls who talk loudly, speak a lot and keep the company of boys are most likely to be harassed. A further 30% of men felt that girls who ride on bikes and are non-traditional in their approach are most likely to be harassed. 10% of boys and 5% of men also felt that girls travelling outside their houses for work can attribute to them being harassed. By and large women and girls disagreed with these points of view. However, some women and girls did feel that wearing "modern" clothes can lead to harassment of girls and therefore it was only prudent to dress conventionally if n wanted to avoid being harassed.

Significant to the findings of this study is that 55% girls felt that harassment is faced by all girls and their type, character or clothes has nothing to do with it.

Whistling, winking and passing comments at girls is harmless and a part of a teenage boy's growing up process

	Reasons	Boys groups	Girls groups	Men groups	Women groups
1	Yes, this is natural	6	9	6	7
2	Yes, girls are meant to be looked at	1	2	1	1
3	No, families have not established boundaries	5	3	8	9
4	No, such boys are of loose character	8	8	8	7
5	No, it only happens in cities	1	0	2	0
6	No, lack of education and unemployment	4	1	3	0
7	No, it's wrong	3	5	4	2
8	No, under the influence of alcohol, drugs and bad company	4	0	2	0
9	Cuts across gender	1	1	1	0

It is important to note that across the board, all groups who participated in the focus group discussions felt that whistling and winking was natural for boys and a harmless growing up process for them. They had no idea of the feelings of girls when being teased. However, if the same were to happen to a woman or a girl from their family then it was a matter of dishonor to their family which was to be avenged. Many times this revenge was taken out on women folk of the family of the harasser leading to a perpetuation of violence against women.

“Girls are meant to be looked at.”

While some boys and men felt that whistling and winking are phenomena's that are only present in cities, there were others who agreed that it exists in the village as well but felt that it was the upbringing provided by the family that was to be held responsible for such behaviour. They were also of the opinion that these were not natural activities; rather they were a result of the loose character of boys

Further, there was also an opinion that such behaviour was not something that happened without the participation of girls. Boys alone cannot be blamed for this; rather this is usually two sided and will only happen at the initiation from girls.

How behaviours such as whistling, winking and passing comments at girls should be handled

	Response	Boys groups	Girls groups	Men groups	Women groups
1	Leave it as in youth, this is common	1	0	1	1
2	Scold them slightly	6	4	5	4
3	Be very strict with them so that they don't repeat the same in the future	9	11	11	9
4	Hand them over to the police	4	6	4	6
5	If no change after being threatened, then hang them	3	6	4	3
6	Strict laws to create fear in these boys	0	2	1	0
7	Death sentence in case of rape	1	0	1	0
8	Awareness rally	0	1	0	0

Sexual harassment in its covert or overt forms is a violation of a woman's human rights. It is a form of sexual and psychological abuse and bullying that is manifested in four forms– verbal, non-verbal, physical and visual. Whistling and passing comments are verbal forms of sexual harassment and winking is a non-verbal form of sexual harassment. When sexual harassment occurs, there is a long lasting negative and traumatic impact on victims including psychological and physical suffering. It is not only an injury to the one individual; it also has a ripple or multiplier effect that has a negative impact on other women and girls.

Sexual harassment is an issue brought about by the existing unequal power relations of sex rather than an issue brought about by personal relations, and it requires a systematic response to address it. Section 354A of the Indian Penal Code states that a man committing any of the following acts will be guilty of the offence of sexual harassment:

- Physical contact and advances involving unwelcome and explicit sexual overtures; or
- A demand or request for sexual favours; or
- Showing pornography against the will of a woman; or
- Making sexually coloured remarks.

It also states punishment for any man who commits such offences.

In response to this statement, a large number of participants felt that strict action should be taken against those found indulging in such behaviour. Once

again, the contradictions in the thinking of boys and men is demonstrated in that if they personally indulge in such behaviour it is harmless but if it happens to women in their family by a stranger strict action is to be taken. And there was an expectation that authorities will take action once they are caught. Therefore women, girls and boy felt that the boys should be handed over to the police.

Does a man have the right to tell his wife what she can and can't do?



Several of the participants felt that both the partners in a relationship have the right to tell each other what each can do or cannot do.

All the men who participated in the study were of the opinion that the man has the right to tell his wife what she can and can't do. Significant in this was the fact that 60% of women and 40% of girls also believed that men have the right to tell his wife what she can and can't do.

While the mindsets of the younger generation is changing, it is evident that a lot more work has to be done to bring about gender equality in such a patriarchal society as a lot of the behaviour stems from patriarchal mindsets and attitudes. Infact, these are so deeply entrenched in the psyche of boys and girls, men and women that rituals, behaviour and social cultures and traditions are accepted as the norm without question from any person.

Is there rape in marriage?

Response	Boys	Girls	Men	Women
Yes	11	12	8	12
No	9	3	14	11
Don't Know	0	4	0	0
Refused to answer	0	0	2	0

When is it rape in marriage	Boys	Girls	Men	Women
When it's against her will	13	8	6	11
When there is a demand for sex during menstruation	3	1	0	1
Not applicable	5	4	9	5
Not sure	0	1	2	0

Why do we consider there can be no rape in marriage	Boys	Girls	Men	Women
Husbands right, wife's duty	6	2	13	9
Wives are brought for sex	0	0	0	3
Not applicable	10	12	4	8

Nearly one out of four men in a United Nations study of 10,000 men in Asia admitted to having committed rape. Marital rape was by far the most common type of rape, followed by the rape of an intimate partner (Rukmini, 2013). The UN Population Fund states that more than 2/3rds of married women in India, aged between 15 to 49 years have been beaten, raped or forced to provide sex. Studies also indicate that between 10 and 14% of married women are raped by their husbands: the incidents of marital rape soars to 1/3rd to ½ among clinical samples of battered women. Sexual assault by one's spouse accounts for approximately 25% of rapes committed. (Rath)

The data generated by this study indicates that 70% of men who participated in the safety audit were of the opinion that there is no such thing as rape within a marriage as it was the right of the husband and the duty of the wife to satisfy her husband's sexual needs.

At the same time, among women, while 60% of them were of the opinion that there was rape within marriages, 55% also disagreed with this. 92% of the women who agreed said the cause of marital rape was unwillingness to comply with her husband's sexual needs. 82% of the women who disagreed with the

statement felt it was the duty of the wife and another 27% were of the opinion that one of the reasons women were married and brought to their marital homes was to satisfy the sexual needs of her husband.

Among the boys and girls, 60% girls and 55% of the boys were of the opinion that there can be rape within marriages and the refusal to comply with sexual demands made on her was the primary reason cited by both. At 67%, more than half the boys who disagreed with the statement felt that it was the right of the woman to comply with the sexual demands made on her by her husband.

Sexual violence and control over women's sexual rights is seen as one of the most pervasive forms of discrimination and assertion over women. It would appear that the responses of men and women in Sonapat are no different than in most of the countries.

How should women deal with violence in their lives?

	Response	Boys groups	Girls groups	Men groups	Women groups
1	Keep quiet to save her family's honour	13	17	17	19
2	Raise her voice against it when its above tolerance	2	3	2	2
3	Share with their family	6	2	8	6
4	Register a complaint with the police	8	2	4	3
5	Share with friends	5	4	0	3
6	Commit suicide	8	1	5	2
7	Don't Know	1	0	0	0
8	Get women married off	1	0	0	0
9	Sharing in different institutions	0	1	0	0
10	Divorce/leave husband's house	3	1	2	0
11	Reach out to panchayat	0	1	0	0

Global statistics reveal that 1 in 3 women worldwide have experienced physical or sexual violence in their lifetime mostly by an intimate partner. Yet, a study based on interviews with 42,000 women across the 28 Member States of the European Union revealed that only 14 per cent of women reported their most serious incident of intimate partner violence to the police, and 13 per cent reported their most serious incident of non-partner violence to the police. (UN Women , 2014)

More often than not, cases of violence against women go unreported. The reason for the silence could be anything from lack of awareness, fear, or acceptance of their situation and belief that this is the correct social order

Out of the 12 different methods that women employ to deal with violence that were recorded through the discussions, the most common was silence. 90% of women, 85% of men and girls followed by 65% of boys felt that women should remain silent to save their family's honor. Astonishingly men and boys were also of the opinion that women should commit suicide if they ever face any acts of violence upon them. Registering a complaint with the police has been identified by 40% of boys and 20% of men as an alternative to dealing with cases of violence against women; however only 15% of women and 10% of girls identified this as one of the solutions.

Even though there is talk of women's rights and the right not to be violated, at the same time, issue of honour, chastity of women is so deep seated that most feel it is better for them to commit suicide than live a life of dishonor. There seems to be no consideration of the male perpetrator or his accountability in dishonouring a woman.

Various challenges faced by women

	Responses	Girls groups	Boys groups	Women groups	Men groups
1	Difficult to face the society	7	8	5	11
2	Families do not listen/believe her	5	4	9	4
3	Neighbors make fun of her	1	1	1	0
4	Police do not register complaint	2	1	1	0
5	Movement restricted	3	3	2	3
6	Fear	1	2	1	1
7	Poor families unable to pay dowry	1	0	0	0

In the discussions, 7 different challenges faced by women were recorded. 55% men were under the impression that the primary challenges faced by women are their difficulty to face society, 20% believed that families do not listen to women and still a further 15% of men believed that women face challenges due to the restrictions on their mobility. By and large boys too agreed with them going further to add fear as another challenge.

For women and girls their greatest challenge was that their families do not listen to them.

Violence against women is a worldwide yet still hidden problem. Freedom from the threat of harassment, battering, and sexual assault is something that most of women have a hard time imagining because violence is such a deep rooted part of their cultures and lives.

Violence against women is sustained by a culture of silence and denial of the seriousness of the abuse, its consequences on the personal and social level, and its use as a tool of domination. The reasons so many cases go unreported are both personal (embarrassment, fear of retaliation, economic dependency) and societal (imbalanced power relations for men and women in society, privacy of the family, victim blaming attitudes). This challenge is even greater in cultures where violence against women is seen as a natural phenomenon based in deep rooted beliefs and attitudes. (Gracia, 2004)

It is woven so intricately into the fabric of their lives that those who are victimized feel that they are at fault. Many who perpetrate violence feel justified by strong societal messages that say that rape, battering, sexual harassment, child abuse, and other forms of violence are acceptable.

According to a survey conducted by the Centre of Research on Women, US, and Instituto Promundon in Brazil, more than 65% of Indian men believe that women should tolerate violence in order to keep the family together, and women sometimes deserved to be beaten. (Open Source, 2011)

Who is responsible for acts of violence against women?

	Responses	Girls groups	Boys groups	Women groups	Men groups
1	Women who keep quiet are responsible	9	5	8	7
2	Men are responsible	6	3	5	2
3	Society	10	10	8	7
4	Family	7	11	5	13
5	Neighbors	4	10	4	8
6	Panchayat	7	12	5	9
7	Government	1	3	2	1
8	Unemployed/Illiterate	0	1	0	1
9	Drunk Men	0	2	2	2
10	Women in families(domestic violence)	1	1	0	1

11	Friends/People close to us	1	0	0	0
12	Husband	0	1	1	0
13	Police	1	0	0	0
14	TV/phone/computer	0	0	0	1
15	Youth	0	1	0	0

Among the boys, a large 60% held the panchayat responsible for acts of violence against women in their village followed closely by 50% of boys who also held society and neighbors equally responsible. 65% of men blamed the family and a further 45% blamed the panchayat.

Women and girls felt strongest that women who keep silent are responsible for acts of violence against women. Women themselves are unable to analyse why they remain silent. They are also unable to accept that the fault lies with men. If men did not commit these acts, women will not need to speak out.

It is surprising to see that alcoholism and domestic violence were not included in this list as alcoholism has come up several times in other discussions during the audit.

Who is responsible to put an end to violence against women?

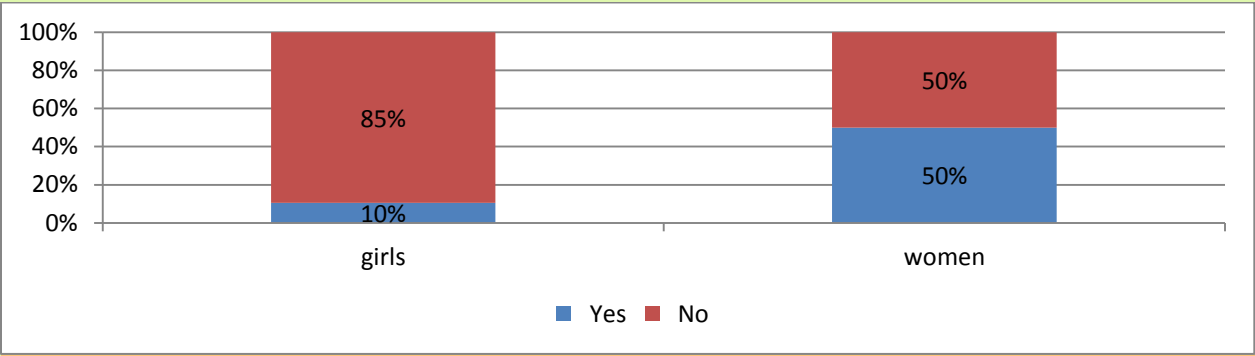
	Responses	Girls groups	Boys groups	Women groups	Men groups
1	Women who keep quiet are responsible	8	3	8	2
2	Society	9	13	10	9
3	Family	4	10	10	8
4	Neighbours	5	9	3	7
5	Panchayat	8	10	7	12
6	Government	1	5	5	7
7	Police	2	0	1	1
8	Men	2	1	1	0

Men, women, boys and girls believe that the panchayat, society, family and even women themselves are responsible to end violence against women. Interestingly, only 5% boys and women and 10% of girls thought that men were also responsible to end the violence.

“All have an equal role to play. The individual ideology perpetuates the violence, social structures and beliefs favor it and a weak government promotes it”

Strict laws instill a fear of punishment in perpetrators and one does expect the government and the panchayats to take on a more responsible role in addressing the issue. However, it is interesting to note here that in this study, none of the men however were of the opinion that they themselves could also play a role in putting an end to violence against women.

Can women share incidences of violence with their family?



If they cannot tell their family then why not?	Girls	women
Honour of family is at stake	1	3
Fear of being blamed	8	4
Fear of not being allowed to go out/pursue education/getting married	6	2
Neighbours blow up the story	0	1

If they can tell their family then why do they share	Girls	women
Violence got severe	0	1
Girls with bad character don't share	0	1
Perpetrator is caught	1	4
Better to hear from self than somebody else	0	3

This question was asked only to girls and women. While only 50% of women felt that they can share incidences of violence with their family, 85% of the girls felt that they can share the same with their parents. Girls who felt that they could

not share the information felt so because of the fear of being blamed, and of the fear that it will have repercussions on their freedom to go out or pursue education. They also felt that it would also be an avenue for the family to get them married off.

Women however felt that they could not share with their families as it would put the honor of their family at stake.

Here, we can see that in cases of violence in public spaces, because the perpetrators are largely known to the woman and her family, the fear of social ostracisation acts as a significant disincentive for her to report any kind of sexual violence or abuse. When it is domestic violence, women are afraid to speak for fear of further violence or being turned out of the home. And women often do not have the financial resources to fend for themselves.

The results of the study show evidence that woman and girls are extremely vulnerable within the home and outside of it. They are molested and raped in buses, schools, fields and even temples. Verbal abuse, lewd gestures and stalking are everyday happenings.

The study also points out that the general perception is that the safety of women and girls is their responsibility alone. They must get back home by sunset, avoid travelling late nights and at night, avoid public spaces, refrain from talking and laughing too loudly and avoid wearing 'modern clothes' that provoke lewd comments. Most importantly, they must ignore the harassing behaviour and remain silent.

The thinking that puts the onus on women who have experienced the violence is so strong that it is her that feels a sense of shame and guilt. It is common for women to report themselves as "unworthy", a "bad person", or that "they should have known better".

7: Specific findings from baseline study conducted in academic institutions

After conducting the safety audits and attitude assessments in different villages, the baseline safety audit was extended to schools and universities in six clusters of Sonipat district namely Gohana, Sonipat, Kharkhoda, Murthal, Gannaur and Gohana blocks.

A total of 1856 students (872 boys and 984 girls) from 22 institutions (including 20 schools and 2 universities) participated in this study. This exercise aimed at capturing the responses on safety parameters in and around the premises of these specific institutions. There were three categories of institutions that were a part of the study - private schools, government schools and universities. While 3 of them were all girl schools and 18 were co-educational schools. . Girls have shared their experiences of navigating various zones with respect to safety and security.

7.1 Findings from the safety audit mapping exercise

More than 1/3rd of girls reported that they do not feel safe in their schools. If we take 33% of the locations as being the minimum acceptable parameter of safety of the sample size, then we are still short of 12% institutions being safe for girls. Girls from 12 out of 22 locations shared that they feel secure at all the places in their educational

Administrative units: Majority of girls shared that administrative spaces such as the Principal's office; staff rooms, reception area are safe locations. According to them, the presence of teachers and administrative staff responsible for maintaining discipline reinforces a sense of safety in such areas.

9% of the girls talked about a sense of discomfort in and around the common staff room. The presence of male teachers inside these common staff rooms makes them feel unsafe. Similarly, 5% of the girls reported the area in and around the male teacher's staff room as being unsafe.

Girls from one of the universities shared that they felt unsafe near the new administrative block of the university.

“New administrative block is under construction. It is far away from the main campus and the presence of construction workers makes us feel unsafe, as they stare at us”

Educational sections: The spaces included in educational sections were the classroom, library, and laboratories. The response to safety in these sections evoked mixed feelings from the students. Almost 50% of the girls reported feeling safe in their classrooms due to the presence of teachers. The primary wing of the school was also reported to be safe as the girls felt that they did not face any threat from the younger boys.

A few schools have a separate section for boy's classrooms. 14% of the girls reported that they felt vulnerable while passing the senior boys section.

“Boys wink at us and pass comments as we cross their classrooms”

However, 5% of girl's reported laboratories as unsafe and a 14% of them said that laboratories are unsafe due to the presence of male teachers. Some girls added that they feel safe in the laboratories because *“Different periods are allotted to girls for computer laboratories”*.

9% of the girls shared that libraries are quiet spaces and usually have male staff on duty. The nature of the space and presence of these male workers underpins the sense of fear amongst girls, where there are isolated spaces and/or where there are men.

Girls from one university also reported their central library as being an unsafe place, for very much the same reasons.

Recreational facilities including Playgrounds /Stadiums/auditoriums /halls: 18% of the participants shared that playgrounds and stadiums within the school or university were secure and said that they were comfortable in these spaces and their safety was not compromised.

On the other hand, 28% of the girls also reported that they feel unsafe due to dominant presence of boys in the playgrounds and stadiums.

“It is okay to use the playground during lunch breaks. As soon as it gets over, the ground becomes empty and boys get a chance to comment at us”

The chances of getting harassed by a boy's mob in the playgrounds were felt to be a high probability by the girls; which was the primary reason for them to

avoid being in these spaces, even if they were in a group; as individuals the insecurity and vulnerability was higher.



Toilets and drinking water: These spaces have emerged as one of the prime concerns for safety amongst the girls. While 18% of girls reported the toilets as safe spaces, others reported the opposite. They reported that boys are often to be found standing in groups around the girl's toilet. They stare at them and pass lewd comment which makes girls feel uncomfortable. Crossing the boy's toilet to go to the girl's toilet was another serious area of concern expressed by the girls.

Water coolers are accessed by boys as well as girls and 14% of the girls categorized water coolers as unsafe space, and another 14% has mixed view depending on the presence of boys around them. So in essence 28% of girls find water coolers unsafe spaces.

Another concern expressed by girls was using school corridors dominated by boys. The usual lewd comments, gestures, jostling and other physical gestures were not uncommon.

Entrance/Transport and school neighborhood: One of the safety concerns raised by girls was reaching school safely. They face harassment in different forms like staring, comments, and stalking everyday on their way to and from school. This concern was also reflected in the village level safety audit.

Girls from a Government High School talked about the harassment they face by the drunkards around the liquor shop on the connecting road between the school and the village. The girls shared,

“If we tell our parents that drunkards tease and pass lewd comments, they will force us to leave the school”

Some girls also talked about the harassment they face from the boys of the neighboring school who harass them on a regular basis.

35% of the girls also reported that the road to school, parking area and school entrances as being unsafe places as groups of boys stand around these spaces and harass the girls as they enter or leave the school. Another 14% said that these areas were safe only when there were no boys present. But some of the concerns were addressed at employees

“There are bus drivers at parking place and they can kidnap girls”

Girls from a university also reported similar concerns. Additionally, they also included the teacher’s colony, market area, bank, and post office; the way to the university, hostel, VIP guest house, grid station, canteen, kitchen area and helipad as being unsafe.

7.2 Findings from attitude assessment in academic institutions

Women should not take up jobs involving travelling

Women should not take up jobs involving travelling	Grand Total Girls (984)	Grand Total Boys (872)	Total Number of Responses (Boys & Girls) (1856)
Yes	89%	75%	83%
No	10%	24%	16%
No Response	1%	1%	1%

Out of 1856 students who participated in the study, 83% of them felt that women should not take up jobs that involve travelling. Of these, 89% were girls who felt this way. There could be several reasons for girls feeling this way but during the discussions that followed, safety was the primary concern that was expressed by the girls. They were of the view that when the spaces around their own homes, villages and schools were so unsafe, then surely, the probability of violence in other unknown spaces would be higher. Additionally, in the patriarchal structures of the families that these girls belong to, it is understood that the primary responsibility of the home, the children and the cattle were the woman's. It was hard for them to imagine how the tasks would be completed if their mothers were to be involved in jobs that took them far away from their home.

Winking, whistling and passing comments at girls are harmless and a part of a teenage boy's growing up process

Winking, whistling and passing comments at girls are harmless and a part of a teenage boy's growing up process	Grand total Girls(984)	Grand Total Boys(872)	Total Number of Responses (Boys & Girls) (1856)
Yes	39%	73%	55%
No	60%	26%	44%
No Response	1%	1%	1%

Gendered perceptions and attitudes are still very deeply ingrained in patriarchal notions of male superiority that legitimises violence against women. 73% of boys felt that winking, whistling and passing comments at girls were harmless and a part of a teenage boys growing up process. These gendered perceptions are not limited to the thinking amongst boys alone, 39% of girls also agreed with this statement. Such attitudes are rooted in the upbringing that

condones such behavior in boys as natural and normal, but if a young girl of the same age were to behave in a similar manner she would be termed as loose and promiscuous and would be heavily penalised by family as well as society.

However, it is apparent that awareness is spreading among youth and with it, the ability to analyse and introspect. A low yet significant 26% of boys disagreed with the statement. 60% of girls also disagreed with this statement. They were of the opinion that eve teasing and passing comments makes girls uncomfortable and therefore it cannot be termed as being harmless. Additionally, several girls have had to drop out from school precisely for these reasons alone and therefore such behaviour could not be termed as harmless as it had severe repercussions.

Girls invite eve teasing by their provocative dress and behavior

Girls invite eve teasing by their provocative dress and behavior	Grand total Girls (984)	Grand total Boys (872)	Total number of responses (Boys & Girls) (1856)
Yes	39%	73%	55%
No	60%	26%	44%
No Response	1%	1%	1%

The responses of this statement were very similar to the responses of the statements above. In this statement, where 60% of girls and 26% of boys disagreed with the statement, they were of the opinion that it does not matter what the dress and behaviour of the girl is, it is the bad intention of the man/boy that provokes the eve teasing.

This is yet another manifestation of the patriarchal way of thinking where the tendency is to place the onus of “good behaviour” on the female victim herself, while at the same time overlook the shortcomings of the male perpetrator himself. This deep rooted thinking and unequal thinking is present in the views of 39% of girls and 73% of boys who agreed that it was the dress and behaviour of the girls that provoke eve teasing. There was a unanimous agreement that provocative dress entailed revealing clothes and modern clothes such as jeans and leggings, sleeveless clothes and indeed anything outside of their social structure.

No one has analysed that women and girls dressed in traditional clothing are also molested; and some of the sexual assault also takes place in the confines of their home, and on their ways to the fields to ease themselves. And no one seems to want to accept or recognise that infants, babies and toddlers also get sexually assaulted.

Pooja is eve teased by a group of boys every day on her way to the school. She does not tell her family as she fears they will stop sending her to school. Do you think Pooja is right in doing so?

Pooja is eve teased by a group of boys every day on her way to the school. She does not tell her family as she fears they will stop sending her to school. Do you think Pooja is right in doing so?	Grand total Girls (984)	Grand total Boys (872)	Total number of responses (Boys & Girls) (1856)
Yes	14%	17%	16%
No	85%	82%	83%
No Response	1%	1%	1%

This question raised a fairly positive response. A large 83% of boys and girls felt that Pooja's actions were not correct. Of these, 85% were girls and 82% were boys. The responses and reasons for the reactions were contrary for both boys and girls. While boys felt that Pooja should tell her parents as they would be able to help her deal with the stalkers; the girls felt that if they told their parents that they are being stalked on their way to school, their parents would ensure that they drop out of school. And they would never be allowed out of their homes again. Victim blaming is a common phenomenon in the patriarchal super structure that exists in society, and it is not uncommon that the victim herself be "blamed" for the act of violence, the reasons ranging from her "inappropriate" dress, behaviour or conduct. From these contradictory responses of the boys and girls, it can be deduced that the boys clearly have not experienced this phenomena and therefore do not understand the impacts of it fully. The girls on the other hand, having experienced it are more aware of it and therefore would rather remain silent than report being stalked even if it means a threat for them.

The following types of boy's eve tease

The following types of boy's eve tease	Uneducated	Unemployed	Alcoholic	School boys	College boys	No response
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Boys(872)	40%	28%	43%	27%	42%	4%
Girls(984)	56%	42%	56%	44%	56%	4%
Total(1856)	48.5%	35%	50%	36%	50%	

From the options that were given to the students, it was clear that both boys and girls were of the opinion that all boys indulge in eve teasing. Among them, both boys and girls were of the opinion that college boys, uneducated boys and boys who drink alcohol have the highest propensity to eve tease. However, reluctant to see themselves as perpetrators, boys were not in agreement with the girls when they said that school boys also indulge in eve teasing.

A girl's family should give dowry at the time of marriage

A girl's family should give dowry at the time of marriage	Grand total Girls (984)	Grand total Boys (872)	Total number of responses (Boys & Girls) (1856)
Yes	17%	37%	27%
No	82%	61%	72%
No Response	1%	1%	1%

A reflection of the statistics revealed that more than one-third (37%) of boys and only 17% of girls who participated in the study were of the opinion that the girl's family should give dowry to the boy's family at the time of marriage. The fact that these were the voices of students of middle and upper schools only goes to show the workings of the wheels of the socialisation process. Patriarchal attitudes and beliefs have already begun to be manifested and ingrained in their young minds and they perceive that it is the right of the boy to receive dowry in order to accept the girl as his partner.

But on a more positive note, there were also a large 82% of girls and 62% of boys who were of the opinion that dowry should not be given at the time of marriage.

A man has the right to tell his wife what she can do and what she can't do

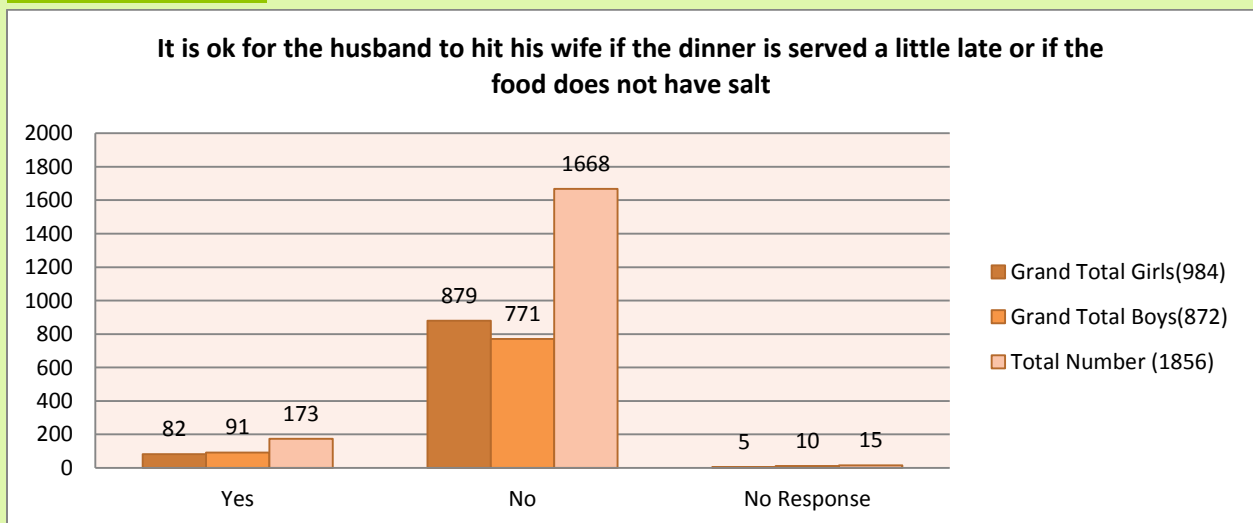
A man has the right to tell his wife what she can do and what she can't do	Grand total Girls (984)	Grand total Boys (872)	Total number of responses (Boys & Girls) (1856)
Yes	44%	73%	57%
No	55%	26%	41%
No Response	1%	1%	1%

Patriarchy refers to a social system where the father controls all members of the family, all property, all economic and other major decisions. This is based on the assumption that men are superior to women, and that women should be controlled by men and are part of a man's property.

In a patriarchal system, it is generally the men who hold the power in all the most important positions in society – social, economic and political. 73% of boys and 44% of girls also agree and feel that a man has the right to tell his wife what she can or cannot do.

However, less than one – third (26%) boys and 55% girls were of the opposing opinion. They did not agree and challenged the notion that the man has the right to tell his wife what she can or cannot do. According to them both men and women should have an equal right in such matters.

It is okay for the husband to hit his wife if the dinner is served a little late or if the food does not have salt



90% of boys and girls did not agree with the statement, of these, 88% were the opinion of boys and 90% was the opinion of the girls. There were also some girls (8%) however, who endorsed this and felt that it was okay for husbands to beat their wives if the food is not too salty or served late. It was not alarming to know that girls also think like this as behaviours such as this are most often than not very much a part of their everyday lives at home. It would not be wrong to also assume that this is a phenomenon that they might be witnessing in their homes every day, so much so that it has become an integral and normal part of their lives, in which their mothers or they themselves are beaten up for the very same reason. It is a matter of concern that the girls have in a way begun to legitimise the violence within their homes and will therefore be expected to be ready to “accept” the same in their own lives.

Gender Discrimination is a form of violence against women

Gender Discrimination is a form of violence against women	Grand total Girls(984)	Grand total Boys(872)	Total number of responses (Boys & Girls) (1856)
Yes	55%	56%	56%
No	40%	40%	40%
No Response	5%	4%	4%

A society where women are not treated equally contributes to violence against women

A society where women are not treated equally contributes to violence against women	Grand total Girls (984)	Grand total Boys (872)	Total number of responses (Boys & Girls) (1856)
Yes	66%	59%	62%
No	31%	38%	35%
No Response	3%	3%	3%

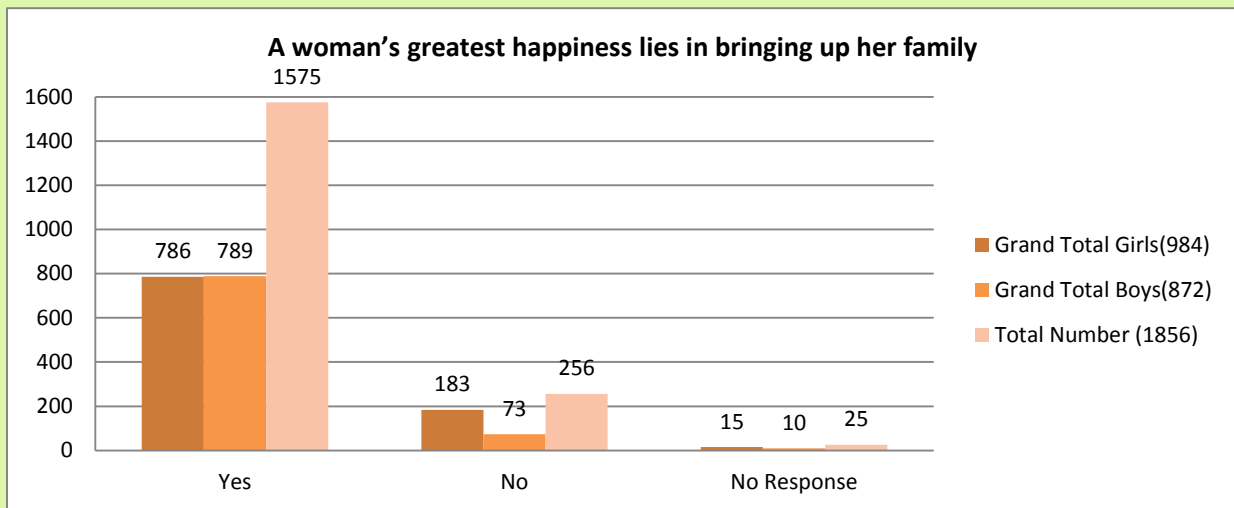
The subordination that women experience on a daily basis, regardless of the socio-economic class they might belong to, takes various forms – discrimination, disregard, insult, control, exploitation, oppression, violence – within the family, at the place of work, or in society. The details may be different, but the theme is the same. The patriarchal view stresses dichotomy and hierarchy, where one is

superior over the other, and hence, domination, discrimination and exploitation. Violence against women is rooted in the view that men are superior to women and therefore have the power and the right to exert control over all aspects of her life.

At the same time, discriminatory attitudes towards women and girls results in the lack of food, medical care, educational opportunities and the perpetuation of age old customs such as feticide, female infanticide, child marriage and early child bearing.

From the responses of both these questions, it is evident that there is some clarity among the participants on the fact that violence against women is rooted in gender inequalities and discrimination. However, gender discrimination itself is not recognised as a form of violence. The findings also show that girls have a greater understanding than boys and agree that gender discrimination is a form of violence and will not be present in societies where women and men are treated equally.

A woman's greatest happiness lies in bringing up her family



A very large number of boys (91%) and girls (80%) felt that woman's greatest happiness lies in bringing up her family. In a majority of societies such as the ones to which the students belong to; the division of roles and responsibilities between men and women are rigid. It determines their socialisation at the family and society level. While men are considered to be the head of the family, the

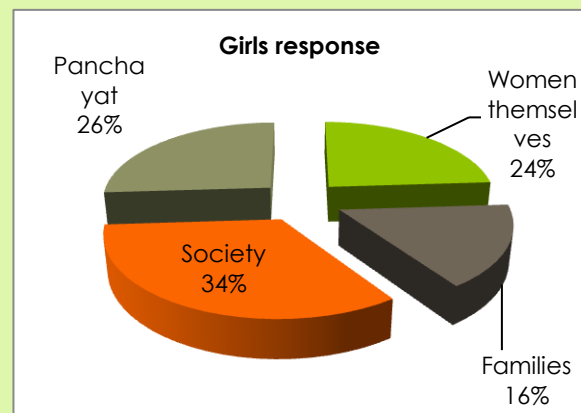
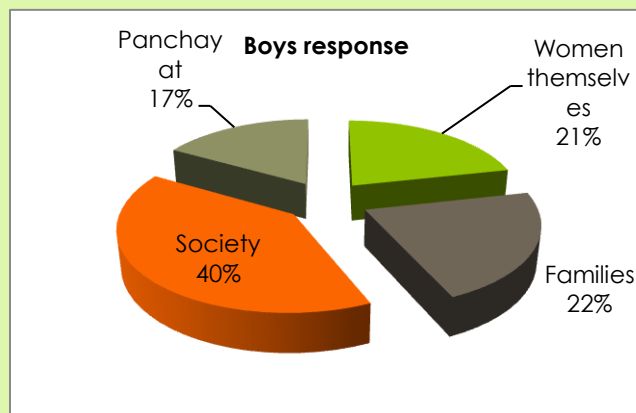
breadwinners, owners and managers of properties; women are socialised and trained to look after the children and the home, to nurse the infants and the old and do all the household chores. Because men are given the role of earners and managers of properties, they tend to wield power whereas women play subordinate roles. Girls watch their mothers look after the children and are therefore socialised into believing that they are happiest while performing the roles that were assigned to her mother and then to her. If women try to break away from these stereotypes they are shunned or thought to be abnormal. Women and mothers are put in such a high pedestal that just looking down from it is frightening and jumping off is suicidal. It is also not surprising to note here that almost all the boys also felt the same way.

It is okay for the wife to earn more than the husband

It is okay for the wife to earn more than the husband	Grand total Girls(984)	Grand total Boys(872)	Total number of responses (Boys & Girls) (1856)
Yes	55%	35%	46%
No	43%	63%	53%
No Response	2%	2%	2%

In keeping with the strongly biased responses to the previous statement, 63% of boys strongly advocated that it was not okay for wives to earn more than their husbands. However, it is important to acknowledge here that there were also a significantly large number of boys (43%) who expressed a liberal way of thinking and agreed with the statement. They felt that it was okay for wives to earn more than their husbands.

Who is responsible for acts of violence against women?



It is evident from the charts above that both girls and boys feel that society has the prime responsibility for violence against women; followed closely by women themselves. A larger number of girls were of the opinion that women themselves were to be blamed for acts of violence upon themselves.

8: Ways forward

Discussions with girls, boys, men and women across 20 villages and 22 educational institutions reaffirms the fact that even institutions are not sacrosanct when it comes to the issues of safety and security of women and girls.

The safety audit also established that girls perceive the presence of boys and men in any particular space as a threat to their safety, including within the home and schools.

Eve teasing and sexual harassment in the form of comments, stalking, staring, leering, winking, whistling and touching were the most highly reported forms of violence by girls.

Boys on the other hand had an entirely different understanding of safety for girls. For them, all crowded spaces were safe for girls especially areas where there was a presence of boys and old men.

Restriction on mobility: The safety audit raised the issue of the restriction on the mobility of girls and women as a serious area of concern. It established that the mobility of girls in the community is severely restricted because of harassment motivated by perceived gender expression not just inside the institution but in the public space as well.

They reported that the presence of men including policemen, school teachers, teaching and non-teaching staff of universities, sarpanch, doctor and the priest was a consideration for the environment becoming unsafe. Their presence meant eve teasing, sexual assault and harassment which left them feeling vulnerable and insecure. Women reported that they are afraid to leave their daughters alone in the village. Stalking was another reason why girls reported that they were afraid of being alone outside the school or their homes. Girls shared that they are afraid to report these incidents to the school or to their parents for fear that they might not be allowed to attend the school again.

Women categorically stated that they “were afraid of being raped” and would not think of letting their daughters go anywhere alone in the village.

“If we tell our families we are being followed, they will stop us from pursuing our studies and get us married off”

(Girls - Rajpur village)

Restriction to the access to basic necessities: As a gross violation of their human rights, women and girls reported having limited access to basic necessities such as drinking water and toilets for fear of eve teasing, sexual assault and sexual harassment by men and boys. In the village, the presence of men around the water source and the absence of toilets left women and girls vulnerable to further harassment and sexual assault including health issues. In schools, girls avoided drinking water and using the toilets for the same reason. Girls have also reported the inability to access health services because of the disturbing behaviour of the doctor.

Absence of supportive machinery: Unfortunately girls and women have reported a lack of trust on two of the institutions constituted for the people. They have reported a lack of commitment among the panchayat and the police to address the issues of violence against women. Infact, the study reports that both the sarpanch’s home as well as the police station has been termed as being unsafe. They reported that not only are they willing to suffer in silence rather than approach a police station for fear of further harassment; but they are also fearful of being sexually harassed by police men at the station.

Some of the actions that were recommended by the participants of the safety audit were:

Safety in academic institutions:

- Gender sensitisation workshops should be made an integral part of the curriculum in school and university for students and teachers.
- Training on the prevention of sexual harassment at workplace to be given to all staffs and students of schools and universities
- An effective anti-sexual harassment committee to be instituted in the university and the school and strict action to be taken on perpetrators of violence
- Teachers to continue their role even outside the school and help create a conducive environment within the school.
- There should be police patrolling outside the gates of the school.

Safety in places of residence/village/hamlet:

Action for panchayat:

- Women and girls have strongly advocated that every house must have a toilet.
- A ban on alcohol shops in the village and in the surrounding area. Selling of alcohol in grocery shop should have severe penalties.
- Penalty and strict action for anyone caught or reported harassing any woman or girl
- Instituting street lights across the village
- Ensure that every girl in the village is receiving education that she is going to school and the environment for her to walk to school is safe.
- A playground for girls within the village
- A committee to be set up in the village made up of women, men and youth to address the issues of violence of women and girls
- Ban on playing obscene songs loudly in the village
- CCTVs and effective helplines in the village.
- Patrolling in the village as isolated locations are sources of great insecurity and fear among girls
- Recognise that youth are agents of change and work with them
- Work closely with the youth of the village to ensure a safe environment in the village

Attitudes and behaviours: It has been observed during the study that very large numbers of men, women, girls and boys believed alcohol to be the primary cause for perpetuating violence on women and girls. Reflection on the cause of violence being a direct consequence of deep rooted gendered behaviours and gender discrimination was absent. The tendency to therefore concentrate action on closing liquor shops took precedence over discussions for example about equal property rights, banning of dowry and fasting for men. Sarpanchs were quick to provide quick fix solutions to the problem by pledging to close liquor shops but none were ready to publicly declare action for transgressions of gender.

Boys who participated in the sharing of the study results said that the one learning they received from this exercise was that girls do not feel safe even inside their homes. There was a huge gap between the boys and girls, men and women around the understanding of violence. Women and girls are sensitive just by virtue of their being women or girls was established to be a myth. The fact that women are as much a product of the thinking, attitudes and beliefs of the patriarchal super structure as men themselves was established. They know the reality that they have seen, understood and lived.



8.1 Action taken

1. The findings of the safety audit were collated into a 10 point charter of demands and presented by youth to 23 MLA candidates from 8 political parties including 2 independent candidates in 11 constituencies of Haryana during the 2014 state level assembly elections. The charter stated:

- Formulation of a safety policy for women and girls in the State
- Constitution of a Youth Violence Watch Group at panchayat level
- Safety audits to be institutionalized in the State
- Deployment of women constables in educational institutions and villages
- Installation of street lights in the whole village
- Banning of alcohol shops in and around residential areas and educational institutions
- Inclusion of gender in the curriculum of schools
- Ensure that the Internal Complaints Committee and Local Complaints Committees are constituted at the institutional and district levels
- Strict restrictions on the release of obscene songs
- Institution of a one stop rape crisis centre in all districts

2. The data of the safety audit was shared with the sarpanch and the community members. Sarpanches from the 20 villages of the audit location took an oath to make their villages violence free. They pledged that they will work closely with the youth of the village to make their village violence free.

3. Special gram sabhas were called by each sarpanch in their village to share findings of the safety audit. In Rehmana village, the sarpanch promised to close all the liquor shops by the 31st of January. The adult members of the community took the matter up with the sarpanch when he failed to deliver on his promise.

4. Students of both the universities have shared the results of the safety audit in front of their faculty and are in the process of taking up the issues that emerged from it with the concerned authorities. Anti-Sexual harassment committees have been re constituted in both the collaborating universities.

5. A month long campaign was conducted at the village level in February. The campaign was designed around the findings that emerged from the safety audit.

9: Conclusion

Among the different forms of violence that women experience in their lifetime, wife beating is probably one of the most common forms of violence against women. Married women are more likely to experience physical or sexual violence by husbands than by anyone else. In India, according to the National Crime Records Bureau's 2005 Crime Clock, four out of 10 women in a have experienced violence in the home.

Dowry has been identified as one of the most significant motives for atrocities against women sometimes leading to their death. Approximately 6,000 women are killed in India every year because of dowry according to the National Crime Records Bureau's 2005 Crime Clock. Unofficial estimates are as high as 15,000 deaths a year. In other words, between 16 and 40 women die every day because of dowry. According to National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), Haryana recorded 4,645 instances of crime with as many as 269 cases of dowry deaths and 488 cases of rape in 2008. (Sehgal, 2009)

Inequalities of gender and sex are systematically perpetuated and reinforced all around us, at home, in society, at work, in organisations, and in nations across the world. In this unequal world, power and control are seen to rest in the hands of men. Women, who are deemed powerless by virtue of their sex come to believe in and accept the systems of inequality and injustice. Socialisation from infancy further instils values and attitudes which make them take these systems for granted as those aspects of reality which cannot be changed.

This study also reiterates the reality that women and girls have lost faith in their ability to understand their world, leave alone transform it. They suffer from low self-esteem and lack self confidence in themselves and those around them. Women through decades of consistent neglect, hardship and subjugation doubt the system and think that it can never be changed. They mistrust their own capacities to change their situation. Their aspirations are bound by low self-concept and feelings of dependency, vulnerability and their tendency to stay submissive and voiceless.



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