



Outside home, Indian woman unsafe; inside, she needs luck

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You don't need a survey to find out that women feel insecure in this country. You just need to take a walk in don't need numbers to see that domestic violence against women is widespread. You just need to look into t perhaps yours. Yet this realisation is not enough to devise a strategy to combat this violence. You need to ur anatomy of violence — where, how and why of violence against women — to begin to think about countering



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This is what the latest round of the the six-monthly The Indian Express-CNN-IBN-CSDS State of the Nation 5 the eve of the country's first Republic Day with a woman President.

So this round of the survey focuses entirely on the Indian woman. We interviewed about 4,000 women in 16 rural and all shades of urban India across 20 states of the country in the second week of January and quizzed a wide range of questions, including many sensitive questions on the nature of violence against women.

The findings of the study corroborate and deepen the popular impressions about the high level of insecurity. Nearly half the women interviewed, 44% to be precise, said that they felt "mostly" (17 per cent) or "sometimes" (27 per cent) unsafe outside their home. The survey findings also confirm that the metropolitan areas (million plus cities) are the most insecure places for the women. Women in small towns feel much less insecure than big cities or villages. The survey also helps us to pinpoint some of the most vulnerable groups of women that require special policy attention:

- Young women below 25 years feel particularly unsafe in all kinds of localities. While women in villages feel safe, in metros, young women in rural areas are more vulnerable than their counterparts in urban areas.
- The poor women who live in big cities turn out to be the most vulnerable group across all locations and categories in the survey.
- Single working women feel much more insecure than the average.
- While there is no strong community pattern to the level of insecurity, young Muslim women feel particularly vulnerable.

The survey gives some insight into the basis of this sense of insecurity. It is not so much the screaming hear or murder but the everyday experience of routine violence that makes women insecure.

In this respect again, metropolitan areas are the worst places for women. As many as 59% of our respondents in metros had experienced either physical or verbal harassment in the last one year; 37% had faced physical violence.

- Public transport in big cities is a hellish experience for women. A majority of young women living in the metros had experienced teasing and one-third of them had experienced molestation in the last one year in public transport.
- There is little to support the widespread impression that women who dress up 'provocatively' are more vulnerable to harassment. If any thing, our analysis shows that women who did not give any importance to dressing up fashionably and physical harassment than those who were attentive to dressing up.
- Harassment at the work place is not confined to daily-wage workers or those who work in the unorganised sector. Professionals who work in offices report a higher than average experience of harassment at the work place.

Insecurity for women does not begin outside the four walls of their home. Taking a cue from the pioneering National Family Health Survey (NFHS) in documenting domestic violence, our survey also asked a series of questions

questions on violence that women face from close quarters.

- Nearly one-fifth of our married respondents said they were beaten by their husband or in-laws in the last 12 months. This figure for husband alone was 17%. This fits in well with the findings of the NFHS that women who experienced sexual or emotional violence from their spouse within the previous 12 months were 21%, 7% and 11% of those interviewed. These figures are particularly important because domestic violence tends to be severely under-reported.
- Domestic violence has the expected pattern: women in lower classes tend to experience or report greater violence. At the same time, the level of violence by husband or in-laws in the respectable middle class families is inconsiderable. Educated women too face a great deal of domestic violence.
- Far from escaping it, working women face more marital violence than “housewives.”
- Those women who were not married did not escape this form of violence: about one-sixth of unmarried women reported being beaten by their father or teacher respectively.

Finally, the survey gives a reason why violence against women does not come down: women don't quite trust police to help them when they face violence. When asked if they would approach police if they faced molestation in a city, about half of the women responded in affirmative. Interestingly, there are no big differences across caste, class or class on this question, though the poorer women were obviously a shade less sure of going to the police. Here are some points for policy makers to ponder about.

The Indian Express-CNN IBN Survey

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Methodology:

The Indian Express-CNN-IBN-CSDS “State of the Nation Survey- An Exclusive Survey of Indian Women” was analysed by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi.

The findings presented are based on a sample of 3998 women respondents in 160 locations spreading over 13 rural and 17 million plus cities, 17 big cities with population over a lakh, 11 small towns with population less than a lakh and 32 urban locations.

The respondents were randomly selected from female names on the electoral rolls in each location. The urban areas were over-sampled in order to get a detailed picture of various kinds of towns and cities. Urban women comprised 28 per cent of our sample, although only 28 per cent of the country's women stay in urban areas. This over-sampling of urban areas should be kept in mind while reading any figure for ‘all’ respondents. Despite this limitation, the social profile of the sample is fairly representative: 75 percent Hindus, 12 percent Muslims, 14 percent Dalits and 10 percent ST.

The fieldwork for the study was conducted between January 10 and 16, 2008. More than 320 investigators (about 80 percent among them being women) conducted face to face interviews at the place of residence of the respondent using a standard-structured questionnaire in the language spoken and understood by the respondent.

Sanjay Kumar of the CSDS directed the survey. The field work was coordinated by P. Narsimha Rao (Andhra Pradesh), Rakesh Ranjan (Bihar), Kinjal Sampat (Delhi), Priyavdan M Patel (Gujarat), B.S.Padmavathi (Karnataka), Saikat (Kerala), G. Koteswara Prasad (Tamil Nadu), Ram Shankar (Madhya Pradesh), Nitin Birmal (Maharashtra), Jitendra (Punjab), Harish Kumar (Haryana), Baba Mayaram (Chhattisgarh), Sanjay Lodha (Rajasthan), A.K. Verma (Uttar Pradesh), Suprio Basu (West Bengal), Harishwar Dayal (Jharkhand), S.N Misra (Orissa) Akhil Ranjan Datta (Assam), M. Rajesh Deb (Meghalaya). The team that designed, coordinated and analyzed the survey at CSDS included Yogendra Yadav, Sanjeer Alam, Praveen Rai, Dhananjai Joshi, Vikas Gautam, Himanshu Bhattacharya, K.A.C. Kanchan Malhotra.