



## SOTN: What Indian women think about the nation

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STATE OF FEAR: Survey quizzed 4,000 women across 160 locations in 20 states.

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

This is what the latest round of the six-monthly Indian Express-CNN-IBN-CSDS State of the Nation Survey does. This round of the survey focuses entirely on the Indian women.

We interviewed about 4,000 women in 160 locations in rural and all shades of urban India across 20 states of the country in the second week of January and quizzed them about 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 felt by women.

Nearly half the women interviewed, 44 per cent 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 most insecure places for the women.

### Vulnerable groups

Women in small towns feel much less insecure than big cities or villages. The survey enables us to pinpoint some of the most vulnerable groups of women that require special policy attention:

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

The survey gives some insights into the basis of this sense of insecurity. It is not so much the screaming headlines about rape 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.

### High level of insecurity, especially among metros

<i>Those who feel unsafe among</i>	<i>%</i>
<b>All</b>	<b>44</b>
Metropolitan	53

City/town	37
Village	46

*Note: All figures in percent of women who feel unsafe; 'Unsafe' includes those who feel unsafe mostly or 'sometimes'. 'Metros' are all the cities with million plus population.*

As many as 59 percent of our respondents from the metros had experienced either physical or verbal harassment in the last one year; 37 percent had faced physical violation.

#### **Some sections are more vulnerable**

*Those who feel unsafe among*

Poor women in metros	68
Young Muslim women	<b>61</b>
Single working women	<b>58</b>
Young women (below 25)	50

*Note: All figures in percent; 'Unsafe' includes those who feel unsafe mostly or sometimes. 'Metros' are all the cities with million plus population.*

#### **Unsafe at home, unsafe at work**

- Public transport in big cities is a hellish experience for women. A majority of young women living in the metros said they 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 faced more verbal 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. Organised 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 work of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) in documenting domestic violence, our survey also asked a series of sensitive 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 one year; the figure for husband alone was 17 percent. This fits in well with the findings of the NFHS that women who experienced physical, sexual or emotional violence from their spouse within the previous 12 months were 21 percent, 7 percent and 11 percent of the women interviewed. These figures are particularly important because domestic violence tends to be severely under-reported.
- Domestic violence has the expected pattern: women in the lower classes tend to experience or report greater domestic violence. At the same time the level of violence by husband or in-laws in the respectable middle class families is not 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 and the same proportion of students 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 the police to help them when they face violence.

When asked if they would approach police if they faced molestation in a public place, only about half of the women responded in affirmative. Interestingly, there are no big differences across caste, community or even class on this

question, though the poorer women were obviously a shade less sure of going to the police. Here is something for policy makers to ponder about.

*(Next page: methodology and graphics)*

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

The findings presented are based a sample of 39,98 women respondents in 160 locations spreading over 13 metropolitan or 'million plus' cities, 17 big cities with population over a lakh, 11 small towns with population less than a lakh and 68 rural 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 56 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 has to be kept in mind while reading any figure for 'all' respondents. Despite this limitation, the social profile of the achieved 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 and supervisors (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), Sajjad Ibrahim (Kerala), G. Koteswara Prasad (Tamil Nadu), Ram Shankar (Madhya Pradesh), Nitin Birmal (Maharashtra), Jagroop Sekhon (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), Mangi Singh (Manipur), Rajesh Deb (Meghalaya). The team that designed, coordinated and analyzed the survey at CSDS comprised of Yogendra Yadav, Sanjeer Alam, Praveen Rai, Dhananjai Joshi, Vikas Gautam, Himanshu Bhattacharya, K.A.Q.A Hilal and Kanchan Malhotra.

#### **Young women are more vulnerable in public places**

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Teasing</b>	<b>Molestation</b>
<b>All</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>14</b>
Young women (below 25)	<b>42</b>	<b>17</b>

*Note: All figures are for per cent of women up to 45 years who faced harassment at least once in the last one year in public places like street/mohalla or market. 'Teasing' stands for any form of verbal harassment including lewd comments and 'molestation' stands for any form of physical harassment.*

#### **Work place harassment cuts across occupations**

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Teasing or molestation</b>
Teasing or molestation	<b>22</b>
Office goers	<b>28</b>
Manual labourer	<b>36</b>

*Note: All figures are for per cent of working women who faced physical or verbal harassment at least once in the last one year at their work placer.*

#### **Women being harassed in public transport**

<b>Locality</b>	<b>Teasing</b>	<b>Molestation</b>
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<b>All</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>15</b>
Metropolitan	<b>39</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Young metro</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>30</b>

*Note: All figures are for per cent of women up to 45 years who faced harassment at least once in the last one year in public transport.*

*'Teasing' stands for any form of verbal harassment including lewd comments and 'molestation' stands for any form of physical harassment.*

#### **Women are unsure of going to police even if molested in public**

	<b>All</b>	<b>Poor</b>
<b>Will approach police</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>No, will not</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Not sure/ Cant say</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>38</b>

*Note: All figures in percent.*

#### **High incidence of domestic violence**

<b>Those who were beaten by</b>	<b>%</b>
Husband	<b>17</b>
In-laws	6
Father	12
Employer	4
Teacher	17

*Note: All figures in per cent of (married women for husband/in-laws; unmarried women for father, working women for employer and students for teachers) women below 50 years who were hit at least once in the last one year. Interviewed held in the presence of husband and other adult male family members are excluded from the analysis.*

#### **Working women face more violence from husband and/or in-laws**

<b>All</b>	<b>19</b>
Housewives	<b>16</b>
Working women	<b>23</b>

*Note: All figures in per cent of married women who were hit by their husband or in-laws at least once in the last one year.*