

# A Rapid Study on Women's Safety in Public Spaces in Rohtak, Haryana

March 2018



**SAFETIPIN**  
Supporting Safer Communities

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Women's Safety in Public Spaces  
in Rohtak, Haryana  
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## Acknowledgements

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## Section I: Introduction

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### A. Objective of the Study:

- To gather data about experiences and perceptions about sexual harassment in public spaces faced by women/girls
- To explore perceptions of different groups of citizens and diverse stakeholders around the issue of sexual harassment in public places of women/girls

### B. Methodology

This study was conducted in Jhajjar, Bahadurgarh and Rohtak urban areas from December 2017 to January 2018. Four tools were used to gather qualitative and quantitative data on women's experience of sexual harassment in public places and perceptions of different stakeholders in the community on the issue. The tools used were Focus Group Discussions (FGD), Key Informant Interviews (KII), safety audit walks and SafetiPin Nite using the SafetiPin App.

#### 1. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):

Wards were selected on the basis of meetings held with ward councilors of Jhajjar and Rohtak. It was decided to conduct FGDs with groups of men, women and youth in each of the three towns. The suggested ratio of youth was 6 girls to 4 boys; however this ratio was not maintained in all cities. FGDs were conducted in wards where the councilor appeared most responsive to issues of women's safety. There was an effort to include participants of various ages belonging to different sections including migrants, workers, students, and homemakers.

Wards selected were as follows:

Ward Numbers	Rohtak
Men	14
Women	10
Youth	4

FGDs offer valuable insights into perceptions, attitudes and biases among respondents on an issue. In the context of this rapid study, 9 FGDs were undertaken, with different groups of men, women and youth to understand similarities and differences in their perception and experience on women's safety and sexual harassment in public places. Participants also shared some factors that contribute to sexual harassment and ways in which this issue can be addressed. A semi-structured guideline was used to facilitate discussions that lasted for approximately forty-five minutes to an hour. The FGD tool can be seen at Annexure 3.

Below are details of the FGDs undertaken (Table 1)

Men		Women		Youth	
Number of Participants	Profile	Number of Participants	Profile	Number of Participants	Profile
5	30-50 years; Businessmen, MLAs, Professors	10	25-60 years; Homemakers	8	15-25 years; High school and college students

## 2. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

The Key Informant Interviews were used to have in-depth discussions with service providers such as; district administration and police in each of the three towns. Other key stakeholders interviewed were those who were knowledgeable about the concerns of women and girls such as angawadi workers, auto union president and principal of a girls' college.

A key informant interview is a useful tool to highlight the voices of key stakeholders, who have experience and knowledge on a particular issue. For this study, individuals who interviewed comprised officials at the district administration level, police personnel, college principal, an anganwadi supervisor and an auto union official. A total of 11 KIIs were conducted in the 3 towns/cities using a semi-structured questionnaire. Each interview lasted approximately for an hour. (See Annexure 4 for KII guidelines. Details of the respondents interviewed can be found in Annexure 1, Table A.)

## 3. Safety Audit Walks

For the Safety Audit Walk, routes were selected to include important public areas in the city, especially those that women and girls do frequent or are more likely to frequent.

The objective of the safety walk is to identify locations which women/girls find to be unsafe and where they experience fear and feel threatened. The walk is transactional in nature and the audit team observes the spatial layout based on the following parameters; lighting, physical infrastructure, public transport, last mile connectivity, security and policing, gendered usage of space, eyes on the street and public messaging. The observations from the safety walk help in identifying key concerns that women/ girls face and how they can be addressed.

The audit team included 21 persons – women and men from the community, teachers and students of women's colleges, social service organizations, and experts, officials of government departments – who accompanied members of Project Jagriti (Government of Haryana), UNICEF and Jagori. The safety audit benefited from the observations, knowledge and experience of the local team and provided a sense of ownership.

In all, 6 routes were selected in Rohtak. To see the guidelines for the Safety Audit Walk, refer Annexure 5.

#### 4. SafetiPin Mapping: SafetiPin Nite

SafetiPin, is a map-based mobile phone and online application, which works to make communities and cities safer by providing safety-related information collected by users and by trained auditors. At the core of the app is the Women's Safety Audit. A Women's Safety Audit (WSA) is a participatory tool for collecting and assessing information about perceptions of safety in urban public spaces. The audit is based on nine parameters – Lighting, Openness, Visibility, Crowd, Security, Walkpath, Availability of Public Transport, Gender Usage and Feeling. Each of the nine parameters is rated 0/1/2/3 with 0 being the poorest and 3 the best. The coloured pins on the map reflect the overall rating with red showing poor, yellow showing average and green showing a good score for the location.

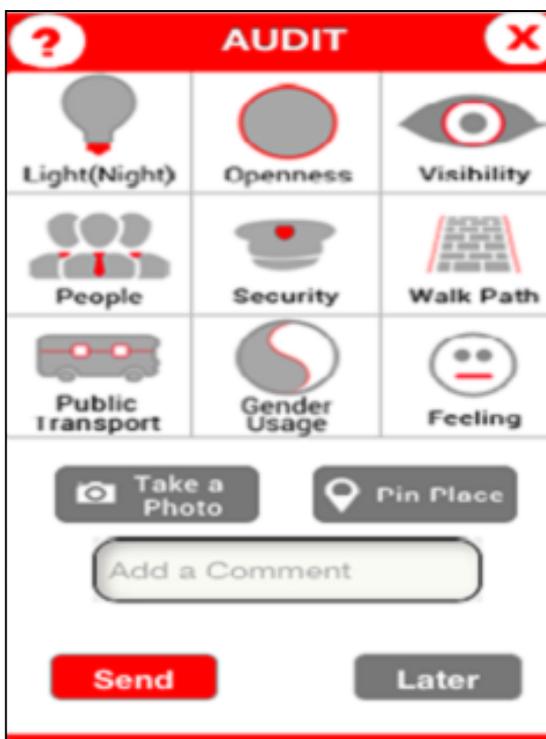


Figure 1: Safetipin App (parameters)

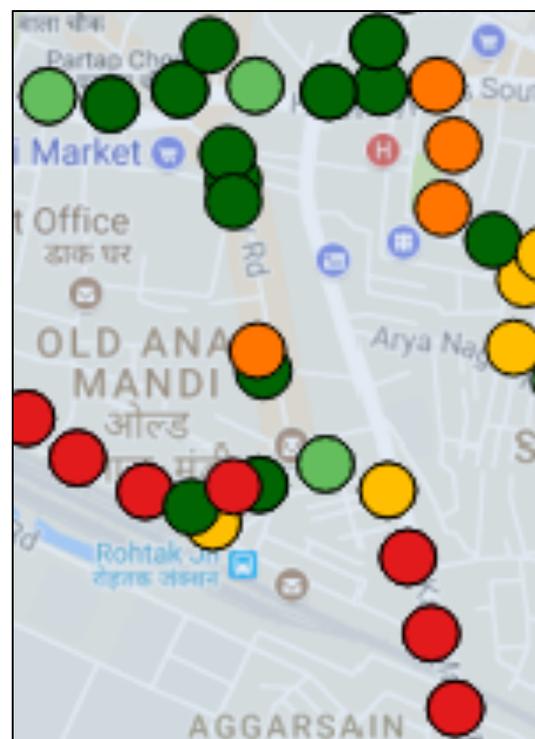


Figure 2: Safety scores on the map

In Rohtak, a total of 1437 safety audit pins were generated using the Safetipin app covering a stretch of 54 kilometers. To comprehend the map and graph better, it is important to note that the Safety Score of a point indicates the perception of safety around a particular location. Each audit point is a number between 0 and 5, 0 being Poor i.e. Very Unsafe and 5 being Excellent in terms of overall safety. The pie chart specifies the percentage distribution of pins in each range.

### C. Safe Cities: Concept

A 'safe' city is not just a city where women and girls live their lives free from sexual violence and harassment, but also from any fear of experiencing such violence or harassment.

Women's safety is rooted in the concept of:

- Women's right to the city and right to safety at all times
- Right to a political voice in urban governance and equal citizenship
- Right to autonomy, mobility, bodily integrity and freedoms
- Right to plan and imagine city-spaces, infrastructure, public provisioning and access to effective redress systems
- Right to decent employment and livelihoods

#### **A SAFE CITY FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS IS...**

- ✓ A city where women and girls can enjoy public spaces and public life without fear of being assaulted.
- ✓ A city where violence is not exercised against women and girls in either the home or the street.
- ✓ A city where women and girls are not discriminated against and where their economic, social, political, and cultural rights are guaranteed.
- ✓ A city where women and girls participate in making decisions that affect the community in which they live.
- ✓ A city where the state guarantees the human rights of all people without excluding women and girls.
- ✓ A city where the state and local government take actions to provide attention, prevention, and punishment for violence against women and girls.
- ✓ A city where the state and local government guarantee women and girls' access to justice.

[Source UN Women, Safe Cities Module]

<http://www.endvawnow.org/uploads/modules/pdf/1304107021.pdf>, pg 6-7

## Section II: Key Findings

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### Rohtak: A Brief Profile

As per the 2011 census, Rohtak is the sixth most populous city in Haryana with population of 374,292. The district has an area of 1668.47 sq. kms density of population at 466 per sq.km. There are 146 villages and 151 Panchayats in the district. Out of the 20 ward councillors in Rohtak, 10 of them are women.

The rural population is 613864 and urban population is 444819. As per 2011 census, rural population constitutes 57.98% of the total population. Total number of males, as per the 2011 census, is 566687 and females are 491975. Thus, females constitute about 46.5% of the total. The sex ratio of the state is 887 females per 1,000 males and male literacy was 88.94% and female literacy was 78.68%.<sup>1</sup> The economy of the district is primarily agriculture i.e. agrarian economy. About 51.89% of the total workers are engaged in agriculture and allied activities, 7.68% in cottage & household industries and the rest are engaged in other activities. Rohtak has one of the highest number of dairies in India, a reputed university and a medical college.<sup>2</sup>

The caste composition in Rohtak is such as that the upper caste mostly comprise of Jats who dominate the rural areas while the urban areas have mixed groups such as Baniyas, Aroras and Khatri. Violence against women and girls has been a pressing concern.

### Crimes against women and girls

Despite good female literacy (78.68%) and a rapid progress towards urbanization, Rohtak still remains a male dominated society where the rights and freedom of women and girls continues to be restricted. There are several cases of female foeticide, honour killing, and cruelty by husband reported in Rohtak. The skewed sex ratio and the patriarchal notions of society have curbed women's mobility and growth in the district.

A considerable rise was noted in the violence perpetrated on women and girls in Rohtak district over the years 2013-15.

### Rohtak crimes against women data (2013-2015)<sup>3</sup>

Year	Rape	Kidnapping & Abduction	Dowry Deaths	Assault on Women with intent to outrage her Modesty	Cruelty by Husband or his Relatives
2015	54	277	14	190	193
2014	68	19	16	98	168
2013	51	57	17	55	127

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Census 2011

<sup>2</sup> Source: Planning Families, Planning Gender, CWDS, URL: <http://www.cwds.ac.in/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/PlanningFamiliesPlanningGender.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Source: <https://data.gov.in/catalog/district-wise-crimes-committed-against-women>

As per the above table, there is an increase in the number of cases registered under assault on women - from 55 in 2013 to 190 in 2015. According to NCRB data of 2015, registered cases of rape in Rohtak increased from 51 in 2013 to 54 in 2015 while cases of cruelty by husband and his relative (Sec. 498 A) increased from 127 in 2013 to 193 in 2015.

Three FGDs were conducted in Rohtak city. The participants in the women's group were mostly educated homemakers. Men were professors, business men, and local leaders including an MLA. The FGD youth group comprised of all male college students.

Three KIIs were conducted with an administrative official, a police personnel and the Principal of a women's college.

The safety audit walks were undertaken along six routes, covering the approach to the railway station, the area around the a hospital, the old and the new bus stations and a vegetable market.

## **Findings**

### **1. Focus Group Discussions**

#### **a) Different forms of sexual harassment:**

Women respondents shared that they faced different forms of sexual and street harassment. This included - stalking, inappropriate touching, comments passed when they walked past places where men/boys hang out and being teased on the streets. Women also shared that boys tend to keep track on the movements of girls, and if they wish to get to know her they follow her on her way back either from school/tuition classes, etc. Men in their discussions spoke about how social media is key to increasing instances of stalking girls/women. Young women/girls post personal details on several sites and this lends itself to boys finding out about them and planning to chase/stalk/follow them.

#### **b) Sites of sexual harassment:**

Within Rohtak, during the discussions women identified two routes as most unsafe (Ashoka Road to old ITI building; and Labour Chowk to Lakshmi Narayan Mandir). Boys indicated the main market areas and the main road outside their own ward (Ward No 4, Tej Colony) as being unsafe. Men noted that areas that are outside their ward are unsafe (Delhi bypass, Nehru Colony, Indira Colony and Bus Adda). The Delhi bypass is frequently accessed by working women who commute to Delhi. Other unsafe routes included were outside of colleges, schools and where girls go for tuitions.

Areas that are not lit well, that are isolated, where they do not have hawkers and shops on streets, as also where there is no police patrolling and presence of liquor shops are also considered as unsafe by most women/girls. Dark spots on streets also become unsafe as one cannot identify the stalker, harasser. Many mentioned that they felt safer in crowded areas - such as the market places, where there were many people around.

Men found most residential areas to be safe, whereas there was a different perception by women. Women said that feel unsafe even in well-lit residential areas, as most residents within their homes and not aware about what goes on in the streets outside. Thus, residential areas also have gender gaps and do add to women's feeling of security.

#### **c) Reasons for sexual/street harassment**

*“The mindset of people needs to change; they are conservative and narrow-minded. Some men follow women when they walk the streets. If girls/women are spotted talking to a man, people tend to think there is an intimate relationship. They do not consider that she could be speaking to her brother. This biased thinking needs to change.”* - (Respondent, men's group)

A few respondents alluded to the gendered socialisation of boys and girls, and that there are unequal power relations. It is accepted that boys will tease girls and that is not considered sexual harassment. Other male respondents stated that harassment is generally 'initiated' by the girls. They give hints by smiling, crying or making gestures to invite the attention of boys. Older women respondents said that girls should exercise caution and not do 'galat baat' (wrong things). In their view, it was girls who are not living at home and those that stay in hostels that express more freedom in their association with boys. They do not have anyone to stop them or protect them.

*“Hostel se ladkiyan aayi hui hai...jo ladkiyan bahar se aayi hai woh free hai kyonki unko koi rokne wala nai hai. Aap medical chale jao, park chale jao, jhund ke jhund baithe hote hai wahan pe. Toh ladkiyon mein kahin na kahin toh ye cheez hai...woh apne aazaadi ka najaayaz fayda uthate hai.”* (Respondent, women's group)

Additionally men stated in their discussions, that girls invite trouble due to the kind of clothes they wear. In the discussions in the women's group, there were mixed views about clothes; some agreed with the above, whereas others stated that clothes are an expression of personal choice and has nothing to do with being sexually harassed.

As mentioned earlier, this group too referred to consumption of alcohol among men, as one of the reasons they harass women. They also discussed how the use of ear phones made girls unaware of her surroundings.

#### **d) Responses of family and community**

Women/girls shared that generally bystanders and public at large hesitate to intervene if they are harassed, as they fear for their own safety and security. This was echoed in the other two groups, where men/boys admitted to no reactions by bystanders. Boys said that in case of a single perpetrator, people may still intervene; however, if they are in a gang, they would hesitate to confront them. Men shared the same feeling and also felt that they might be wrongly accused and get into a vortex.

*“...Aaj ke time jo aam insaan hai na woh nahin rokta. Kya pata samne wala maar ke chala jaye. Har kisi ka parivar hai apna. Koi interfere nahin karna chahta hai.”*  
- (Woman respondent)

*“Woh log ikatthe ho do chaar toh akele bande ko toh maar denge koi bolne jaye toh...(Male respondent, youth group)*

However all respondents acknowledged that there is a need to confront offenders, or else they would continue their behaviors with impunity.

#### **e) Potential Harassers**

As mentioned it seems that boys in groups are feared. Hanging out in a gang they seem to send messages that create fear among the girls/young women. They are naturally attracted to girls/women, and actually indulge in ‘harmless’ behaviours. As they grow up, they no longer engage in such behaviours. They felt that men who harass women, do it intentionally to cause harm and thus that is a serious crime.

There were discussions about insiders and outsiders. Across groups respondents felt that those who harass are ‘outsiders’ and do not belong to that community or locality. Some women identified likely offenders are migrants who come to work in that city. While in the men’s group, they felt harassment takes place outside their ward areas (which are inhabited by other communities).

#### **f) Precautions Taken by Girls and Women**

A few precautions were taken by girls/women such as pepper spray or safety pins for self-defence. The main measures include, restricting one’s own mobility and going out only when one has to either for work, or to study. The legitimacy of going without reason did not exist. Men were of the strong opinion that girls should avoid being outside their homes at night, and if they do have to go, they should be accompanied.

#### **g) Access to redress systems**

A sense of resignation prevailed among the respondents - that complaints to the police either go unheard or offenders use their influence to escape punishment. Women and men shared incidents of failed attempts to taking formal redressal. One participant narrated her experience where she tried to call the police emergency line (100) several times, with no response. When she finally reached the police station, the phone was off the hook. However, one of the youth members said that had a positive response from the police and they would act on reports/complaints within 15-20 minutes.

Women felt safer with the establishment of the mahila thanas. Some were hopeful that increased police patrolling would halt instances of harassment. Even though many women/girls were aware of the 1091 helpline number, they have never used it.

## 2. Key Informant Interviews

One key informant in Rohtak said that Haryana is a deeply patriarchal society, where men control all aspects of women's public and personal life.

Interestingly, women are looking for ways to mitigate the impact of sexual harassment on them, as there is silence on the issue, and they identify infrastructure issues such as poor lighting, broken pavements as key rather than the impact of patriarchal values that normalize sexual violence.

*"The Pink auto scheme was initially introduced to empower women, change public perceptions and ensure safe transport for women and girls, but authorities have found some instances, where the permit was given to the wife to drive and the auto is being driven by the husband".* (Ajay Kumar, Additional District Commissioner, Rohtak)

Respondents stated that:

- Need to ensure local complaints committees are constituted in colleges/ universities
- Address the need for special public transport facilities for women passengers
- Identify how fear of sexual harassment impacts women's mobility and take direct actions especially in public transport
- Ensure that desolate and isolated areas with poor lighting which are used by girls/women as transit spaces, are addressed
- The need to address greater employment opportunities for women in the public sector
- How to address the fact of under reporting of street crimes and sexual harassment, and address fear of being stigmatised and shamed
- The need for more effective redress and support mechanisms for survivors, including counselling and support services (safe houses)
- Undertake more comprehensive public campaigns and messaging on women's safety and advertise the helpline numbers around universities, markets, parks, public toilets, residential areas, etc.

*"Currently we are trying to ensure that there are fewer instances of under-reported crimes such as street crimes, passing lewd comments and whistling at women and girls. Most often people do not recognize these as crimes and therefore this attitude needs to be changed."* (Pankaj Nain, Superintendent of Police, Rohtak)

*"Elected Women Representatives (EWR) such as ward members need to come out of the shadow of their husbands and participate more centrally and contribute to the post for which they have been elected. The officials too, have a role in encouraging the EWRs to do so."* (Ajay Kumar, Additional District Commissioner, Rohtak)

*"The college has 70 staff members including 15 men. In 2000, a male teacher was accused of harassing a female student and upon finding him guilty, he was immediately transferred. Apart from that, so far there have been no cases of sexual misconduct by male teachers in our college."* (Officiating Principal, Rohtak College for Girls)

### 3. Safety Audit Walk

#### a) Lighting:

Most areas that were audited had inadequate or no lighting facility. In areas such as the entrance to the railway station and Gate no. 2 of the new bus terminal, where lights have been installed, the presence of trees blocks them leading to insufficient lighting. Women attendants mentioned the absence of lighting outside the hospital as it causes anxiety when they leave the building at night.

*“Station wale area mein raat ko darr lagta hai. Wahan light bhi bahut kam hai. Kayi baar kayi auto waale nashe mein hote hain. Ajeeb sunsaan sa ho jata hai ye area.”* (Female MBA Student, HAMT about the Rohtak Railway Station)

#### b) Physical Infrastructure:

The safety audit walks revealed poorly maintained public infrastructure. There was absence of footpaths on a few routes, including from the old bus terminal to the new subzi mandi and the railway station to the bus stand. There were broken footpaths with cars parked on them, making them inaccessible for pedestrians (near Bikaner Misthan Bhandar). This affects those with disabilities and older people.

Infrequent and inadequately maintained public toilets for women were also observed on all the routes in Rohtak. Toilets in the new bus terminal were dirty; toilets were absent on the route from the old bus terminal to the new subzi mandi. The location of the toilet near D park opposite an alcohol shop was mentioned as being problematic by the community women who accompanied the walk.

*“Yahan koi shauchalya nahin hai, kya Karen, bahut zaruri hota hai to kahin chup kar dukaan ke peeche jaakar kar lete hain.”* (Women street hawkers, new subzi mandi)

The notable absence of security guards in front of Raj Cinema, non-functional CCTVs (near Myna Tourist Resort and Sen Bhagat Chowk, deserted areas on either side of Panipat road near the new bus terminal and the presence of alcohol shops across the chowk from the new bus terminal were also causes for concern.

#### c) Transport Facility:

Pink autos are infrequently seen on the streets and are largely on the route from Rohtak railway station to PGI hospital. Although they were originally intended to ply between college and school routes, however according to a pink auto driver, due to low numbers of passenger/users, the routes have now been modified. The audit team observed that the more male passengers accessed pink autos than those by female passengers.

Except for 2 buses, only private jeeps were available at the old bus terminal in Rohtak. In the new bus terminal, while buses operated, however after 9 p.m. they do not enter the terminal. Hence passengers are forced to wait outside the terminal for 15-20 minutes.

Women mentioned feeling unsafe waiting outside the terminal. The only other public transport available there was autos, which are few in numbers and infrequent.

*“The bus terminal should have better/improved lighting facilities. Security too needs to be stronger. The bus terminal needs to be open/ accessible for the whole night. Buses usually leave from outside, but technically should leave from the bus terminal itself. The bus drivers must be monitored so that they start the bus services from inside.”* (State Transport Corporation Employee)

**d) Experience of security & policing:**

While police patrolling is evident both during day and night near the entrance of Mansoravar Park on the main road, there is no visible patrolling inside the lanes. No PCR vans or security guard was seen outside the station. Shops in the surrounding area are open till 10 p.m. and shopkeepers have installed their personal CCTV cameras. The team was unable to gather data on the functioning of the cameras installed outside the railway station, however residents said that the cameras were being checked once every 6 months.

The area near the old bus stand to the new subzi mandi is reputed for frequent crimes including chain snatching however residents reported inadequate patrolling limited only to Valmiki Chowk. This was reported in spite of the presence of a police station next to the bus terminal. However, in the new bus terminal patrolling by 2 security guards till late night hours was observed.

**e) Gendered usage of space:**

The usage of public places largely follows a time pattern. Around 5 p.m. both men and women (mostly older) were visible in the parks. However, the numbers of women gradually dipped as the evening progressed. By 7 p.m. no single woman was visible on the street; they were either accompanied by men or were seen on two wheelers. Only a few men were seen in D park and no women were there.

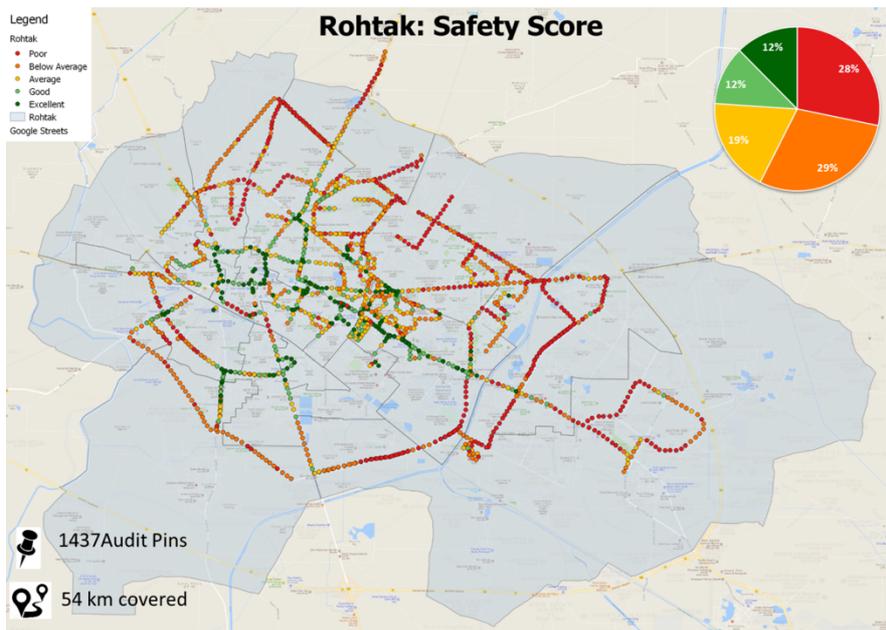
Outside the railway station, fewer women were visible in comparison to men. The market area near the station is accessed by women only till 8 p.m. after the shops shut and the area ceases to be lit due to absence of street lighting.

During the audit at the old bus terminal, no women were seen. Male commuters said that women did not access this place beyond sunset, as it is near a liquor shop and this made them feel unsafe. However, residents of Krishna Colony mentioned that the terminal was used by both male and female college students.

**f) Eyes on the street:**

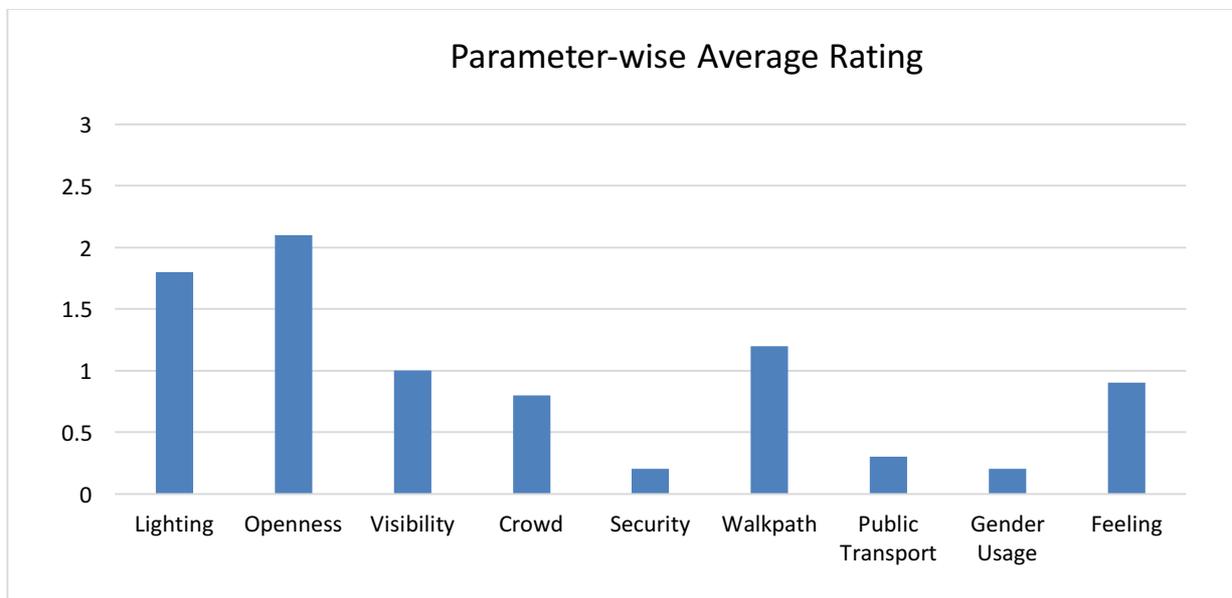
Street vendors are present till 9 p.m. outside the old bus terminal while women vendors were leave by 7 p.m. It is quite clear that women are not in the public space after evening and never alone as such.

#### 4. SafetiPin App: SafetiPin Nite



Map 1: Safety Score of Rohtak

Of the 54 kms stretch of Rohtak city audited (see map above), 12% of audit points were found to be excellent which meant safe and 28% audit points were rated poorly. Adequate measures need to be taken to ensure to improve the safety aspect in these areas.



Graph 1: Parameter wise-average rating

The graph above shows that the parameters of lighting and openness are above average, while the rating of security, public transport and gender usage are poor. The parameters of visibility, crowd, walk path and feeling are below average. The overall safety of Rohtak has been rated as poor.

## 5. Images: Rohtak Safety Audit



Image showing broken and unattended manhole and walkpath near Nagar Nigam



On this narrow footpath, pillars create a hindrance for pedestrians outside secretariat



Functioning street lights on the main road near Canal Rest House



No street lights on the main road – right to secretariat back entrance



Trees and parked vehicle block the footpath and hinder visibility



Inadequate lighting and security on the main road – Sonepat road



Street vendors act as eyes on the street



The bus stand is crowded but it is not gender-diverse



Good lighting but lack of crowd in the waiting area of the bus stand

### Section III: Overall Findings

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1. Women and Girls experience **different forms of sexual harassment:** verbal abuse, lewd comments, touching, boys' crowd girls in a group, stalking, and the like. This harassment takes place in public transport, in abandoned/vacant spaces, around liquor vending shops, outside educational institutes, malls, in crowded as well as secluded places, especially in locations with poor lighting and poor patrolling. Students in school and college, and those who take coaching/tuitions, seem to be the most vulnerable. Public transport is another site where sexual harassment takes place. Some young women also shared that they were tracked via social media.
2. The **reasons for sexual harassment are varied:** consumption of alcohol, and substance abuse in public spaces create threats. There is some kind of a competitive attitude among young men to gain women's attention and while it has been noted that older men harass individually, younger men/boys do so in gangs/groups. There is concern about the patriarchal and conservative mind-set in society that puts the onus on girls for their safety. They are blamed for dressing in a certain way and if they go out after evening (7 pm). There is lack of any support from bystanders. This mind-set provides some form of impunity for men/boys and deterrence is low. Women also found that due to inadequate police patrolling, limited women police staff, infrastructure deficits (lack of toilets and street lights etc.) lack of transport options and last mile connectivity, they feel a sense of fear in being out in public spaces after dark. Certain neighbourhoods were found to be safer than others. It was also noted that while men found their neighbourhoods safe, women did not feel the same way.
3. **Responses of family and community:** In a classical sense, due to external factors, women/girls are not encouraged to be out without any reason. They are also accompanied if it gets dark. The cultural factor combined with lack of gender sensitive infrastructure also contributes to their sense of unease and insecurity and affects their mobility. The notion of protecting their honour at any cost is supreme and overrides their desire to be free and independent. There is little understanding of what constitutes sexual harassment by boys and what does not. There is a silence around these issues. Most girls/women do not want to talk about sexual harassment with their family members lest they be blamed. They also do not get support from their family members and fear they will be taken out of school/college.
4. **The profile of potential harassers:** Men across all age groups, including migrant and other workers are seen to be harassers, particularly those that consume alcohol and drugs. College boys in groups and on bikes are seen to stalk/abuse women/girls. Young men get obsessed or feel they love/like a certain woman/girl and when she doesn't respond, they end up stalking/harassing her. They see this as their expression of love and affection. It was also noted that **bystanders** do not intervene in cases of harassment, as they fear being attacked or would later be called as witnesses.

5. **Women/girls build certain coping mechanisms:** They are learning self-defence techniques, and discussing with friends and family to raise their awareness. Some of them carry mirchi powder/safety pins, etc. to protect themselves. They also maintain a silence on the issue and rarely report cases to their parents or their schools/colleges for fear of being blamed/ shamed for the incident. 90% women/girls are not aware of legal recourse on crimes against women. More boys/men than girls/women are knowledgeable about the helpline numbers for women's safety and most have never used it. While they find little support from families, they also say that there are no safe zones available to them. They are happy about the women police stations and staff, but also feel that confidence building measures are needed with the police.
6. **The presence of women in public spaces is limited:** Even though some women work (agriculture, horticulture, pottery-making, brick kilns, factories and in markets), they are fewer in numbers and their contribution to productive work is not fully recognised. Even for elected women representatives, there are issues of exercising leadership at ward levels, their voice is muted as husbands seem to represent them in their official positions and claim the public space, while they get relegated to the private space. This lack of visible presence and voice leads to SILENCE on the issue of violence, especially in public spaces. More women are now filing complaints on domestic violence, dowry and other issues.
7. **Mobility of women/girls:** It is very noticeable in the Safetipin and other data collected that women are not visible in public spaces. Women of age group less than 50 years do not access public spaces alone. They are largely accompanied by a male member (presumably husband/ son). There is an unstated curfew on their timings and women need to be home before it gets dark (6 pm). This lack of mobility intersects with conservative thinking of the community and family, where there are huge concerns around maintaining and protecting her own and the family's reputation, and her marriage is prioritised over career. Women have no/limited choices in choosing their partner for life as well as having boys as friends.
8. **Gaps in gender sensitive services:** Among several gaps identified, the most important one is regarding Public Transportation. There are limited options for transport and fewer ones for bridging the last mile connectivity. Special transport for women college-going students is missing and though pink autos have been instituted, their routes and uptake have been limited and this requires further study. In addition, messaging about helpline numbers seems limited. More men and boys know about helplines and mobile safety apps as compared to women and girls. Public messaging needs to be more targeted at women/girls in spaces they inhabit. Given their low presence in public spaces and fear of being out for long, they are not consumers of the public messaging. Additional services such as safe zones, shelters, and counselling are needed. Mahila thanas and women's desks at police stations are limited or not accessible to all. There is also need across various agencies to converge on services for women's safety.

## Section IV: Moving Forward

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The findings above indicate the need for a multi-sector approach to addressing safety of women and girls in the 3 cities. The multi-sector framework enables a coordinated implementation of architecture across government departments, civil society and community partners. It situates women's safety as discrimination and a rights violation placing obligations on the State to exercise due diligence and realize the strong Constitutional Guarantees of the right to life and gender equality.

Four broad areas for implementation can be considered:

1. Knowledge generation and evidence building
2. Gender-inclusive urban design, infrastructure and services
3. Improved policing and legal framework for victims/ survivors of violence and access to justice
4. Supporting community and citizen initiatives and education

The Justice Verma Committee noted that violence against women should be understood from the perspective of women's autonomy, bodily integrity and dignity, and not framed as patriarchal notions of honour and shame. A charter of rights for women is also in their report and can be reviewed for implementation.<sup>4</sup>

A comprehensive strategic framework for safer cities has been developed by Jagori with extensive consultations with several stakeholders over years, identifying key areas of intervention in the short term, mid-term and long-term. This includes:

1. Public Transport
2. Public Awareness
3. Education
4. Urban planning and design of public spaces
5. Provision and management of urban infrastructure
6. Policing
7. Legislation, Justice & Support to victims/survivors
8. Information Technology

Some actions that can be taken forward have been listed below.

### 1. Public transport

- Increase public transport (buses, pink autos) with expanded outreach for college students, especially where last mile connectivity is poor and in peri-urban areas.
- Plan regular gender sensitization of drivers, conductors, auto drivers, cab drivers etc.

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<sup>4</sup> Appendix 3: Bill of Rights pg.429-433:

<http://www.prsindia.org/uploads/media/Justice%20verma%20committee/js%20verma%20committe%20report.pdf>

- Encourage more women in transportation, including as drivers and conductors.
- Display helpline numbers (1091 and 100) prominently including on all forms of public transport, at bus stops and terminals.
- Collect gender disaggregated data on use of transport in order to plan.
- Incorporate women's voices in planning.

## 2. Public messaging

- Advertise helpline numbers and redress systems on media channels including through hoardings, posters, signage (put up in public vehicles as well as in schools, colleges, other educational institutes and public spaces) and via television, radio, social media etc. Use of PSAs on the themes such as gender equality, women's empowerment, breaking gender stereotypes etc. can be made to raise awareness among the public.

## 3. Gender Sensitization

- Organise campaigns in educational institutions - schools, colleges, tuition centres, vocational training centres, etc.<sup>5</sup>
- Build awareness and sensitization among public to ensure timely bystander support.<sup>6</sup>
- Conduct regular training sessions/ workshops for sensitization of teaching and non-teaching staff in schools and colleges; for anganwadi workers; and relevant service providers in government agencies working on women's safety.<sup>7</sup>
- Raise awareness among family and community, and work with men and boys as well.

## 4. Policing

- Increase the numbers of female police officers, mahila thanas and women's desks.
- More patrolling by PCR vans and more visible security.
- Build trust and confidence among female citizenry and others.<sup>8</sup>
- Advertise the helpline numbers through all forms of media; train helpline staff to provide gender-sensitive counseling and support.
- Dedicate more PCR vans for women's safety.
- Establish protocols for addressing complaints pertaining to women.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Linking with global and national days such as the National Girl Child Day (24<sup>th</sup> January), the 16 day campaign to end gender based violence (25<sup>th</sup> November to 10<sup>th</sup> December, the One Billion Rising Campaign (14<sup>th</sup> February), or the Anti-street Harassment Week increases visibility and support on the issue.

<sup>6</sup> This could be done using creative tools such as wall painting, street theatre, films, games in public forums such as Raahgiri or in public spaces such as parks advertising through billboard and posters, television commercials, radio programmes, use of community radio (for instance Gurgaon ki Awaz), and Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

<sup>7</sup> Include gender sensitization modules in the in-service orientation/ refresher courses

<sup>8</sup> Example of UP Police can be seen at <http://policeworld.businessworld.in/article/U-P-Police-Instil-Confidence-In-School-Girls/15-12-2017-134838/>; in Rohtak, women PCRs visit schools and colleges to spread awareness about crimes against women and how to file complaints in such cases.

<sup>9</sup> Read report on gaps and actions with respect to Police helplines in Delhi. Read at [http://www.safedelhi.in/sites/default/files/reports/Delhi%20Police%20Helpline%20Study\\_Jagori\\_Marg\\_final.pdf](http://www.safedelhi.in/sites/default/files/reports/Delhi%20Police%20Helpline%20Study_Jagori_Marg_final.pdf)

## **5. Assessment of infrastructure and social usage of public spaces on regular basis**

- Map gender gaps in infrastructure and services.<sup>10</sup>
- Monitor data from apps and helplines to ensure more efficiency of response.<sup>11</sup>
- Conduct regular safety audits

## **6. Up-gradation of gender sensitive infrastructure**

- Ensure regular maintenance of roads and footpaths to ensure unhindered movement, including for disabled persons.
- Design and build public toilets for women with menstrual hygiene and safety facilities, especially in schools and colleges, mahila thanas, bus stands, railway stations, hospitals, courts, markets, parks and other public spaces.
- Improve lighting and other civic amenities.
- Use the urban design principle of ‘eyes on the street’ and promote mixed use of public spaces.
- Maintain and re-use/ reconstruct abandoned buildings, vacant lots etc.
- Design safe bus stops and other waiting areas. They should be well lit, be visible to people and encourage hawkers and others to provide ‘eyes on the street’.

## **7. Strengthen support to victims/survivors**

- Strengthen sexual harassment committees at district level, including within educational institutes.
- Build collectives of women to support community initiatives.

In order to ensure convergence of purpose and strategies, consultations are recommended with key stakeholders to assess what is working well at the district level, where the gaps lie and what can be further augmented. A mapping of all key initiatives in the district can mainstream additional responses within the mandates of different stakeholders.

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<sup>10</sup> Tools such as manual safety audits, safety chaupals and Open Street Audit Mapping (OSAM) can be used by ward councilors and communities to identify gaps in the social and physical infrastructure in local areas.

<sup>11</sup> Safetipin is an effective tool that can help to generate city wide data on gaps in infrastructure.

## Section V: Actions for Women's Safety: Some Examples

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### 1. Seoul

The Women Friendly City Seoul program aims to address women's role and empowerment in society. The program includes addressing women's economic and housing needs and making Seoul a more caring city. One of the components is "A Convenient Seoul which aims at improving women's convenience, accessibility to public places and mobility on public transportation to make a women friendly city environment." To this end they have several transport specific interventions. These include special buses for women, special taxis for women, reserved parking for women near the elevator or entrance of the building, The Women Safety Brand Call Taxi project allows women to access a safe taxi service at night. A phone services sends the plate number, departure time, and location via a text message to the family members of women who use the taxi at night. Women-Friendly Bus: This project improves bus services for women, the elderly and persons with disabilities. The initiative focuses on safe driving so riders will not be exposed to any high speed, sharp curves, or sudden stops. The buses are also equipped with lower hand-bars to increase comfort.

### 2. Vienna

#### a) Public transit and pedestrian mobility:

When citizens were asked how often and why they used public transportation, it was found that women had a much more varied pattern of movement than men. They used the city's network of sidewalks, bus routes, subway lines and streetcars more frequently and for a myriad reasons. It was also made clear that safety and ease of movement were a priority. Recognizing this, the city planners drafted a plan to improve pedestrian mobility and access to public transit.

Lighting was added to make walking at night safer. Sidewalks were widened so pedestrians could navigate narrow streets. And a massive barrier free staircase with a ramp was installed near a major intersection to make crossing easier for people with strollers and individuals using a walker or a wheelchair.

#### b) Public Housing - Women-Work-City:

An apartment complex designed for and by women in the city. The idea was to create housing that would make life easier for women. Time use surveys showed that women spent more time per day on household chores and childcare than men. Women-Work-City was built with this in mind. It consists of a series of apartment buildings surrounded by courtyards, allowing parents and children to spend time outside without having to go far from home. It has an on-site kindergarten, pharmacy and doctor's office. It also stands in close proximity to public transit to make running errands and getting to school and work easier.

### **c) Public parks and their usage:**

A study was commissioned to see how boys and girls use park space differently. It showed that after the age of nine, the number of girls in public parks dropped off dramatically, while the number of boys held steady. Researchers found that girls were less assertive than boys. If boys and girls would up in competition for park space, the boys were more likely to win out. City planners wanted to see if they could reverse this trend by changing the parks themselves. Footpaths were added to make the parks more accessible and volleyball and badminton courts were installed to allow for a wider variety of activities. Landscaping was also used to subdivide large, open areas into semi-enclosed pockets of park space. Almost immediately a change was noticed. Different groups of girls and boys began to use the parks without any one group overrunning the other.

## **3. Toronto**

### **Addressing women's safety in transport**

Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) has been a pioneer in addressing women's safety concerns in moving around. In the late 80's they introduced the Between Stops Program to help women get off in between bus stops if they were travelling between 9 pm and 5 am. The commission also created Designated Waiting Areas (DWAs) on subway platforms that provide a safe, well-lit space and access to an intercom that enables communication with station operators. Public Telephones are located on all subway station platforms, at station entrances and in many bus and streetcar transfer areas. There is also an Emergency button at the entrance of every train carriage which can be used. Montreal also has a between stops service as well as bus stops made fully of glass so that it is visible to anyone walking by.

More recently, The TTC have announced an app through which women can report harassment as they are experiencing it so that they information can be relayed to appropriate authorities. TTC has also committed to audit all safety procedures through a safety lens. But even here there have been shortcomings. It has been pointed out there is a lack of female leadership at the TTC - only 15 % of TTC employees are women and nine of its ten board members are men. Thus there needs to be systemic change along with programs if women's concerns are to be fully reflected.

## Annexures

### Annexure 1: Safety Audit Walks

#### Selected Routes for Rohtak Safety Audit Walks

	<b>Route Details</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Audit Team</b>
Route 1	Mansarovar Park- Delhi Road- Pandit Bhagwat Dayal Sharma Chowk	08.01.2018	5:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community members: D Gopal Krishna, Mukesh Vashisht, Hari Om Tiwari, Sumeet Kaushik, Geeta, Naveen Garg, Ritika, Sheetal, Kavita</li> <li>• Narendra Kumar (IC College)</li> <li>• A woman police officer</li> <li>• Bharati (UNICEF)</li> <li>• 2 members from Jagori</li> </ul>
Route 2	Mini Secretariat- Nagar Nigam - Canal Rest House – Red Cross office and back via Court Road to IC College gate	08.01.2018	5.30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manjeet Dahiya (XEN, Municipal Corporation), Devender Chahal (Secretary Red Cross Society), Naresh Kumar (SHO Civil Line Police Station), Anita Jaagriti (social worker), students and teachers from IC College for Women</li> <li>• Palak (Project Jagriti Govt. of Haryana)</li> <li>• Geetha and Norati, Jagori</li> </ul>
Route 3	Pandit B D Sharma, PGIMS	09.01.2018	11:00am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr Gopal Krishna, Mukesh Vashisht, Hari Om Tiwari, Sumeet Kaushik, Naveen Garg</li> <li>• Bharati (UNICEF)</li> <li>• 2 members from Jagori</li> </ul>
Route 4	Rohtak Railway station- Qila Road	10.01.2018	5:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr Gopal Krishna, Mukesh Vashisht, Hari Om Tiwari, Sumeet Kaushik, Naveen Garg</li> <li>• Bharati (UNICEF)</li> <li>• 2 members from Jagori</li> </ul>
Route 5	Old bus terminal- Kaccha Beri Road- Market	10.02.2018	11:45am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bharati (UNICEF)</li> <li>• 3 members from Jagori</li> </ul>
Route 6	New Bus Terminal / Huda City Park, Rohtak	10.01.2018	5:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dr. Anita, Monica Bhatnagar, Dr. Gopal Krishan, Mukesh Vashishth, Hari Om Tiwari, Sumit Kaushik, Naveen Garg</li> <li>• Bharti (UNICEF)</li> <li>• Palak (Project Jagriti Govt. of Haryana)</li> <li>• 2 members from Jagori</li> </ul>

B-114, Shivalik, Malviya Nagar, New Delhi -110017, Phone: 91-11-26691219/20  
jagori@jagori.org; sangat@sangatsouthasia.org  
www.jagori.org; www.safedelhi.in; www.sangatsouthasia.org  
Helpline: 91-11-26692700, 08800996640 (Monday to Friday 9.30am to 5.30pm)