

Safety and Security of Women: An Analysis of Government Initiatives in Jaipur City

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ABSTRACT

Rapid urbanization has contributed to economic growth and modernization, yet it has simultaneously intensified gender-based inequalities and safety concerns for women in public spaces. This study examines women's safety in Jaipur with a focus on awareness, experiences of violence, reporting behavior, and the effectiveness of government initiatives. Drawing upon both primary and secondary data, the research is based on a survey using purposive sampling, covering 50 respondents 25 female students and 25 domestic maids. It examines experiences of violence, awareness of safety measures, and reporting behavior. The findings indicate that women frequently face verbal, visual, and physical harassment, particularly in public transport and roadside areas, with domestic maids being more vulnerable. Despite this, incidents are largely underreported due to social perceptions and procedural barriers. Awareness of government initiatives is higher among educated respondents, highlighting the role of education in empowerment. The study also highlights the gap between policy provisions and their effective implementation. The study emphasizes the need for improved awareness, simplified reporting systems, and stronger institutional support to ensure safer environments for women.

Keywords: Women's Safety, Gender-Based Violence, Urbanization, Public Spaces, Awareness, Government Initiatives.

Introduction

Rapid urbanization has paved the way for economic development and modernization, but is also propagating disparities and marginalization. Gender, public places, urbanization, and safety have a direct relationship.¹ Recognition of women as citizens can only be legitimized by guaranteeing safe public places for women. (Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces: Global Results Report, n.d.)² Sections 14–32 of the UN reports on Habitat III clearly state the need to achieve gender parity by empowering all women.^{3,4} Sustainable Development Goal 11.7 aims to provide worldwide access to secure public places, especially for women, people with disabilities, and children. Safety, peace, egalitarianism, equity, and development are difficult to achieve without the meaningful participation and representation of women in key governance, socio-economic, cultural, and policy decisions. (Women, Peace and Security 2020–2021 Annual Report, n.d.)⁵ Global studies and surveys demonstrate that women feel less comfortable and secure in public places, even in developed countries, and are afraid of violence and aggression. This dilemma is prevailing in developing countries, and the facts associated with women's harassment and ferocity in public places reported by urban women in India are 79%, Thailand is 85%, and Brazil is 89%.⁶ Local survey studies and literature on women's safety in public places expose that women's needs and concerns are overlooked due to societal inequities, anxieties, and phobias of aggression.^{7,8}

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Women Safety

Women's safety refers to a set of measures, policies, and practices designed to prevent gender-based violence and reduce women's fear of crime. It also emphasizes the creation of secure and inclusive environments. Public spaces are not neutral; their design and conditions can influence how safe or unsafe individuals feel. When a space generates fear, it limits women's mobility and discourages their participation in community life. This restriction of movement and sense of discomfort ultimately contributes to social exclusion, as women may avoid certain areas or activities due to safety concerns. 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.⁹ Women's safety involves self-worth. In safe homes and communities, women have the right to value themselves, to be empowered, to be respected, to be independent, to have their rights valued, to be loved, to have solidarity with other family and community members, and to be recognized as equal members of society.¹⁰ Women's Safety means a safer, healthier community for everyone. This is a participatory process focused on changing community norms, patterns of Social interaction, values, customs, and institutions in ways that will significantly improve the quality of life in a community for all of its members.¹¹ This is a natural product of efforts that attempt to address issues such as family dynamics, relationships, poverty, racism, and/or ending sexual violence. Building a healthy and safe community is everyone's responsibility.¹²

Why do women in cities require safety and security?

Gender-based violence is a global issue affecting women and girls across cultures, manifesting in physical, sexual, psychological, economic, and sociocultural forms. A 2018 analysis by the World Health Organization (WHO) across 161 countries revealed that nearly 30% of women worldwide have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by intimate or non-partners.¹³ Such violence includes female genital mutilation, honour killings, forced and early marriages, and human trafficking.¹⁴ In 2020, approximately 81,000 women and girls were killed globally, with 47,000 (58%) murdered by intimate partners or family members equating to one death every 11 minutes.^{15,16} Urban spaces also remain unsafe, with widespread sexual harassment. Adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable, yet only 1% seek professional help.¹⁷ In regions like the Middle East and North Africa, 40–60% of women face street harassment, while cyber harassment affects one in ten women in the European Union.^{18,19} Additionally, women and girls constitute the majority of human trafficking victims globally.²⁰

In India, women's safety remains a critical concern. The Thomson Reuters Foundation ranked India as the most dangerous country for women in 2018.²¹ According to NFHS-5, 30% of women aged 15–49 have experienced violence.²² NCRB data show a 15.3% rise in crimes against women in 2021, with 4,28,278 cases reported.^{23,24} The most common crimes include domestic cruelty, assault, and abduction.

In Rajasthan, women constitute 48% of the population, yet the state reports alarming crime rates. It ranked second in crimes against women in 2021 and recorded the highest number of rape cases (6,337).²⁵ Cases of rape, molestation, and kidnapping have steadily increased. Between 2010 and 2019, crimes against women rose by 126.90%, highlighting a worsening situation.^{26,27}

Methodology

Both primary and secondary data sources have been taken into Consideration. The survey was conducted with the help of a structured schedule. In total, 25 female students and 25 domestic maids were approached, and about 50 were respondents. Purposive sampling has been used to collect data. The responses received have been represented in terms of percentage; however, the limitation of the survey lies in the fact that it is often difficult to cover the entire women's population in Jaipur.

Objectives

- To examine the level of awareness among women and girls regarding safety issues in Jaipur.
- To identify and examine the various form of violence experienced by women and girls in public spaces in Jaipur.
- To analyse the factors contributing to the underreporting of incidents to the police.

Government Initiatives

The Government of India has undertaken several initiatives to combat violence against women and promote their empowerment through a range of welfare schemes and programs. Both central and

state governments are actively involved in implementing such measures; however, this study focuses on a select few due to time limitations. The Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) has played a key role by introducing centrally sponsored schemes under the broader framework of the National Mission for Empowerment of Women.

One of the most significant initiatives is the One Stop Centre (OSC) Scheme, launched on April 1, 2015. Its primary aim is to provide immediate, round-the-clock support and emergency assistance to women facing violence in both private and public spheres. Government of India has set up One-Stop Centres (Sakhi) in all the States. In Rajasthan, 33 One-Stop Centres are working, for a total of 704 functional One-Stop Centres in India. The scheme envisions a supportive institutional framework for women victims of difficult circumstances so that they can lead their lives with dignity and conviction.²⁸

Prior to this national rollout, Rajasthan had already established a similar model known as the Aparajita Centre in Jaipur in 2013. Additionally, schemes such as Swadhar Greh and Ujjawala have been merged under “Shakti Sadan” to provide integrated relief and rehabilitation services. Swadhar Greh, introduced in 2001–02, focuses on assisting women in difficult circumstances by offering shelter, food, healthcare, counselling, and skill development opportunities, thereby enabling them to live with dignity and independence. The capacity of Swadhar Greh could be expanded up to 50 or 100 on the basis of need assessment and other important parameters.²⁹ Another important intervention is the Women’s Helpline Scheme, which also began in 2015. It provides 24/7 emergency assistance through a toll-free number (181), ensuring immediate response and guidance to women facing violence. Toll-free **Women’s Helpline No. 181** has been defined as unrestricted (shall be accessible from anywhere national and international).³⁰ At the state level, Rajasthan has implemented several innovative measures to enhance women’s safety. Initiatives like the Nirbhaya Squad and Suraksha Sakhi aim to strengthen security mechanisms and boost women’s confidence in the justice system. The Nirbhaya Squad, consisting of women police officers in plain clothes, actively monitors public spaces and transportation to prevent harassment and ensure swift action against offenders. Meanwhile, the Suraksha Sakhi initiative focuses on community participation by forming groups of women who act as a bridge between the police and society. These volunteers assist victims, spread awareness about legal rights, and help report crimes such as cyber harassment, eve-teasing, and domestic abuse. Apart from this, these Suraksha Sakhis will also be ready to help the women who are being harassed by their in-laws or the elderly women who are being harassed by their daughter-in-law. The police department will also make arrangements for self-defense training for the women joining this unit.³¹

Overall, the state government is fully committed to bringing women into the state under the purview of the fool proof security circle. The decision to make Suraksha Sakhi will also help in developing an information system for the police in every street and locality, with which the goal of complete control over crime against women will be achieved.³²

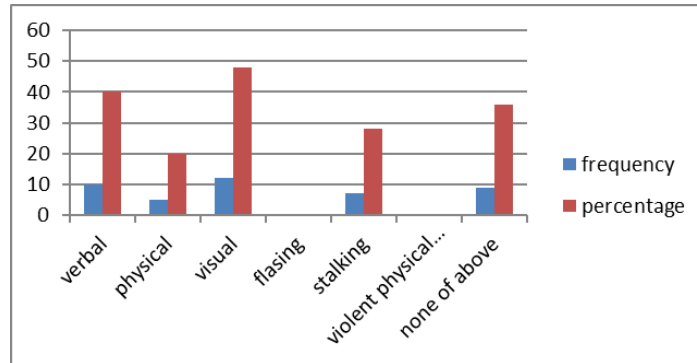
Further, the Mahila Garima Helpline (1090) provides a confidential platform for women to report harassment and seek assistance without visiting police stations. The Mahila Suraksha evam Salah Kendras (MSSKs), established within women’s police stations, offer integrated socio-legal support, including counselling, mediation, legal aid, and follow-up services. These centres have handled a large number of cases, with many resolved through mediation.

Additionally, schemes like Nari Niketan and State Mahila Sadan provide shelter, food, clothing, medical care, and vocational training for widows and economically disadvantaged women. Despite such efforts, India’s ranking on global surveys of gender equality has not improved over the years; according to the Global Gender Gap Report 2021, India ranks 140th among 156 countries (World Economic Forum, 2021).³³ Given the low ranking on the gender gap, India has to work towards political empowerment, which is relatively low, as well as economic empowerment.

Analysis of Data

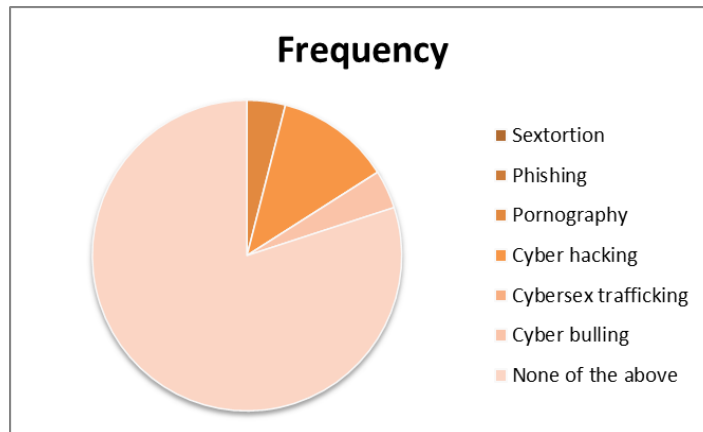
Social status of Students:-25 female students and 25 domestic maids were approached, about 50 were respondents. Purposive sampling has been used for collecting data. The girl respondents came from variety of backgrounds, with 52 percent being Gen., 32 percent being OBC, 8 percent being SC, 4-4 percent being ST and Minorities. 40 percent girls respondent from joint family, 56 percent from nuclear and 4 percent from single type. 88 percent of students live with their parents, 8 percent live in PG; and only 4 percent live in hostels. 80 Percentage of students live in Jaipur longer than five years; 8 percent live in Jaipur less than five years; and 12 percent live in Jaipur less than one year.

Types of Violence Faced by Student



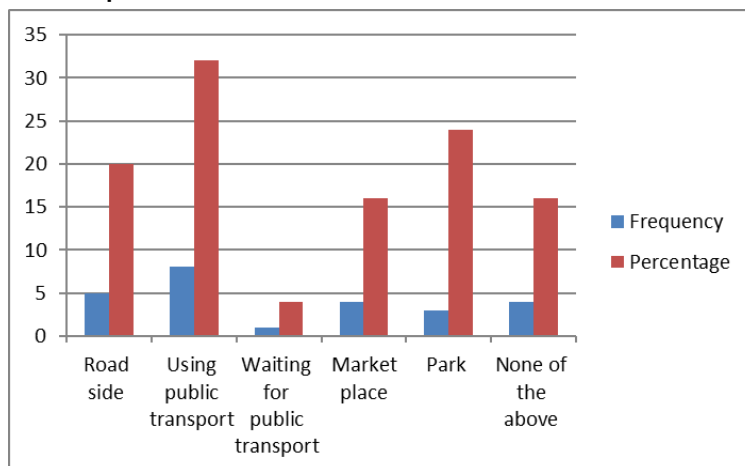
40 percent of girls who responded faced verbal violence, 20 percent physical violence, 48 percent visual violence, 28 percent stalking, and 36 percent none of the above.

Cyber- Crime Related Chart



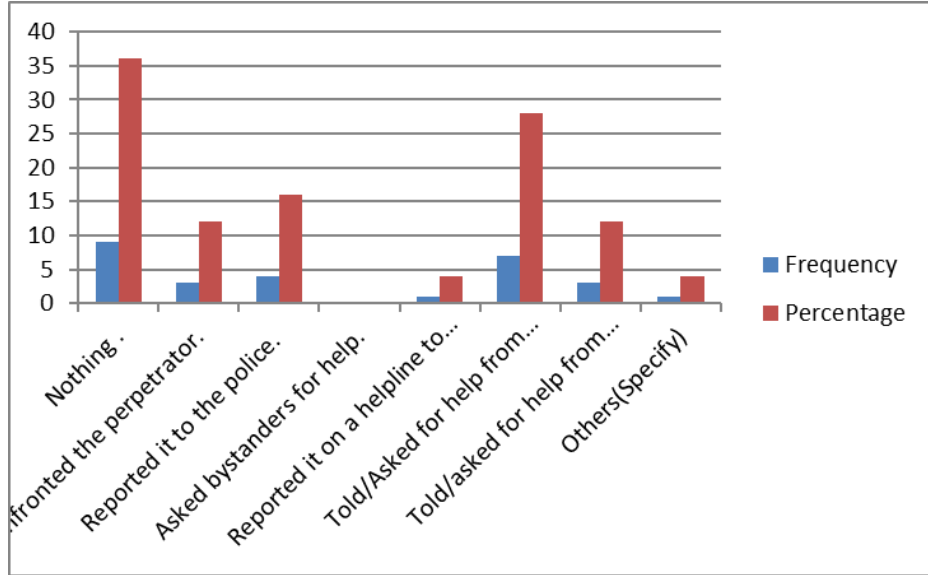
Cybercrimes faced by girls: Girls use smart phones for study purposes; they spend most of their time on phones, so sometimes they face cybercrimes and violence as well. 12 percent faced cyber hacking, 4 percent cyber bullying, 4 percent pornography, and 80 percent none of the above, meaning 80 percent have not faced this type of violence.

Public Places where Respondents Faced Violence



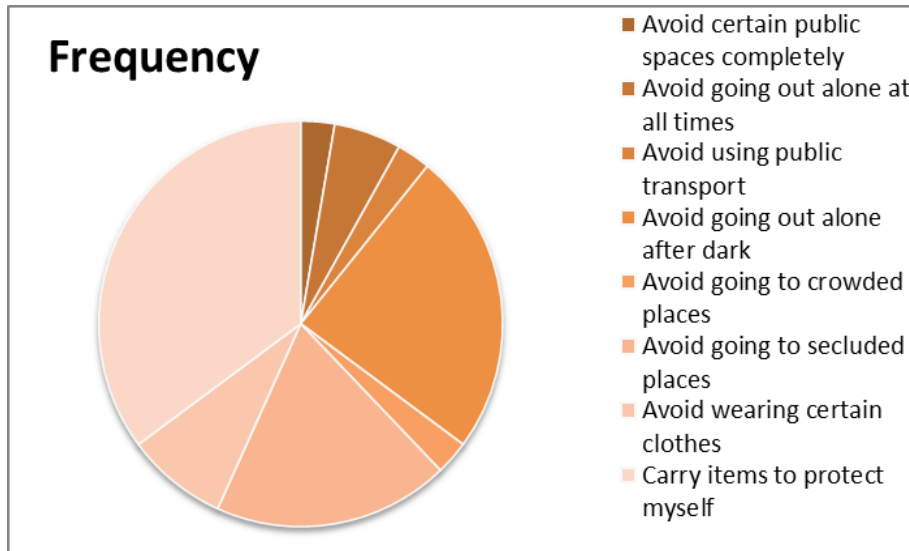
20 percent of students faced violence on the roadside, 32 percent faced violence when they were using public transport, only 4 percent faced violence when waiting for public transport, 16 percent faced violence in market places, 24 percent faced violence in parks, and 16 percent said they did not face violence.

Action taken by Respondent after Facing Violence



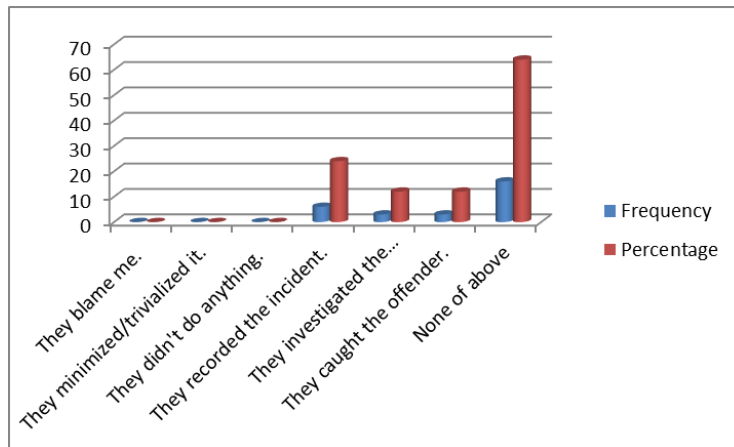
After facing violence, different respondents took different actions. 36 percent did nothing, 12 percent confronted the perpetrator, 16 percent reported it to the police, and 28 percent asked for help from family. 12 percent asked for help from friends, and only 4 percent reported it online. All girls are educated but are not reported online.

To Avoid Violence Respondents Avoid these Things



4 percent avoid certain public places, 8 percent avoid going alone outside, 4 percent avoid using public transport, 36 percent avoid going out alone after dark, 4 percent avoid going to crowded places, and 28 percent avoid going to scheduled places. 12 percent avoid wearing certain clothes. But 52 percent of them carry items to protect themselves

After Reporting the Police



Those respondents shared their experiences. 24 Percentage said that police recorded the incident, 12 percentages said police investigated the incident, and 12 percentages said police caught the offender. But 64 Percentage said that there was no need to report it to the police.

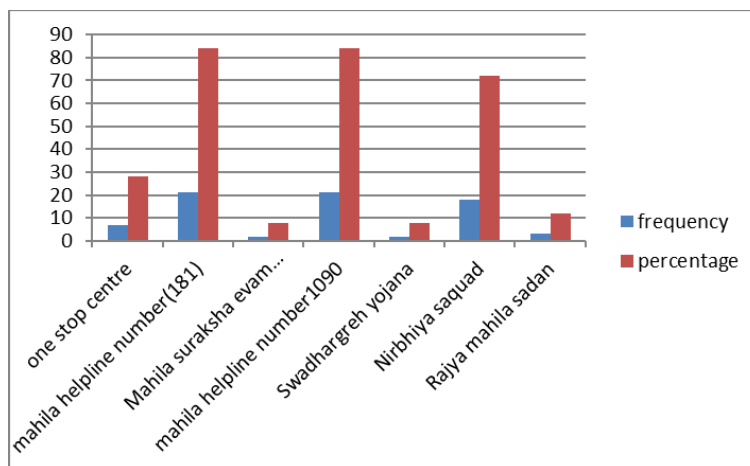
Reasons for not Reporting the Police

Why have you not reported some /all incidents to the police	Frequency	Percentage
Not serious enough to report	20	80
Afraid to approach the police	0	0
They would not do anything anyway	0	0
The process is too tedious	6	24

24 respondents said that the process of reporting is very tedious, and 80 percent said it is not serious enough to report.

Awareness of Respondent about Govt. Initiatives

Awareness about Government Initiatives	Frequency	Percentage
one stop centre	7	28
Mahila Helpline Number(181)	21	84
Mahila Suraksha Evam Salah Kendra	2	8
Mahila Helpline number1090	21	84
Swadhargreh Yojana	2	8
Nirbhiya Saquad	18	72
Rajya Mahila Sadan	3	12



Awareness of girls respondent 28 percentage are aware of one-stop centers, 84 percent are aware of Mahila helpline number 181, and 8 percent are aware of Mahila Surakha Evam Salah Kendra. 84 percent are aware of Mahila helpline number 1090; 8 percent are aware of Swadhar Greh Yojana; and 72 percent know about Nirbhiya Saquad. 12 percent are aware of Rajya Mahila Sadan.

Analysis of Data of Domestic Maid

Although students and Domestic maids are not same group so homogeneity is not found in respondents but we can see how literacy rate decrease violence and increase awareness.

Marital Status of Domestic Maid

Marital Status	Domestic Maid	Percentage
Married	21	84
Unmarried	03	12
Divorced	00	00
Widow	01	04

25 domestic maids were approached. 84 percent are married, 12 are unmarried, and 4 percent are widows. 84 percent women were married but they did not talk about domestic violence.

Domestic Maid from Different Age Group

Range of Age (in years)	Domestic Maid	Percentage
16-25	02	08
26-35	16	64
36-45	03	12
46-55	04	16

64 percent of respondents were between the ages of 26 and 35, while 16 percent were between the ages of 46 and 55. 12 percent from the 36–45 age- group and 8 percent from the 16–25 age group.

Education Level of Domestic Maids

Education	Domestic Maid	Percentage
illiterate	21	84
Class 1-5	03	12
Class 6-10	00	00
Class 10+ (till BA)	01	04

84 percent illiterates, 12 percent pass out 1–5 classes, and only 4 percent pass out 10-B.A. classes

No. of Years been Living in Jaipur

Number of Years	Domestic maid	Percentage
1-5	01	04
5-10	-	-
10-15	-	-
15-20	01	04
More than 20 years	20	80

80 percent domestic maids have lived in Jaipur for more than 20 years. Only 4 percent live from 1–5 years, and only 4 percent live in Jaipur from 15–20 years.

Time they have been Working

Number of Years	Domestic Maid	Percentage
1-5	15	60
5-10	06	24
10-15	02	08
15-20	01	04
More than 20 years	01	04

60 percent of respondents worked from 1–5 years, 24 percent worked from 5–10 years, 8 percent worked from 10-15 years, 4 percent worked from 15-20 years, and 4 percent worked from more than 20 years.

Kinds of Violence Faced, if they have Faced any

Kinds of Violence	Domestic Maid	Percentage
Visual	16	64
Flashing	02	08
Stalking	15	60
Violent physical attack	01	04
Verbal (bad comments, whistling etc.)	12	48
Physical	01	04
None of above	01	04

Every woman has faced violence once or more in her life. 64 percent faced visual, 8 percent faced flashing, 60 percent faced stalking, 48 percent faced verbal, and 4-4-4 percent faced physical, violent physical attack, and none of the above.

Places where they Faced Violence Usually

Places	Domestic maid	Percentage
Road Side	15	60
Using public transport	02	08
Waiting for public transport	01	04
Market place	05	20
park	01	04
Other (At home)	01	04

60% of maids experienced violence on the road, 8% while using public transportation, and 20% while shopping. 4 percent faced violence when they were waiting for public transport, 4 percent at the park, and 4 percent at home.

No. of Women who Complained to Police

Complained	Domestic maid	Percentage
Yes	Nil	00
No	25	100

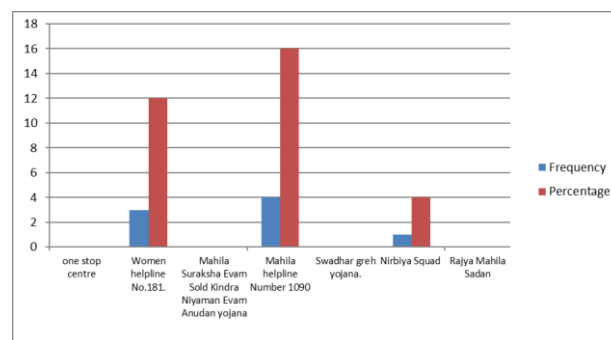
100 percent of women have not complained to the police.

Reasons for Not Reporting to Police

Reasons	Domestic Maid	Percentage
Not serious enough to report	10	40
Afraid to approach the police	02	08
Ignoring (would not do anything about it)	07	14
Process is too tedious	12	48

48 percent said that the reporting process is tedious, and 14 percent said that the police would not do anything. 40 percent of respondents said the incident was not serious enough to report, and 8 percent were afraid to approach the police.

Awareness of Domestic Maid about Government Initiatives



12 percent of domestic maids are aware of Mahila helpline number 181, and 16 percent of domestic maids are aware of Mahila helpline number 1090. Only 4 percent of domestic maids are aware of Nirbhaya Squad. They are not aware of the one-stop centers: Swadhar Greh Yojana, Rajya Mahila Sadan, and Mahila Suraksha Evam Salah. Kendra Niyaman Evam Anudan Yojana The percentage of awareness of government initiatives among college girls is higher than that of domestic maids. As the level of education increases, so does the awareness. 84 percent of domestic maids are illiterate, so awareness is low.

Conclusion

The study reveals that although college students and domestic maids are distinct groups lacking homogeneity, literacy plays a crucial role in reducing violence and increasing awareness. Among girl students, awareness levels are relatively high: 84% know about Mahila Helpline numbers (181 and 1090), 72% are aware of Nirbhaya Squad, and 28% know about One-Stop Centres. However, awareness of other schemes like Swadhar Greh Yojana and Rajya Mahila Sadan remains low. In contrast, domestic maids show significantly lower awareness, with only 12% aware of Helpline 181, 16% of Helpline 1090, and 4% of Nirbhaya Squad, while most are unaware of other initiatives.

Experiences of violence also differ. Among students, 48% reported visual violence, 40% verbal, and 28% stalking, whereas domestic maids reported higher exposure, especially visual (64%), stalking (60%), and verbal violence (48%). Cyber violence is reported only among students due to smartphone use. Violence commonly occurs in public transport for students and roadside areas for maids. Reporting remains limited due to perceived triviality, fear, and lack of trust in police. With 84% of domestic maids being illiterate, lack of education significantly contributes to low awareness and higher vulnerability to violence.

Suggestions

A speedy trial of cases must be effected. As justice is denied, fast-track courts must be set up in every district headquarters to resolve the complaints filed by affected women. A self-defense training program should be introduced at the junior high school level to help girls become more aware, confident, and prepared for unexpected situations. Regular awareness programs on women's rights, safety laws, and security mechanisms are essential. Police officials should frequently visit schools, and students should also visit police stations to reduce fear and build trust in reporting incidents. Women must be encouraged to raise their voices against violence.

Strict and speedy legal action is necessary, along with respectful and prompt police response. Society must actively intervene against harassment and promote a safe environment. Parents and schools should instill values of equality, dignity, and respect, especially among boys. Installation of CCTV cameras, strict punishment for offenders, and effective law enforcement are crucial. Media should responsibly address gender issues, avoid sensationalism, and promote awareness. Additionally, fast-track courts and community-based initiatives are needed to ensure timely justice and long-term social change.

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