Fundamental Survey on Awareness of Safety among Women

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Introduction

We all are living in modern India. Everything has changed from gadgets we use, education and Medical facilities that we get, the positions that women are holding but the only thing which has not changed is the image and safety of Indian women. Almost every day when we pick up the morning paper, we shiver reading about the young woman who is physically assaulted. This happens in a local mall, a parking or at school. This has happened with a young girl of 9-10 years, an office going professional or with an 80 year old lady. The incident in which a 23 year old paramedical student was gang-raped by 6 men inside a moving bus near a posh Delhi locality and thrown off the bus is a soul shattering incident that can't even be imagined in dreams. Although it was a most heinous case of cruelty, it is ironical to note that such incidents are not actually rare in our country. There are many such cases happening everyday where females (from infants to old ladies, from middle class women in metro cities to dalit women in villages) are subjected to horrendous sexual torture by so called powerful men who are, in most cases, known to the victims. It is very important to make rigorous laws to ensure that the guilty in such cases gets the punishment which they deserve else they will roam around freely due to the weak provisions or loopholes in the existing laws. But again insisting these laws doesn't guarantee to inhibit male sexual overdrive in India and also can't be vindicated.

"You can tell the condition of a Nation by looking at the status of its Women." very rightly said by Jawaharlal Nehru. Comparing the status of women with the ancient times, women now can be seen everywhere in every field working shoulder to shoulder with men and now they are even holding high offices and big positions in Indian administration. Still the area where the nation is falling back and is lacking is the safety and security of Indian women. The Constitution of India guarantees all Indian women equality (Article 14), no discrimination by the State (Article 15(1)), equality of opportunity (Article 16), and equal pay for equal work (Article 39(d)). While women are guaranteed equality in our constitution, legal protection has a limited effect. Not only the discrimination arises because of dowry but it starts from the day they take birth. They face discrimination: before birth, as an infant, at the time of marriage and even after marriage. Violence is the word that they have to face.

There are very less cases of sexual molestation which gets registered in police stations out of those entire where a large portion of women in India are subjected to rape and other forms of sexual assault on a daily basis. Sexual harassment has become very common these days and can have very serious consequences for the harassed individual. Sexual harassment has a demoralizing effect that discourages women from asserting themselves within the workplace. Apart from sexual harassment, physical abuse is no less which is being experienced by women and they are prone to it while travelling and commuting daily to and from their workplaces. Whether it is on a bus in New Delhi or at a resort, the possible risk of an assault is ever-present. The danger always prevails for the female travelers. Such news reports have sparked an alarm for many of us who goes beyond familiar destinations. The heinous act of the gang rape and murder of a young Indian medical student on a bus in New Delhi shocked many around the world. Protests caught fire in huge numbers throughout India. But on the blackguards of the New Delhi attack came three more assaults on women in India that grabbed headlines. All three of the victims were foreigners: a Swiss woman during a camping trip in Madhya Pradesh state, a British woman in her Agra hotel room; and an American lady in the resort town of Manali.

So, what is the reality of violence against women now at the workplace, the hotel they stay or in the places they want to go? What is the solution? What should they do? Should women stop working? Should they stop commuting to their workplace? And should they be avoiding going to different cities because of this risk?

As the very obvious and natural case, women can't stop going in and around the city but can avoid and prevent such cases of violence and physical abuse by being attentive and careful all the time while commuting. This study revolves around spreading awareness of various safety applications available for women. It also aims at knowing the opinion of women regarding the safety scenarios at the areas they live or where they work. It also finds out actions taken by women when they get teased by males. The important objectives of this study are to diffuse more information about awareness of safety of women and to know about the most insecure area and the duration in which they avoid going out.

Safety Awareness among Women

The most serious obstacle in one's safety is the fallacy that "I am safe" or "this can't happen to me" or "this can never happen with me" and this dangerous thinking leads to carelessness and then the happening of uncalled incidents. As we are living in an increasingly violent world, personal safety is very important for women. There are various nonprofit organizations which are active in creating and spreading awareness of safety among women.

National Organization for Women's Safety Awareness, Inc. ("NOWSA") is a non-profit charity which aims to prevent violence against women and teens through raising awareness about sexual assault and other forms of violence. It also promotes personal safety through education by creating and advancing vehemence prevention and safety go ahead. The NOWSA reaches out to individuals and corporate partners as well as schools, colleges, universities, public and government agencies and encourages them to help promote the message that sexual assault and other violence against women and teens must not be supported. NOWSA also provides a platform to the victims of sexual assault and violence where they can "Become a Voice" and share their tragic and triumph stories and help others in building self confidence and self esteem. The key objective here is to sponsor or fund the costs of educational programs on women safety issues and make an effort to decrease and ultimately prevent crimes against women. Another goal of the NOWSA is to provide fund for other women safety awareness related activities such as spreading awareness and information about safety programs and campaigns and distribution of informational and resource materials while recommending and urging education, prevention, and self-protection.

Safety and Security Apps for Women

The best way for women to minimize their chances of becoming a victim of violent crime (robbery, sexual assault, rape, domestic violence) is to identify and call on resources to help them out of dangerous situations. There are some apps available on iPhone and Android and several of them have both free and premium versions. Whether somebody is in immediate trouble or get separated from friends during a night out and don't know how to get home, having these apps on phone can reduce risk and bring assistance when needed. Although several were originally developed for students to reduce the risk of sexual assault on campus, they are suitable for women also.

Since mobile phones have become ubiquitous, they can be used for security. Hence the next section discusses five such applications, which are the handy tools for safety of women. Many of these applications use SOS system which is Single Operation system which helps in sending a faster message to the receiver without getting struck in the mobile network traffic. These apps help women to alert their near and dear ones, and tell them about your exact location in case of emergencies.

Safety App	Features
Fight Back 	Fight Back is an India specific application available for all types of mobile phones. It uses GPS, SMS, location maps, GPRS, email and a person's Face book account to inform the loved ones in case somebody is in danger. Five emergency contacts can be added to the list and they are alerted and the location is sent to them, when the panic button is pressed and this is visible to all the users of the web portal. The portal also sends out SOS SMS to the mobile numbers pre-set by the user. When the Facebook message is clicked, it will take the Facebook friend to the web portal Alert Page, and will show the location of the mobile user when the alert was raised, along with a time stamp. This app is paid as referred from [14] and is available for select Android, Blackberry and Nokia smart phones
Life 360 Family Locator 	This app uses GPS tracking technology. With this app, one can locate family members at any time using GPS, Wi-Fi and Cell Triangulation technology. Apart from its basic function of sending SOS messages to chosen numbers, it can be used for other purposes, such as to save the most commonly visited locations, receive automatic alerts when family members arrive or depart, view sex offenders and recent crimes in your neighborhood, and track stolen phones (seems to work only in the USA). As from [16], this is one of the best security apps. When the panic button is pressed, the application sends an SOS through email, SMS or app notification if the other family member has the app as well. It is available for android as well as for non smart phones.
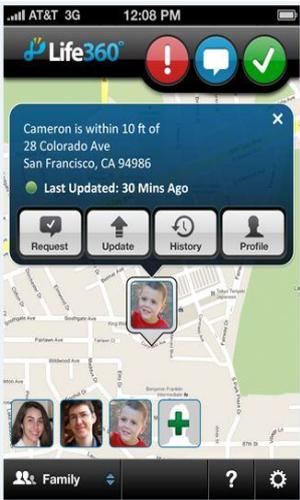
Vith U App	When in danger, it really is difficult and plus there is no time to dial an emergency number looking at the word pad. The Vith U App helps a potential victim skip through the number-punching, and directly lets you push the power button twice to instantly send an SOS alert to contacts. From [15], it is referred that alert messages are **sent out every two minutes to the contacts in the list, who will receive a message along with the physical location. The location gets updated each time the message is sent.**
Guardly	Guardly is a personal safety service which instantly gets connected to the safety network and authorities in case of an emergency. This app differs from others as it places a phone call to your contacts with your name, exact location and the type of emergency such as walking alone or feeling of danger and this differentiates it from other apps. The subscription service enables respondents to connect by a conference call, and also texts/emails the group a link to an emergency response site where they can exchange messages, send photos, and locate each other on a map. From [16], it is free and is available on iPhone, iPod touch, Android, Blackberry and Windows Phone 7.

Nirbhaya: Be Fearless App	The Nirbhaya App is another app that allows the user to send an alert through Sms or call with just a single touch in the event of an emergency. When activated, as from [15], sends the precise GPS location to pre-selected contacts, with exact location updates every 300 meters the person moves. Other features include the **Geo Fence** (which helps keep your contacts informed of your location) and the unique '**Shake to alert'** function. The power button is used to send out a distress signal.
Be Safe	This is a GPS based safety alarm that sends SOS messages during emergencies to the mobile numbers one has previously chosen. All one has to do is to select a few numbers of relatives and friends. As many as numbers can be added as we want. It comes with a big red button for SMS/call in case of emergencies; one just need to push that, triggering the app to send instant SOS messages to the numbers which have been chosen. As referred from [14], the best part about this app is that one can also ask selected friends to follow her live from a distance with real-time GPS tracing. Availability: Android, iOS and BlackBerry phones and tablets
Scream Alarm	This app has similar utility and features as Nirbhaya and Vith U app. What can be done if somebody is walking alone at night, waiting for a bus or a taxi at the bus stand and suddenly finds that somebody is following her? One can't even utter few words when petrified so screaming out loud will be a far thought story. And it even becomes difficult when terrified and have soft-voice. Scream Alarm app is very useful in such times. From [16] this app does nothing other than emit a loud scream. Very simple app without any complicated features though it is not necessarily the best security measure but it might distract the pursuer and give those precious few seconds to save from the situation or run away from the place. This is free and can be downloaded from Google Play.

Circle of 6	As its name suggests, this app lets you choose six trusted friends to add to your circle. If you get into an uncomfortable or risky situation, Circle of 6 can be used to automatically send a pre-programmed SMS alert message with your exact location to your circle of friends. The app's usefulness is verified from the fact that it was the winner of the 2011 White House 'Apps against Abuse' Technology Challenge. As from [14], this app requires iOS 4.0 and is compatible with iPhone 3G, iPhone 3GS, iPhone 4, iPhone 4S, and iPhone 5.
SOS Whistle	SOS Whistle does not send an SOS or let your friends know where you are. Rather, as its name suggests, the app has a very simple function-to trigger a whistle. In fact, it can trigger a whistle sound even if the phone is in silent mode. Thus, it is a great app in times of danger to tell other passers-by of the situation one stuck in. One doesn't even need a data connection or GPS service. Once the screen is tapped the app will start an alarm,[14].It is available on all phones.

Safety Advices for Women

There are many small way out and ideas that women already know but forget to use them when the need arises. These ideas need to be taken care while women are travelling or commuting daily to the offices or to the workplace. While walking if you sense a trouble on your way, be ready to change your original route and take a detour. Also be prepared to run and guard yourself. Try not to wear dazzling jewelry when walking on the streets alone. Never hitchhikes instead use a bus or a taxi no matter how late you are. Always look confident! as weak people are always the easy targets. You can win a fight without it even starts. Maintain eye contact, don't fear and do not get frightened by them.

Public Transport

Always follow law of large numbers. More number, more safety. Always wait in a coffee or a tea shop or a well lit area. Never wait at a bus stand or an isolated area. While commuting through a bus, don't choose the window seat as you may be "blocked in" by a potential assailant; always choose an aisle seat for quick exit. While travelling in trains choose the train compartment which has sufficient number of passengers in off hours. Always order taxis so that the driver can be traced. If not always check the identification of the driver and ensure that it matches the driver. To be extra cautious always forward the taxi number to one of your family members in case the driver is not known to you and the journey is long.

Motor Vehicles

Always approach your four wheeler with the keys ready in your hand. Windows should be up and doors locked while driving to avoid unwanted passengers at intersections. Never leave your car unlocked, even for few minutes. If you are driving at night and eggs are thrown at your windscreen, do not stop to check the car. Do not operate wiper and do not spray any water as eggs mixed with water become milky and block the vision probably up to 92% and then you are forced to stop beside the road. While driving through an isolated area, do not stop seeing anything unusual on roadside, this could be a trap. Never get into a car even if someone is pointing a knife at you from inside. Just start running away from the car screaming at the same time. Never stop your car while driving in a quiet road even if someone driving alongside your car points at the tires. Always continue driving to a well-lit and crowded area before exiting your car. This can be a bluff and the driver wants you to stop at the side of the road to take undue advantage of you. Always be alert while going in underground office parking or basement mall parking or a ground parking area at night or when it's dark. If you are afraid, don't be too shy to ask someone to escort you to your car.

Defense Strategy

Most people think of kicks and blocking punches when they hear the term "self-defense." However, actual self protection begins long before any actual physical contact. The first, and probably most important, component in self-defense is awareness: awareness of yourself, your surroundings, and your potential attacker's likely strategies. The criminal's primary strategy is to use the advantage of surprise. Studies have shown that criminals are expert at choosing targets that appear to be unaware of what is going on around them. By being aware of your surroundings many fracases which are common on the street can be avoided. Pepper spray, like other self-defense aids, can be a useful tool. Try to keep a pepper spray always in your bag. However, never depend on any self-defense tool or weapon to stop an

attacker. Always rely on your body and your abilities, which you can always depend on in the event of an attack.

If you have car problems and you are looking for some help, never walk with the traffic but walk against the traffic so that you can see anything or anybody coming to your side. Don't use a "walkman" when walking in isolated areas at any time. Routines should be regularly changed. Always mark few places in your mind which can be used as safety stops in case of any attack or an unpleasant situation. Don't presume that because your area has been "safe" thus far, that it will continue to be so.

Home Invasions

Criminals always have all the information as in when the lady of the house is alone and at what times she can't contact anybody. They choose such times of a day to invade home by dressing up as a repair person, a sales representative, an electricity meter reader, an AMC in charge or even police officer. The primary way to prevent a home invasion is simply to never, ever open the door unless either it is certain that it is known who's on the other side or it can be verified that they have a legitimate reason for being there. In the event that an intruder breaks in while you're home, always retreat yourself in a room with a strong door, deadbolt lock, phone (preferably cell phone), and a can of pepper spray or fire extinguisher.

Research Methodology

Awareness about various issues related to safety and security is very important for people and especially for women to prevent any unforeseen events and avoid the premonition of a bad unwanted incident. A survey is conducted to know about the safety levels and the awareness of theses responsible factors among the women of Ahmedabad. The study follows a systematic and scientific approach. The Research Methodology used here is descriptive in nature. This study is aimed to gain further insight into the thinking and awareness of safety among women of Ahmadabad and tries to seek some new perspectives. For this, a survey was conducted on 100 women randomly chosen from different areas of Ahmadabad. The respondents are asked various questions; their views were taken and recorded. The sampling technique used here is convenience sampling with the sample size 100. Here the source of data collection is primary source of data where the data collection tool is questionnaire.

The demographic profile of the respondents under survey is as follows:

Table 1: Demographic Details of Respondents

Demographics		No. of Respondents
Female		100
Age	Below 20	28
	20-30	54
	30-40	12
	40-50	6
	Total	100
Occupation	House Wife	15
	Student	35
	Working	50
	Total	100

On asking the respondents whether they considered Ahmadabad city to be safe in comparison with other cities, around 60% women said they considered the city to be safe only 12 % considered it to be an unsafe city. The very important question that was asked was whether they feel safe while being out alone in the city at night, for which 54% responded positively and the rest 46% said they fear going out alone at night.
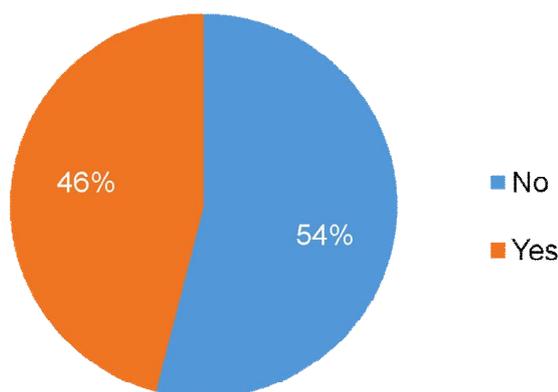
Figure 1: Break-up of Women Respondents Who Feel Safe at Night

From Chart 1 it can be interpreted that almost half of the women feel safe and the other half do not feel safe. Women feel safe when they find cops patrolling at night. When asked regarding patrolling, 68% women said they have always seen cops patrolling in the area where they go and this is the reason why they feel safe. Rest 32% was not happy with the fact that cops were never seen and hence they feel unsafe. Among different areas of Ahmedabad, the most unsafe areas were also explored.

Table 2: Insecure Areas of Ahmedabad

Areas of City	Women considering it to be most insecure area
Ambawadi	4
Bopal	4
C.G. Road	4
City area	64
Gota	4
Naroda	4
S.G highway	6
Sabarmati	2
Usmanpura	2
Vastrapur	6
Grand Total	100
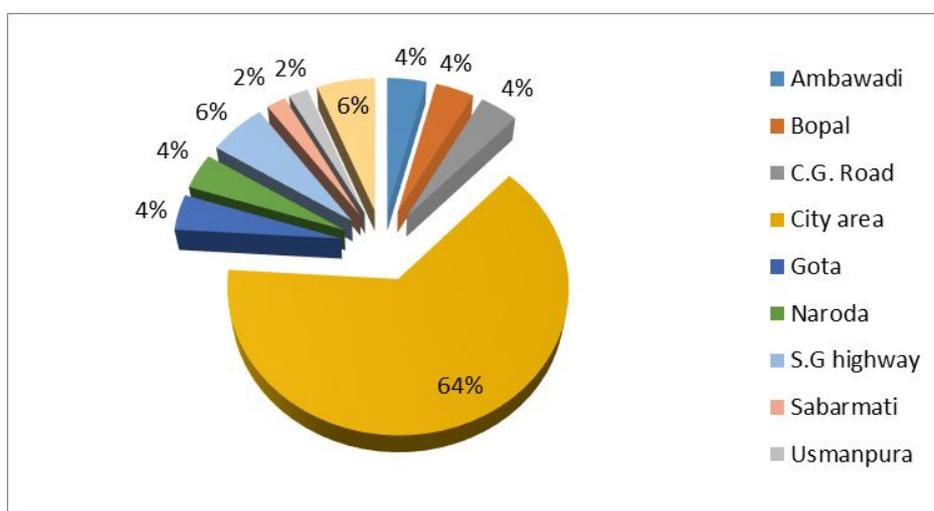
Figure 2: Respondant's view about Insecure Areas of Ahmedabad

Figure 2 shows the opinion of women about the most insecure area of Ahmedabad city. The respondents who participated in the study were given a list of similar areas and were asked to choose the most insecure area. Out of the sample size of 100 women, 64 women said that the most insecure area of Ahmadabad is the city area i.e. the old city areas which are: Kalupur, Dariapur, Raipur, Manekchowk, etc. Rest opinions were very small and conflicting.

Around 64% women said that they avoid going out after midnight as they feel that the risk of mishap increases after that. Women from city areas avoid going out after 10 p.m. only and they finish all their important work before 10 and step out very rarely after 10 p.m. This amounted to 14% of respondents.22% said that though cops patrol still it is not safe to go out between 11-12 p.m.
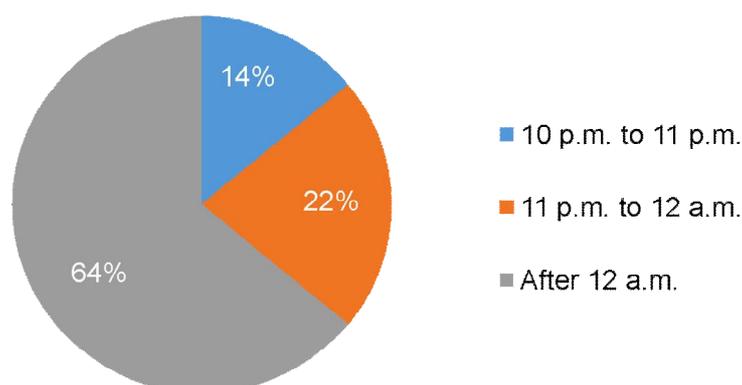
Figure 3: Time Duration when Women Respondent's Avoid Going Out

Out of various reasons that came up for why women feel uncomfortable going out, one of the very prominent reasons was the group of youngsters gathering at the society or apartment entrance. Around 40% of the respondents cited this as a reason for not going out and avoid this group and the teasing comments coming from this group. This was surprisingly sad to know that 74% women do not keep any safety device with them.While18% said that they always have pepper spray with them in their bags. Other 8% mentioned Fork, steel scale, knife, nail cutters and safety pins as their safety devices which they always carry with them.

On asking, around 58% respondents feel that there are quite possible chances that the Delhi gang tragedy may happen here while 32% strongly disagreed on it.

Table 3: Count of Women taking different Actions in need

Actions taken	No. of Respondents
Ask for someone's help	**30**
Call police	**12**
Ignore that person	**22**
You yourself take some action	**36**
Grand Total	**100**

One very important result that was revealed with this study was the actions that are taken by women when they feel uncomfortable on teasing by their male counterparts. It was interesting to know that 36% respondents said that they themselves are sufficient to give good answers to these people and take care of them on their own without anybody's help. More or less equal % of women said that they call somebody available nearby or may be their friends to help them in case of need.22% feel that ignoring such people is the best action that can be taken and only 12% feel that police should immediately be called to teach such people a lesson.
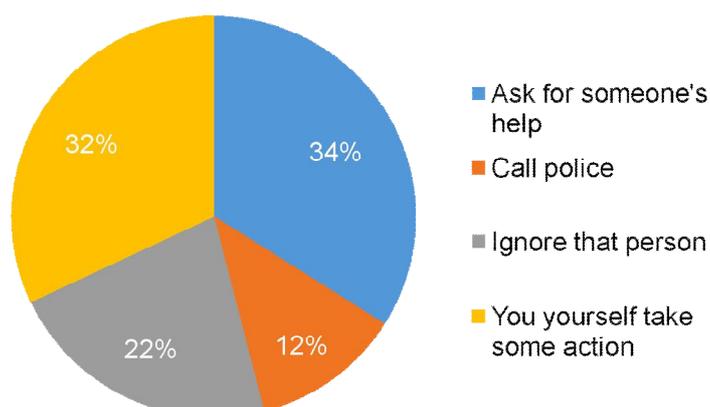
Figure 4: Action Taken by Respondents

Thus we can say that the women of Ahmedabad are strong enough to take some action whether by themselves or by taking someone's help.

Conclusions and Findings

From the study undertaken, the analysis explains that different respondents have different perceptions about the awareness of safety of women in Ahmedabad. The analysis suggests that majority of the women feel safe in Ahmadabad even during the night because cops patrol at night in many of the areas. Women of city areas fear going out late at night and hence the most insecure area of the city according to the respondents is the old city area. Though the women feel that Ahmadabad is safe city for them, at the same time majority of them strongly agree that the Delhi gang rape tragedy can also happen in the city. Very less women keep some safety equipment with themselves and majority of them are even not aware enough to keep a pepper spray or any other device as they think there is no need of it. Women of Ahmedabad are strong enough to take care of themselves in case of any emergency. Still if the need arises they will not hesitate to ask for someone's help. Women of the city feel that Ahmadabad is the safest place as compared to all other cities. The credit of such safety was given to Narendra Modi and to those people who respect women and are educated. Thus we can conclude that Ahmadabad is a safe city. Even though there are many applications available for safety women, all women should take precautions and should be always alert.

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