

CRIME AGAINST URBAN WOMEN IN NCR (NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION, DELHI)

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Abstract

The concept of crime is a relative one and it varies in accordance with the socio-economic development of the society and is reflected in the moral and social values of a community.

Crime against women is definitely on the rise in the India's national capital. It is very unfortunate that even in the urban areas as high as 18 per cent of crimes are committed against women who are basically related to dowry and harassment by husbands and in-laws. This also exhibits the poor status of Indian women even in the capital city. Among the 12 metropolitan cities, Delhi accounted for 30 per cent of rape cases and 46 per cent of kidnapping cases in 1990. On the whole crime against women has gone up by 75% in 15 years between 1998 and 2011. The majority of crimes against women are matrimonial crimes. The rate of increase in cases of domestic violence is highest at 140 %, followed by kidnapping at 117%, rape by 60 % and molestation at 40 % between 1998 and 2011. However, as an exception, there was a substantial increase in the number of rapes and acts of sexual violence reported after December 2012 till March 2013.

Key Words—Crime, Matrimonial Crimes, molestation, Rape

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Introduction

Under the IPC (Indian Penal Code) crimes against women include rape, kidnapping and abduction, homicide for dowry, torture, molestation, sexual harassment, and the importation of girls. Violence against women has become now a common phenomenon. Crime, no doubt is a complex social problem but in the recent decades, it has achieved new dimensions and has brought within its teeth children, youth and women. With the advance of industrialization and urbanization criminality is gradually rearing its ugly head all over the world.¹ It has touched new heights and dimensions in the numbers and operational patterns. Use of violence, even fatal attacks has become more common than they were some time past. The modern scientific developments in technology have not been able to stem the tide of this social problem.² The most interesting aspect of crime is that in every age and almost in every society, it has been regarded as a problem peculiar to the contemporary society and has always existed in one form or the other.³ Further, there is no apparent reason to expect that it will not remain so in the near future.⁴

Crime is as old as the mankind in itself, but in the recent years it has increased in its dimensions and has attained new heights. It is difficult to find a society without deviance. Almost the entire society is directly or indirectly affected by such violence. Women as a separate class are subjected to a greater criminal victimization both inside and outside their homes. This victimization of women as pointed out by Aiyisha,⁵ is due to a variety of factors such as historical, cultural and social, there is no society without its quota of crimes against women. No doubt, the problem of crime against women particularly against young married women is on increase. This type of violence usually consists in the form of harassment, torture, abuses, sexual assaults, beating, burning alive and sometimes even death.

Now the victimization of women has taken new strides and has significantly increased in the number. The exploitation and victimization ranges from molestation, beating to murder and in some cases includes even burning alive. The indifferent attitude and discrimination against fair sex starts right from her birth but in many cases takes a serious turn immediately after marriage.

The issue of crime against women in urban areas has drawn significant attention among national governments across the world, irrespective of their development stage, as well as among international agencies, as a part of their concern for human security and, more importantly, in the context of the larger issue of human rights. As it is, urban safety and security, as evinced from the reports of member countries across the world in successive World Urban Forums, is becoming a major concern of urbanization and the focus of discussions is on violence abating measures and the role of the society in it. The vulnerability of women to urban life has assumed special significance in the context of reported unsafe situations that they are exposed to in every day urban life, having far reaching consequences on the growth and development of the city and the country.

Safety is important for women to act as an equal partner in the society. Personal security is central to every woman's physical, intellectual, emotional, economic and spiritual sense of wellbeing. Crime and sense of crime are two critical factors that greatly undermine a women's sense of security and prevents them from becoming equal partners in society.

The global awareness about the unequal status of women in enjoying urban facilities is however, not new. The first public voice raised on women's safety in urban environment was three decades ago in North America. Since then many countries and international organizations, including the OECD and the UNCHS (now UN-HABITAT) have focused on this issue, especially in the 1980s and 1990s. After the Beijing Women Summit in 1994, several commitments were made in many countries for full participation of women in the decision making process and in sharing power and authority. The Huairou Commission was set up to monitor the progress in the full participation of women in development of cities and in implementation of gender-based approaches to planning, development and management of cities. It was expected that with the participation of women in the critical issues of city management, safety of women would be ensured.

In India, women have been victims of humiliation, torture and exploitation for as long as we have had written records of social organization and family life. "The custom of infanticide is similarly responsible even now for no small loss of human life. In India there has been since time immemorial a strong prejudice against the birth of girls. Sons are preferred to daughters. This prejudice has often resulted in the killing of girls. The Rajputs were the worst offenders

in this respect; they never wanted to be the fathers-in-law (sasur) of anybody. Father-in-law or brother-in-law was a term of abuse to them. In 1856 special inquiries were instituted by the Government. The committee visited numerous Rajput villages and found in some not a single girl. Another committee was appointed in 1869 and submitted the following report about the villages they visited. In seven villages, 104 boys and 1 girl; and in twenty-three villages, 284 boys and 23 girls were found by them.....” Haikerwal (1934)⁶

Man and Woman are born equal and both play vital roles in the creation and development of their families in particular and the society in general. Woman is not only the bread distributor but she is also as bread winner. She is working shoulder to shoulder with men. The greatest contribution of the Indian women like her counterpart in other parts of the world is through home, husband and children.⁷The middle class wives in the four major cities Bombay, Colcutta, Chennai and Delhi constitute about 17 per cent of the total working class of urban population. The findings of a study conducted on 1,600 women, revealed that they formed 22 per cent of the working force in Bombay to a minimum of 9 per cent in Calcutta. They contributed about Rs. 1,500/- on an average to each family income in addition to their regular household chores and ended up working for almost 18 hours a day.⁸

The history of the mankind reveals that the woman is and has been the foundation stone of a family in particular and the society in general. She is spiritual and direct agent of life forces and if the foundation is not properly maintained, the whole building of the human life is bound to crack down and dismember.⁹Further, among the most wonderful mysteries of our nature is that of sex, therefore, the mother that bore us must have our reverence. The wife through whom we enter parentage must have our reverence. Sex which governs so much of our physical life and has so much influence on our emotional and higher nature, deserves not our fear or contempt or our amused indulgence, but our reverence in the highest sense of term.¹⁰

Woman has been given a position of pride in every religion. Under Christianity and Hinduism, they are respected and due importance is given to their rights and privileges. Woman enjoyed a position of high esteem in the Rig Vedic period. No function of significance could be completed without her participation.¹¹ In the Quran, a complete Sura has been devoted for the welfare, rights and duties of women.¹²

It has been rightly pointed out that women have been and will always be what men make them. However, no philosophical student of comparative religion can fail to observe that at the foundation of every spiritual faith stands a woman, whose sympathy blesses the work of infusing new life into humanity.¹³ A number of laws have been enacted in almost all the civilized countries to restore, maintain and project the status and position of the women. Such laws have also received international recognition.

A total of 2,28,650 incidents of crimes against women were reported in the country during 2011. The north eastern city of Tripura recorded the highest rate of crimes against women at 37 percent, compared to the national crime rate of 18.9 percent.

Kidnapping and abductions are up by 19 percent and trafficking rose by 122 percent in the same period. Crimes that include the Indian term "eve-teasing" or harassment and heckling and sexual innuendoes against women in public places including streets, public transport, cinema halls, along with the rape of minors and women in tribal and villages often go unreported and unrecorded.

According to records, Madhya Pradesh, a state with a large population of tribes, has recorded 3406 rape cases, the highest number of incidents in the country in 2011.

India's profile as an emerging modern nation has taken a beating by the recent rape case, as widespread gender-based violence has been exposed.

Crime against women is definitely on the rise in the national capital. It is very unfortunate that even in the urban areas as high as 18 per cent of crimes are committed against women who are basically related to dowry and harassment by husbands and in-laws. This also exhibits the poor status of Indian women even in the capital city¹⁴. Among the 12 metropolitan cities, Delhi accounted for 30 per cent of rape cases and 46 per cent of kidnapping cases in 1990. It is a paradox that in spite of these measures women are becoming an important partner in the city management, they still remain a major victim of the violence in urban areas¹⁵. The rate of increase in cases of domestic violence is highest at 140 %, followed by kidnapping at 117%, rape by 60 % and molestation at 40 % between 1998 and 2011. The nature of women-related crimes has too undergone change between this period with the share of rapes, sexual harassment and immoral trafficking gone down in comparison to

increased cases of domestic violence reported from across the country, says the study. However, as an exception, there was an increase in the number of rapes and acts of sexual violence reported after December 2012 till March 2013. The number of cases being reported was seen rising after the brutal Delhi gang rape cum murder case of December 16.

Objectives

In the present study crime against urban women in NCR has been analysed .The study attempts to examine the increasing rate of crime in NCR and the reasons for such increase. It also attempts to understand the spatial variations.

Study Area

The **National Capital Region** (NCR) in India is a name for the conurbation or metropolitan area which encompasses the entire Delhi as well as urban areas surrounding it in neighboring states of Punjab, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan. With a total area of about 33,578 km² (12,965 sq. miles), it is the world's second largest urban agglomeration by population behind Tokyo and the largest by area.

A total of 15 districts in three neighbouring states of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan along with whole of the National Capital Territory of Delhi constitute the National Capital Region (NCR) of India as defined in National Capital Region Planning Board (NCRPB) Act of 1985. These are: -

Area-wise contribution of participating states in the NCR.

| State | Area (in km ²) | Area (in miles ²) | Population (2011 Census) |
|--------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| NCT of Delhi | 1,483 | 573 | 16,753,265 |

Area-wise contribution of participating states in the NCR.

| State | Area (in km ²) | Area (in miles ²) | Population (2011 Census) |
|---------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Haryana | 13,413 | 5,179 | 25,353,081 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 10,853 | 4,190 | 19,95,81,477 |
| Rajasthan | 7,829 | 3,023 | 68,621,012 |
| TOTAL | 33,578 | 12,965 | 310,308,835 |

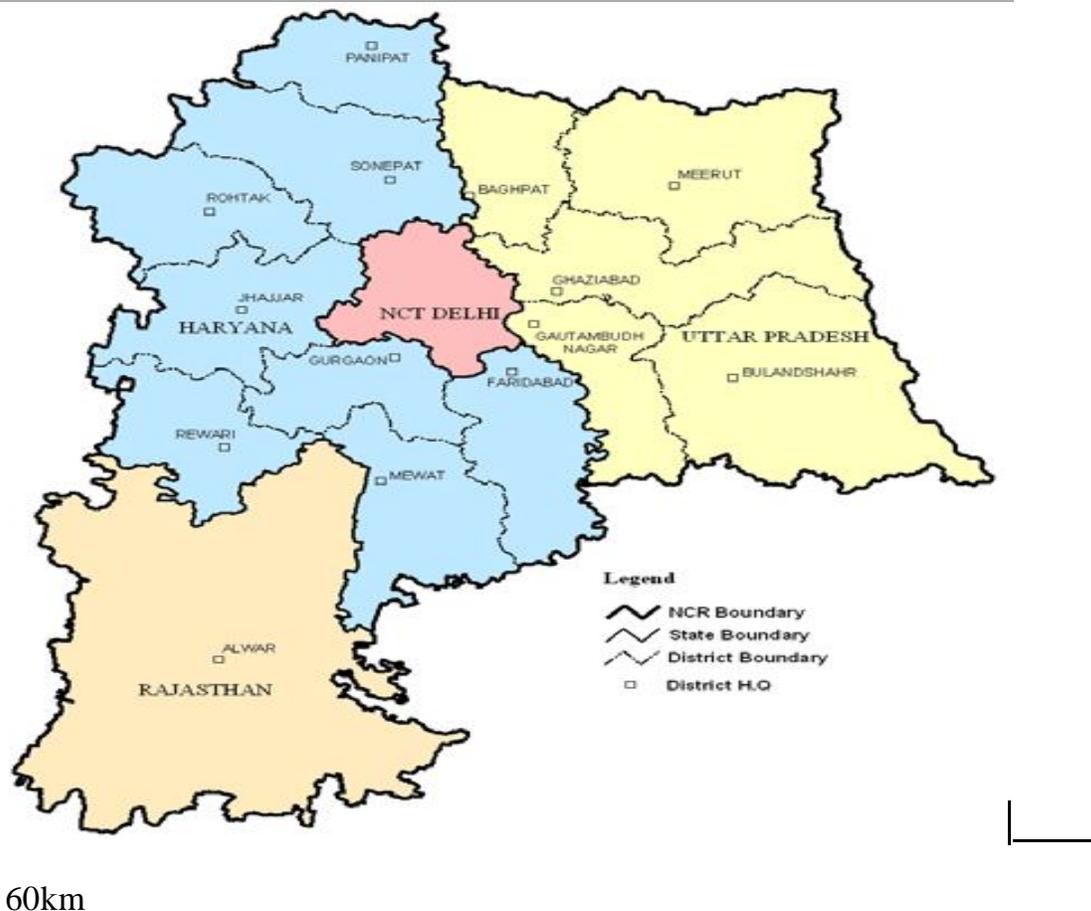


Figure 1: Map of NCR

The origin of NCR is traced to the recommendation of first ever Master Plan of Delhi, way back in the year 1962. The prime aim was to reduce the burden of increasing population in Delhi and the growing demand for more space owing to large scale industrialization. Therefore the neighbouring states like Rajasthan, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh came into consideration for developing satellite cities of Delhi. Gurgaon, Noida, Ghaziabad and Faridabad were the names that came up for developing the whole NCR region. The study used purposive sampling method to collect information from respondents belonging to diverse occupational categories spread across public places such as bus stands and market places of five cities of NCR (Delhi, Gurgaon, Noida, Ghaziabad and Faridabad).

Delhi comes under the governance of NCT, called the National Capital Territory. However, the Central Government does have some control over the administration and other departments. According to the census 2011, Delhi has a population of 11,007,835 persons, literacy rate of 87.60% and sex ratio of 875 females per 1000 males.

Methods and Material

Data has been generated from primary survey conducted in various strategic places of Delhi, Gurgaon, Faridabad, Ghaziabad and Noida. The study relies to a large extent, on primary sources. Secondary data have been examined to assess the situation at the macro level.

The key factors considered in the selection of locations for sample survey were places where safety of women is likely to be endangered. These include public facilities, such as markets, parks, shopping malls, underground sub -ways and places below the fly-overs, educational institutions, cinema halls and restaurants, metro and bus terminus and railway stations, as well as work places like government and private office complexes.

The primary data were collected through canvassing of pre-tested questionnaires to 300 women. Secondary data were obtained from published and unpublished sources, data like violence and crime against women, nature of violence, predators characteristics etc provided by The National Crime Resource Bureau; National Commission for Women; Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India; Jagori, Delhi Commission for Women etc.

There were some critical constraints in obtaining genuine responses from select groups of women.

- 1 Many women were, in general, cautious in expressing their views and a sense of fear was visible on their face. Their response was guarded and they were careful in sharing their opinion and perspectives.
2. In case of government employees, the response was very slow.

The present study is based on primary as well as secondary sources. There are two types of data in secondary sources. One set gives detailed information regarding population and various socio-economic variables that have bearing upon crime pattern. Second set pertains to details regarding various aspects of crime. For the first set data was taken from census of India publication. For the second set data collected by NCRB (National Crime Record Bureau) was used. Secondary data was also collected from various literature available on crime against women. From all the available sources of information pertaining to crime against women it was very clear that such crimes are on the increase at national and international level. Thus a lot of hard work was put in for the collection and analysis of primary data.

The main aim of the primary survey was to unearth the problem of crime against women on the basis of the following two observations; It is a well-known fact that the reporting of crime against women is very less. But eve teasing, molestation, domestic violence and harassment at place of work are very common crimes confronting women of all walks of life. With this assumption a number of women were interviewed in an informal manner at various strategic points. Besides general questions pertaining to their socio-demographic profile they were asked to report about the above mentioned crimes. Major crimes against women such as rape, murder and kidnapping and abduction was not included in the survey for it is difficult for women to talk of such crimes in the public, but given a push they still would share their experiences of minor crimes.

The study used purposive sampling method to collect information from respondents belonging to diverse occupational categories spread across public places such as bus stands and market places of five cities of NCR (Delhi, Gurgaon, Noida, Ghaziabad and Faridabad).

The survey gathered and analysed information about the nature and forms of harassment faced by women. A total of 1132 females were questioned and it was possible to get a sample of 300 females who had been victims of eve teasing, molestation, domestic violence or harassment at place of work. The remaining may or may not been victims of crime. Some were not ready to respond and some were too much in a hurry to even think about the problem

It had not at all been easy task in making the victims of crime admit the fact. Thus, although the questionnaire was small, but to get information from each victim was time consuming for only after gaining the trust and confidence could it be possible to make them divulge the information required.

Following is the list of places where the interviews were conducted.

- Delhi-Bus Stands-Sarai Kale Khan, AnandVihar and Kashmere Gate
- Market Places-Jama Masjid, Rajiv Chowk, and Sarojini Nagar
- Gurgaon-Bus Stand
- Market Places-Sadar Bazar, Sector 14
- Faridabad-Main Bus Stand
- Market Places-Sector 15
- Noida-Bus Stand
- Market Place-Atta Market
- Ghaziabad-Old and New Bus Stand
- Market place-Navyug market

Results and Discussion

The issue of crime against women in urban areas has drawn significant attention among national governments across the world, irrespective of their development stage, as well as among international agencies, as a part of their concern for human security and, more importantly, in the context of the larger issue of human rights. It is a paradox that in spite of these measures women still remains a major victim of the violence in urban areas. Law enforcing and other related agencies have no idea of the actual volume and magnitude of

the problem.

It was in this context, that this study was undertaken to find out the scenario of crime committed against urban women in the national capital region of Delhi. The focus of this study is to find out the various types of crime committed and the legislations pertaining to such crimes. The study is a mix of literature search and a survey of women across age, economic and social groups in the city. The survey sample included 300 respondents.

Table 1-Profile of Victims- By Crime 2012

| Cities | Delhi | Gurgaon | Noida | Ghaziabad | Faridabad | Total |
|--------------------------|-------|---------|-------|-----------|-----------|-------|
| Base | 100 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 300 |
| Figures in % | | | | | | |
| Eve teasing | 80 | 76 | 70 | 82 | 82 | 79 |
| Molestation | 9 | 12 | - | 6 | 10 | 8 |
| Harassment | 15 | 14 | 12 | 10 | 16 | 14 |
| Domestic Violence | 21 | 22 | 16 | 14 | 10 | 17 |

Source: - field survey by authors

On the whole it can be seen that out 300 victims surveyed 79 % have been victims of eve teasing at one time or the other in their life's , 8% were molested 14 % harassment at work and 17 % suffered domestic violence..

There is a considerable amount of legislative provisions at the national, state and city level. Crimes against women are broadly classified under two categories. The first category includes crimes identified under the Indian Penal Code (IPC), such as, rape, kidnapping and abduction, dowry homicides, torture-physical and mental, molestation, eve-teasing or sexual harassment, importation of girls, and murder (other than dowry homicides). The second category covers crimes identified under the special laws (SL), such as immoral trafficking, demanding dowry, and indecent representation of women.

The environment of a city depends, to a considerable extent, on the socio-cultural and economic mix of the city population, its spatial distribution of income opportunities and living habitats, access to key urban services for movements within the city and undertaking all activities. The quality and strength of the protective services like the police

and the laws to provide protection are other critical components that determine the safety dynamics of the city. As such, protection of women is a function of several interacting activities, which require being equally efficient in delivery of their services. All service providers have to interact positively among themselves to become an effective team that would ensure the safety of women.

The causative factors of a low level of safety environment in Delhi emerge from the city's population dynamics. Rapid urbanization and development become a magnetic pull factor for continuing migration, resulting in strong competitive environment for living and work space. This trend contributes to the expansion of the unsafe city environment, both for men and women, though the first target invariably becomes the women.

A large migrant population is always considered to place an additional burden on the safety environment. Ignorance of laws and behavior practices in a fast moving urban situation, along with competition among the migrants to find a foothold in a new environment, both for habitat and income activities, invariably results in conflicts and brings to the fore the safety issue.

Density of population is another component of the population dynamics that has to be addressed. Delhi has the highest density among all states/UTs in the country. Higher density results in congestion, which is an important contributing factor for facilitating the growth of crime against women.

Spatial dynamics adds to the problem of safety. Delhi is a classic example of integration of rural and urban lifestyles, upsetting expected urban behavior modes in modern cities. The city's area is also continuingly expanding, resulting in large spatial distribution of living and workplaces and substantial travel across the spatial spread. The comparatively inadequate public transport facilities, *a priori*, has an impact on the safety situation, due to congestion, overcrowding, and jostling to access to public services, among other factors. Women become a soft target in this process.

Economic dynamics further accentuates the situation. The economic growth has been considerably stimulated and sustained by the tertiary sector that contributes 71% to

Delhi's GDP. This sector operates to a considerable extent through the informal economy, with levels of safety environment and practices which are lower than may be desirable in the context of safety of women. But the role of these economic activities cannot be overlooked in the context of Delhi's sustainability.

The final component of the city safety dynamics is the social dynamics. Two critical social dynamic parameters are the literacy rate and the sex ratio. Women are at a clear disadvantage in Delhi in terms of these parameters. A low sex ratio, from the safety perspective, is a factor that enhances the level of insecurity for women.

Delhi occupies the top place for reported crimes among 35 cities in India with million plus population, the share being 16.2%, as also in the rate of crime against women (27.6 per 100,000, compared to national average rate of 14.1). The crime mix includes rape, kidnapping, abduction, dowry deaths, cruelty, immoral traffic, molestation, sexual harassment, and eve-teasing.

The following conclusions were drawn from the primary survey of victims in NCR in the year 2012. The highest percentage (31%) of victims was from the age-group 25-35.

Table 2-Profile of Victims-Age wise

| Cities | Delhi | Gurgaon | Noida | Ghaziabad | Faridabad | Total |
|---------------------|-------|---------|-------|-----------|-----------|-------|
| Base | 100 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 50 | 300 |
| Figures in % | | | | | | |
| 15-25 | 11 | 10 | 16 | 22 | 28 | 16 |
| 25-35 | 33 | 24 | 28 | 34 | 36 | 31 |
| 35-45 | 37 | 30 | 24 | 24 | 14 | 28 |
| 45-55 | 14 | 36 | 26 | 18 | 8 | 19 |
| 55 and above | 5 | 0 | 6 | 2 | 14 | 6 |

Source: - field survey by authors

At an overall level, majority of the people were literate with the minimum level of education being, Primary education. The percentage of post graduate is maximum in Delhi and Noida. Around half of the victims (47%) have an annual income between one lakh and three lakhs.

About one third of the victims have annual income of less than one lakh. Across the cities it has been found that the birth place of victims was mainly rural. Across the cities, women have a nuclear family setup. In Gurgaon 34% of the victims have a joint family setup. On the whole it can be seen that out 300 victims surveyed 79 % have been victims of eve teasing at one time or the other in their life's , 8% were molested 14 % harassment at work and 17 % suffered domestic violence. Urban women of age group 25-35 more vulnerable to being victims of crime.

- Urban literate women are equally vulnerable to being victims of crime.
- Both rich and poor women are susceptible to being victims of crime.
- Eve teasing followed by domestic violence and harassment at workplace are very common crimes in the NCR region.

An important concern of women in Delhi is that the common factor in crimes against women is that these take place in public domain except for domestic violence, indicating absence of measures for safety of women in public places as well as lack of awareness or enlightenment among people to intervene when an incident takes place.

Even from a cursory view of the study area it is very much evident that the cities of the Delhi, Gurgaon, Faridabad, Noida and Ghaziabad are all coming up with the best of amenities and infrastructure. And over the years literacy rates and sex ratio of these cities too have come up remarkably well. Now there are two facts related to crime. Firstly crime against women has risen over the years. Secondly such crimes are now affecting both rich and poor urban women. So now it is not possible to blame shabby environmental conditions are low literacy rate and low sex ratio for occurrence of such crimes. Thus it is not just the living conditions that are responsible for the making of the criminals but mind set of the peoples that have created an environment that is unsafe for women. And this typical mindset is now permeating the whole environment of NCR. And thus crimes against women are on the rise with increasing population.

Recommendations

Respect of women to be inculcated from childhood and schools and colleges need to include it in their syllabi of moral science or environmental science. Doing this would

improve the status of women and create a friendlier environment for women to work and travel.

Effective security has to be provided after 7 pm in the transport vehicles and work places and the journey terminals have to have a strong presence of security personnel, proper lighting, public amenities, and strict supervision of road vendors and service providers.

It is vital to reduce density and congestion, in the work areas and informal economic activity zones. Ensure some minimal standards of security with respect to working women and amenities for them in their work place.

Social awareness and sensitization should be a high priority program. It should cover the police personnel, citizens of Delhi, migrants to Delhi and the victims/prospective victims of crimes against women. Apart from providing knowledge and information, a component of training to face situations of crime has to be included. Training in self-defense techniques is another important requirement.

Mere laws are not enough, but it is important to have proper and effective machinery for enforcement of such laws. Moreover, the co-operation of the people is also essential for the effective implementation of the social welfare legislations for which awareness about such laws should be created among the masses.

Last, but not the least is to improve trust in the police so as the reporting of crime is not hampered.

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