



# SAFE CITIES

Results from Scoping Study in  
Earthquake Affected Districts in Nepal



# Acknowledgements

There is a high prevalence of Gender Based Violence (GBV) in public spaces in Nepal. Safe Cities Program attempts to advocate against GBV and start the process to address GBVs with special focus on sexual harassments in urban public spaces. This is a noble effort which demands research/ evidence based planning, monitoring and evaluation along with the support from the wide range of stakeholders (including Government, non-state actors, civil society, men, women, and their families). Nepal Evaluation and Assessment Team (NEAT) is pleased to continue the partnership and collaborations with Safe City Initiative through a scoping study in earthquake affected districts of Nepal. This study was conceptualized with an aim to explore and understand the sexual harassment in the public areas, briefly to map out existing services and stakeholders in the sector and to gain an insight on demographic and socio-cultural factors associated with GBV in the study areas.

This study was conducted with the support from various institutions and individuals right from its conceptualization to the analysis stage. We would like to thank ActionAid International Nepal for entrusting us with the opportunity to initiate research in such a sensitive and critical issue related to women's rights in Nepal. We appreciate the financial support and methodological guidance provided to us by UN Women, Nepal. We would like to thank Ms. Malati Maskey - Women Rights Coordinator, and the Safe City for Women Campaign team for their guidance and support.

The field based volunteers in all districts deserve special thanks for their rigorous and painstaking work in collecting both qualitative and quantitative data from the field. We would also like to thank our colleagues at NEAT, especially Mr. Sunil Poudel - Program Manager, Bikash Acharya, Senior Researcher and Ms. Jyoti Jha, Finance Officer for their excellent support for data processing and logistics arrangements.

The Study Team

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## Acronyms & Abbreviations

<b>AAIN</b>	ActionAid International Nepal
<b>DDC</b>	District Development Committee
<b>DPO</b>	District Police Office
<b>FGD</b>	Focus Group Discussion
<b>GBV</b>	Gender Based Violence
<b>KAP</b>	Knowledge, Attitude and Practice
<b>KII</b>	Key Informant Interview
<b>NEAT</b>	Nepal Evaluation and Assessment Team
<b>PNGO</b>	Partner Non Governmental Organization
<b>VAWG</b>	Violence against Women and Girls
<b>WCSC</b>	Women and Children Service Center

# Executive Summary

## Background

Action Aid International Nepal (AAIN), a right based NGO, has been working in Nepal since 1982. One of the objectives of AAIN's Country Strategy Paper IV is to work on the issue of violence in both private and public spaces. After having identified Violence Against Women (VAW) in public spaces as one of the major hindrances for women's empowerment and confinement from enjoying their right to freedom, mobility and security, AAIN has implemented Safe City Program in an effort to ensure the women's right in urban spaces. In Nepal, AAIN had been envisioning and implementing Safe City Programme for last five years. In the aftermath of the massive earthquake and based on the experience and learning from the project, AAIN realized the necessity to scale up the project and increase its coverage. Therefore, additional scoping study of the Safe City project was commissioned to be carried out in four districts and its urban areas, namely, Bidur of Nuwakot, Madhyapur and Bhaktapur core areas, Dhadingbesi of Dhading and Chuatara-Tatopani of Sindhupalchok. The scoping study is expected to contribute in project design and the scaling up of the Safe City project.

## Objectives

The major goal of this scoping study is to understand the local context, assess and measure the present situation regarding violence against women and girls in public places and identify key stakeholders and areas for future partnership in the study areas. The core objectives of the study were to explore, explain and understand sexual harassment and other gender-based violence in public places; to identify and assess significant stakeholders and their activities; to assess relevant existing services and projects, especially from the perspective of intended beneficiaries and to provide insight to demographic, social, cultural, economic and other relevant characteristics of intervention areas. The study also aims to analyse development policies, plans and relevant initiatives.

## Methodology

The scoping study involved collection of quantitative as well as qualitative data from community members, educational institutions, non-government organizations, and government agencies. The study adopted set of simple methods involving review of secondary sources, sample survey and community level discussions. The methods included a KAP survey with women/girls, focus group discussion with women/girls and men/boys and key informant interviews with major stakeholders. KAP survey was conducted with 360 randomly selected

women and girls in two urban areas of each district. Key informant interviews were conducted with representatives of local district development committees, municipality authorities, District Women and Children Office, Women and Children Service Center at District Police and representative of schools and colleges. In each municipality, a municipal data collection form was administered to collect data on availability of basic public services.

## Key Findings

- **Most women find an urban place to be unsafe:** Eight out of ten girls/women find public space in their area to be unsafe. Mostly areas like chowks, dark places are perceived as unsafe by women/girls. The prevalence of harassment was wide, also in upcoming urban areas. At least 6 out of 10 women have faced sexual harassment in public space while around six percent face sexual harassment on a regular basis.
- **All forms of sexual harassment are highly prevalent:** On the whole, women were mostly able to identify various external events as a violence. Highly prevalent forms of violence were: showing private body parts, physical touch, engaging in uncomfortable conversation, using bad language, making comments of a sexual nature, and showing a sexual content (mostly applicable for social networking sites).
- **A non-verbal form of harassments is most common:** For areas outside Kathmandu, non-verbal and verbal harassments were more common than physical ones. For around 44 percent women/girls, the last violence they faced was of verbal (using bad language, uncomfortable conversation, making comments of a sexual nature) followed by 42 percent non-verbal (showing private parts, showing sexual content, stalking) and around 11 percent physical violence.
- **Some locations are more unsafe than others:** Public vehicles were found to be most unsafe in terms of prevalence of harassment for young women. Social networking sites, internet platforms and mobile phones are up and coming areas for harassment. Cinema hall, and roads are equally unsafe locations.
- **Younger men/boys are more prone to committing harassment:** In half of the participant's case, the perpetrators were aged between 15-25 years. This age group is more likely to commit non-physical offence toward women and girls.
- **Young girls are vulnerable to harassment in public places:** Adolescent and teenage girls are more vulnerable to harassment. One in five women reported facing the first violence at the age of 10-14 years.
- **Women/girls with high mobility and using public vehicles are vulnerable:** Among the participants who travelled on daily basis, 73 percent reported to have faced sexual harassment in public space, and among those travelling sometimes, half (51%) faced harassment in public space.
- **Higher levels of education are related to harassment in public places:** More than half of the women (62%) with higher education reported facing GBV and harassment in public spaces. The reasons for this could be higher levels of awareness regarding GBV as well as higher mobility related to education and employment.

- **Earthquake affected regions have become more vulnerable to harassment and violence in public space:** Around 37 percent of the participants reported that public places have become more unsafe after the earthquake. Same proportion explains that the trend of violence is increasing after the earthquake
- **Reporting of sexual harassment is non-existent due to fear of society and lack of trust in justice delivery:** Women normally respond to the sexual harassment through shouting and other verbal reactions but they rarely file an official complaint to the police or relevant places. Only 4 percent of the participants had ever reported the incident of sexual harassment. Women considered some forms of sexual harassment as minor offences which did not need reporting. For others, women feared that reporting would bring unnecessary attention to them and their family. Furthermore, many believed that the perpetrators would not be suitably punished.
- **Formal complaints lead to action against the perpetrator:** In majority of the cases reported (92%), some action was taken against the perpetrator. Although verbal warning was generally given to the perpetrators, almost 42 percent were punished through imprisonment or other means.

Presence of supportive agencies, networks and other stakeholders is not known to women. Only around half of the women surveyed had the knowledge of existing supportive measures.

In terms of safety in public places, many found very minimal changes in recent years. Only one in four participants found some improvement in safety in public places.

## Conclusion and Key Inferences

The scoping study confirms the information available from the previous studies commissioned by AAN in 2014 and 2016 in various big cities of the country, and has also enabled to generate some new inferences for upcoming cities. The study clearly indicates that sexual harassments in public places are widespread, though less compared to core city areas. At least 6 in 10 women between age 14-30 have faced such incidence, and the occurrence of such incident for certain victims were very frequent. While girls and women were mostly aware enough to identify certain activity as a violence, the awareness was particularly low among the boys/men in the same regards. The majority of women were able to identify the various forms of non-verbal, verbal and physical harassment as violence against women.

The most unsafe public spaces were public vehicles, social networks, roads, and movie theatres. For both cities and for upcoming urban areas, social networks, including the use of mobile was one of the key platforms for harassment. The women/girls of age group 15-19 who are frequently required to walk in the street and travel in a public vehicle for education/work, and those who travel alone or with female friends were at higher risk of harassment. While physical form of violence also existed, the prevalence of non-verbal and verbal violence were also heavily prevalent in the study sites. The perpetrators were mostly of the age group 15-24, and known individuals whom the victim has seen a few times. Due to various reasons, the tendency to file case against harassment was very low, though many women have reported that they instantly reacted to the incident. Although the educational attainment and

awareness on legal provisions related to GBV did not affect the chance to face violence, the awareness on law particularly contributed to better response and reporting of the violence.

The 2015 earthquake in Nepal has added additional vulnerability. In a post-earthquake scenario, the upcoming urban areas have become more unsafe for women/girls. The violence has particularly increased in neighborhood for women/girls. Nevertheless, the urban areas have made some rare initiations, and are committed to make public space safer for girls/women though very little can be seen in practice.

The events emanating from unsafe public space have direct negative effects on the lives of women and children. Young girls who face sexual harassment at early age face stress and trauma for long. Not only that, women/girls feel that violence affects their education and employment related opportunities.

This study identifies a major policy gap to protect women from violence. Present laws and provisions are limited inside domestic sphere and organization context. No laws have been able to incorporate verbal, non-verbal harassment into its jurisdiction. Although physical harassment is processed under the 'intent to rape' clause, this study suggests that very few cases of physical harassment ever get reported to the police. Therefore, an all encompassing law for VAWG in public places is essential.

Furthermore, the findings provide inferences for an effective designing of a safe city program in the upcoming urban areas. It is suggested that the ActionAid and other safe city campaigners discuss on the findings to figure out the way forward. Nevertheless, based on the findings, the study team suggests on the following inferences:

- **Gender sensitive support mechanism, particularly police, court, and other reporting mechanisms need to be strengthened**

- Special police beats in public road to complain about violence in public vehicles
- Special cell on sexual harassments in public space in cities
- Women in the cell in all police offices
- Informal support networks (available to support women to walk during the evening in the lonely street)

- **Large scale advocacy for safer public spaces**

There is a need for advocacy to develop women/girls friendly infrastructure and services targeting roads, public vehicles, and social networking platforms and other public domains. For example, advocacy could target having bigger bus, which only takes passengers based on its seating capacity. Some suggested advocacy objectives could be:

- A large bus or public vehicles that strictly follow passenger per seating rule
- Adequate number of public vehicles
- Wider foot path and street lights
- Designated parking and waiting spaces with seats available for women/girls

- **Need to devise alternative ways to raise awareness about legal provisions**

The awareness on legal provisions against violence clearly has some influence on response to and reporting of violence. The safe city campaigners, like AAN and PNGOs are suggested to explore ways to enhance awareness on legal provisions so that message can reach to a larger audience, and could drive changes in their behaviors. For example, campaigners can explore the use of mass media as well as screens available in microbus/bus and reach younger generation through social networks.

- **Specify the focus groups, time and locations**

The evidences generated in this study point out that sexual harassment is faced and committed by people of a certain age and the harassments are more prevalent in particular areas. This presents a need for the project to identify and focus on specific age groups, time and locations which assist vulnerability.

- **Age group 15-25:** Women in this age group frequently face violence whereas most perpetrators fall in this age group.
- Students or job holders who frequently travel and use public vehicle are more vulnerable to various forms of harassment.
- **Location:** Public vehicle, streets, and social networks, platforms where harassment is most common.

- **Work for long-term solution than short-term**

Considering that the situation not only requires immediate solution, but also need changes in the society. Some long-term solutions include:

- Incorporate contents related to gender based violence and sexual harassments in the school curriculum, and also in the induction courses of police, military, government and private offices
- Work with schools and colleges to make boys as well as girls adequately aware of and informed about it
- Targeting awareness and advocacy that relate to the socialization process (starting with the family)
- Advocacy to encourage people (observer or individuals other than the victim) to raise a voice and support victim in case of violence

## 1.1. Introduction

Nepal is in a unique stage of socio-economic and political transition. The Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA), 2006, Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007, declaration of federal republic state of Nepal, and the first constituent assembly elections in 2008, the second constituent assembly elections in 2013 and the promulgation of the new constitution in 2015 gave momentum to the ongoing process of change towards people's aspirations and expectations of peace, freedom and democracy. After a struggle for more than a decade, the country finally managed to have a first ever constitution written and endorsed by the sovereign people.

The economic scenario of the country is at a very challenging point. The massive earthquake that struck the country on April 25, 2015 took the lives of many people and added financial burden to the State for rebuilding and reconstruction. The new constitution has invited further challenges while the Madhesh based parties did not welcome it and started an agitation expressing their grievances. An acute shortage of fuel and the daily commodities for around six months in 2016 affected all sectors of the country. Based on the recent figures, the domestic economic growth is at the slowest pace of the history, with 0.7% per year. The government has declared expansionary fiscal policy for the coming year with the size of the budget also reaching to the highest in the history (close to 10 billion USD).

Patriarchy is a social norm among the Nepalese people in which males hold predominant roles, limiting women's opportunities for self-determination and empowerment. Discrimination, particularly in the rural areas, against women is prevalent in the household, at the work place, and even in national laws pertaining to land ownership and citizenship rights. Historically, violence against women and girls was common and acceptable in the typical Nepalese society. The figures of violence might have reduced while the core issue is still grounded, and the violence pattern has transformed. A serious concern of women's rights advocates around the world, violence against women and girls (VAWG) is a gross violation of human rights and a grave public health issue as it concerns women's physical and psychological health. It occurs at various levels of society, i.e. at homes, schools and workplaces, in public areas and between partners, which affects multiple lives, including those of children.

In the past few years, there has been a general consensus among the media, INGOs and the civil society to make a strong case of violence against women and girls. In 2015, Some Nepal Acts for Maintaining Gender Equality and Ending Gender Based Violence, 2015 amended 32 discriminatory laws and provisions. Consequently, there is an institutional and public understanding of violence against women and girls occurring inside homes or the domestic sphere in Nepal. In most of the national gender instruments, policies and acts VAWG in the private sphere is seen prominently featured in. In 2009, Domestic Violence (Crime and

Punishment) Act was passed, encompassing wide forms of violence against women inside the scope of the private setting i.e, inside homes and families. Women and Children Service Center at District Police Offices address women and children related crimes with special attention to domestic violence. In addition, the Government of Nepal has enacted a specific legislation, addressing sexual harassment at workplace with an aim to protect the right of every individual to work in a safe environment. The Sexual Harassment at Workplace Prevention Act, 2015 (2071) ("Sexual Harassment Prevention Act" or "Act") came into effect on February 20, 2015 (Falgun 08, 2071). However, the Act does not include violence outside of the workplace. Despite the attention paid to domestic violence at the work place, VAWG occurring in public spaces has not yet become a concern of public policy making. The recent Act addressing the sexual harassment in the workplace (Sexual Harassment at Workplace Prevention Act, 2015) only includes jurisdiction of governmental, non-governmental, corporate and other entities conducting business, trade and services. Furthermore, there are no adequate data related to VAWG in public places, particularly in the towns and the cities where gender based violence is rampantly growing.

A study conducted by Saathi in 1994 was the first documented evidence of sexual harassment in public places in Nepal. Although conducted in a very small sample, this study brought into light the growing state of violence in the rapidly urbanizing city, like Kathmandu. In 2011, AAIN's action research titled 'Women and the City' reiterated the fact and exposed the severity of the situation in Kathmandu and other growing cities of Nepal. It revealed that the public spaces, like streets, public transport, bus stops and stations are prone to sexual harassment and thus are unsafe for girls and women. In 2013, World Bank conducted a study related to public transport and reported the direct effect of poor public transport on women. The report indicates that women mostly feared public transport due to overcrowding. There was little gender difference discernible in transport preferences except that women were more likely than men to wait for the next bus to avoid overcrowding and observation suggest that women like the security of travelling in tempos (World Bank, 2013). The report, which compared public transport use related behaviors between men and women found that women were largely concerned about personal security, including sexual harassment. Although the report focused on the difficulties faced by women in public transport, it did not explore the nature and prevalence of violence against women in the public sphere.

Over a year after the devastating earthquakes of 2015, 40,706 individuals (53% women) continue to live in temporary displacement sites that offer limited protection from the elements and threats to personal health and safety. The aftermath of natural disasters infringes upon the rights and freedoms of women and girls as equal citizens. The vulnerabilities and the prevalence of sexual violence against women and girls (SVAWG) in public spaces, and the trafficking in persons, especially women and children increased after the earthquake. There have been reports of sexual violence against women and girls (SVAWG) and other forms of violence against women (VAW) in the temporary shelters and camps. Therefore, it is crucial to help Nepal build back better and safer in the post-disaster recovery and reconstruction efforts. It gives an opportunity for a gender equal society free of gender-based violence and discrimination and address pre-existing gender inequalities. In this context, the UN Women Nepal seeks an agency (preferably in partnership with other agencies having expertise in conducting research in the area of violence against women and girls) to conduct a scoping study, on sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls in public spaces and carry out safe public spaces project design workshop and conduct women's safety audits in the selected municipalities of four districts in Nepal.

## 1.2. Context

In Nepal, studies show that gender based violence in various forms still remains widespread. According to the Nepal Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) (2011), 22 percent women aged 15 – 49 had suffered physical violence, 12 percent of women had experienced sexual violence while one third have experienced marital violence (emotional, physical or sexual violence), 17% in the last 12 months. About three quarters of women who had experienced physical or sexual violence at some point in their lives had not sought any help, and two thirds had never reported the violence to anyone. Only 7 percent experiencing sexual violence had reported the assault, only 4 percent of those who sought care had been to the police, and 3 percent to medical services (NDHS 2011).

Action Aid International Nepal (AAIN), a right based NGO, has been working in Nepal since 1982. One of the objectives of AAIN's Country Strategy Paper IV is to work on the issue of violence in both private and public spaces. After having identified Violence Against Women (VAW) in public spaces as one of the major hindrances for women's empowerment and confinement from enjoying their right to freedom, mobility and security, AAIN has implemented Safe City Program in an effort to ensure the women's right in urban spaces. Under the umbrella of the Safe Cities Initiative, Action Aid is working globally in different countries to make cities and urban structures safe for women and girls. The initiative aims to build capacities of girls, women and youth to bring out legitimate voices and use them to advocate for gender responsive policies in urban planning and judicial framework.

In Nepal, AAIN had been envisioning and implementing Safe City<sup>1</sup> Program for last five years. In 2011, as part of a multi-country research, AAIN initiated an action research program focusing on the use of public transportation by urban women and girls. The research identified sexual harassment and insecurity of girls and women in public spaces as major issues of women living in cities and rapidly growing urban areas. Violation of basic rights and services, discriminatory cultural values and norms, weak legal and justice system and weak public service policies and their implementation were found to be major reasons behind the problem. In 2012, AAIN introduced Safe Cities for Women Campaign in the selected areas of the country.

In 2014, NEAT conducted a baseline study for the Safe City project in Kathmandu valley, Chitwan, Nepalgunj, Biratnagar, and Hetauda. Following the baseline, safe city interventions were also initiated in the project areas. In 2015, more comprehensive study was conducted covering another set of six cities in Nepal (i.e. Kathmandu, Dhulikhel, Pokhara, Birgunj, Chitwan, Nepalgunj). The study confirmed the findings from 2014, observed some changes in places where safe city campaign was implemented, and also found inferences of impact due to earthquake.

In the aftermath of the 2015 massive earthquake and based on the experience and learning from the project, AAN realized the necessity to scale up the project and increase its coverage.

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### 1 **What is safe city?**

UN Women defines a 'safe city' as: (1) one in which both the government and civil society guarantee women's rights in all spheres; and, (2) a city that promotes the elimination of gender-based violence, while at the same time promoting equal opportunities for men and women in all spheres of social, economic, cultural and political life (ex: access to employment, education, political participation, resources, leisure).

## Topline findings from Safe City Study 2015

- Majority of the women and girls (14-30) find public places to be unsafe. Around 89 percent respondents found that the public spaces in their cities are unsafe.
- Around 9 in 10 respondents have experienced sexual harassments in public spaces. The occurrence of such harassments is also quite frequent: around 60 percent of the respondents reported that they have experienced such harassments during last month with 1 in 3 girls facing it more than once a week.
- Although more than 90 percent respondents could identify the key forms of sexual harassment that could occur in public space, the prevalence differed by type of violence. The most common violence was physical touch followed by displaying private parts of the body, and making comments or gestures of sexual nature.
- Prevalence locations are specific. The locations with higher prevalence of harassment are public vehicle (3.5), social networks (3.5), movie theatre, roads, and market place. Compared to baseline during 2014, social network has become more prominent location for harassment.
- Risks are connected to vulnerabilities. Girls and women of younger age (particularly 15-19 years) who need to travel alone or travel with family friends, mobile for education and employment, and travel frequently using public vehicle were more vulnerable. The awareness on legal provisions and educational attainment of the victim did not reduce vulnerability.
- Reporting is very low largely because of ambiguity in understanding about sexual harassments and social and institutional barriers. Only around 11 percent respondents reported that they ever reported violence in public space. The lack of knowledge about the legal provisions was a barrier only for a small proportion of respondents. More than 65 percent respondents reported that they are aware of legal provisions though they consider it to be inadequate (61%).
- There were some indirect effects of the prevalence of violence cases on the opportunities for women. Around 52 percent respondents reported that they have had to make some adjustments with around 85 percent among them reporting that it affected their education and employment related opportunities.
- The brief project implementation during 2014-2015 has already initiated some changes. In areas where project was implemented during last two years, majority of the respondents (63%) reported at least some improvements.

Therefore, additional scoping study of the Safe City project was commissioned to be carried out in four districts and its urban areas, namely, Bidur of Nuwakot, Suryabinayak and Bhaktapur core areas, Dhadingbesi of Dhading and Chuatara-Tatopani of Sindhupalchok. The scoping study is expected to contribute to the design and the scaling up of the Safe City project.

### 1.3. Objectives

The major goal of this scoping study is to understand the local context, assess and measure the present situation regarding violence against women and girls in public places and identify key stakeholders and areas for future partnership. Furthermore, a review of existing data, taking stock of existing services/projects against sexual harassment and violence against women is also a priority for investigation in the scoping study.

The core objectives of the study were:

- to explore, explain and understand sexual harassment and other gender-based violence in public places
- to identify and assess the role of the relevant stakeholders and their function
- to identify the existing multisectoral services for the survivors of violence against women and girls
- to provide insight to demographic, social, cultural, economic and other relevant characteristics of intervention areas.

The study collected data on knowledge, attitude, practice, and behaviors related to gender based violence in the major cities/town in the study district. It covers basic information related to instances of GBV in public places, experiences of violence in city areas and women's responses to such event, etc. The basic information and earthquake specific inquiries were done under following areas.

- Changes in public spaces during post-earthquake scenario (in terms of vulnerability of GBV in public spaces)
- Changes in vulnerability to and prevalence of GBV in public spaces
- Effects, reactions, and coping strategies

### 1.4. Study Coverage

The study covered four earthquake affected districts: Nuwakot, Sindhupalchowk, Dhading, and Bhaktapur, with a focus on municipalities and emerging urban areas in the districts. In Nuwakot district, the study sites were selected Bidur municipality and Trisuli Bazaar, and in Dhading district, Nilkhanta municipality and Gajuri areas were selected. In Sindhupalchowk district, the district headquarters Chautara Bazaar and Sukute area were included in the study. In Bhaktapur, the study covered two municipalities -Bhaktapur and Madhyapur Thimi.

## 2.1. Methodology Overview

The scoping study involved collection of quantitative as well as qualitative data from the community members, educational institutions, non-government organizations, and government agencies. The study adopted set of simple methods involving review of secondary sources, sample survey and community level discussions. In developing the scoping study methodology, the study team relied on UN Women's Guidance for Scoping Studies, a document prepared to assist in the Safe Cities program. A sample survey was conducted with 360 women and girls in two urban areas of each district. Two focus group discussions with women and girls of different age groups were also conducted in each district. Around 7-10 women participated in each FGD. The researchers also conducted key informant interviews with representatives of local district development committees, municipality authorities, District Women and Children Office, Women and Children Service Center at District Police. One interview with representative of local schools was conducted in all four districts.

## 2.2. Study Methods

The key methods used are described below:

- **Method - 1: KAP Survey with Girls and Women**

- **Rationale**

The main purpose of a KAP survey with girls and women was to understand their perception and experience related to violence in public spaces, including reporting and solution to the violence. The KAP survey allowed one-to-one exploration through the scheduled interview.

- **Sample size and sampling**

A KAP survey will be administered in the target group with a sample size of girls (age group 14-30) of 360 (357). The sample size is calculated considering confidence interval of 5, the population of 5,000 (taking the figure of beneficiary per year), and confidence level of 95%. The sample size will be further divided into 90 per district, and 45 per urban area. In all four districts, two municipalities or urban area will be selected for the study based on initial scoping. In each city, the sampling procedure was as follows:

- Identify public spaces to conduct survey
- Take first random individual (meeting the criteria - female, age 14-30)

## Basic information areas

- Experience of GBV in public place (nature, frequency, adjustments/effects)
- Knowing the perpetrators
- Understanding of girls and women about GBV in public places
- Coping strategy adopted by women, and its effect on day to day lives
- Demand and use of available safe public places
- Awareness about legal provisions
- Tendency of women and girls to report
- Response from legal and judicial mechanism and solutions
- Availability of support mechanisms (family, friends, agency/networks)
- Effectiveness of support mechanisms

## Earthquake specific information

- Changes in public spaces during post-earthquake scenario (in terms of vulnerability of GBV in public spaces)
- Changes in vulnerability to and prevalence of GBV in public spaces
- Effects, reactions, and coping strategies

- Depending on the mass, decide the random number (frequency) to leave to select next respondent
- Select next respondent
- Continue the process

- **Contents**

In the KAP survey, the core contents were identified based on the guidance document provided by the UN Women. The contents were also mapped, taking reference to previous safe city studies conducted by AAN in 2014, and 2015. It basically covered information about knowledge related to GBV in public space, prevalence by types and locations, attitude towards GBV, and experiences.

- **Method - 2: Focus group discussions (only in new locations)**

- **Rationale**

FGDs were used to collect valuable qualitative information related to gender based violence against girls and women.

- **Sample size and sampling**

Focus group discussions were conducted with homogenous groups of girls and women (age group 14-20 and 20-30), and boys and men (age group 14-30). The groups were identified at the local level through reference of local non-governmental organizations. The participants were purposively selected to meet the age criteria depending on their willingness to participate and speak on this topic.

- **Contents**

The key discussion points included forms of violence in public spaces, perpetrators, practice and attitude regarding reporting and other issues related to the program and its impacts. FGDs were conducted based on specific checklists supplemented by some participatory tools.

- **Method 3: Key Informant Interview (KII)**

As Safe Cities project will be implemented in collaboration with various stakeholders, a range of governmental and non-governmental entities are identified as crucial participants in this scoping study. The key informant interviews with government stakeholders involved discussion with officials from District Development Committee (DDC) and municipality, law enforcement agencies (Women and Children Service Center at Police Stations), representative of educational institutions and local women's rights group/networks.

- **Method 4: Municipality Information Form**

A form was developed to collect information from municipality to compile the basic profile of the intervention area in terms of demographics, and other socio-economic and cultural parameters. The information was obtained and filled based on the information provided by the Municipality and literature review at the local level.

- **Method 5: Desk Review**

The desk review included guiding documents from UN Women, and various publications related to safe city. It also involved review of national policies, related project reports and studies on violence against women, and available safe city reports conducted by the AAN and other agencies.

## 2.3. Special Considerations During Data Collection

### Human subject research ethics

NEAT ensures strict adherence to human subject research ethics related to anonymity, confidentiality, and informed consent before collecting any information under its research activities. Standard consent form was used prior to collection of data for Safe Cities. Moreover, as this research pertains to sensitive issues of sexual harassment and violence against women and girls, NEAT ensured sensitivity in its execution of research methods.

## Participation of Safe City for Women Campaign Team

The baseline study was conducted by mobilizing a central team of experts of NEAT with support from the NGOs and agencies involved in Safe City for Women Campaign. The campaign team members were consulted at the beginning and during the analysis process.

### 2.4. Limitations

The study was conducted within a short period of time involving only five key cities where the program is planned for implementation. The data collection involved PNGO officials who were briefly trained on research ethics and data collection procedure. The study was conducted with randomly selected respondents identified in a public setting, and thus, specific sample frame was not used in the sampling process.

The study was conducted in pre-determined districts affected by the earthquake. The emerging urban areas were selected purposively. Only two such areas in each district were included in the survey. Due to the absence of legal mechanism to record and process sexual harassment as such, no data on harassment in public places could be collected. In the District Police Office, only sexual harassment of physical nature and sexual assault were found to be recorded under attempt to rape title. The representative of the District Police Office confirmed that cases of verbal and non-verbal form of harassment are not reported to the Police.

## 3.1. Profile Of The Area

Four municipal areas or urbanized area fell under the scope of the study in four districts. Among them, Bhaktapur district, adjoined with the capital city Kathmandu is comparatively highly urbanized city. The whole district has six municipalities or urban areas. Nuwakot district is located northwest of the capital, Kathmandu. Bidur is the only municipality with an area of 34.55 sq km. Dhading district, which acts as a gateway to the Kathmandu district has few slightly urbanizing areas along the Prithvi highway which connects Kathmandu to the Terai. Only Nilkhanta was declared a municipality in 2070 B.S. Sindhupalchok, a district lying north to Kathmandu valley is one of the districts highly affected by the massive earthquake in 2015. Chautara Bazaar is the municipal area in the district declared an urban area recently in 2071 B.S.

In terms of population, Madhyapur is the most populated municipality under the study, but the Nilkhanta municipality in Dhading covers a wide area. In all municipalities, a large proportion of the households are connected to electricity, but access to safe drinking water is widely varied. In Madhyapur Thimi, only a quarter of the households have access to safe drinking water.

Table 3.1: Basic profile of study area

	Madhyapur	Bidur	Nilkantha	Chautara
Area (sq. km)	11.47	34.55	107.24	41
Total population (estimated)	82,037	26,750	51,452	15,606
No. of households	20,302	6,270	10,011	3,877
Male (est)	40,313	12,712	25,697	7,314
Female (est)	42,623	14,038	25,755	8,292
Literacy rate (%)	97			
HH with drinking water (%)	25	70	75	-
HH with electricity (%)	100	100	95	-
Total HH affected by the earthquake in the district	15,710	9,436	8,000	4,382

### a. Public Services and Infrastructure

The scoping study team also collected information on various public services available in the municipality. It gives an overview of the size and scale of the municipal public spaces which are

instrumental in determining spaces for intervention of the safe city project. The municipalities vary in terms of physical infrastructures. Madhyapur Thimi has comparatively higher number of educational institutions than other areas. It has more bus parks, public parks than other municipalities. Bidur municipality, as a section of the Pasang Lhamu highway, has a very large volume of public vehicles (running daily) as compared to other three municipalities. Chautara municipality is relatively backward in the road infrastructure. At the time of the study, Nilkhanta municipality in Dhading district did not have street lights and the process of installing street lights was underway.

Table 3.2: Mapping of service points and public spaces

Services	Madhyapur	Bidur	Nilkantha	Chautara
High schools (+2)	14	4	7	7
College (private & community)	6	2	4	1
Health facilities	5	16	18	4
Financial Institutions	5	30	13	6
Bus park	4	2	1	1
Park	2	0	1	1
Cinema	NA	1	1	0
Factories	NA	NA	3	0
Religious and cultural places	25	128	NA	7
Police stations	2	6	3	1
Tarmac Road (Km)	10	58	13	0.79
Non-tarmac road (Km)	5			103.6
No. of public vehicle running daily	NA	400	60	NA
Are street lights available?	Yes	Yes	No	Yes, partially

## b. Places to Report GBV

Gender auditing is not a common practice in the municipalities under study. Of the four municipalities covered in the study, only Bidur municipality in Nuwakot had conducted a gender audit in the last fiscal year (2072/73). According to the information provided by the municipal representative, there are four agencies in Madhyapur where reporting of GBV incidents can be done. In Chautara Bazaar, there are three places for which to register complaints for GBV. Similarly, there are four places in Nilkhanta and six agencies in Bidur where GBV can be reported. Women and Children Service Center in District Police Office, Women and Children Office, the legal counseling section in municipality office, NGOs, like Stri Shakti and Saathi are some of the agencies where the complaint of GBV can be reported.

### 3.2 Safety & Prevalence Of Violence In Public Space

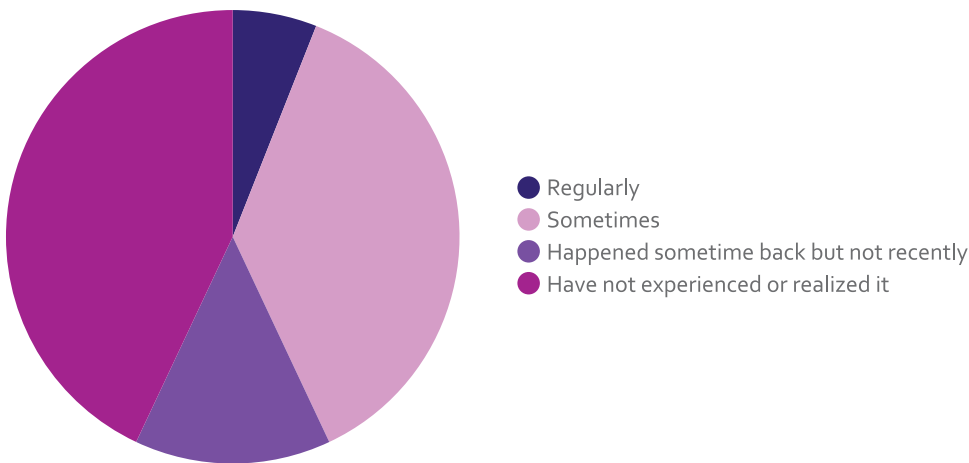
The majority of women finds public places to be unsafe for them. Eight out of ten girls/women find public space in their area to be unsafe. Girls reportedly felt unsafe in those areas where young boys loiter in a group, especially those who are under the influence of drug or alcohol. These areas are usually chowks (crossroads), areas near liquor shops and the dark places. Women in peri-urban areas feel unsafe while walking to and from the market, especially where the road has turns and dark nooks and corners. In newly formed municipalities like Nilkantha in Dhading there is a lack of urban facilities, such as street lights. In this district, girls pointed out that the main road and the chowks in the market area are the most unsafe for them. Girls and boys both indicated that time is crucial to their sense of safety.

There are dark turns in the road where a group of boys is hanging out. We generally take alternative route. (FGD with girls, Nuwakot)

The common time for harassment is early morning around 6 and in the evening after 5 during loadshedding hours. (FGD with boys, Dhading)

The prevalence of harassment was wide, also in upcoming urban areas. At least 6 out of 10 women have faced sexual harassment in public space while around six percent face it on a regular basis. In aggregate, six percent reported that they experience it on a regular basis while a 4 in 10 girls/women reported that they sometimes face it. Around 43 percent girls/women reported that they have not experienced or have not realized a violence in public space.

Chart 3.1: Did you face harassment in public place?



It is alarming that some girls who faced harassments in public spaces were facing it frequently. One third of the participants reported that they are facing violence more than five times a week for the last one month, followed by 7 percent who faced 3-4 times a week, and around 60 percent face 1-3 times a week. The figures indicate possible long term effects on girls/women, and the opportunities they receive.

### 3.3. Forms of Harassment

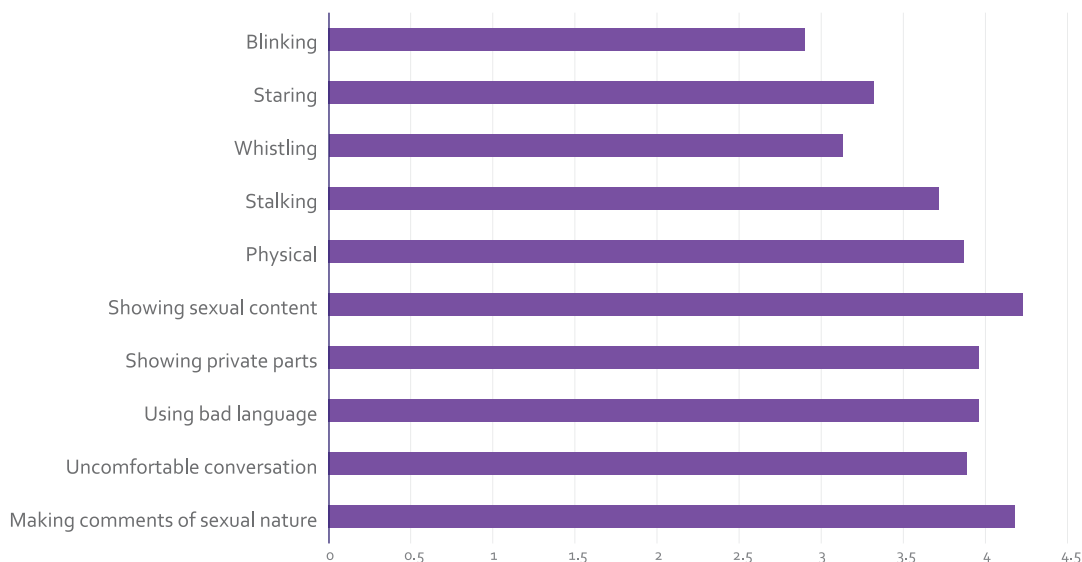
On the whole, women were mostly able to identify various external events as a violence. While some of the violence, such as teasing, blocking the way, unwanted touching was more common, some forms of harassment - like teasing, clicking tongue are not considered serious by many women as a reportable offence.

Table 3.3. Awareness about various forms of harassment

Forms of harassment		% of women who consider it as a violence	Remarks
Non Verbal	Blinking eyes	88.4%	Non-verbal forms that are not considered violence
	Staring	84.1%	
	Whistling	89.5%	
	Stalking	97.7%	
	Showing sexual content	99.4%	
	Showing private parts	99.7%	
Verbal	Using bad language	98.9%	
	Uncomfortable conversation	97.5%	
	Making comments of a sexual nature	99.4%	
Physical	Physical	100.0%	All consider it a violence

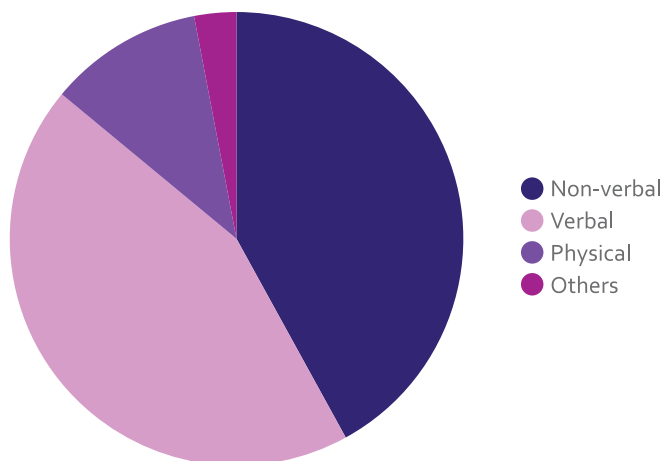
Although awareness has had some implications for the way people consider and report violence, the level of prevalence differed for various forms of violence. The prevalence was quite high for almost all forms. Highly prevalent forms of violence were: showing private body parts, physical touch, engaging in uncomfortable conversation, using bad language, making comments of a sexual nature, and showing sexual content (mostly applicable for social networking sites). The new forms of non-verbal harassments are more prevalent than the old forms, such as (whistling, stalking).

Chart 3.2. Rating on prevalence by forms of harassment (Rating 1-5)



For areas outside Kathmandu, non-verbal and verbal harassments were more common than the physical ones. For around 44 percent women/girls, the last violence they faced was of verbal (using bad language, uncomfortable conversation, making comments of a sexual nature) followed by 42 percent non-verbal (showing private parts, showing sexual content, stalking) and around 11 percent physical violence.

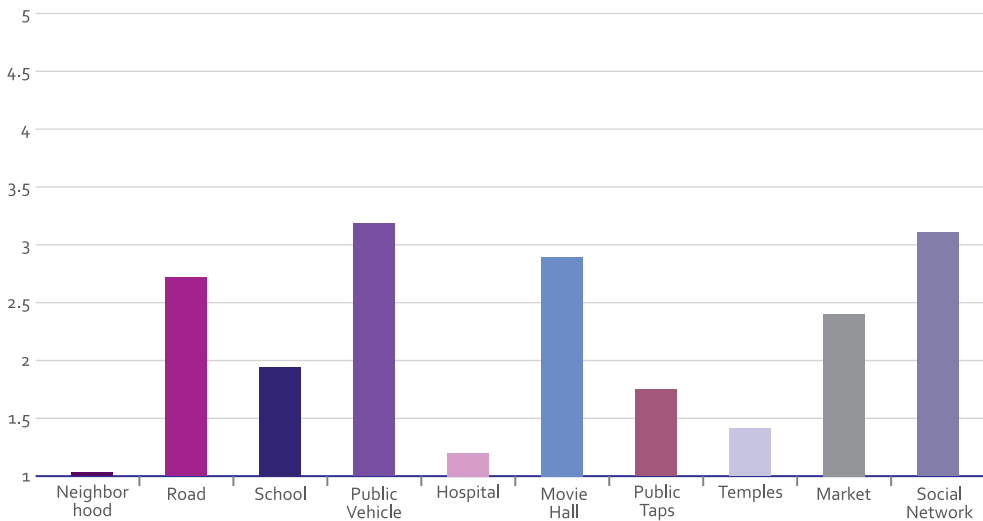
Chart 3.3. What was the form of violence you faced recently?



### 3.4. Locations

Public vehicles were found to be most unsafe in terms of prevalence of harassment for young women and girls. Girls/women experience harassment in public vehicles traveling to and from their hometown to Kathmandu or to other cities. The other unsafe spaces were social networking and internet (mobile phones), cinema hall, and roads. With a rating of 1-5, 1 being the least vulnerable to harassment and 5 being the most vulnerable to harassment, the average rating for public vehicle was at 3.36 closely followed by harassment through mobile phones and internet (3.27).

Chart 3.4. Rating on prevalence in various locations (1-5)



Many women report that harassers take advantage of the seating arrangement in public vehicles where taking passengers are more than the seating capacity which gives opportunities to perpetrators. Physical harassment (unwanted touching, rubbing) is most common inside public vehicles.

In qualitative discussions, the participants revealed the extent of harassment through social platforms and mobile phones. In more urban areas, like Bhaktapur, the problem was most common through social networks, particularly the Facebook. Unwanted chats, calls and sending vulgar pictures and videos through Facebook was quite common.

They take number from Facebook and call us or send unnecessary chat message in the Facebook. (FGD with girls)

Most harassments take place inside the bus. There are few seats and more people. People have to stand. (FGD with boys)

I have faced harassment 2-3 months ago while traveling. The bus conductor was pressing on me. So, I also shoved him. (Interview with representative of District Police Office)

In the night, there are calls from unknown numbers; they talk vulgar word. We switch the phone off, scold them and block them. (FGD with girls)

Crowded public spaces like a cinema hall (movie theatres), bus parks are also places where comparatively more girls/women face sexual harassment.

There is so much teasing in the cinema halls (FGD with girls).

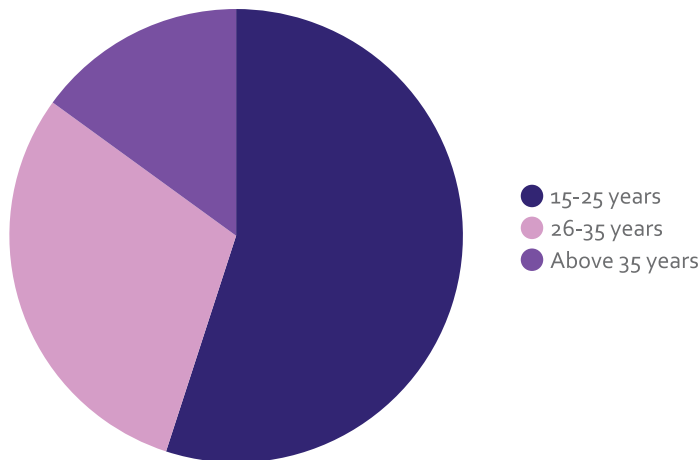
Sometimes guys stick chewing gum in hair, dress. (FGD with girls)

It is more prevalent in the bus park, it has also happened to me once. One guy stalked me so I told two guys there who told me to go talk to the police. The guys later ran away. (FGD with girls)

### 3.5. Perpetrators

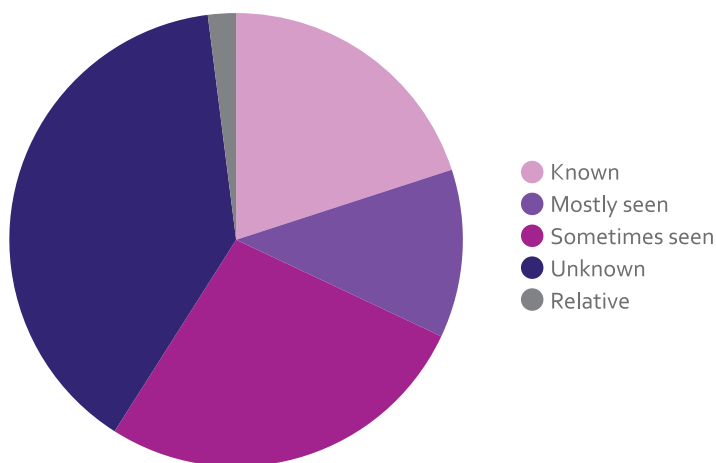
As reported by the women, the age of the perpetrator in their recent experience of harassment was between 15 and 25 years. Around 30 percent were between the age of 26-35 years old and the rest 15 percent were above 35 years old. The older men were mostly found unwanted touching while younger men/boys would tease. But college going girls cited being harassed by boys younger than them.

Chart 3.5. Age group of the perpetrator

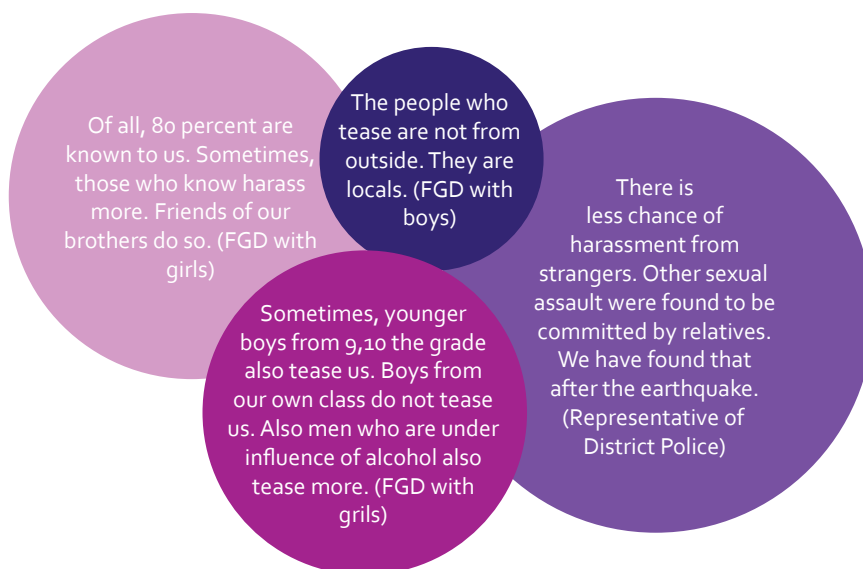


A large proportion of the perpetrators (aprox 61 per cent) were either known or seen earlier. Around 39 percent were complete strangers.

Chart 3.6. Who were the perpetrators?



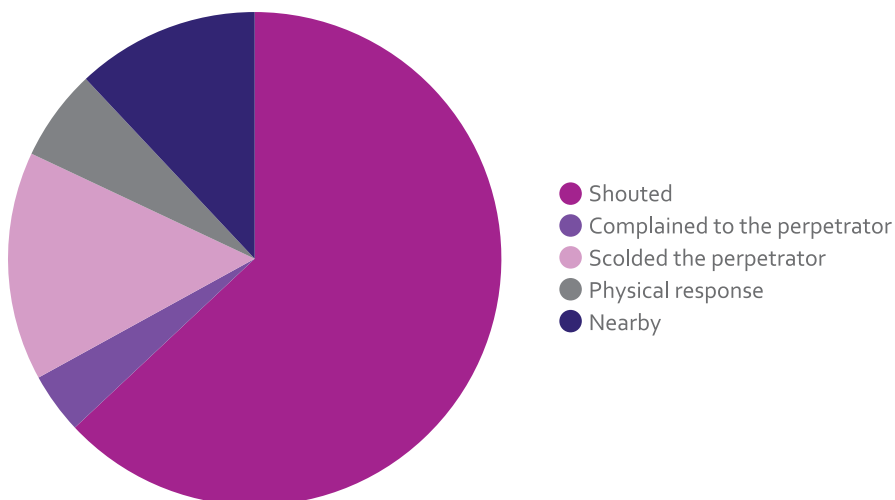
The qualitative discussions also confirm the same. The same perpetrators try to harass same victims, and thus, are distantly known. This figure leads to a point that possibly the perpetrators can be tracked and dealt with.



### 3.6. Response & Legal Actions

The majority of women/girls responded to the violence: 70 percent of the participants had protested against their recent experience of sexual harassment. More than half (63%) of them had shouted against the act. A 15 percent of them scolded the perpetrator and 12 percent reported the act to somebody nearby. However, physical response (6%) and reporting (4%) was very low.

Chart 3.7: How did you respond?

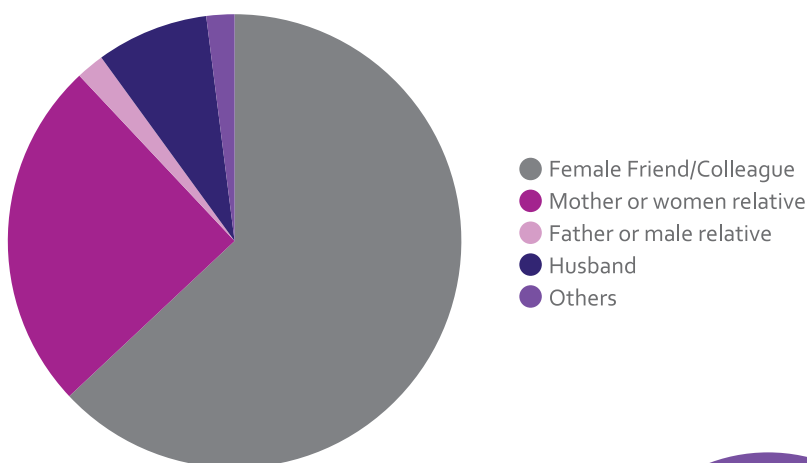


The focus group discussion resulted that when the girls are alone, they mostly stay quiet or ignore harassments, like teasing and unwanted touching. However, being with a friend and relative increases the likelihood of protesting or reacting or taking some kind of action against the perpetrator.

#### a. Coping

It was found that girls usually share the incident of harassment to their friends. Some also prefer reporting to mothers. However, mothers' first instinct is to tell daughters that they might have incited it- especially through clothes and behavior. The KAP survey revealed that 57 percent of the participants had shared the latest experience with someone. The most trusted point to share such information were female friends and colleagues followed by mom. The majority of them (63%) shared with their female friends followed by 25% percent who shared with mother or female relatives, 8% shared it with their husband, and only around two percent shared the incident with father, brother or other male relatives.

Chart 3.8. Who did you share the incidence with?



Reporting to father or brother and other male members was avoided because of the fear that they would take an action and the incident would 'blow out of proportion'. This was corroborated during a discussion with men/boys in various districts. Boys/men reported that they would take physical actions against the men who harass their sisters or female relatives.

It is easy to tell about it to mother. They tell us that we have to be good, nothing bad happens or there is any fear. (FGD with girls)

If we find somebody teasing our sisters and mothers, we talk to them. If it exceeds normalcy, we gather a group of boys and beat them up. (FGD with boys)

We mostly tell to friends, otherwise to family members. (FGD with girls)

### b. Reporting, Response and Actions Taken

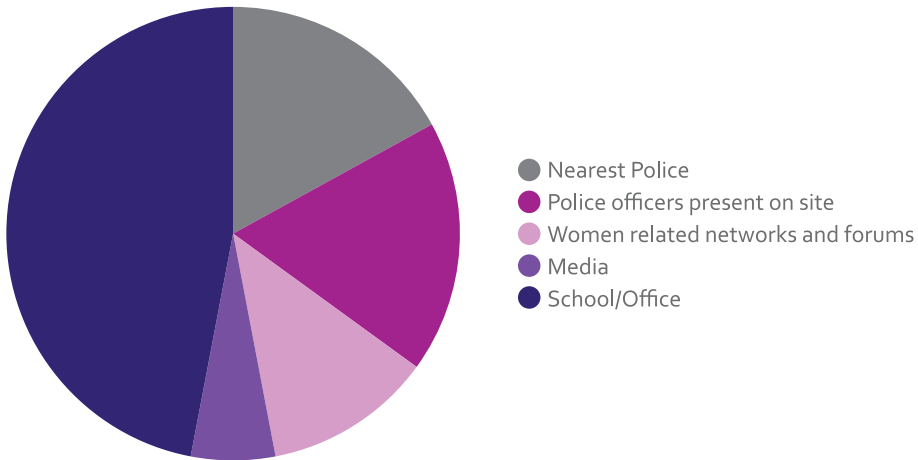
Ninety five percent of the women have never filed a complaint against sexual harassment in public spaces. Only 5 percent have filed a case of any kind or reported to the agencies. Both young girls and women do not think it is wise to report to police because it would raise more questions from the police, and draw the incident into public eyes. It was corroborated by the representative of Women and Children Service Center at District Police Office, who stated that people do not want to report in fear of publicity although the unit tries to assure their confidentiality. Many respondents also did not believe that legal provisions and mechanisms would be effective to reduce the causes of violence. Only around 10% believed that it could contribute significantly while around 70 percent believed it could contribute partially. Women/girls doubted the ability and willingness of the government mechanism to adhere and implement available legal provisions/mechanisms.

The families suggest the victims to tolerate, and their guardians would solve through other ways. So, they forbid them to report. (Representative of Women and Children Service Center)

There is also a fear of political pressure from the accused and ultimately retribution to the accuser and her family. Women/girls think it is safe and easy to report to organization/CBOs rather than police. However, they are not aware of any organization which takes complaints against public harassment

Of them, nearly half (47%) complained in their school or workplace. Around 18 percent of them filed a case at the nearest police station and the same proportion reported it to the Police Officer present on site. Around 12 percent reported to the women related networks and forum, but only 6 percent reported to the media.

Chart 3.9. Where did you report?

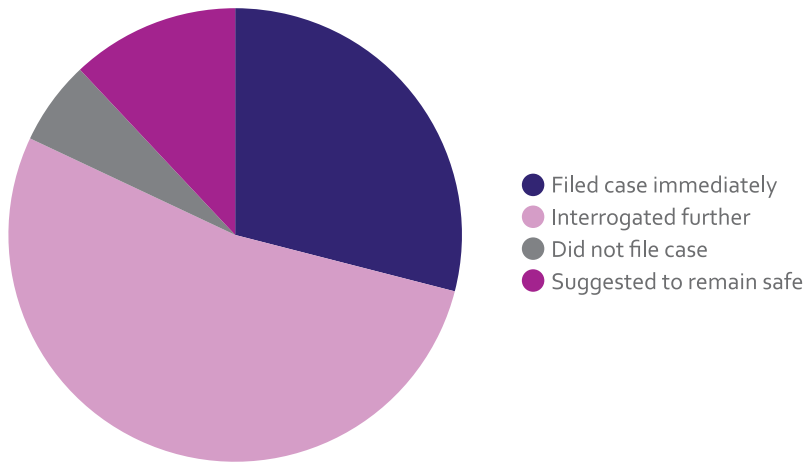


Girls feel safer reporting the cases of harassment to women. But, many women do not have knowledge of women run service center in District Police Office.

One of the reasons for women to not report violence immediately was the lack of their trust on the police system and overall mechanism. Very few reported cases are actually taken seriously and taken for appropriate punishment. After reporting to the agencies, only 30 percent of the women’s complaints were filed immediately. For 53 percent women/girls, they were interrogated further, and in case of 12 percent women, they were rather suggested to remain safe and 6 percent of the women did not file the case.

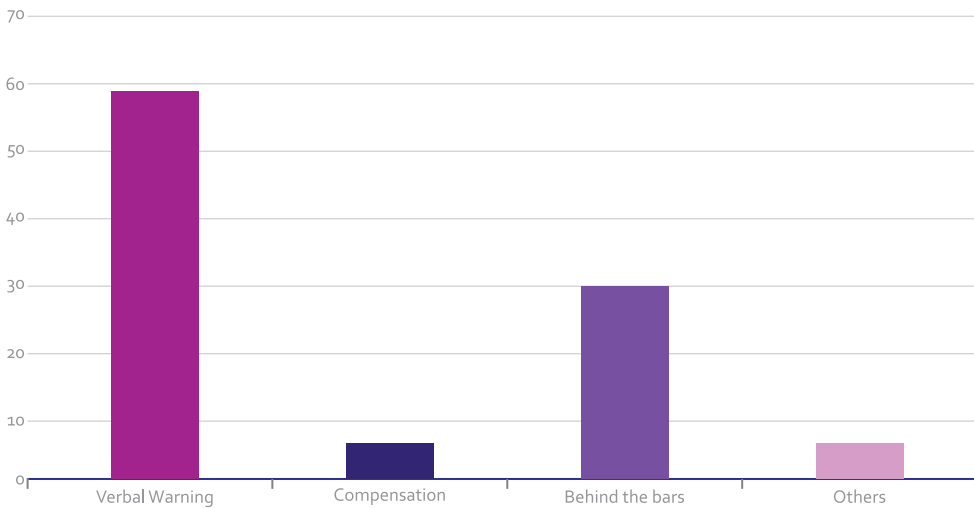
- We have female Principal in our school so it is easy to tell her. (FGD with girls)
- Girls share their issues with female teacher. (Interview with school representative)
- We have not received any case of harassment in the public places and public vehicles. (Representative of Women and Children Service Center)

Chart 3.10. Immediate response of the reporting agency



Out of 92 percent of the complaints, some kind of action was taken. For majority cases (59%), the perpetrators were only verbally warned. In a 30 percent case, the perpetrators were taken into the custody and 6 percent of them were compensated. Other kinds of punishment were given to perpetrators in 6 per cent of cases.

Chart 3.11. Actions taken



Very few women/girls who registered complaints were satisfied with the response. Only 18 percent were highly satisfied and 23 percent were satisfied. The majority of them were either neutral or dissatisfied.

### c. Effects on the victim

Although not heavily in many cases, the prevalence of harassment and the fact that a girl/woman faced harassment in public space affects their daily schedule as well as education and employment opportunities. One in two girls/women had to make some form of shift in their daily schedule, and the cases have also affected their education and employment opportunities. For around 7-8 percent girls/women, the effects were high and for around 40 percent girls/women, the effects were moderate.

Table 3.4. Extent of effect of harassment on girls/women

Extent of effects	Have you had to change your routine due to such harassment?	If it has changed, has that affected your education and employment?
Yes, a lot	6.7	8.1
A bit	38.7	38.7
No	54.7	53.2
Total	100.0	100

### 3.7. Who are Vulnerable ?

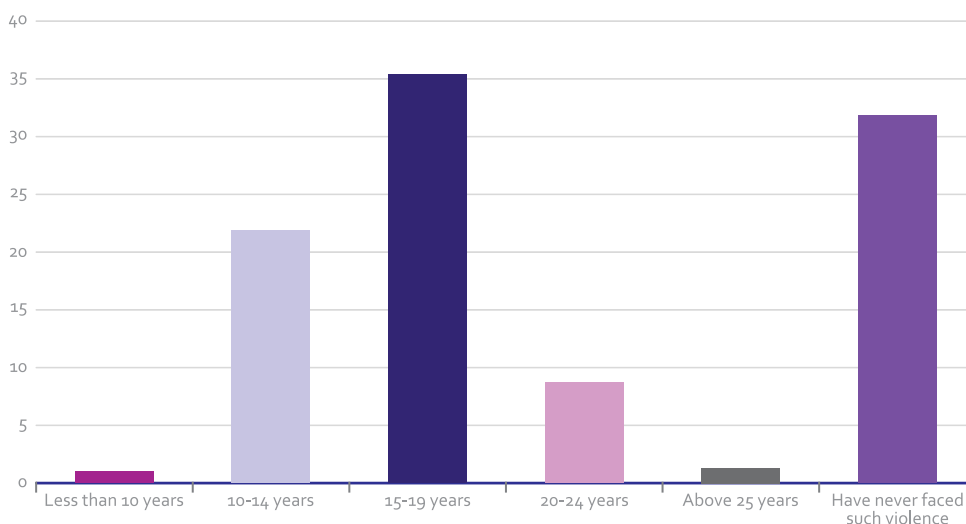
Some girls/women were more vulnerable to face violence in public space than others. It depended on various characteristics such as:

- Age
- Use of public vehicle
- Companionship during travel
- Education, and awareness about rights
- Earthquake

#### a. Age and harassment

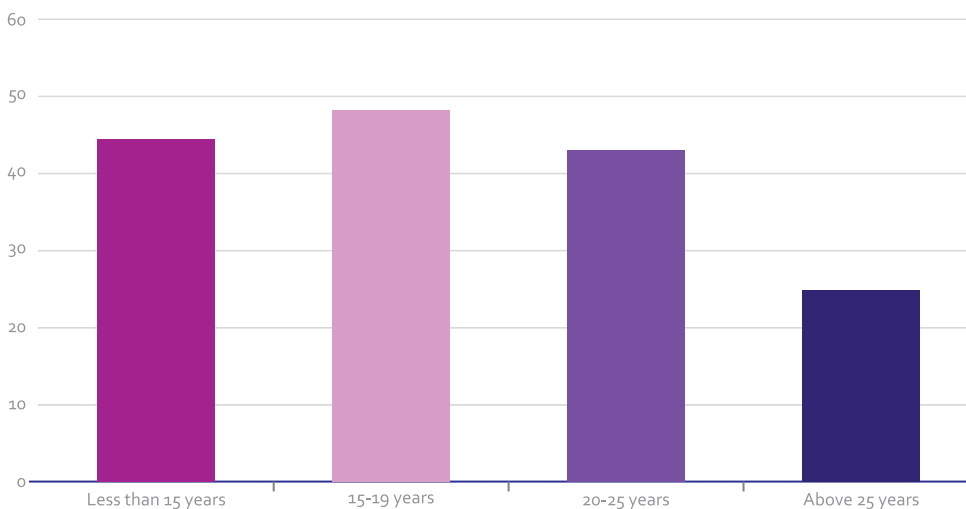
The violence was mostly common among girls/women of age 15-19 years while it started as early as 10 years. One in five women reported facing first violence at the age of 10-14 years. In the community discussion conducted with women and girls, the point was reinforced as young girls also being regular victims of sexual harassment.

Chart 3.12: Experience of harassment for the first time (% of respondents by age group)



Similarly, the prevalence was also higher for the women of age 15-19 years, though the women younger than 15 years and between 20 and 24 years are still victim to some extent. One in two women/girls from age group 15-19 (48%) faced harassment in public space. The majority of women among those who reported to have faced such harassment earlier but not now were from the age group 20-24 years.

Chart 3.13. Women who reported to have faced harassment in public space regularly or sometimes (by age group)



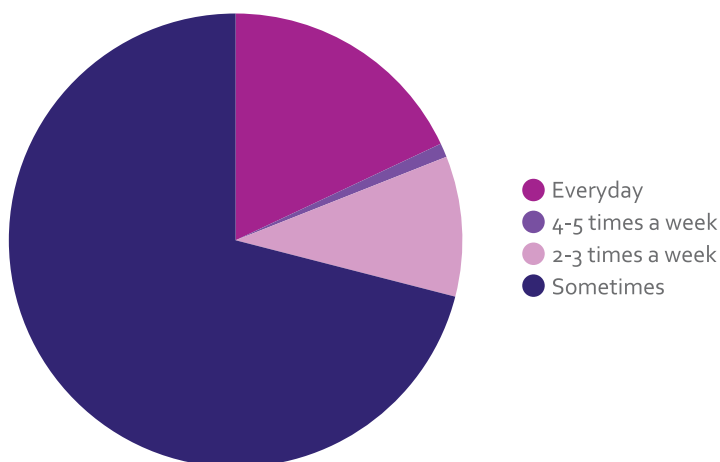
In the discussion women reported that girls as young as 11-12 years old, face harassment of one type or another. The women who are 25 years old and above reported that they have been facing little or no harassment. However, they think that younger women/teenage girls face more harassment and harassment is more frequent among the girls of the Mongolian ethnicity.

Teasing and verbal harassment is seen more in tamang and dalit girls. Also, they are threatened. (FGD with boys)

### b. Use of public vehicles

Women's mobility and use of public vehicle has been an area of interest for this study. But many participants reported that they do not use public vehicles regularly. The majority of the participants (71%) travelled only sometimes/infrequently using public vehicles followed by 18 percent of the women use public vehicle every day and 12 percent use them 2-3 times a week.

Chart 3.14. Frequency of use of public vehicle



The frequency of use of public vehicle had significant relations with a chance to face harassment (Chi.square coeff = 0.02). Among those who travelled on daily basis, 73 percent reported to have faced sexual harassment in public space, and among those travelling sometimes, half (51%) faced harassment in public space.

### c. Travel companions

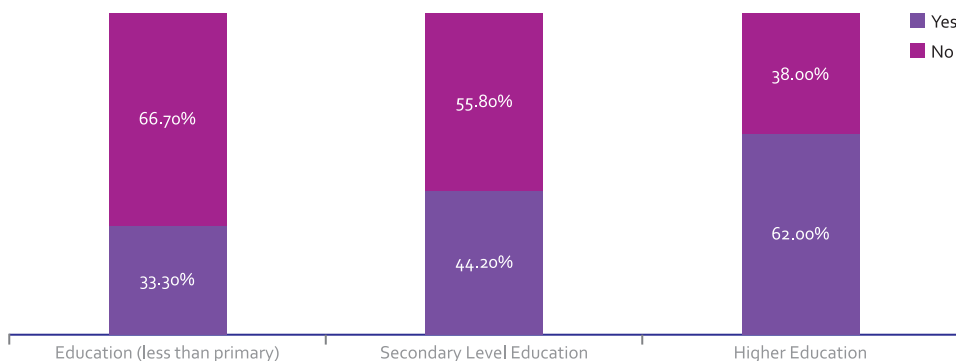
Women usually travel alone in the public vehicles. The study revealed that half of the travel alone (51.4%) while a quarter of them (25.1%) travel with their family members, and 18 percent usually travel with a female friend. The companionship and its nature significantly affected the chance to face harassment in the public spaces (Chi. coeff = 0.05). Women/girls travelling alone or with female friend were more likely to face the harassment in public space. Around 60 percent girls who travelled alone and 59 percent girls who travelled with other girls faced harassment in public space. There was only difference in a chance to face violence if the

companion was male or a family member while being with female friend did not make any difference.

#### d. Education

The education level of the respondent was uniquely associated with chances to face harassment in public space. The one with less than primary level of education were least affected compared to the one with higher education. The education level might have affected the chance to face violence since better educated are more mobile for education and employment opportunities.

Chart 3.16. Have you faced any gender based violence and harassment in public space?



#### e. Awareness about rights

Around 3 in 4 respondents stated that they are aware of the provisions related to gender based violence (GBV) while only half (52.5%) said that they are satisfied with those provisions. The same proportion (73%) also believed that these provisions are helpful in reducing violence against women and sexual harassment. The awareness about rights did not have any influence on whether a person faces violence. **The women aware about rights were able to identify and locate violence in public space, and were also facing them more than those not aware about it. However, it determined whether a person is reporting the case. If aware, there is a tendency that women/girls report about the violence.** Among those who were aware of their rights, 59% faced violence in public space (39% among unaware), and 57% among those aware of rights actually reported the violence (compared to only 25% for those not aware).

Table 3.5. Awareness of rights and facing violence

Are you aware of the rights related to gender based violence?	% of women/girls who faced violence?	% of women/girls who reported violence
Yes	59	57
No	39	25

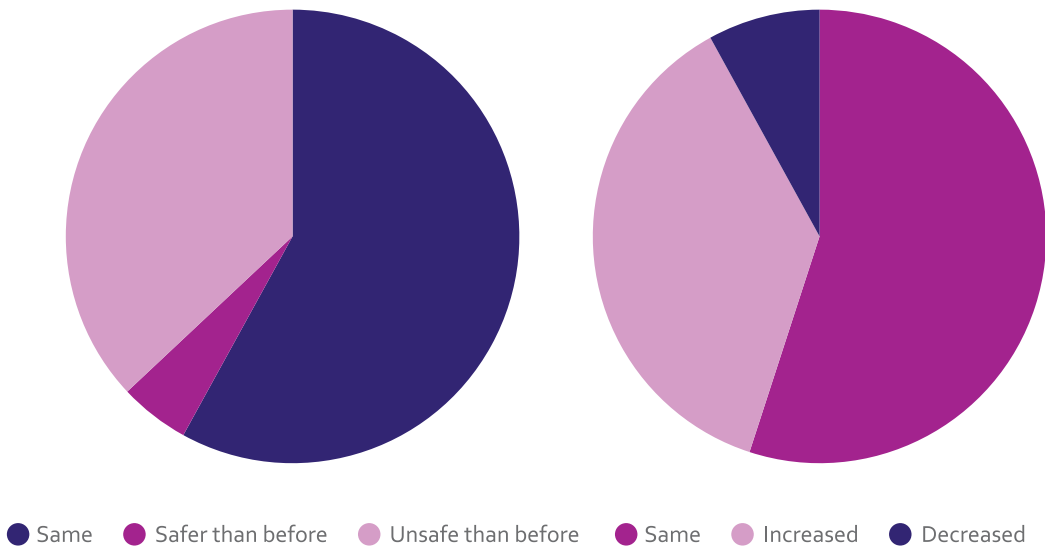
Both men and women showed very less knowledge about the complaint and redressal mechanism. They were not aware of the legal implications of sexual harassment. Many believed that the Police would just warn the perpetrator and let him loose. In fact, one of the reasons for younger youths to be a perpetrator was lack of adequate awareness of harassment and legal provisions. Similarly, women were not aware of the availability of women-centered reporting unit in the District Police Office. Many concerns regarding reporting centered on the issues of confidentiality as women did not want to expose the event.

We don't know what are the punishment for harassment. (FGD with boys)

### f. Earthquake

**The earthquake affected regions have become more vulnerable to harassment and violence in public space.** Around 37 percent of the participants reported that public places have become more unsafe after the earthquake. Same proportion explains that the trend of violence is increasing after the earthquake. After the earthquake, in some areas, such as Bhaktapur where a large number of people were displaced, the cases of sexual harassment and assault in shelters were reported to the Police which was processed under attempt to rape clause. In Dhading, around 40 cases of sexual assault and rape inside shelters were reported to the District Police.

Chart 3.17: How has earthquake affected safety in public places?



Women generally consider neighborhood and areas near their homes safe. However, around 44 percent of the participants expressed that in the post-earthquake scenario, the safety has worsened and the violence has increased in the neighborhoods. The other public spaces which have become more unsafe after the earthquake were roads/streets (28%) and public vehicles (20%).

Table 3.6: Where has the violence increased after the earthquake?

Where has it increased?	Percentage
Neighborhood	43.9
Road/street	28.1
Public vehicle	20.1
Internet	3.6
Market	1.4
Hospitals	0.7
Movie halls	1.4

School girls participating in focus group discussion reported that after the earthquake they have started feeling unsafe as the buildings on their way home have been abandoned.

### 3.8. Supportive Measures

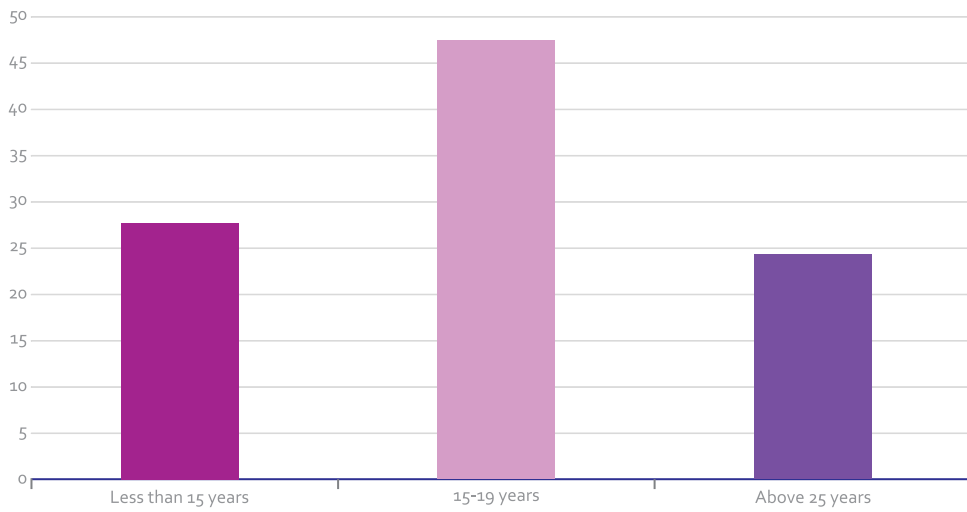
Around 58 percent of the participants covered by this study said that they have supportive networks to solve cases of violence against women and sexual harassment in their community. A one third of the women did not know if any such network existed in their community. Eight percent of the women/girls said that there were no such networks in their community. In the areas where such networks were available, only half (52%) of the participants thought that the networks were working effectively to support women.

In the study districts, both government and non-government agencies have been working in collaboration in the broader area regarding the violence against women and girls. In Bhaktapur, Women and Children Service Center has volunteers from Sahara Nepal who help the service user to write an official complaint to Women and Children Service Center without fees. In Dhading, an organization called 'Saathi' helps to register cases of violence in collaboration with District Women and Children Office. In Nuwakot, various organizations like Shakti Samuha are working against women trafficking. Despite these efforts, any focused intervention for sexual harassment in public spaces is considerably missing.

#### Changing public spaces

Although many participants found very minimal changes in recent years, a quarter found some improvement while another quarter found no improvement. For a quarter of the women, there has been no improvement for the safety in public spaces in the past 2-3 years. Many participants pointed that mobile phones, and social networks are some spaces which have become more unsafe than earlier. However, the Municipalities have prioritized to install street lights, and CC cameras in some cases. These initiatives are the signs of the positive changes, though they are not enough and well directed.

Chart 3.18: Do you find change in the safety of public spaces?



## 4.1. Conclusion

The scoping study confirms the information available from the previous studies commissioned by AAN in 2014 and 2016 in various big cities of the country, and has also enabled to generate some new inferences for upcoming cities. The study clearly indicates that sexual harassments in public places are widespread, though they are less in the core city areas. At least 6 in 10 women between age 14-30 have faced such incidence, and the occurrence of such incident for certain victims were very frequent. While girls and women were mostly aware of identifying certain activity as a violence, such awareness was particularly low among the boys/men. The majority of women were able to identify the various forms of non-verbal, verbal and physical harassment as violence against women.

The most unsafe public spaces were public vehicles, social networks, roads, and movie theatres. For both cities and for upcoming urban areas, social networks, including the use of mobile phone were a few key platforms for harassment. The women/girls of age group 15-19 who travel frequently are required to walk in the street and travel in a public vehicle for education/work, and those who travel alone or with female friends were at higher risk of harassment. While physical form of violence also existed, the prevalence of non-verbal and verbal violence were also heavily prevalent in the study sites. The perpetrators were mostly of the age group 15-24, and recognized individuals whom the victim has seen a few times. Due to various reasons, the tendency to file case against harassment was very low, though many women have reported that they instantly reacted to the incident. Although the educational attainment and awareness of legal provisions related to GBV did not affect the chance to face violence, the awareness on law particularly contributed to better response and reporting.

The earthquake has added additional vulnerability. In the post-earthquake scenario, the upcoming urban areas have become more unsafe for women/girls. The violence has particularly increased in neighborhood for women/girls. Nevertheless, the urban areas have made some rare initiatives, and are committed to make public space safer for girls/women though very little can be seen in practice.

The events emanating from unsafe public space have direct negative impacts on the lives of women and children. The young girls who face sexual harassment at early age face stress and trauma for a long time. Moreover, women/girls feel that violence affects their education and employment opportunities.

## 4.2. Key Inferences

This study identifies a major policy gap to protect women from violence. The prevalent laws and provisions are not implemented effectively. No laws have been able to incorporate verbal, non-verbal harassment into its jurisdiction. Although physical harassment is processed under the 'intent to rape' clause, this study suggests that very few cases of physical harassment ever get to the police station. Therefore, an all encompassing law for VAWG in public places is essential.

Furthermore, the findings provide inferences for an effective designing of a safe city program in the upcoming urban areas. It is suggested that the ActionAid and other safe city campaigners discuss on the findings to figure out the way forward. Nevertheless, based on the findings, the study team suggests on the following inferences:

- **Gender sensitive support mechanism, particularly police, court, and other reporting mechanisms need to be strengthened**

- Special police beats in public road to complain about violence in public vehicles
- Special cell on sexual harassments in public space in cities
- Women in cell in all police offices
- Informal support networks (available to support women to walk during the evening in lonely street)

- **Large scale advocacy for safer public spaces**

There is a need for advocacy to develop women/girls friendly infrastructure and services targeting roads, public vehicles, and social networking platforms and other public domains. For example: advocacy could target having bigger bus, which only takes passengers based on its seating capacity. Some suggested advocacy objectives could be:

- A large bus or public vehicles that strictly follow passenger per seat rule
- Adequate number of public vehicles
- Wider foot path and street lights
- Designated parking and waiting spaces with seats available for women/girls

- **Alternative ways to raise awareness of legal provisions**

The awareness on legal provisions against violence clearly (International instruments like CEDAW, Beijing+, national act and policy related to VAW) has some influence on response to and reporting of violence. The safe city campaigners, such as AAN, PNGOs, UN Agencies, Safe City Collation Group and alliance/network are suggested to explore ways to enhance awareness on legal provisions so that message can reach to a larger audience, and could drive changes in their behaviors. For example- campaigners can explore the use of mass media as well as screens available in microbus/bus and reach younger generation through social networks.

- **Specify the focus groups, time and locations**

The evidences generated in this study point out that sexual harassment is faced and committed by people of a certain age and the harassments are more prevalent in particular areas. This presents a need for the project to identify and focus on specific age groups, time and locations which assist vulnerability.

- Age group 15-25: Women in this age group frequently face violences whereas most perpetrators fall in this age group.
- Students or job holders who frequently travel and use public vehicles are more vulnerable to various forms of harassment.
- Location: Public vehicle, streets, and social networks, platforms where harassment is most common.

- **Work for long term solution than short term**

Considering that the situation not only requires immediate solution, but also need changes in the society. Some long term solutions include:

- Incorporate contents related to gender based violence and sexual harassments in the school curriculum, and also in the induction courses of police, military, government and private offices
- Work with schools and colleges to make boys as well as girls adequately aware of and informed about it
- Targeting awareness and advocacy that relate to the socialization process (starting with the family)
- Advocacy to encourage people (observer or individuals other than the victim) to raise the voice and support the victims in case of violence

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## Socio-demographic Profile

- **Family type and housing status:** Participants were equally from single families (48%) and joint families (52%). Half (52%) of the participants live in their own houses and one third (34%) live in a rented house. Around 11 percent live in their own house built in public land.
- **Age, education and Occupation:** Participants in the scoping study were mostly literate with a large proportion of participants having higher education (62.5%). A quarter of total respondents had completed secondary education followed by 8.3 percent with primary education.
- Half (54%) of the participants in the scoping study were students. Around 17 percent owned/operated business and 12 percent of the participants were job holders. Very few of them were daily wage earners. Around 14 percent of the women included in the study identified themselves as housewives.
- **Caste/Ethnicity:** 59.5 percent of the participants included in the study were janjatis, 31% were from other caste/ethnicity and 9.5 percent were Dalits.
- **Major Source of family income:** For around one- third (34%) of the participants non-agriculture business is a major source of family income. Agriculture was a major source of livelihood for 19 percent of participants. In 17 percent of the women's families, monthly salaried job was a major source of income. Foreign employment was a major source of family income for 10 percent of the participants.

Major Sources of Income	Percentage of Respondents
Agriculture (farming)	19
Agriculture (livestock)	7.3
Non-agricultural business	34.1
Monthly salaried job	17.3
Pension	4.2
Daily wage work	5.3
Foreign employment	10.1
Others	2.8



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