

# Women Safety in Digital India –a Prime Agenda for the Society

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## Abstract

In today's world safety of women has become the greatest concern. There is no place in city in the where women are not bound to fear of violence. No leader can strongly say that his nation is free of violence on women. Women and girls face sexual harassment and threat in streets of the city, while travelling in public transport, in school & colleges. This threat has been pulling down the freedom of living a comfortable life and participating in various sectors of work and education for women. The fact is that we are unaware of the depth of problems faced by women and there are fewer laws or policies to address the issues in detail. Objective: To understand the factors that makes women feel safe in public places. To analyze the usage of Digital India in addressing the issue of women safety.

**Keywords:** Digital India, Women Safety, Preventive Measure

## 1. Introduction

Safety of women is a matter of concern at home, working place. Last few years the crime against women were fearful. These types of crimes raise doubts on the safety issues of women in the city. Highest rate of crime against women in Chennai in 2000 was around 4,037 incidences as per the statistics of National Crime Records Bureau. There was decrease in the crimes drastically in the years which was around 838 by 2013. This has been reported as the largest fall in the cities of India in comparison to the capital city of India, Delhi which recorded 11,449 incidents in 2013.

**As per Survey of Women,** Women are losing the confidence on police. Delhi government's Women and Child Development Department reported that around 80% women in Delhi have fear on safety. The Survey also pointed out that the sexual harassment occurs due to lack of gender friendliness, improper infrastructure like consumption of alcohol in common places, lack of sufficient lighting, safe public places, improper working of helpline numbers, etc. This resulted in a high percentage of women losing faith in police curbing harassment cases. Therefore, there is a need to address this issue and build a nation free from crime against women to comfort them with freedom by ensuring safety.

Digital India has been influencing the economy in various ways by creating more job opportunity, better delivery services, technological sectors. It will always help in better Governance.

'Digital India' initiative has been an area of interest of numerous researches from various disciplines because of its great significance and influence on the economy as a whole and particularly the technological sector.

**Junger (1987),** Women may apply different strategies to avoid the risk of being the victim by avoiding a particular route. **Keane (1998),** Women may reschedule their trip or take along a companion with them to avoid risk of being victim to a crime.

**Junek, Binney & Winn (2006), 54-55; Skift(2017),** Women travelers have drastically increased due to various political and social reasons. Women labor force has also increased due to which women travel for leisure and are onto many business trips like men. **Wilson & Harris (2006); Wilson & Little (2008),** Women travelers are interested more on travelling alone for sense of independence and to address the challenge of stepping out of their comfort zone. **Smith (2008),** It is necessary to understand the pattern of male and female victimization to take the necessary preventive actions. **Ceccato (2013); Loukaito -Sideris (2015,2016),** Women fear more than men on public transport. **Morgan & Smith (2006),** even though men are more victims of crime than women. **UN Women (2017),** Violence in the private place is considered as human rights violation, violence and sexual harassment in public places still remains a neglected issue. **Michelle Bachelet (2013),** each city is different and needs a unique local response to address the safety of women. Cities have to improve lighting and designing of streets, training police personnel's and hiring more women police officials.

**Jyoti Parihar (2017),** explored the role of digital technology in building the gender gap and thereby facilitating equal opportunities to women in India who are looking for social and economic independence. **Gupta & Arora (2015),** found the impact of digital India on rural sector's. They indicated the effect of digital India in development of rural agriculture, entrepreneurship and empowerment of rural Indian women. **Rani (2016),** indicated the huge opportunity provided by Digital India projects and the usage of latest technology in service industry.

**Midha (2016),** indicated that the digital India is facing major challenges and if they are properly addressed and implemented it may lead to a better future for the citizen of India.

## 2. Digital India and Women Safety

India, being a developing country cannot ignore empowerment of

Women. Technology intervention is important while considering women empowerment. After globalization there has been a rapid growth in the Information and communication Technology after the advent of digital technology.

Women security has been one of the major concern as well as agenda for our Government. In spite of major efforts by the Government still there is a gap in its proper implementation. The gap may be due to lesser application of Digital India like Internet & Women Safety App's by Women in India. (Fig1)

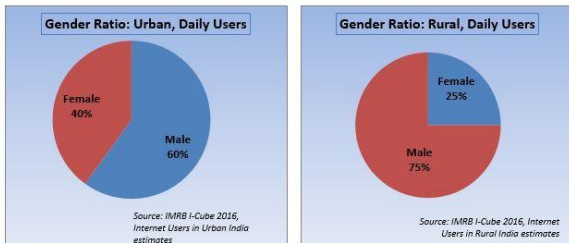


Fig: Growth of Internet Usage by Women

Source: IMRB I-Cube 2016

According to a study conducted by United Nations only 29% of online users are females which is leading to “digital gender gap”. As per the ‘State of the World's Children 2017: Children in a digital world' unveiled by the UNICEF today, rural girls still face restrictions to use Information and Communication Technology due to gender reasons. The study revealed that less than one third of Internet users are females in India. This prevents females deprived of information on Legal activities to counter sexual harassment, domestic crimes & other social injustices towards them.

2.1. Mobile Usage by Women

According to GSMA, a global association of mobile service companies, 72% of India's females doesn't own a cellphone. Those who have often use the phone for making calls. As per the study of GSMA 55% of women have never used their mobiles to send text messages.

The above information clearly indicates the need for promoting more digital technology among women will be required by the Government to take faster actions on sexual harassment cases through digital technology.

3. Women Safety in Chennai

Chennai is relatively considered the safe city of India, but still the city has come across some major incidents in public as well as private domains related to women assaults that it became necessary for the Government to take more stringent action to prevent such future assaults and harassments on women.

3.1. Increasing Women Workforce

Women in Chennai are crossing boundaries and coming out of their glass ceiling and working long hours in the night almost in all sectors. Crimes still occur in the city during daytime. We need to understand if our city has accepted such rapid changes in the society to ensure the safety of women. Such depth understanding on the causes of crimes may help us in preventing future crimes & sexual harassment.

The above set of information indicates that we need to understand our women safety better and their comfortability with respect to place of stay or working, while travelling and perception on the preventive measures taken for women safety in the city. This will

enhance our ideas on better women safety measures keeping in mind the Internet and Mobile usage of women.

3.2. Crime Rates in Chennai

As per Awareness for Wo+Men to Advocate their Rights and Equality (AWARE NGO) 56% of respondents have ranked Chennai 5 and 7 on a 10-point scale with regard to safety in public transport. Over 50% of respondents have reported of sexual harassment while travelling in Public transport and did not accept the fact that other people assistance for women in public domain. (Fig 2)



Fig 2

Source : NCRB Crime in India -2015

The molestation and statistics of the Chennai city reveals that women are much safer in the Chennai city compared to other cities (Fig 3)

City	Molestation (Sec.354 IPC)			Sexual Harassment (Eve-Teasing) (Sec.509 IPC)		
	I	R	P	I	R	P
(2)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)	(19)	(20)
BENGALURU	251	4.4	7.2	35	0.6	2.1
CHENNAI	42	0.7	1.2	10	0.2	0.6
DELHI (CITY)	491	3.8	14.1	113	0.9	6.8
HYDERABAD	295	5.3	8.5	63	1.1	3.8
KOLKATA	201	1.5	5.8	90	0.7	5.4
MUMBAI	400	2.4	11.5	101	0.6	6.1
TOTAL (CITIES)	3477	3.2	100.0	1657	1.5	100.0

Fig 3

3.3. Molestation & Eve- Teasing - Indian Metros - Statistics

This indicates that though Chennai is far better in crime rates against women compared to other city, still it needs concentration on the public support /assistance for women at the place of crime to prevent it immediately. This can be cultivated by more awareness on “Women Support” programmes.

4. Methodology

Empirical study has been done on the research paper to find out perspective of women on safety in Chennai. The affective

attitude of the respondents has been analyzed. Literature Review has been done to analyze the factors that are important in Digital India for Safety of Women. The data has been collected through convenient sampling from 184 respondents in Chennai. Primary data has been collected by distributing the questionnaire among women in the Chennai city region to get the opinion on women safety. The reliability test (Cronbach's alpha) is (0.843) tested and the instrument for analysis is found to be reliable. The analysis has been done SPSS 21. The following hypothesis has been tested:

**Hypothesis 1:**

H0<sub>1</sub>: There exists no significant difference between age and the women safety perception in Chennai.

**Hypothesis 2:**

H0<sub>2</sub>: There exists no significant difference between the occupation and the women safety perception in Chennai.

**Hypothesis 3:**

H0<sub>3</sub>: There exists no significant difference between the education and women safety perception in Chennai.

**Hypothesis 4**

H0<sub>4</sub>: There exists no significant difference between the Attitude towards Safety and Education of Women.

**Hypothesis 5**

H0<sub>5</sub>: There exists no association between Place Safety, Transport Safety, Attitude towards Safety, Preventive measures and Perception.

**5. Results & Discussion**

**I: Difference between age groups and the women safety perception in Chennai.**

**Table 1:**

Descriptives								
PERCEPTION								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
15-25	112	3.7143	.88459	.08359	3.5487	3.8799	2.00	5.00
25-35	40	3.4000	1.21529	.19215	3.0113	3.7887	1.00	4.00
35-45	32	4.0000	.71842	.12700	3.7410	4.2590	3.00	5.00
Total	184	3.6957	.95516	.07042	3.5567	3.8346	1.00	5.00

ANOVA					
PERCEPTION					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	6.499	2	3.250	3.666	.028
Within Groups	160.457	181	.887		
Total	166.957	183			

One-way Anovatoool was used to interpret if there exists any significant difference among the age groups (15-25,25-35,35-45 and above 45) and Women Safety Perception in Chennai. The research finding shows that there exists a no significant difference between age groups- Women Safety Perception in Chennai as F= 3.666 and p<0.05. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. Moreover, it also states that the age differences have no effect on the Women Safety Perception in Chennai.

**II: Difference between Occupation and the Women Safety Perception in Chennai.**

**Table 2:**

Descriptives								
PERCEPTION								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
professional	48	3.5000	.77184	.11141	3.2759	3.7241	2.00	4.00
Private	96	3.6667	1.11135	.11343	3.4415	3.8918	1.00	5.00
student	24	4.0000	.83406	.17025	3.6478	4.3522	3.00	5.00
homemaker	16	4.0000	.00000	.00000	4.0000	4.0000	4.00	4.00
Total	184	3.6957	.95516	.07042	3.5567	3.8346	1.00	5.00

ANOVA					
PERCEPTION					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5.623	3	1.874	2.091	.103
Within Groups	161.333	180	.896		
Total	166.957	183			

One-way Anovatoool was used to interpret if there exists any significant difference among the Occupation (Professional, Private/business, Student and Homemaker) and Women Safety Perception in Chennai. The research finding shows that there exists no significant difference between Occupation - Women Safety Perception in Chennai as F=2.091 and p>0.05. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted. Moreover, it also states that the Occupation have no effect on the Women Safety Perception in Chennai.

**III: Difference between Education and Women Safety Perception in Chennai.**

**Table 3:**

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
10th/12 <sup>th</sup>	5.0000	.00000	.00000	5.0000	5.0000	5.00	5.00
Graduate	3.6667	1.07947	.09854	3.4715	3.8618	1.00	5.00
postgraduate	3.4000	.49614	.07845	3.2413	3.5587	3.00	4.00
below10th	4.0000	.00000	.00000	4.0000	4.0000	4.00	4.00
Total	3.6957	.95516	.07042	3.5567	3.8346	1.00	5.00

ANOVA					
PERCEPTION					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	18.690	3	6.230	7.563	.000
Within Groups	148.267	180	.824		
Total	166.957	183			

One-way Anovatoool was used to interpret if there exists any significant difference among the Education (10<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup>, Graduate, Post Graduate and Below 10<sup>th</sup>) and Women Safety Perception in Chennai. The research finding shows that there exists significant difference between Education- Women Safety Perception in Chennai as F= 7.563 and p<0.01. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. Moreover, it also states that Education has some effect on the Women Safety Perception in Chennai.

Descriptives								
ATTITUDE								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
10th/12 <sup>th</sup>	8	11.0000	.00000	.00000	11.0000	11.0000	11.00	11.00
graduate	120	9.6000	2.34216	.21381	9.1766	10.0234	6.00	15.00
postgraduate	40	10.6000	1.37375	.21721	10.1607	11.0393	9.00	13.00
below10th	16	11.0000	1.03280	.25820	10.4497	11.5503	10.00	12.00
Total	184	10.0000	2.09083	.15414	9.6959	10.3041	6.00	15.00

**IV: Difference between the Attitude towards Safety and Education of Women. Table 4:**

**Table 4**

Descriptives								
ATTITUDE								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
10th/12 <sup>th</sup>	8	11.0000	.00000	.00000	11.0000	11.0000	11.00	11.00
graduate	120	9.6000	2.34216	.21381	9.1766	10.0234	6.00	15.00
postgraduate	40	10.6000	1.37375	.21721	10.1607	11.0393	9.00	13.00
below10th	16	11.0000	1.03280	.25820	10.4497	11.5503	10.00	12.00
Total	184	10.0000	2.09083	.15414	9.6959	10.3041	6.00	15.00

ANOVA					
ATTITUDE					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	57.600	3	19.200	4.655	.004
Within Groups	742.400	180	4.124		
Total	800.000	183			

One-way Anovatoool was used to interpret if there exists any significant difference among the Attitude towards Safety and Education. The research finding shows that there exists significant difference between Education –Attitude towards safety in Chennai as F=4.655 and p<0.01. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. Moreover, it also states that Educationhas some effect on the Attitude towards Safety in Chennai

**V: Association between Place Safety, Transport Safety, Attitude towards Safety, Preventive measures and Perception.**

**Table 5:**

Correlations						
		PLACESAFETY	TRANSPORTSAFETY	ATTITUDE	PREVENTIVEMEASURES	PERCEPTION
PLACESAFETY	Pearson Correlation	1	.302**	.118	.282**	.199**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.109	.000	.007
	N	184	184	184	184	184
TRANSPORTSAFETY	Pearson Correlation	.302**	1	.103	.568**	.530**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.163	.000	.000
	N	184	184	184	184	184
ATTITUDE	Pearson Correlation	.118	.103	1	.524**	.285**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.109	.163		.000	.000
	N	184	184	184	184	184
PREVENTIVEMEASURES	Pearson Correlation	.282**	.568**	.524**	1	.721**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	184	184	184	184	184
PERCEPTION	Pearson Correlation	.199**	.530**	.285**	.721**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	.000	.000	.000	
	N	184	184	184	184	184

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Association between Place Safety, Transport Safety, Attitude towards Safety, Preventive measures and Perceptionis tested using Pearson correlation. The results suggest that there is significant association between Place Safety, Transport Safety, Attitude towards Safety, Preventive measures and Perceptionat 0.01 level. There is a strong positive correlation between Perception and Preventive Measures with 51% significance and Perception and Transport Safetywith 28% significance. All factors associate with Perception as well. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected. It also states the importance of the above factors with respect to Perception on Women Safety in Chennai.

## VI Weighted Mean

### a) Safety Place for Women

Table 6:

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
SP1	184	2.00	5.00	3.5652	.77254
SP2	184	2.00	5.00	3.8261	.70298
SP3	184	1.00	5.00	3.7391	.89771
SP4	184	1.00	4.00	2.7826	.93301
SP5	184	1.00	4.00	2.6087	.92277
SP6	184	2.00	5.00	3.6087	.64370
SP7	184	1.00	5.00	2.7391	1.19076
SP8	184	2.00	5.00	3.9565	.86097
SP9	184	1.00	5.00	3.8696	1.19395
SP10	184	1.00	4.00	2.6087	.87411
SP11	184	1.00	4.00	2.3043	1.04269
Valid N (listwise)	184				

Women consider working place safer than public places like Shopping Bazaars, Malls, Bus Stands, Parks & Railway Stations. Public Parks shows the least Mean Value where attention is required for Women Safety (Lowest Mean)

### b) Safe Transport Mode

Table 7:

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
ST1	184	2.00	4.00	3.1304	.68101
ST2	184	1.00	4.00	2.8696	.85209
ST3	184	2.00	5.00	2.9130	.83178
ST4	184	2.00	4.00	2.9130	.65540
ST5	184	1.00	5.00	3.6522	1.04995
ST6	184	2.00	4.00	3.2174	.72166
ST7	184	2.00	5.00	3.6087	.64370
Valid N (listwise)	184				

Women consider office cabs safer than Public & Private transports. Private Cabs shows the least Mean Value where attention is required for Women Safety (Lowest Mean)

### c) Preventive Measures

Table 8:

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
M1	184	2.00	5.00	3.0870	.93097
M2	184	1.00	5.00	3.3043	1.04269
M3	184	1.00	5.00	3.4783	.97486
M4	184	2.00	5.00	3.8261	.86976
M5	184	2.00	5.00	3.7391	.99033
M6	184	1.00	5.00	3.8696	.94917
M7	184	1.00	5.00	3.6522	1.00746
M8	184	1.00	5.00	3.0870	.93097
M9	184	1.00	5.00	3.0000	1.06612
Valid N (listwise)	184				

Women feel immediate Public support at the place of crime more useful. Sexual Reporting Apps in the organization as less useful for women safety (Lowest Mean)

### d) Attitude towards Safety

Table 9:

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
A1	184	2.00	5.00	3.6087	.82258
A2	184	2.00	5.00	3.8261	.91864
A3	184	1.00	5.00	2.5652	1.01685
Valid N (listwise)	184				

Women keep themselves updated on women safety issues through Internet and Social Medias which shows higher Mean. But they need more awareness on the Toll-free numbers (Lowest Mean)

## 6. Conclusion

Women Safety should be one of the prime objectives of the city. There needs to be Gender Equality when we talk about women safety. Women needs care and support from the society to enjoy her freedom to move around. Though Chennai city is considered safe by majority of women still they expect Public support at the place of crime/ harassment for preventing the magnitude of the crime in city. The pace at which the women are growing in their careers is leading to travel at late hours which needs a special attention. There is a need for equal change in our social norms matching the growth of women. This will reduce more vulnerability of women to crimes. The time curfew on women in the city should change drastically by bringing more awareness program on "Gender Equality" and "Freedom for Women from harassments". Better and Faster Preventive measures by Government is required in Public Places especially in Parks with 24/7 security personnel and better monitoring systems in Private Cabs while travelling. Also, introduction of more Apps and its awareness to women will be useful for quicker actions. App Demos in Public places, Schools and Colleges in the city is necessary to bring a connectivity between the Digital India and its usefulness for Women Safety.

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