

"I've lived in Lal Kuan all my life and lack of safety has been a concern from as long as I can remember. It felt nice to finally participate in changing something. Painting this wall was not only empowering for a community where most women held the paint brush for the first time, it also gave us the strength to take on other issues including the violence we faced in the absence of toilets and the risks we were facing because of it. It was our first step to make our neighborhood safer through collective action, this campaign was an eye opener and it made us want to act."

*-Sunita
(a young resident of Lal Kuan)*

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Safecity Lal Kuan Chapter

Jan – Apr, 2015
Lal Kuan, Prehladpur

About Safecity

Safecity is a platform that crowdsources personal stories of sexual harassment and abuse in public spaces. This data which maybe anonymous, gets aggregated as hot spots on a map indicating trends at a local level. The idea is to make this data useful for individuals, local communities and local administration to identify factors that causes behavior that leads to violence and work on strategies for solutions

Abstract

Safecity's Lal Kuan chapter is about empowering the community with right tools to report and curb sexual harassment. It brings together all the stakeholders to fight the issue of sexual harassment and eradicate it from the area via increased governance and sustained development

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1. Campaign Description

1.1 Background

Safecity's Lal Kuan Chapter came into existence to address sexual harassment in public spaces of Lal Kuan. This campaign was in collaboration with the Plan India International Gender Resource Center's (*established under State Govt.*) program 'Awaaz Uthao' which was launched in 2013 to address sexual violence against women in public spaces. Safecity was introduced to Plan India Gender Resource Center (GRC) by Naz Foundation. Upon further discussions with GRC's Project Coordinator for Awaaz Uthao program, common objectives and the structure of our partnership were outlined.

1.2 Existing Issues

Women and girls staying in Lal Kuan became victims of sexual assaults on a regular basis. It restricted their mobility and access to certain routes, places etc. These incidences primarily (~50%) occurred on their way to and from Market / Home / Workplace / School or at these places. Around 25% of these were repeated occurrences as there was limited / zero bystander intervention. The main cause of these was absence of proper Public infrastructure which was worsened by the presence of alcoholic men loitering around these routes, public spaces etc. Here is a detailed account of the issues faced:

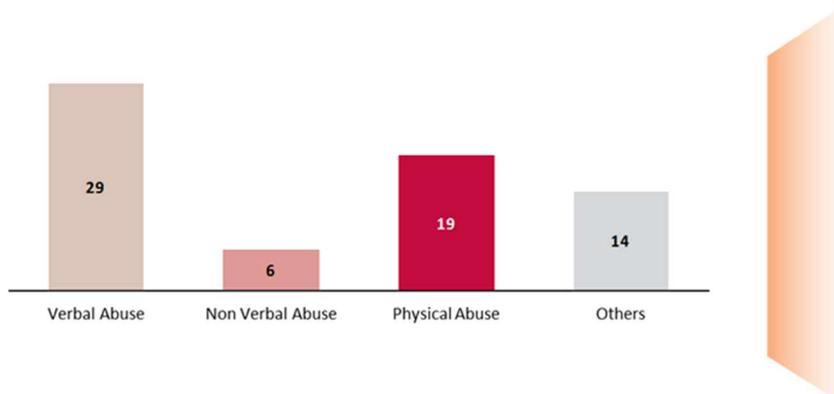
1. Lack of Public Infrastructure:

- a. **Absence/non-functionality of community toilets:** Majority households do not have indoor toilets, forcing women to access isolated, far off, poorly lit public spaces to ease themselves, usually late evenings or early mornings. During these times, several women faced sexual abuse such as groping, stalking, sexually assaults etc. at these public spaces from local men.
- b. **Poor street lighting in bylanes of Lal Kuan:** The lanes connecting different blocks of Lal Kuan are poorly lit / not lit at all, restricting the mobility of women and putting them at risk of sexual abuse. Majority of the reported issues were Stalking and groping.

2. Groups of men stalking and commenting:

- a. **High incidents of staring and commenting on an arterial main road connecting 2 densely populated blocks of Lal Kuan (E and G):** This street had increasingly high incidents of sexual violence. The presence of a tea stall gave men and boys an excuse to loiter for extended hours commenting / stalking women, making it uncomfortable for women to access this road and forcing them to use alternative longer routes
- b. **Presence of truck loaders near Prehladpur Petrol Pump:** This area is occupied by truck loaders (*mostly men*), stationed here through most parts of the day with bustling activity during the evenings and nights. Many women shared personal incidents of sexual harassment by these men, citing these men were usually under the influence of alcohol. The nature of abuse reported was mostly staring and commenting. There were a few unverified reports of sexual assault, rape and the presence of an underlying prostitution/sex work ring

Lal Kuan – Incident Types



Lal Kuan– Incident examples



1.3 Current Impact

These incidences of sexual violence have had far reaching impact on the women living in the area. It has affected their daily choices and restricted them to live an independent fear free life. Here are few examples of the same:

1. Mobility and accessibility
 - a. Limited/restricted access to public spaces
 - b. Strong sense of fear and apprehension among women in accessing public spaces
 - c. Lack of trust in the system to safeguard their rights
2. Physical, emotional and psychological
 - a. Society-based pressure and shame inflicted on women who have faced/reported sexual violence
 - b. Restricted/discouraged participation of girls and women in university and community based matters

2. Campaign Objectives

2.1 Goals

The campaign aimed to reduce / remove the sexual violence in Lal Kuan area by ensuring the repairing and maintenance of existing public infrastructure and by increasing awareness on sexual harassment and associated rights and laws. Here are the detailed objectives:

1. Highlight the improper condition of existing public infrastructure and get local authorities involved in repairing and maintenance
 - a. Assessment of existing infrastructure's state and capacities
 - b. Reporting the gaps to the local authorities such as Municipal corporation etc. for maintenance
2. Increase awareness on sexual harassment, individual and collective legal rights and laws against sexual harassment
 - a. Encourage people to report sexual harassment in public spaces through training and development
 - b. Only 10% of women knew what constitutes sexual harassment (*most women considered only rape to be sexual harassment*) amongst the 100 participants who submitted reports of incidents of sexual abuse
3. Address sexual harassment in public spaces using data and technology
 - a. Train volunteers on engaging community members to take ownership of the campaign for systemic and social change
 - b. Address the absence/lack of bystander intervention
4. Increase community participation
 - a. Engage community members in brainstorming sessions
 - b. Improve community member's involvement in devising and effective solution to curb sexual harassment cases

2.2 Target Audience

1. Women, Girls associated with GRC and Community members mobilized and organized by GRC
2. Children and teachers of local MCD school
3. RWA
4. Local Municipal Corporation, Local police and district officer
5. Grassroots NGOs like Kalyanam and Anganwadi

3. Campaign Methodology and Challenges

3.1 Methodology

The campaign was conducted in multiple phases to ensure accurate diagnostic and develop a comprehensive solution for the above-mentioned problems.

1. **Diagnostic:** Documenting sexual harassment in public spaces at Lal Kuan in collaboration with GRC by:
 - a. Collecting reports and uploading them on Safecity's reporting platform
 - b. Focused group discussions and Community meetings (*including One-to-one discussions with survivors of sexual violence*)
 - c. Strategic meetings with grassroots organizations in Lal Kuan
 - d. Community mobilization and field visits
 - e. Engaging media house DNA (*Zee News*) to document stories of sexual violence in public spaces of Lal Kuan

2. **Developmental Trainings, Awareness workshops and focused discussions (*including one-to-one discussions*):**
 - a. **Mural painting on public wall:** 24 girls and women in the age group of 15-45 years were invited to attend a workshop conducted by *Shilo Suleiman of The Fearless Collective*. The workshop's objective was to train women on using mural painting to disseminate strong social messages in public spaces. One of the highlighted issue was staring on a main street, where men gathered at a tea-stall and stared, passing comments and stalking further. During the 3-hour workshop, these women identified the location for the mural painting and the social message to be disseminated. Later 15 of these women along with Shilo painted big staring eyes on the public wall facing the tea stall.
 - b. **Capacity building of GRC:** GRC (*2-years old in Lal Kuan*) was struggling with the campaign's outreach and impact. After a series of discussions with Safecity, a joint plan of necessary training and development was created. This included-
 - Campaign Design and implementation focusing on improved engagement
 - Coordination with local systemic bodies like Police, MCD etc.
 - Skill enhancement such as Train the trainer on conducting awareness workshops
 - Data and Technology to influence social and systemic change
 - c. **Training and development of community collectives:** 4 community teams were trained by Safecity on specific actions against sexual harassment. The training was centered on identifying hotspots using Safecity's reporting form, interviews etc. This session was followed by an intervention designing session, which helped GRC to design its activities in these areas
 - d. **Awareness workshop with local MCD school:** 100 students of Lal Kuan's local MCD School participated in Safecity's awareness workshop on child sexual abuse. This was followed by a training session for 7 staff teachers on identifying child sexual abuse, and associated responsibilities and obligations. This workshop was conducted after the unfortunate death of a 6-year-old boy of this school.

- e. **Awareness workshop with NGO 'Kalyanam'**: 15 women members (*victims of sexual violence in public spaces*) of 'Kalyanam' participated in Safecity's sexual violence awareness workshop. The objective was to empower women to keep neighborhoods safe.
- 3. Art and theatre to create awareness and facilitate social change by encouraging community participation and action:**
- a. **Theatre act by Asmita at annual community meet**: 25 Theatre Artists of the '*Asmita Theatre Group*' organized an afternoon of theatre performances in a sexual harassment hotspots. The gathering was close to 300 community members including 40% men. The performance was themed on women sexual harassment in public spaces and was followed by an open discussion to highlight the findings of Safecity's reporting platform. The objective was to increase awareness and community action in sexual harassment hotspots (*locations*)
- 4. Digital Campaign:**
- a. **International Anti-street harassment campaign with DNA India**: Safecity and DNA India jointly designed a digital outreach campaign for the International Anti-street harassment week, (*12-18 Apr'15*). During the 3-day long campaign (*15-18 Apr'15*), DNA India covered hyper local news on sexual harassment in public spaces in communities where Safecity was active.
 - b. **Campaign for safe and accessible community toilets**: Based on the report analyses, group discussions of the Awaaz Uthao Campaign, absence and/or non-functionality of community toilets forcing women to go outside to ease themselves was a primary cause of sexual harassment, eg: ~48% reports highlighted such incidents. GRC and Safecity along with 4 Journalists from DNA India organized a campaign to re-open at least one of 2 identified locked toilets
- 5. Stakeholder meetings and audits:**
- a. **Street light audit**: Safecity trained 12 community members on how to conduct a street light audit. The teams then conducted an audit in the local area (*identified as spots for intervention*) and submitted a report of non-functional street lights in block G and E to the local MCD official with their signatures. The report included how unsafe women felt accessing these streets with high number of groping, chain snatching and stalking incidents.
 - b. **Stakeholder meeting with Local Police, Media, MCD**: During the 3-month campaign with GRC on increasing awareness and reporting of sexual harassment in public spaces, 2 successful stakeholder meetings were conducted which included local police and MCD, grassroots NGO, Naz Foundation, community collectives, Media representatives etc. These were designed by Safecity with the aim of seeking support and accountable governance from local systemic bodies to eliminate sexual violence through human rights based approach.

Campaign Snapshots – Safecity Methodology



Pic4: Community girls and women attending a workshop on how to do mural paintings for social change

Pic5: Women organizing themselves to paint the mural on a public wall facing the tea stall where men aggregate and stared



Pic6: Workshop on mapping sexual harassment in public spaces with members of community collective of 4 unsafe zones in Lal Kuan

Pic7: The event was attended by more than 200 community members, with a remarkable engagement of boys and men as well and was addressed by the GRC, Safecity, Asmita and the local police



Pic8: Women engaged with Kalyanam holding slogans against sexual harassment at our awareness workshop on sexual harassment



3.2 Challenges

1. Limited / Zero Community development:

- a. Poor Literacy rate: Low literacy rates made it difficult to design trainings as it restricted the use of most content. Since very few women (*less than 20%*) are literate in this area, awareness on sexual harassment and their rights was poor / absent
- b. High Poverty rate: Lal Kuan is a predominantly low income area, with less than 50% employment rate and 80%+ people living below poverty line. Poverty is used as an excuse by the community to account for increased rates of sexual violence.
- c. Language barriers: Translation of trainings from English to Hindi while retaining the original content was a challenge resulting in few videos. These barriers also made it difficult for people outside Lal Kuan (*majorly college students*) to contribute.
- d. Limited use of technology: The use of technology to report sexual abuse was highly limited (*Less than 20% had a cell phone*)

2. Community behavior and taboos:

- a. Cultural barriers: The strong shackles of patriarchy not only governed the oppressing attitudes and behaviors of men but also women. Women were also engaged in perpetuating the hold of patriarchy as they believed that women are meant to be inferior to men, and hence should accept everything, including violence. This ideology prevented many interested women from engaging on the campaign and made it difficult for Safecity to engage men
- b. High dropout rates from campaign/absenteeism: Since most girls and women associated/reached out to through the campaign do meager jobs to sustain their families, they fail to regularly show up for campaign activities, or were denied participation by their families due to tabooed behavior towards sexual harassment, affecting campaign sustainability.

3. Limited involvement / Negligence of local authorities:

- a. Change in state policy around GRC's operations and existence: GRC was shut down on 1st Apr'15 due to state policy. This gravely affected community's engagement as it was heavily dependent on GRC's efforts.
- b. Resistance from institutional bodies (Police, MCD): Hostile nature of Police and lack of accountability on issues of sexual abuse as evident from police statements such as '*some communities do not change,*'
- c. Lack of support from RWA: RWA cited that they have more important and hence pressing issues to work on

4. Other Challenges:

- a. Threat to safety and security of staff and participating members: GRC members including other stakeholders had been attacked for their work in the community as they were believed to be agents corrupting the women
- b. Weather uncertainties: Hot summers or cold winters make it difficult to organize campaign activities, pushing them to the evenings, which made it difficult for working NGOs as it was past their designated work hours
- c. Lack of local media coverage at desired level: Media is not interested in hyper-local news and do not want to engage in inconvenient community issues centered around sexual abuse
- d. Resistance from school authorities to conduct workshop due to time constraints for curriculum requirements
- e. Resource crunch with GRC (*financial, logistical and human resources*) in developing and executing campaigns
- f. Lack of concrete/reliable data (*available with GRC*) on the issue of sexual harassment in public spaces due to limited / no use of technology lead to limited / lack of comprehensive information

4. Social media Strategy

4.1 Goals

The campaign included widespread coverage on DNA India's website, twitter and Facebook page and Safecity and other associated NGO's social Media portals. It was designed with the following objectives in mind:

1. Spread the voice of a lesser known Lal Kuan to the masses and highlight the terrible state of safety and security of children and women in this area
2. Facilitate strengthening of an accountable relationship between the community members and local systemic bodies
3. Share success stories of change governed by local community efforts
4. Encourage more communities and neighborhoods that change is possible through community organizing

4.2 Media platforms used

1. Facebook
2. Twitter (#iaminforsafecity)
3. DNA India online news portal
4. Safecity Website
5. Blogs

4.3 Published Pieces about Campaign

1. <http://www.iamin.in/en/south-delhi/news/iamin4safecity-campaign-anti-street-harassment-week-57417>
2. <http://www.iamin.in/en/anti-street-harassment-week/2015-04-17/20150417155022>
3. <http://www.iamin.in/en/tags/iamin-for-safecity>
4. <http://www.iamin.in/en/anti-street-harassment-week/2015-04-17/20150417191819>
5. <http://www.iamin.in/en/south-delhi/news/walk-through-south-delhis-lal-kuan-den-street-harassers-57407>
6. <http://safecity.in/get-involved/international-anti-street-harassment-campaign/>
7. <http://www.vitalvoices.org/blog/2015/06/safer-cities-ict-how-crowd-mapping-can-help-stop-sexual-violence>
8. <http://www.iamin.in/en/south-delhi/news/lal-kuan-women-have-adopted-these-ways-defend-themselves-against-street-goons-57513>
9. <https://www.facebook.com/safecity.in/posts/420417644784951>
10. <http://www.stopstreetharassment.org/2015/04/4endshweekefforts/>
11. <http://www.redelephantfoundation.org/2015/02/making-cities-safer.html>
12. <http://shiloshivsuleman.com/375111/5443387/social-change/buri-nazar-waale>

5. Campaign Outcome and Impact

The campaign received widespread coverage and educated / enabled community members with the right knowledge and tools to curb sexual harassment cases. It engaged 1000+ people including 20 – 25% men through encouraged reporting, direct engagement, theatre acts etc. The campaign also engaged local MCD and Police authorities in addressing key infrastructural issues such as street lighting and public toilets etc. that affected the access to these spaces. Few instances are as follows:

1. Quantitative Statistics:

a. Overall

- Total # of people reached out to through the campaign activities = ~1000
- Total # of people directly engaged in the campaign activities= 500
- # of reports received by Safecity on personal experiences of sexual violence in public spaces= 100
- # of informal reports received by GRC on sexual abuse in public spaces in a month= 20 - 25
- Ratio of participation of boys/men to girls/women= 1:4

b. Community members engaged in campaign activities

- Total # of women engaged = 200
- Total # of girls engaged = 100
- Total # of boys engaged = 60
- Total # of men engaged = 50
- Formation of 4 Community collectives to spread awareness on sexual harassment and its removal by designing social and systemic interventions

c. Local Authorities and institutions

- # of stakeholders= 8
- # of local police officials engaged= 4
- # of MCD officials engaged= 2
- #of schools in Lal Kuan engaged= 1
- Increased formal reporting to police on incidents of sexual harassment (*exact statistics kept confidential by police*)

d. Media Engagement

- # of local media engagements= 1
- Widespread twitter coverage of Safecity-DNA campaign in Lal Kuan
- 10+ publications across multiple websites and Newspapers

2. Developmental Trainings, Awareness workshops and focused discussions (*including one-to-one and group discussions*):

- a. **Mural painting on public wall:** Community Testimonials and one-on-one discussions have proven the success of the intervention with the reduction in cases of ogling, stalking and the discomfort faced by women in accessing this road.
- b. **Capacity building of GRC:** Safecity was a key member of the impact assessment meetings of GRC, allowing them to reflect on their work and enhance the impact and outreach of the campaign to make it sustainable for the community.

- c. **Training and development of community collectives:** Results of these trainings helped GRC to design its activities effectively
 - d. **Awareness workshop with local MCD school:** Safecity facilitated a discussion of the school staff with the MCD officials to highlight the infrastructural demerits of the school and associated sexual abuse vulnerabilities such as absence of main boundary wall and toilets in outside compound
 - e. **Awareness workshop with NGO 'Kalyanam':** The women members are engaged with Kalyanam to encourage other women to seek employment and uplift their living standards through skill building and free of cost developmental trainings, such as car driving training etc. 'Kalyanam' is still active in the community despite withdrawal of GRC from their joint projects.
- 3. Art and theatre to create awareness and facilitate social change by encouraging community participation and action:**
- a. **Theatre act by Asmita at annual community meet:** On the same day as the Theatre act, GRC witnessed 25 new enrolments for their projects and campaigns, highlighting the success of the event
- 4. Digital Campaign:**
- a. **International Anti-street harassment campaign with DNA India:** The digital campaign was highly shared on Social Media and DNA India's community news page, resulting in engaging 1000+ people digitally and 50+ people in Lal Kuan who agreed for interviews on the impact of sexual violence on their lives
 - b. **Campaign for safe and accessible community toilets:** One of the community toilets was reopened by the district officer due to the direct intervention of Safecity and DNA India. The toilet which was locked for 2 years is now open for community and is being maintained by the MCD. Testimonials from the community members highlighted the impact of this intervention, asserting that it has reduced incidents of sexual violence in public spaces
 - Statement of **AAP's MLA, Sahiram Pehelwan**, (from Tughlakabad) - *"Lal Kuan area has 3 public toilets, out of these 2 are in working condition and one is dilapidated. The problem is that residents must pay for its maintenance. I understand that a laborer will not be able to arrange money for toilet fee every day. Today I will speak to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on this and will request him to make it free for public"*
 - This further resulted in Community mobilization for opening of 2 other community toilets in E-Block with involvement of activists and grassroots NGOs like Kalyanam
- 5. Stakeholder meetings and audits:**
- a. **Street light audit:** After a series of relentless follow-ups, the street lights under audit were repaired by the MCD official within 13 days of reporting. MCD further repaired 6 other street lights in blocks E & G to curb these crimes.
 - b. **Stakeholder meeting with Local Police, Media, MCD:** This meeting strengthened the relationship between the local Police and GRC in addressing sexual violence in public spaces and influencing their patrolling and surveillance in these crime zones.

Campaign Snapshots – Safecity Impact

Pic9: Public wall painted by community women in collaboration with Safecity and The Fearless Collective for the Awaaz Uthao campaign against sexual harassment in public spaces



Pic10: A community collective member, who after attending a series of workshops, addressed the sexual harassment faced from her husband and opened her own little shop to sustain her family



Pic11: Priyanka, 16-year old active citizen, she was the crusader of the street light audit



"I've lived in Lal Kuan all my life and lack of safety has been a concern from as long as I can remember. It felt nice to finally participate in changing something. Painting this wall was not only empowering for a community where most women held the paint brush for the first time, it also gave us the strength to take on other issues including the violence we faced in the absence of toilets and the risks we were facing because of it. It was our first step to make our neighborhood safer through collective action, this campaign was an eye opener and it made us want to act."

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missed call 9015 510 510


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6. Conclusion

Lal Kuan, a small underdeveloped area with less 50% employment rate and more than 80%+ people below poverty line, is gripped with incidences of sexual violence and harassment. The community women become victims of these on a regular basis with limited or no intervention from community. Absence / Non-functional public infrastructure specially community toilets further worsen this issue. Groups of men under the influence of alcohol and substance abuse target these women on their way to markets / schools / workplaces etc. forcing them to alter their daily routes, life choices.

A collaboration of Safecity and GRC worked with the community during a 3-month campaign to address these issues. They organized multiple trainings, awareness workshops, wall paintings, stakeholder meetings to increase community action and involvement. Several local systemic bodies and institutions were pushed to act to improve the living conditions of the community and reduce the cases of sexual harassment. As a result of this joint effort, multiple public toilets were re-opened, non-functional street lights were repaired and the entire community was pushed to come together to fight this issue. The community as a whole, especially women, became aware of sexual rights and laws and started to report these issues via Safecity's reporting platform and local authorities. Extensive media coverage from DNA, India further helped in spreading the word that combined community action can lead to improved living standards and reduction in sexual violence.

Overall, during these 3 months, Safecity and GRC brought all the stakeholders such as local police, MCD, school authorities, grassroot NGOs, community collectives etc. together to act against the issue of sexual harassment.

7. Appendix

7.1 Existing Issues and Challenges

1. Absence of Community toilets:
 - a. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BV0eDTGq15A>
 - b. https://youtu.be/lryq2GgPH_A
 - c. <https://youtu.be/NTHDD8ivVL0>
2. Poor Street Lighting:
 - a. <https://youtu.be/Xxtrjbbhlhc>
3. Community State and behaviour
 - a. <https://youtu.be/4IKBUVIFxP8>
 - b. <https://youtu.be/Xxtrjbbhlhc>
 - c. <https://youtu.be/jJiQR7lwaAc>
 - d. <https://youtu.be/fM8RmFXaKh0>
 - e. https://youtu.be/jcgvWCP_i1U