

Safecity Policy Project: Street Markets Audit Report

Safecity is an initiative of Red Dot Foundation, it aims to make cities safer by encouraging equal access to public spaces for everyone, especially women, through the use of crowdsourced data, community engagement and institutional accountability.

Safecity undertook a Safety Audit of 3 street markets - Colaba Causeway, Bandra Linking Road and the Dadar vegetable market in Mumbai during the months of January and February 2017 as a response to several reports of sexual harassment at street markets in Mumbai on our crowdmap (maps.safecity.in) and similar incidents shared by participants during our workshops, by volunteers during our interactions and through personal experiences of several Safecity staff members. The Safety audit consisted of two components, one that involved collecting reports of sexual harassment from persons present at the street markets and the other being an audit of the facilities present at the street markets to assess how they aid or impede safety in terms of sexual harassment.

The project was carried out by the Safecity Policy team along with volunteers and interns who underwent a comprehensive training before commencing the audit. Reports were collected by speaking to people at the street markets and explaining the concepts of harassment and sexual violence to them. We had 360 respondents across the three street markets and we were able to sensitize over 700+ persons, including both customers and vendors, about sexual harassment and related concepts and its effects on access to public spaces, especially for women.

The Safecity team approached people of all genders and age proportionately. We had 120 respondents at each street market, amounting to 360 respondents in total of which 180 i.e. 50% of the respondents stated that they had been sexually harassed at the street market they were present at. Several respondents reported incidents of sexual harassment at other locations (other than the street market we were at) - that data has not been included in our analysis here but is available on our crowdmap. The reports collected from all respondents, including those who

stated that they hadn't been harassed also included measures to assess awareness of the general populace regarding laws and remedies in case of sexual harassment.

We further discuss some key highlights from reports from persons at the street markets, our own observations by way of the audit and draw on possible solutions for remedying these issues. At several places 'Dadar', 'Bandra' and 'Colaba' have been used to denote the specific market within that area.

Key highlights from the safety audit results:

1. The security provisions at all markets were abysmal. Considering the numbers that populate each of these markets on any given day, the presence of security personnel was not visible at any market except at Dadar. At Dadar as well, only two security personnel were seen for a short period. A few traffic policepersons were present at markets but they, too, were clustered near one spot and were inadequate in number. Working conditions of the CCTV cameras is not known and information regarding the same or access to their footage is not easily available in the vicinity of their location itself. Often shops were located under the bridges or in dingy corners, behind pillars etc., and in such situations no CCTV cameras were visible.
2. There were unattended vehicles left adjacent to the street market areas that remain there through the night. These vehicles create secluded unseen spots that make it easier for a perpetrator to hide. These also serve as an obstacle to those walking in that area and increase the congestion.
3. None of the street markets audited were disabled friendly. They had no measures to ensure accessibility and their very design, or the lack of it, was a hindrance to access.

4. Bad quality of pavements, collection of debris and inadequate walking space aided the issue of inability of access. The quality of the pavements at Dadar was the worst, rated at 2/5, followed by Colaba at 2.5/5 and Bandra at 3/5.

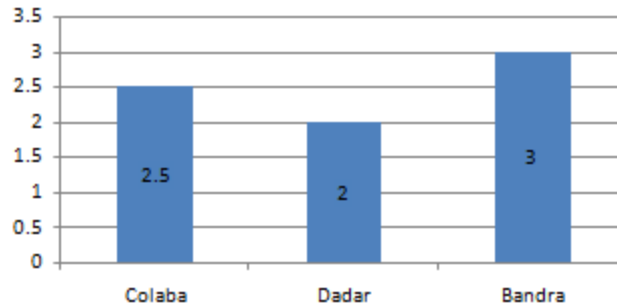


Fig 1. Quality of Pavements

5. The street markets had well-spaced street lights but they were not adequate to provide lighting for all of the market areas. Several street lights were obstructed by trees and some were not working as well, which caused certain areas and lanes to become completely dark. 11% of the street lights at the Bandra Linking Road market and 3% of the street lights at the Colaba Causeway market were not working. Dadar, especially, had shops set up under the bridge where the light from the street lights don't reach and hence certain sections of it were inadequately lit up. In comparison, the shops at Colaba Causeway and Bandra Linking Road were well lit which compensated for the lack of adequate publicly provided lighting in these spaces. The street lights were switched on around 6:45pm at these markets though daylight began fading about 20-30 minutes earlier.

Lighting				
Market	# Street Lights	% Lights Functionality	Time of Switching on	Adequacy of Lights
Colaba	65	97%	18.43	Yes
Dadar	49	N/A	18.4	No
Bandra	44	89%	18.45	Yes

Fig. 2. Lighting across Colaba Causeway, Bandra Linking Road and Dadar vegetable market

- There were absolutely no public goods at any of the street markets. There was no artwork, benches or any other amenity. The bus stops in this area were also congested and not adequately built for the population they were serving. Such crowds and mismanagement of space in public areas makes it easier for perpetrators to undertake street sexual harassment and get away without being known.

Key highlights from the safety audit results:

- 180/360 [62/120 at Bandra, 45/120 at Dadar and 73/120 at Colaba] respondents across the three markets stated that they had been sexually harassed at the street market they were present at.
- The number of incidents were highest in the evening (5-8pm) at all three markets.

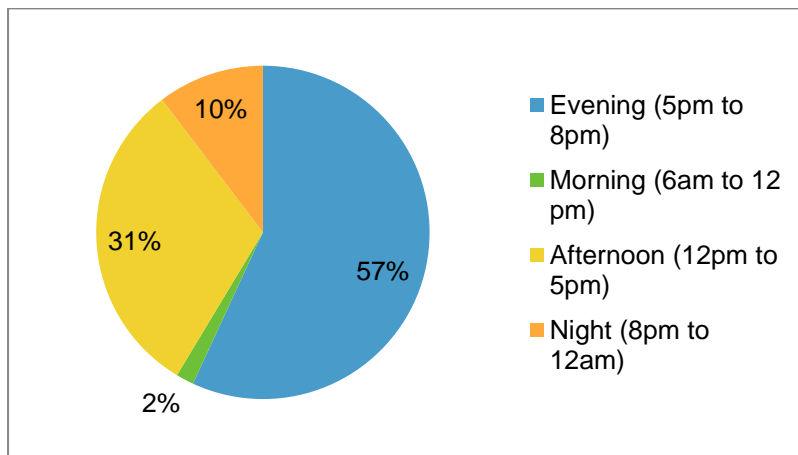


Fig. 3. Number of reports of sexual harassment by time occurrence at Bandra Linking Road

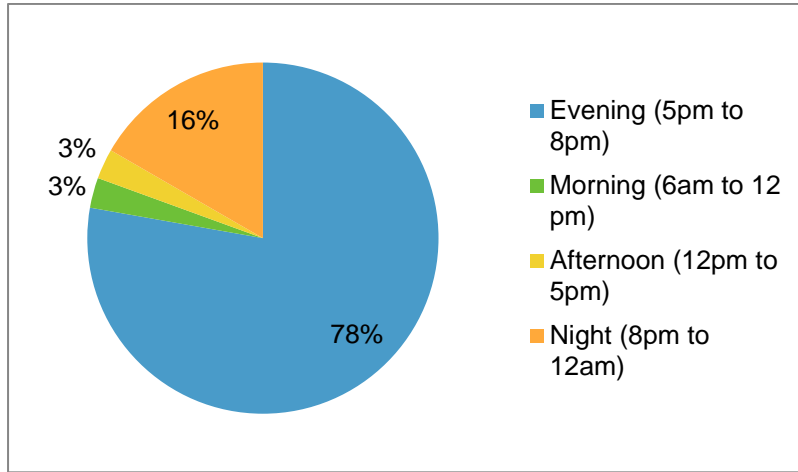


Fig. 4. Number of reports of sexual harassment by time occurrence at Dadar vegetable market

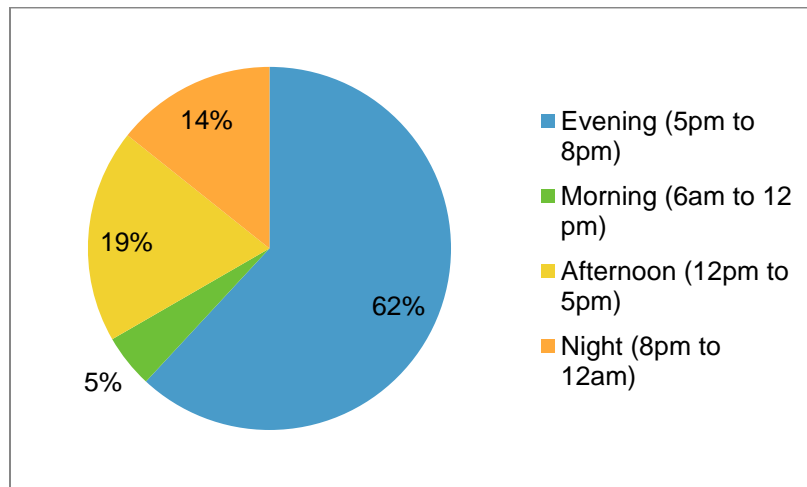


Fig. 5. Number of reports of sexual harassment by time occurrence at Colaba Causeway

Additionally we looked at the nexus in the type of incident and the time of its occurrence:

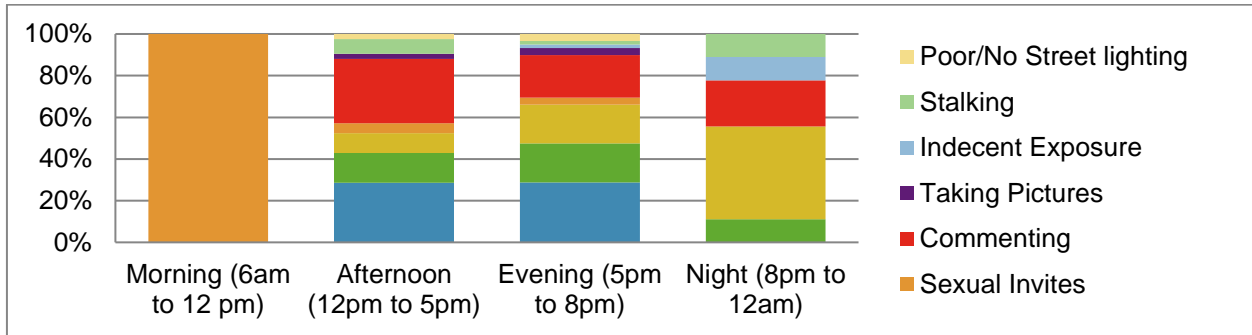


Fig. 6. Percentage of incident occurrence time segregated by type of incident at Bandra Linking Road

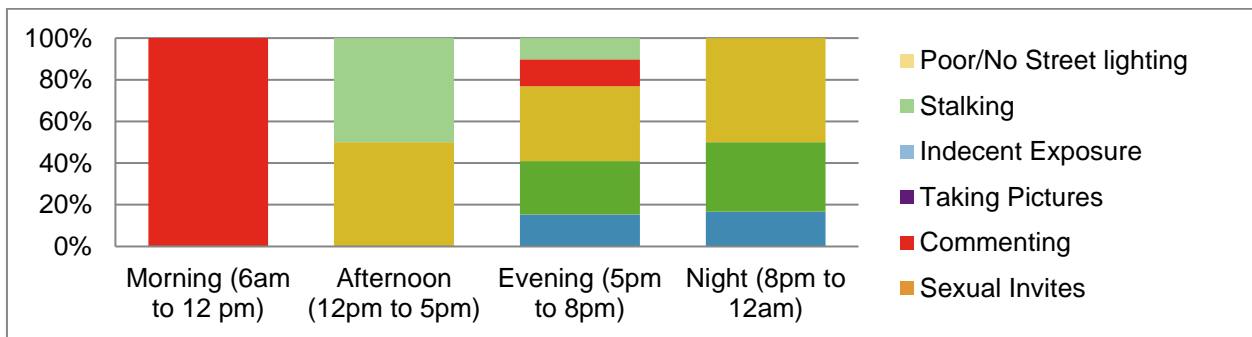


Fig. 7. Percentage of incident occurrence time segregated by type of incident at Dadar vegetable market

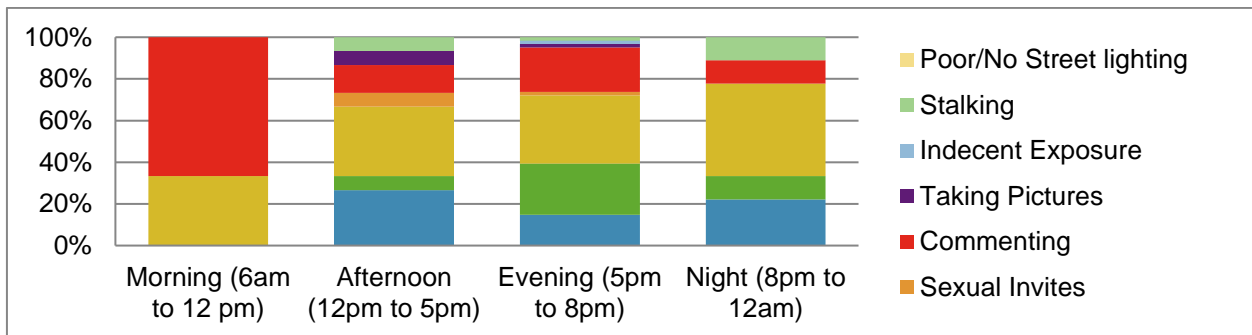


Fig. 8. Percentage of incident occurrence time segregated by type of incident at Colaba Causeway

3. Highest incidents of sexual harassment at the street markets fell under the category of Ogling/Facial Expressions and Commenting (26% each) at Bandra and Touching/Groping at Dadar (38%) and Colaba (33%).

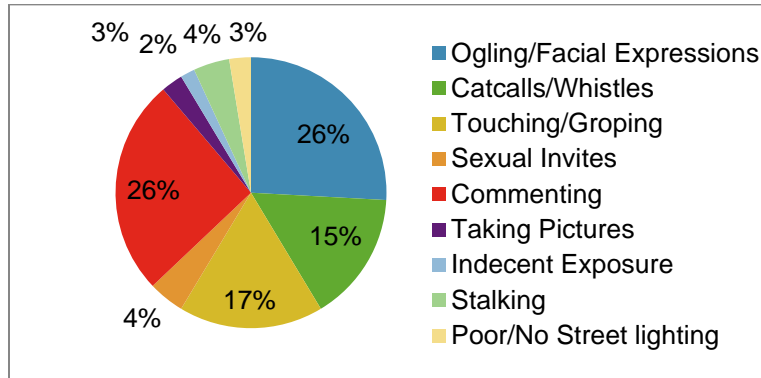


Fig. 9. Percentage of reports of sexual harassment by type at Bandra Linking Road

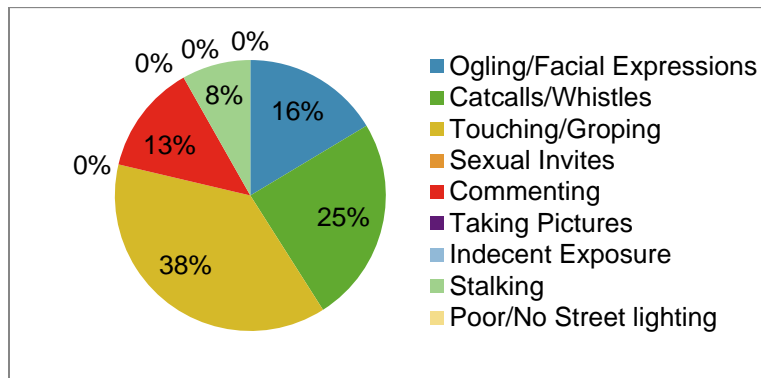


Fig. 10. Percentage of reports of sexual harassment by type at Dadar vegetable market

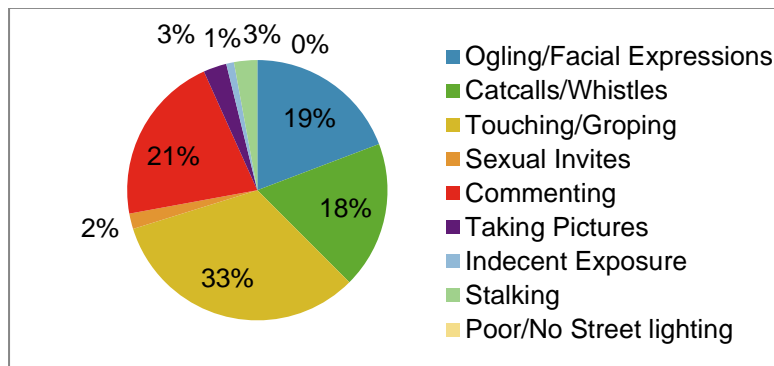


Fig. 11. Percentage of reports of sexual harassment by type at Colaba Causeway

3. The word cloud formed from responses of what made people feel unsafe at these street markets showed a high correspondence to the type of incidents majorly reported. The Bandra market word cloud shows men, staring, crowded and creepy which all are linked to the type of sexual harassment occurring the most there i.e. ogling, staring and commenting. Dadar and Colaba markets show ‘touching’ as the largest word corresponding to high incidents of touching and groping being reported. Otherwise ‘staring’ remains a constant reason for making respondents feel unsafe at all markets. ‘Crowded’ also shows up on Bandra and Dadar market word clouds, highlighting how these markets being crowded may be a factor in aiding sexual harassment.



Fig. 12. Why do people feel unsafe at these street markets?

4. The kind of action taken by respondents mostly involved getting away from the situation or perpetrator. While at Bandra ‘ignored’ the incident came up, at Colaba and Dadar respondents said that they shouted and drew attention. Only at Colaba does the word police come up, in lower intensity than it generally should. **The underlying thread of getting away from that place highlights starkly how sexual harassment affects access to public spaces – the first thing it does is pushes people away from these public spaces.**



Fig. 13. What action do people take when faced with sexual harassment at street markets?

5. Frequency of visit to a particular market and occurrence of sexual harassment are not directly linked for each market. Those who visited any of these markets monthly reported highest incidents of harassment, while at Colaba reporting of sexual harassment for monthly and weekly visits was the same.

Visit Frequency	Harassment Faced		% Harassed
	Yes	No	
Few times a year	15	30	33%
Once a month	40	19	68%
Once a week	5	6	45%
First Time	1	1	50%

Fig. 14. Frequency of visit to Bandra Linking Road and occurrence of sexual harassment

Visit Frequency	Harassment Faced		% Harassed
	Yes	No	
Few times a year	11	12	48%
Once a month	19	16	54%
Once a week	10	17	37%
First Time	0	0	0%

Fig. 15. Frequency of visit to Dadar vegetable market and occurrence of sexual harassment

Visit Frequency	Harassment Faced		% Harassed
	Yes	No	
Few times a year	17	33	34%
Once a month	39	18	68%
Once a week	15	7	68%
First time	0	11	0%

Fig. 16. Frequency of visit to Colaba Causeway market and occurrence of sexual harassment

6. Only 4 respondents of the 73 that said they had been sexually harassed at Colaba Causeway had reported the incident to the police. No respondent at Bandra or Dadar markets had reported any such incident to the police. This lack of reporting is aided by several factors, one of which was seen in our audit - the utter lack of adequate police personnel in the vicinity of the markets.

7. Few people knew of sexual violence related legislations. While 47 and 43 respondents knew of at least some related legislation at Dadar and Colaba markets respectively, only 11 respondents knew of any such legislation at Bandra. Even those who said they knew of such laws only knew basic information, which was in several cases not entirely correct.

Age	Awareness of sexual violence related legislation	
	Yes	No
0-18	1	9
18-22	1	37
22-26	7	32
26-30	2	14
30-34	0	5
Above 34	0	12
Total	11	109

Fig. 17. Awareness of sexual violence related legislation at Bandra Linking Road market

Age	Awareness of sexual violence related legislation	
	Yes	No
0-18	0	3
18-22	11	11
22-26	13	32
26-30	2	6
30-34	5	6
Above 34	16	15
Total	47	73

Fig. 18. Awareness of sexual violence related legislation at Dadar vegetable market

Age	Awareness of sexual violence related legislation	
	Yes	No
0-18	1	5
18-22	11	32
22-26	24	42
26-30	3	10
30-34	1	6
Above 34	3	12
Total	43	77

Fig. 19. Awareness of sexual violence related legislation at Colaba Causeway

- Sexual Harassment and the feeling of safety at the street market are closely linked here. Those who have been sexually harassed at a particular street market have stated feeling unsafe at the market widely across the markets. This brings across a prominent problem for persons and their access to public spaces. While sexual harassment definitely physically and societally inhibits several persons from accessing public spaces - it also inhibits persons mentally and emotionally from accessing these places. And even if these persons are accessing public spaces it does not lend them any feeling of safety or security, taking away from their ability to fully experience the space they are in.

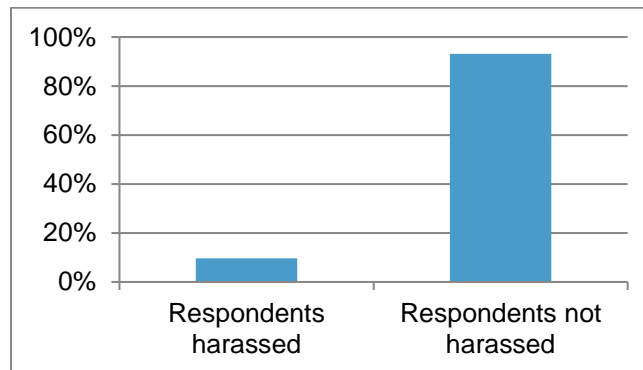


Fig. 20. Percentage of respondents who reported feeling safe at Bandra Linking Road segregated on the basis of if they have faced sexual harassment at the same market or not

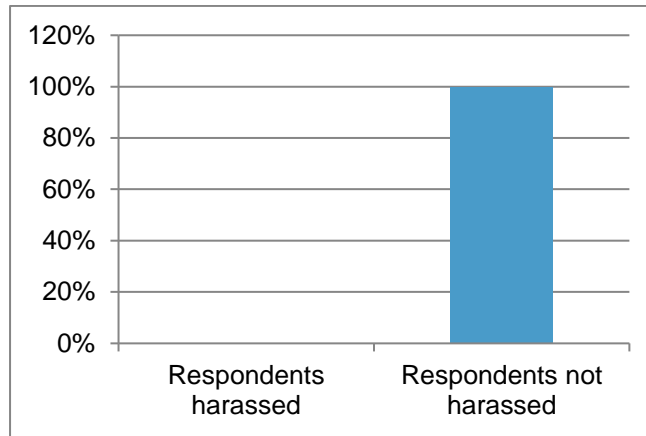


Fig. 21. Percentage of respondents who reported feeling safe at Dadar vegetable market segregated on the basis of if they have faced sexual harassment at the same market or not

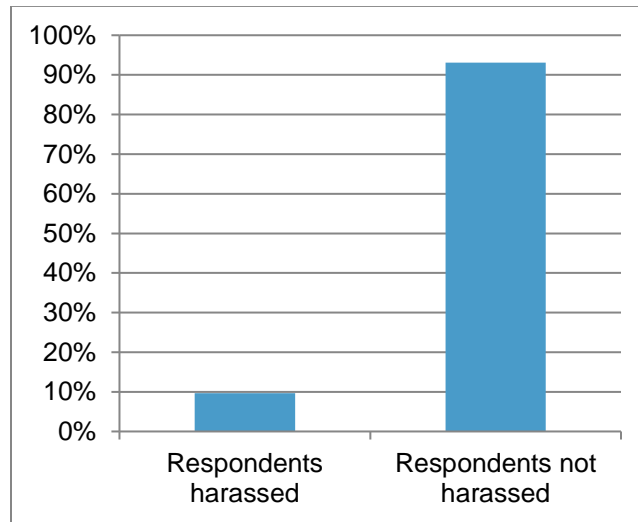


Fig. 22. Percentage of respondents who reported feeling safe at Colaba Causeway segregated on the basis of if they have faced sexual harassment at the same market or not

Proposed solutions:

While we realise that a lot of these shops may not be legitimate or legally holding their place, they have been there for several years now, in part due to governmental action or inaction. In keeping with the times, it is preferable to regulate these markets so that they can be organised more efficiently and intervention is more easily possible in these areas.

1. The government needs to **audit** these street market areas and take steps to fix pavements and remove debris. It should also look into redesigning some of these markets, where feasible, in a more structured manner to provide for more space.
2. There is an urgent need for a **unified helpline number**, not only for sexual harassment related issues but for all of India that can be easy for people to remember and act as a one stop contact for dealing with any kind of emergency situation. This would increase reporting and possibility of action against perpetrators as it makes the process of reaching out to authorities simpler.
3. **Informative posters and wall art** should be displayed at street markets across Mumbai and these should compulsorily include/depict information regarding sexual harassment or images that deter harassers. Such posters can also be placed on the stalls of vendors and in the proper shops in these markets as well.
4. Setting up of **citizen collectives** for major street markets in Mumbai, in association with, or independent of NGOs, that can ensure the maintenance of the public structures where the market is located as well as act a medium to **disseminate information** to vendors regarding sexual harassment and to customers of that vicinity.
5. Pavements need to be fixed and cleared while structural changes have to be made for them to be **disabled friendly**.
6. There is a need for a comprehensive public **app** that provides information regarding sexual harassment and channels of remedy and records complaints of incidents of sexual harassment formally – to make the process simpler and encourage reporting.

7. **Helpline phones** should be placed and cemented at various points at the street markets and in general at various crowded areas in the city, clearly in view of CCTV cameras, that allow a person to call the police for free from that phone, this could also incorporate an emergency button on that phone.
8. **Illegal parking** near these street markets must be prohibited completely as it allows for spaces to be created that are not visible to everyone in that area and hence increases possibility of sexual harassment in the vicinity of the vehicles.
9. There is an immediate need for the presence of adequate, well-spaced **security personnel** at these street markets and other crowded locations.
10. **Lighting** needs to be improved, especially in smaller lanes and under the bridges where shops are set up and a large foot traffic exists.
11. **Training of senior vendors** w.r.t. sexual harassment and need for bystander intervention will help reduce sexual harassment in the street markets. These vendors have been at these markets over years and will be able to influence the behavior of other vendors and patrons of these markets.
12. Better placed and functioning **CCTV cameras** need to be placed in areas of high density of population, like these street markets.
13. Making a **NSS project** that looks at educating citizens on issues of sexual harassment through flash mobs, street plays etc. mandatory. Project to be specified in a designated locality with a focus on high population density areas.