



Safecity Dwarka Chapter

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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 Dwarka chapter is about empowering women with the right tools to report and curb incidences of sexual harassment. It enables the community as a whole to work together in ending sexual violence due to lack of adequate social, systemic and infrastructural elements



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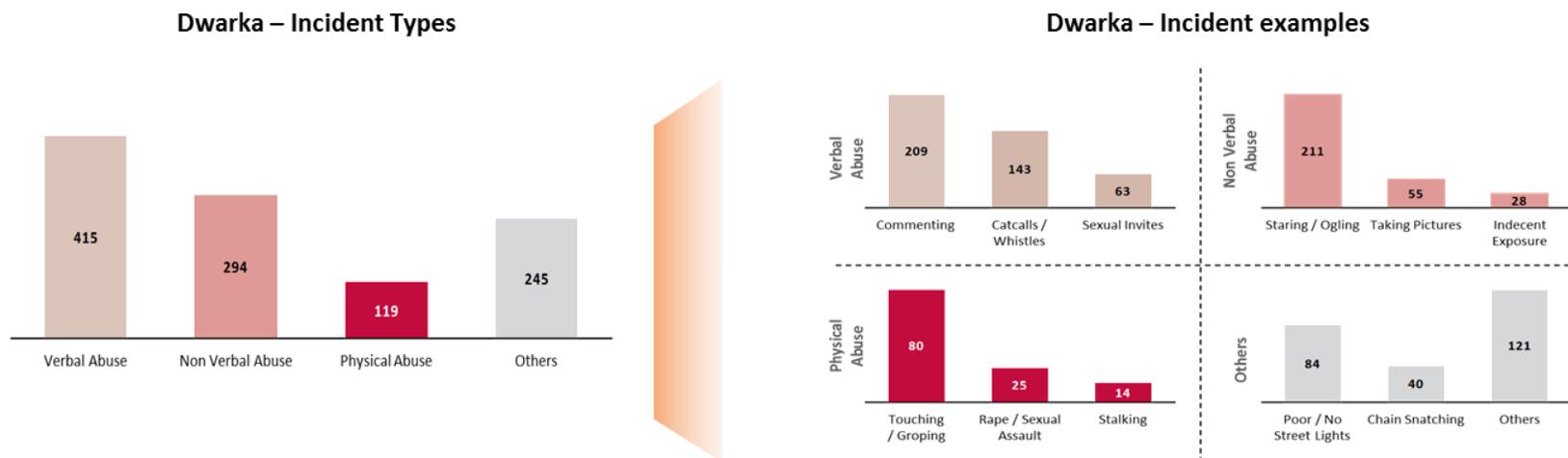
1. Campaign Description

1.1 Background

Five Law students studying at IP University, Dwarka, approached Safecity with the intent of making the public spaces around their campus safer. The students shared their personal experiences of sexual violence in public spaces. Their mobility and access to these spaces was hindered by various social, systemic and infrastructural elements which made it unsafe, especially for female students.

1.2 Existing Issues

Students across the university reported multiple cases of sexual abuse across categories such as Verbal abuse, Non-verbal abuse, Physical abuse etc. These cases also included rape and other serious sexual assault cases. Verbal abuse such as sexual comments, whistles, sexual invites were the primary modes of harassment. ~5-10% of these cases were reported to happen at the Workplace / Universities while travelling to and from the same during evening times by strangers, colleagues etc. Remaining ~90% cases did not include any such specific characteristics. Here is a glimpse of the overall reported cases:



As per the victims, no bystander intervention was observed highlighting zero community involvement and lack of knowledge/information on rights and laws around sexual violence.

1.3 Current Impact

These incidences of sexual violence have had far reaching impact on the women studying and 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 Dwarka area by increasing the awareness on sexual harassment and associated rights and laws. Here are the detailed objectives:

1. 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
2. Address sexual harassment in public spaces using data and technology
 - a. Train students on engaging community members to take ownership of the campaign for systemic and social change
 - b. Address the absence/lack of bystander intervention
3. 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. Students of IP University, Dwarka
2. Community members in identified hotspots
3. Local Police, Government authorities
4. Market associations and other such community groups
5. Delhi Metro

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

- a. Data Collection: The teams collected reports from students of IP University, Dwarka and engaged student volunteers to speak to people in residential societies, markets and metro stations
- b. Focused group discussions - Students were engaged in informal discussions to understand their experience in public spaces, and **encourage them to support in scaling the campaign's outreach**
- c. Direct engagement: Student community was also engaged via one-to-one discussions in different geographical areas of Dwarka, thus filling out reports of personal experiences of sexual harassment in public spaces

2. Awareness programs

- a. Campus Awareness Program: The core team along with volunteers spoke to 1st and 2nd year students making them aware of **Safecity's reporting platform, importance of reporting and what constitutes sexual harassment**
- b. Theatre performance at Raahgiri (Cultural event hosted every Sunday in several pockets of Delhi): Student volunteers choreographed a street play on sexual harassment in public spaces and performed at Connaught Place picking instances from preliminary reports collected during the data building drives

3. Community and Market Audits

- a. Dwarka Mor metro station intervention- During student interactions and detailed data analyses, sexual harassment at Dwarka Mor Metro station emerged as a trend. Safecity informed the metro officials of these issues and findings
- b. Street light audit- The audit was performed by 5 students living on campus at IP University Dwarka to monitor the safety situation and functionality of street lights post 9 pm. The students conducted this audit on 3 different streets around the campus where students felt most unsafe, mapping street lights that were non-functional, lighting dimly or missing. A report of the same was submitted to the local MLA and information of the same was shared with the Local MCD via phone calls

Campaign Snapshots

Pic1: Core Team members



Pic2: Core team recruiting volunteers



Pic3: Team collecting data



Pic4: Team collecting reports



3.2 Challenges

1. Resistance due to conservative and Ignorant mentality:
 - a. Reluctance and resistance from University and families of people
 - b. Long time lags in data collection, uploading reports, brainstorming interventions
 - c. *Resistance of men to participate in the campaign as they consider this to be a women's issue*
2. Resource and Time commitment:
 - a. Tight University schedules resulting in sparse student engagement made it difficult to maintain the flow and visibility of the campaign
 - b. Teams faced tremendous difficulty in engaging Day students they wanted to head back home as soon as their classes ended
3. Lack of knowledge on sexual harassment rights and laws:
 - a. Lack of awareness among students on sexual harassment, rights and the law; including parents of girls
4. Others:
 - a. Few of the on-ground activities conducted in Dwarka were not effectively documented or captured in time by the campaign actors
 - b. Social media engagement on the campaign was weak as the focus remained rooted to on-ground hyperlocal change

4. Campaign Outcome and Impact

The campaign received widespread coverage and educated / enabled students and community members with the right knowledge and tools to curb sexual harassment cases. It was able to engage 2000+ people including 30% men through encouraged reporting, direct engagement, theatre acts etc. The campaign also engaged local MCD and Delhi Metro in addressing key infrastructural issues such as street lighting and patchy pavements etc. that affected the access to these spaces. Few instances are as follows:

1. Diagnostic
 - a. Data collection - The process of building data allowed to see the deficits of public spaces in terms of infrastructure and police surveillance, the emerging concept of gated communities, the scattered development of Dwarka, and poor lighting in most pockets of Dwarka. Approximately 600 reports were collected from 5 different areas in Dwarka **(including one residential community)** reaching out to 300 people
2. Awareness programs
 - a. Campus Awareness program: Around 300 students were engaged during this program which helped them to understand the importance of reporting such incidents and gain knowledge about sexual harassment rights and laws
 - b. Theatre performance at Raahgiri (Cultural event hosted every Sunday in several pockets of Delhi) - This play reached out to ~300 people in person highlighting the issues faced by residents and students of Dwarka. It also received widespread coverage in 'Times of India'
3. Community and Market Audits
 - a. Dwarka Mor metro station intervention: Within a week of submitting the sexual harassment reports, the metro officials started monitoring entries and exits into the metro station and had repaired the dysfunctional lights around the metro station. The metro guards were also regulating the crowd around the metro station, especially autos and rikshaws parked for extended hours. The campaign team spoke to the commuters over a 2-day period post the intervention and saw a maximal opinion stating that they feel safer accessing this metro station now
 - b. Street light audit: The street lights were repaired within 2 weeks of filing the report. A post audit was done on the 3 streets to ascertain the functionality of the street lights. **The following street light numbers were repaired after Safecity's intervention :**
ED5/406,409,410,412,413,415,416,418,419,421,424; ED12/80,79,81,76,75

Media Coverage for the Theatre act



5. Conclusion

Safecity's Dwarka campaign started as an initiative by 5 students from the IP university, Dwarka and turned into a movement with 100s of volunteers reaching out to 2000+ people and touching the life of many more. It helped in reducing the sexual harassment incidences thereby making Dwarka a safer place to live for the community. This clearly highlights the fact that data and technology can help in making our community a safe place. Safecity through its crowdsourcing platform helps people to report such personal stories of sexual harassment and abuse in public spaces, thus creating hot spots on a map. This then becomes useful for individuals, communities, authorities in channeling the resources effectively. Overall, Safecity has facilitated many such success stories resulting in safety of our community.