

# **SAFECITY RAILWAY AUDIT 2019**

Project led by Ms. Marissa Borges conducted from April to July 2019. Report compiled by Ms. Karishma D'Mello.

We would like to sincerely thank Ms. Aarti Singh Parihar, Western Railway Senior Divisional Commercial Manager and Mr. Jai Jeet Singh, Additional Director General of Police, Railways, Mumbai for their cooperation.

Our gratitude also goes out to our volunteers -

Angelina Dsouza  
Mavendra Dev  
Prashant Subramanian  
Sahil Siddhique  
Vernon Mascarenhas  
Vinod Pisharody

## **Introduction**

The Mumbai Suburban Railways consisting of the Western and Central Railways are considered one of the world's busiest and overcrowded services. They have 2,342 train services and carry about 7.5 million commuters daily.

The Safecity audits aim to identify safety on the railway stations and train compartments. The aim is to: a) Draw from individual reports to highlight infrastructural and environmental issues and to suggest improvements, and b) Highlight the degree of awareness of sexual harassment and its components as well as legal provisions concerning violence against women.

This study will attempt to highlight the level of awareness of forms of sexual harassment by railway commuters and to understand the degree of crime being reported at these stations.

## **Procedure**

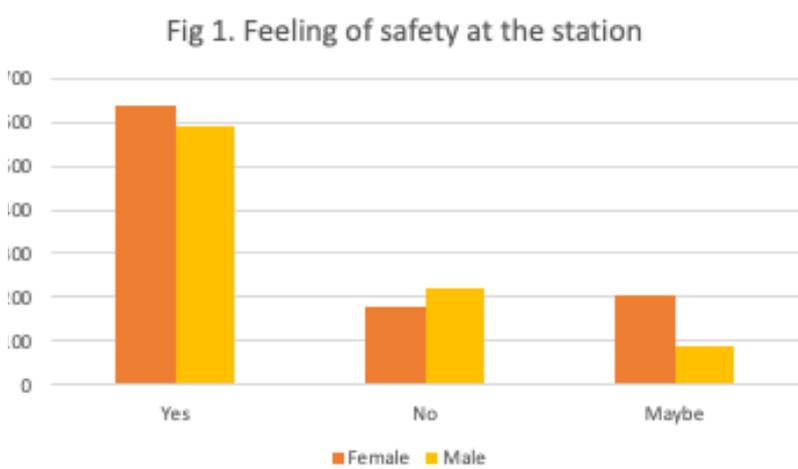
Volunteers were asked to conduct surveys through Google Forms to commuters. After providing a brief overview of the Safecity App, the commuters were asked questions and their answers were recorded. They were also asked to provide suggestions which can help improve the overall feeling of safety at these stations and improve the infrastructure.

The survey was conducted on 29 stations of the Western railway line (Churchgate - Virar), 26 stations of the Central railway line (CST - Kalyan) and 22 stations of the Harbour line (CST - Panvel). A combined total of 1918 responses were collected, out of which, 1014 were received from females and 895 from males. 08 responses were obtained from individuals who chose not to mention their gender. However, since this figure is too small for the sake of this study, only the responses of cisgender individuals will be considered.

A majority of individuals who participated in this survey were 77% between the ages of 15 - 25, 18% were between 26 - 35 years, 3% belonged to the 36 - 60 age range and 2% did not specify their age.

## Analysis

### Perceptions of personal security at railway stations and platforms

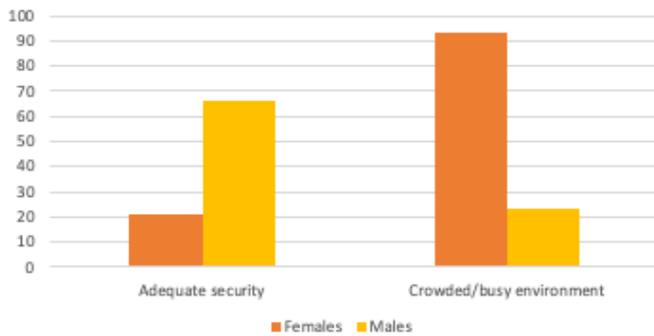


- Associated factors -
- i. Crowded trains and platforms
  - ii. Lighting at stations and platforms
  - iii. Presence of security personnel and CCTV cameras
  - iv. Location of the station

When asked if they generally feel safe at that particular station, most of the respondents said that they do, while 20% reported feeling unsafe and 15% were unsure (Fig. 1). The reasons considered why most individuals felt safe at the railway stations can be summed up into two factors - security mechanisms and crowds.

A greater proportion of males (7.3%) cited the presence of security personnel and CCTV surveillance cameras as being linked to their feeling of safety at those stations. Whereas, (9%) women associated the presence of crowds and the busy atmosphere at these stations with feeling safe (Fig 2). Some respondents mentioned that the busy environment ensured that there were constantly people present which made them feel safe.

**Figure 2. Factors associated with feeling safe**



Interestingly, 24.4% of male respondents reported feeling unsafe, as compared to 17.5% of females. Figure 3 highlights that males (19%) primarily reported pick pocketing to be the main reason why they feel unsafe at railway stations.

The factors associated with feeling unsafe for women, on the other hand, were commenting/staring and stalking. A lack of security measures was another reason highlighted. Among the total respondents, some highlighted that areas around stations are not well illuminated as a reason for them feeling unsafe to travel at night.

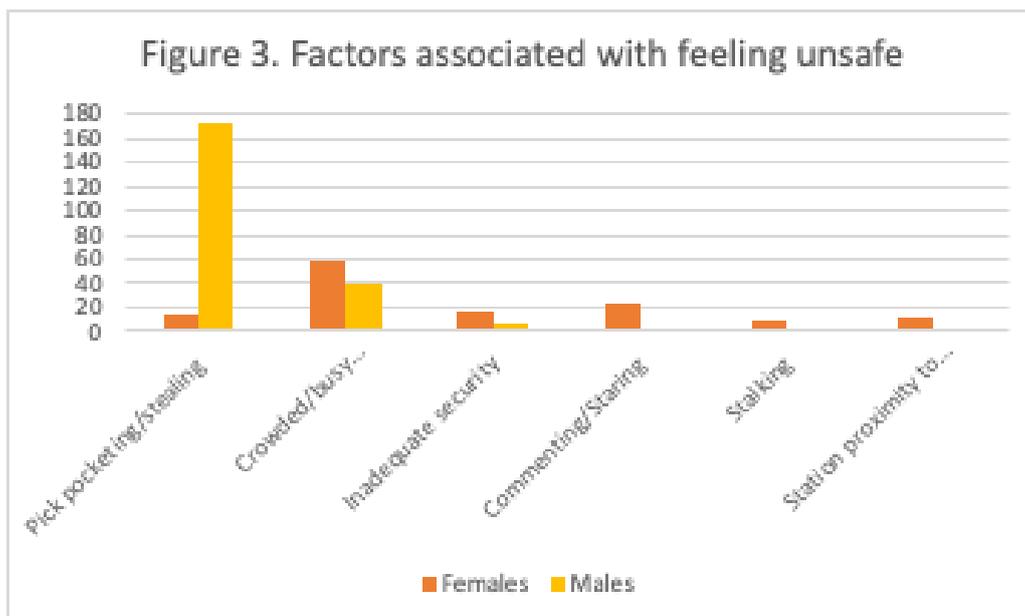
Interestingly, one can conclude that the presence of crowds at these stations can be associated with both, feeling safe and unsafe (Fig 2, Fig 3). This could be because crowds could have a capacity to provide anonymity to perpetrators and make it difficult to identify them, while also being a source of assistance to potential victims (Dawson, 2018)[1].

This is also highlighted by the 'Maybe' responses where 30% of the total respondents cited the presence of crowds as having the potential to either create a safe or unsafe environment.

[1] Dawson, J. (2018, April). Who Is That? The Study of Anonymity and Behavior . Retrieved from PsychologicalScience.org: <https://www.psychologicalscience.org/observer/who-is-that-the-study-of-anonymity-and-behavior>

## Experience of sexual harassment

Figure 4 highlights that, when asked, majority of respondents stated that they have not been sexually harassed at the railway station where they were interviewed. The respondents who were unsure if they had experienced sexual harassment comprised of 10.7% females and 2.3% males.



It was at this point in the survey that the respondents were provided with information about sexual harassment, including its various forms in an attempt to encourage them to think more deeply about their own experiences and instances that they may have normalized. For the purposes of this report, experiencing and witnessing sexual harassment will be considered together to gauge individual as well as bystander crime reporting interventions.

After the volunteers provided a short briefing on what sexual harassment was and the behaviours that can comprise it; there exists a clear increase in individuals highlighting instances that they have experienced/witnessed that can be classified as sexual harassment.

Prior to the briefing, a mere 1.4% of males had reported experiencing/witnessing sexual harassment as compared to 7.5% after the briefing.

Fig. 4 Experience/witness of sexual harassment- Before and after briefing

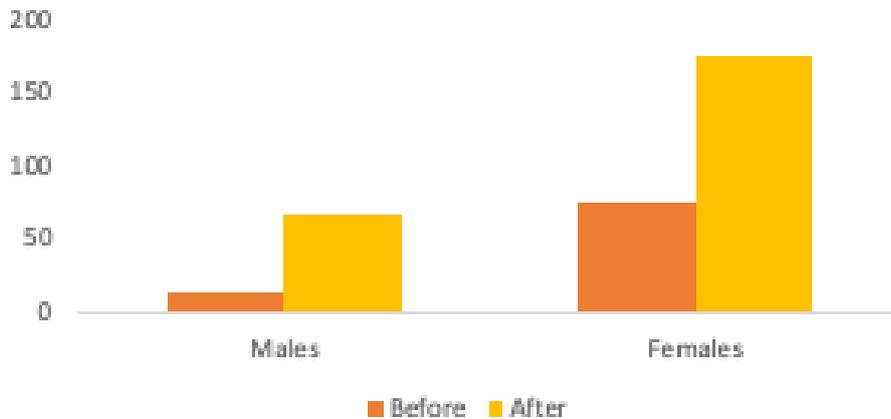
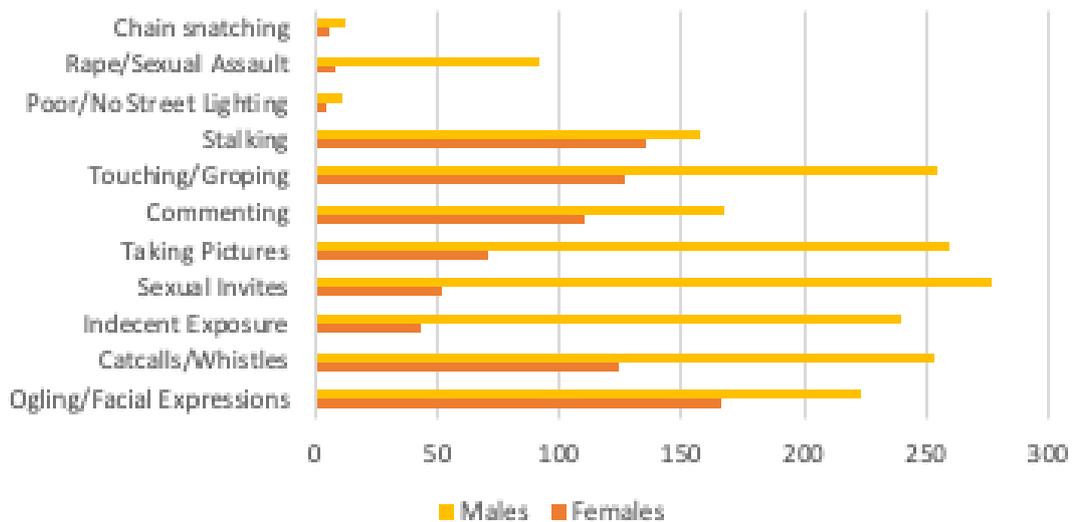


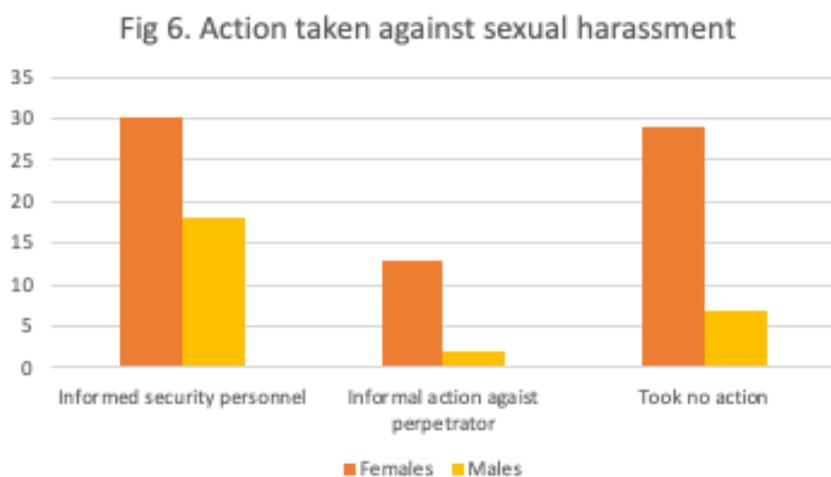
Fig. 5 Forms of sexual harassment experienced/witnessed



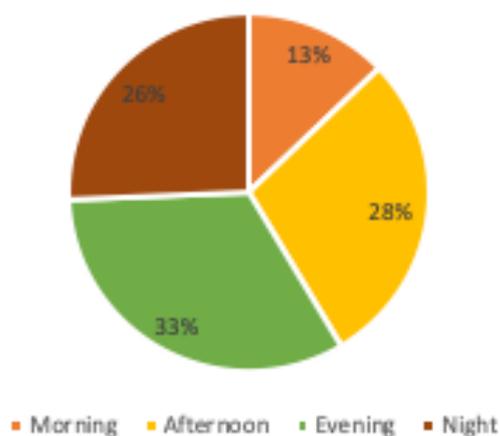
Similarly, among women; those who experienced/witnessed sexual harassment increased from 7.4% to 17% (Fig 5). This could be an indication of increased understanding of what constitutes sexual harassment. According to Figure 5, the most common form of sexual harassment on railway stations as stated by women is ogling, while men responded with citing unsolicited sexual advances as being the most common form of harassment either experienced or witnessed by them. It is interesting to note the major disparity between the male and female respondents, with males highlighting that they had experienced/witnessed many more forms of harassment than women.

## Reporting instances of sexual harassment

When asked whether these individuals had reported these incidences, either as a victim or a bystander, the results indicate that most of them had ignored these instances or had chosen not to take action. Figure 6 displays how, among women who had experienced/witnessed sexual harassment, the proportion of those who took action formally by informing railway security personnel and those who did not take any action was about the same. Some of the reasons behind them choosing not to take action included being alone, the perpetrator being part of a group and that they just wanted to get away from the situation. A small percentage of individuals took action informally through trying to reason with the perpetrator, slapping them or raising an alarm.



**Fig 7. Sexual harassment- time of incident**



According to the study, a greater number of sexual harassment incidents were reported from the Western Railway lines, than the Harbour and Central lines. Grant Road station can be considered the most unsafe station, with many respondents highlighting its proximity to red light districts as being the primary reason for them feeling unsafe.

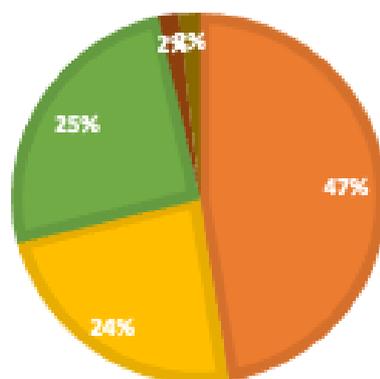
It was observed that a majority of sexual harassment related crimes took place in the evening, followed by the afternoon and then at night (Fig 7).

### Awareness of forms of recourse

It was found that among all the individuals considered, almost 60% were unaware of the railway helpline - #139 that can be used to report instances of crime on the railway stations. In addition, when asked about their knowledge of laws relating to women's safety, 83% reported that they were unaware of any such legal provision. Fig 8 details the laws which the individuals were aware of. It was found that among these individuals, most of them were familiar with POSH laws i.e. the Prevention of Sexual Harassment at the Workplace Act 2013.

**FIG 8. KNOWLEDGE OF LAWS ON WOMEN'S SAFETY**

- Prevention of sexual harassment at the workplace
- Prevention of violence against women
- Criminal law amendment act- stalking
- POCSO
- Indecent representation of women act



## Suggestions

### Infrastructural capacity building

- Increase CCTV coverage inside trains and on platforms
- Increase police and RPF presence on the platforms and in the train, particularly at night
- Increase the presence of female constables near ladies' compartments
- Have 24-hour help desks on the platforms
- Stations and surrounding areas should have better illumination
- Cleanliness - by making railway toilets more accessible

### Awareness building

- Conducting sessions with workplaces, schools and colleges regarding the legal provisions and helplines available against sexual harassment
- Encourage investing in advertisements highlighting the railway helpline number and other sources of assistance for both bystanders and survivors
- Conducting workshops on bystander intervention with boys and men

## Limitations

Due to this survey being conducted in the monsoon season, there were challenges with gathering data - therefore, if few responses were gained from a particular station with few experiences of sexual harassment, one cannot conclude that that station is necessarily considered safe.

Since a large proportion of the sample was aged under 25, older individuals may experience different forms of harassment.

Being a busy environment, many of the respondents were not able to provide detailed answers to the questions.

Most of the volunteers who were administering this survey were male which could have led to skewed results in people's experience of sexual harassment.

## **Safecity Railway Audit 2016 and 2019: A Comparison**

The audit conducted by Safecity in 2016 analysed 3 railway stations - Kurla, Dadar and CST. It involved collecting reports of sexual harassment of people present at these stations and rating the existing facilities and infrastructure on the basis of safety and inclusivity. Building on the findings of the previous study, the survey carried out in 2019 adopted a broader perspective as it covered 73 stations across the Western, Central and Harbour Lines and focused entirely on the responses of the individuals to gauge railway safety measures.

The comparative results are interesting - the 2016 survey indicates that more women experienced instances of sexual harassment, while the more recent survey shows men as having witnessed/experienced more instances of sexual harassment. Both studies show similar findings when it comes to the low rate of reporting these crimes. The evening as being when most crimes take place and the stark lack of awareness of the railway helpline number and related laws.

While the 2016 survey was more focused on infrastructural changes, the 2019 survey emphasised the level of awareness of sexual harassment and its related behaviours and reporting behaviour.

## List of stations with responses

Table 9

Western Line	Responses	Central Line	Responses	Harbour Line	Responses
Churchgate	60	CSMT	15	Dockyard road	12
Marine Lines	44	Masjid	9	Reay road	9
Charni Road	63	Sandhurst road	14	Cotton green	9
Grant Road	46	Byculla	15	Sewri	10
Mumbai Central	89	Chinchpokli	5	Vadala road	8
Mahalaxmi	52	Currey road	5	King circle	10
Lower Parel	48	Parel	6	GTB nagar	10
Prabhadevi	55	Sion	82	Chunnabhatti	6
Dadar	99	Kurla	114	Tilaknagar	7
Matunga Road	22	Vidyavihar	22	Chembur	17
Mahim	6	Ghatkopar	51	Govandi	10
Bandra	73	Vikhroli	6	Mankhurd	11
Khar Road	44	Kanjur marg	5	Vashi	16
Santacruz	17	Bhandup	13	Sanpada	14
Vileparle	8	Nahur	6	Juninagar	14
Andheri	20	Mulund	13	Nerul	11
Jogeshwari	11	Thane	14	Seawoods Darave	15
Ram mandir	4	Kalva	1	Belapur CBD	8
Goregoan	8	Mumbra	7	Kharghar	16
Malad	52	Divajin	7	Manasarovar	4
Kandivalli	2	Kopar	63	Khandeshwar	7
Borivalli	30	Dombivli	12	Panvel	14
Dahisar	11	Thakurli	0	<b>Total = 22</b>	<b>252</b>
Mira road	101	Kalyan	9		
Bhayandar	100	Vithalwadi	4		
Nalgaon	4	Ambarnath	0		
Vasai	32	<b>Total = 26</b>	<b>498</b>		
Nallasopara	36				
Virar	35				
<b>Total = 29</b>	<b>1172</b>				