Women Safety!! A Major Determinant of Women Enrolling in Higher Education: A Study of Factors Attributing to High Enrolment Rates of Women in Colleges in Coimbatore City

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ABSTRACT

The Higher Education is crucial for women to contribute to human capital building of the nation. Higher education of women also is vital for a nation's all round development (social, cultural and economic) and its sustainability. Women, when they are educated, are, empowered and prove to be a potential resource for socio-cultural and economic development of the nation. For a country to develop, empowerment of women is an essential criteria (Singh, 2007; Yehualashet, 2010). According to (Bamora, 2010; Thasniya, 2014; Aneja, 2015), the basis of such an empowerment can be resorted to by educating women which is vital for economic transformation and social equality. There are still many developing countries like India, according to Belal, 2009; Soylu, 2011 where women's literacy rate are lesser than that of men.

Higher education can strengthen women's empowerment. Qualified women have been better and confident leaders in the society who are proven role models to youngsters. Women chose their area of expertise and are confident decision makers. They also prove to be a key success to policies making in issues concerning socio-economic and cultural issues which have an impact on the community life (Shaukat & Siddiquah, 2013).

The current study investigates on safety related factors that encourage women to enrol for higher education in Coimbatore district, Tamilnadu

Keywords: Higher Education, Empowerment, Safety, Enrolment

INTRODUCTION

Although cities are increasingly recognizing the need to prioritize women's safety in urban public space, there remains a lack of clarity about the way forward. The need to discuss the way forward becomes especially important in light of the women empowerment proliferation of safety. To be truly "smart," cities must address gendered disparities in urban safety. Otherwise, the promise of women empowerment will be questioned, which are embedded in the current discussions on smart cities, might just create circumstances where policy makers end up overlooking the entire gamut of safety and inclusion. Current study in this area of relating women safety and enrolment of women in higher education in a safe area like Coimbatore city, Tamilnadu will be the bench mark for policy makers to make further improvement in other cities in mainstream planning agendas, especially with the addition of smart technologies for women empowerment.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Indian government has taken focused steps in encouraging women enrolment in higher education so that the gap prevailing between privileged and under privileged group is reduced. The socio-economic gap existing between advantaged and disadvantaged is also bridged. But, a major portion of the population behind the mainstream are still lagging behind from adopting these initiatives. Higher education helps in empowering such women and bringing them to the foreground by equipping them with confidence and leadership qualities and thus making them socially inclusive.

With passage of time, Indian literacy rate has gone up. But, there still remains a gender gap in the literacy rate. Literacy rates among men had gone up to 80.9 in 2011 to 27.2 in 1951and among women, to 64.6 from 8.9 (Census, 1951 and 2011). According to MHRD,2008-09 data, the enrolment of women in higher education was 60 lakhs and that of men was 100 lakhs. According to Lal et.al; (2016) 85 females per hundred males are enrolled in higher education.

Women's enrolment in higher education, majorly, is dependent on the environmental factors and the facilities provided by the institutions though proximity of the colleges is a mojor determinant. According to AISHE (2017-18), on an average there were 28 colleges per lakh eligible population, which is very less. This is different for different states. The distance from home to school has inverse relationship with the enrolment of girls as parents prefer sending their daughters to colleges/ schools in the nearby vicinity(Yehualashet, 2010; Soylu, 2011). Safety while commuting to college is the major concern of the parents of girls aspiring for pursuing higher education (Bamora, 2010; Ramchandran, 2010; Hebbalkar, 2014). According to Belal, 2009; Ramchandran, 2010; Hebbalkar, 2014, number of female teachers and secure place of education is also a major determinant of enrolment of women in higher education.

METHODOLOGY
This research follows a relative logical strategy and attempts to cover public spaces in Coimbatore city in Tamil Nadu. Various categories of public places as a segment of public sphere include all functional areas such as roads, streets, pathways, public toilets, stations, bus stops, bazaars, markets and malls, highways, parks, restaurants, cinemas, public transport and their usage is examined in towns of Coimbatore in relation to women's demand for security and safety.

I.   Study area

II. Data collection

III. Period of data collection

IV. Questionnaire survey

V.   Data analysis

VI. Limitations of the Study

i. Study area
Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu was India's safest city for women in 2016. Official data declare that in 2016 not a single case of rape, domestic violence, acid attack, stalking, or demand for dowry was recorded in the entire city against only two cases of rape registered in the city in 2015. The city is among top 10 cities in India preferred by women. Coimbatore Police have been actively conducting regular checks, especially in and around institutions where women study or work in large numbers. Lakshmi, (Deputy Commissioner) reports that only few complaints of ragging and eve-teasing were received. The police ensure that incidents like eve-teasing and chain-snatching are looked into as well. By providing a whatspp number to which complaints can be sent at any point of time. The authorities organize workshops in schools and colleges to sensitize the masses about these issues and also suggest them preventive measured needed to thwart the problem in the first place.

ii. Data collection
A purposive sampling method was adopted for collecting data from women in Coimbatore city Data collected was collected by administering questionnaire to 90 women in age age group of 18-32. Likewise, we opted to differentiate relatively homogeneous areas, and to select independent samples in each of them. Upon choosing the number of areas and their limits, certain criteria were followed, such as homogeneity of the public space, functional organization of the neighborhood, socio-demographic characteristics, and structure of the area under study.

iii. Period of data collection
The data were collected from December 9,2019 to December 31, 2019

iv. Questionnaire survey

The questionnaire was divided into three parts. Part A was allocated for questions aimed at getting some information about the individual characteristics and to have an overview of people with different characteristics and background. Part B is about awareness of environmental towards their habitant and mobility welfare which portrayed images of different for perceived safety. Part C consisted of items measuring the level of perceived safety among women students towards perceived safety in public places factors. The last part was to explore whether the individual exposed to any crime before and precautionary measures taken by individuals against fear of crime in public space. The design of the questions was a combination of closed and open-ended questions and question with 'Likert-scale' responses was presented. The survey questionnaires contain questions were self-administered. These questions will be tested against the demographic profile of respondents.

v. Data analysis

To evaluate the data, analysis is carried out, to acquire the results, a descriptive technique is used and inferential statistics such as Chi-Square test of association was employed. To infer the collected data in the expressive form, factor analysis was conducted to find the underlying factors. It is essential to lessen the variables to a few interpretable linear groups, for this purpose principal component analysis was applied on the dependent and independent variables and along with it the statistical test of path analysis model was carried out. Path analysis has been referred to as mediation analysis and has been used to show causal analysis (Davis, 1985; MacKinnon, Krull, & Lockwood, 2000). Path analysis has been considered to be informative because it provides the most information about relationships between variables.

Current study has investigated how women feel when they are able to pursue higher education, how demotivated they feel when they are deprived of higher education for prevailing unsafe conditions in the society for which they are in no way responsible and how inspired they feel to pursue higher education in an institution whose prime focus is women education, women empowerment and women safety. The current study is undertaken with the following objectives

1. To explore the perception of parents regarding their security and the enrolment of girl child for higher education.

2. To examine the difficulties and problems that the young girls face while using the public spaces on the way to their educational institutions.

3. To identify the major factors responsible for increase of crime in the society

4. To study the safety factors contributing to women not pursuing higher education

5. To detect the causal relationship between the Women Safety and empowerment of in enrolling to higher education.

6. To propose safety measures, to enable planners and designers to introduce features for women security and comfort in designing public places.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the data collected from the women respondents for an easy understanding, the analysis has been divided into:

I.   Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

II.   Reasons for increasing of insecurity

III. Nature and frequency of crime

IV.   PLS-SEM Model

V.   Recommendations for policy action

4.1.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

4.1.1 Socio-Demographic Background

From the Table 4.1.1 analysis of data relating to age of respondent's shows that, majority of the respondents were in the age-group of 31-40 years. The respondents were focused more towards those children who are entering into the higher education stages. Women of younger age group parent fear of higher risk factor as compared with those of elder age group because elder parent's children would have crossed the educational age.

Table: 4.1.1

Characteristics	Total	Characteristics	Total
Age		**Gender**	
31-40	61.8	Male	32
41-50	25.5	Female	86
51-60	10.8	**Level of Education**	
Above 60	2.9	Illiterate	33.5
Type of Family		Secondary	53.1
Nuclear	79.7	Higher secondary	9.4
Joint	19.8	UG	3.4
Extended family	0.5	PG	0.6
No of female children		**Employment Status**	
One	62	Employed	57
More than one	38	Unemployed	43

Sources: Analyses were based on the sample surveyed.

Majority of the respondents were womens (86 percent) compared to males (32 percent) since mother is the responsible care taker and deciding factor for the girl child's future in the family. Educated parents will value the importance of higher education enrollment for their future generation. The table shows that 53 percent of the parents finished their secondary level of education, 9.5 percent completed higher secondary level and a few their under graduation level of education (3.4 percent) and P.G (0.6 percent). Even though 33.5 percent of the respondents are illiterate there are chances to upgrade their girlchild to lead a better life by enrolling in higher education. Majority of the respondents (79.7 percent) belonged to nuclear families. Only 19.8 percent of the parents were from joint families. The employment status of victims revealed that 57 percent of them were employed and the rest (43 percent) were unemployed. All the respondent are chosen who have women child and majority of the family (62 percent) consisted only one girl child compared with 38 percent have more than one girl children

4.1.2 Age Composition of the female children

There has been a striking increase in the reporting of crime against women in urban India and anxiety about women's 'security' is a crucial hurdle that may hamper young women's pursuit of higher education. Harassment of young women is likely to occur in any public space and affects those who inhabit affluent spaces as well as rural, whilst they are travelling to educational institutions. Women are vulnerable and feel unsafe in the built-in environment, which needs to be regularized

Table 4.1.2 Age Distribution of the respondents

| Age	Area		Total
	Rural	Urban	
Less than 20	10.00	40.00	50.00
20-22	16.20	30.00	46.30
23-28	1.20	2.40	3.60
Total	27.50	72.50	100.00

Sources: Data based on Field Survey, 2019.

Table 4.1.2 depicts that forty per cent of the respondents girl children were of the age less than 20 from urban area compared to 10 per cent in rural while thirty per cent of them were of the age 30 per cent from urban area compared to 16 per cent in rural.

Figure 4.1.1 displays the level of satisfaction felt by the respondent which has been classified with respect to their children age and the area they dwell. This will give the picture of association between area, age and their attitude towards their safety perception. The result when compared to age distribution between 23 to 28 years old, feel safe irrespective of area they stay.

The group between 20 to 22 years old, majority (38 percent) of which 14 percent in rural and 24 percent of urban felt safe while 9 percent (3 percent from rural and 6 percent from urban) felt unsafe. The age category 23 to 28 displays that 19 percent from urban felt unsafe while 20 percent felt safe, in same way 4 percent in rural area felt safe while 6 percent felt unsafe.

Figure 4.1.1 Age Dispersal of the Enrolment
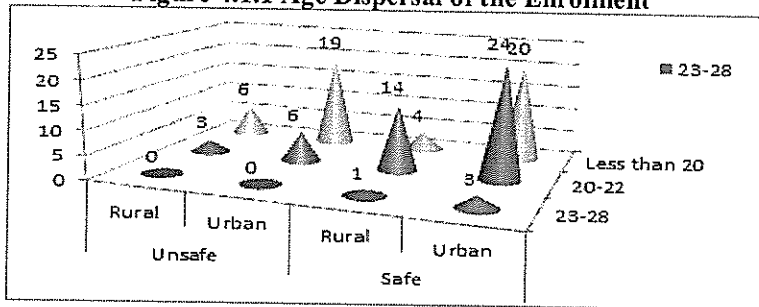
Sources: Data based on Field Survey, 2019.

H0: There is no significant association between Women safety with regard to age group and area.

Table 4.1.3 Age-wise and security Area

Chi-square	Unsafe	Safe
	Area	Area
Values	0.034	2.501
Df	1	2
Sig.	0.853	0.286

Sources: Data based on Field Survey, 2019.

The results showed a mixed figure from graphical analysis; hence chi square test is adopted to test the hypothesis. Hypothesis were tested and the results are presented in the table 4.1.3 which reports that there is no evidence to reject the above null hypothesis of no association of area wise security and age category between 18 – 32 years old of the respondents. In 2013 alone, more than two million Indian women in the age group 15–39 years reported experiencing sexual violence (Raj and McDougal 2014). In India, responsibility for negotiating any 'danger' in city life rests on women and they have less access to public space than men (Phadke 2005).

4.1.3 Educational Qualification

H0: There is no significant association between Women safety and their enrolment in to institutions. higher education.

Table 4.1.4 Enrollment for Higher Education

Higher Education	Feel safe		Chi-Square Tests	
	Yes	No		
Enrolled	20.0	42.5	Value	6.270
Not enrolled	7.5	30.0	Df	1
Total	27.5	72.5	Sig.	0.012

Sources: Data based on Field Survey, 2019.

Figure 4.1.4 shows that there over 73 percent of the respondents feel unsafe while 43 percent enrolled for higher education remaining 30 percent of women who aspire to enroll themselves in to an institution to pursue higher education but have not done. Majority of 20 percent the people were enrolled who felt safe remaining 8 percent respondents were not enrolled even though they feel safer environment this may be due to other factors like financial constrain, social control within the family, problem of early marriages and so on. From the above table 4.1.3 showing chi square test results, the study reject the null hypothesis at 5 percent level and conclude that safety plays a major role in women pursuing higher education.
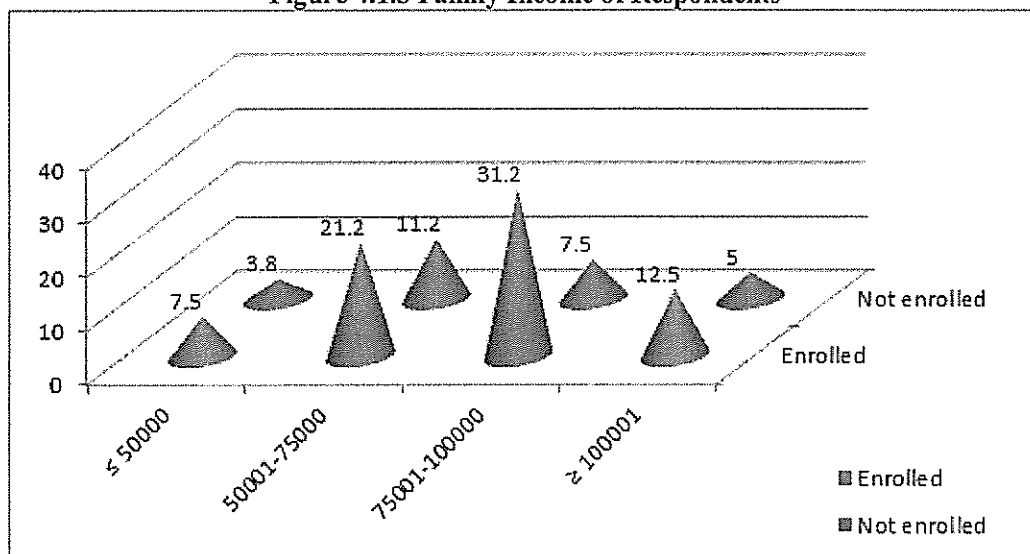
Figure 4.1.2 Enrolment of Girls
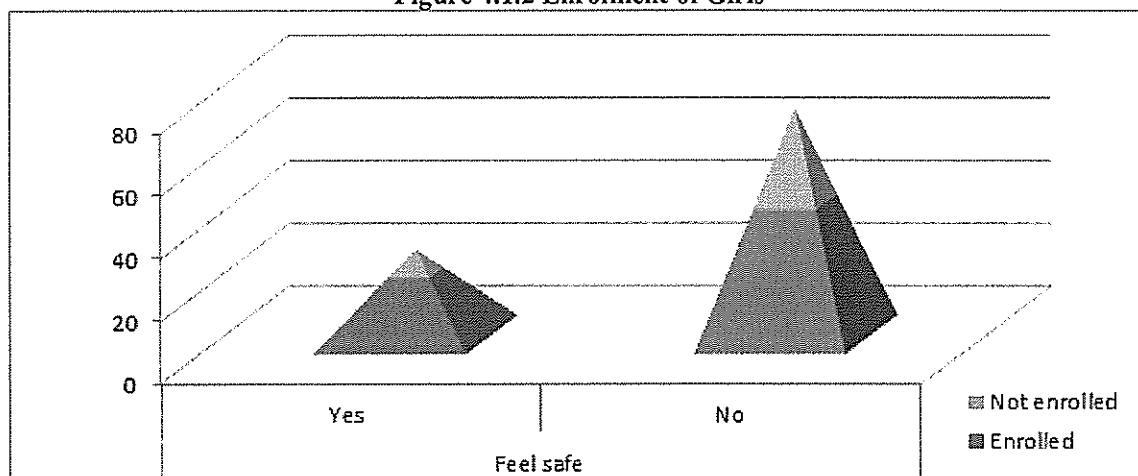
Sources: Data based on Field Survey, 2019.

4.1.4   Family Income
The figure 4.1.3 shows that majority of the women belonged to families that earned between Rs 75,000 and Rs 1,00,000 a year.

Figure 4.1.3 Family Income of Respondents

Sources: Data based on Field Survey, 2019.

Ho: There is no significant association between annual income of the family and women enrolling themselves in to colleges for pursuing higher education.

Table 4.1.5 Family Income of Respondents

Income/ annum	Enrolled	Not enrolled	Total	Chi-Square Tests	
≤ 50000	7.50	3.80	11.20	Value	1.853
50001-75000	21.20	11.20	32.50	Df	3
75001-100000	31.20	7.50	38.80	Sig	0.603
≥ 100001	12.50	5.00	17.50		
Total	72.5	27.5	100.0		

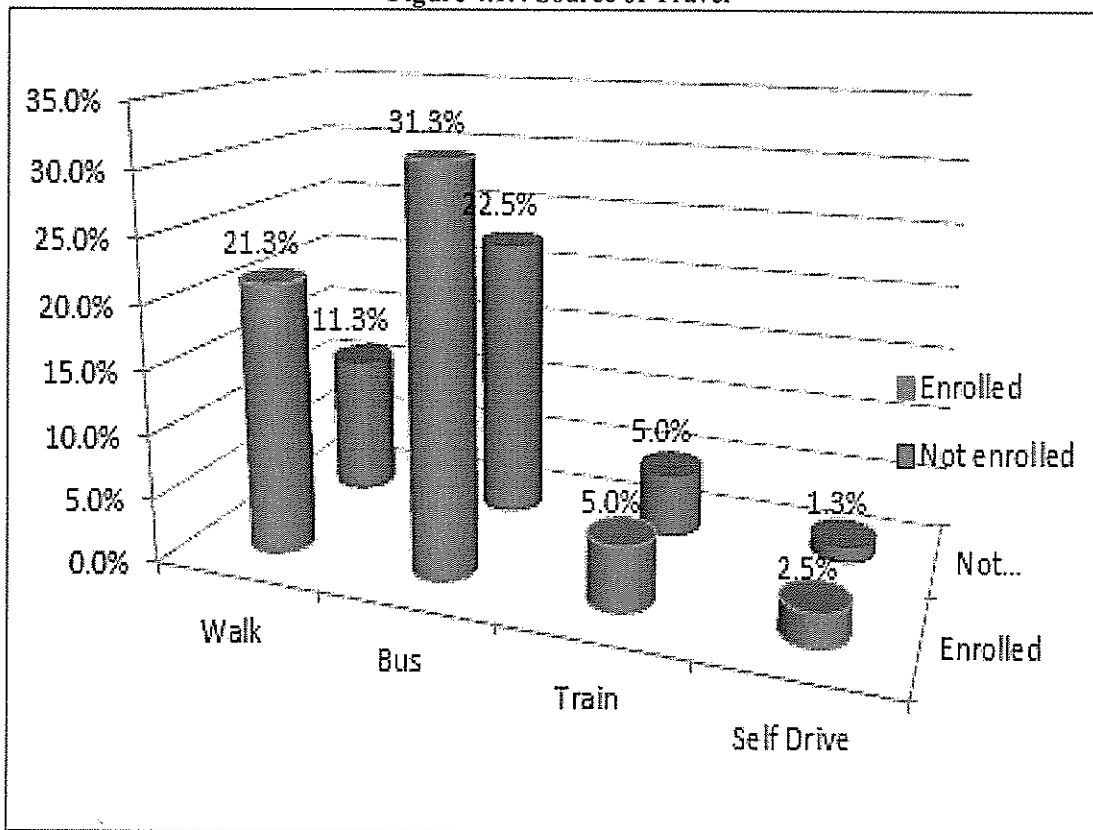Sources: Data based on Field Survey, 2019.

From the above table 4.1.5, the researcher is unable to reject the null hypothesis and says that annual income of the family is a determinant of women enrolling for higher education.

4.1.5 Source of Travel

If educational institutions are not available nearby, travelling for girls becomes a major obstacle.

Travel is seen as a threat to personal security. This is a particularly strong factor in deterring girls from entering higher education as institutions are likely to be very distant and even if boarding facilities are available there are possible incidents of sexual harassment and sexual abuse to consider (Sathar & Haque, 2000; World Bank, 2007; UNESCO, 2010).

Figure 4.1.4 Source of Travel

Sources: Data based on Field Survey, 2019.

4.1.6 Hours of Travel

While assessing the distance to reach the institution hours of travel is taken into consideration. The figure 4.1.5 displays that most of the parents prefers the nearby institution for enrolment for higher education. Nearly 25 percent has enrolled within 15 minutes of travel while 16 percent more than an hour and 10 percent and 6 percent has enrolled within 15 to 45 minutes of travel
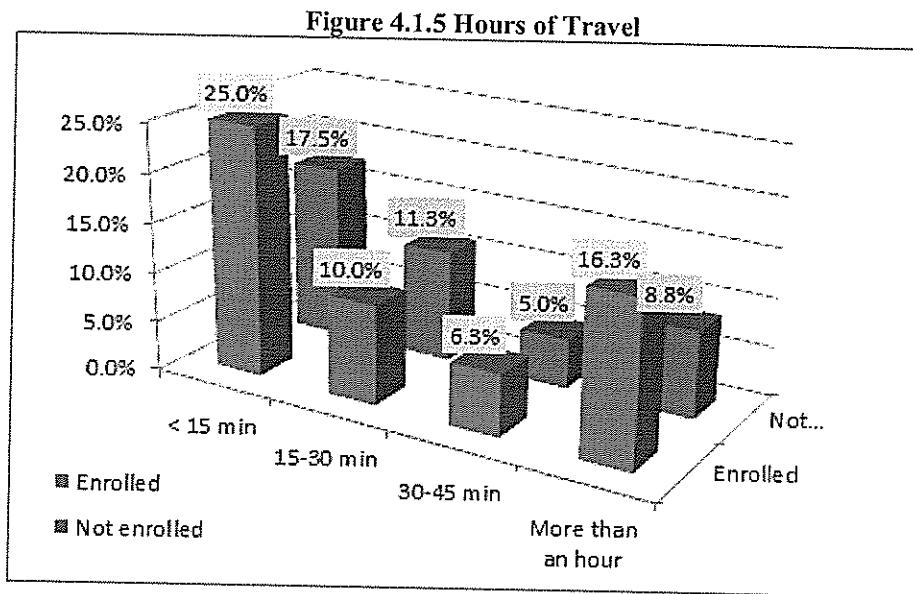
Figure 4.1.5 Hours of Travel

Sources: Data based on Field Survey, 2019.

Ho: There is no significant association between mode of transport and their enrolment in to institutions .higher education

Ho: There is no significant association between hours of travel to institutions and their enrolment in higher education

Table 4.1.6 Higher Education and travel

Chi-Square Tests	Travel	
	Source	Hours
Value	3.934	3.029
Df	3	3
Sig.	.269	.387

Sources: Data based on Field Survey, 2019.

The chi square test exhibits that there is no significant association between mode of travel and hours of travel to that of enrolment of women in higher education. Thus it clearly point out that if there is safety of women there will be larger number of women enrolment in higher education.

4.2 Reasons for Increasing of Insecurity

4.2.1 Insight for fueling crime

Factor analysis was conducted to find what factors contributed to the increasing crime rate in Coimbatore City and the results are summarized below

Table 4.2.1 Main Reason for increasing crime

	Strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree	mean score
No fear of the law	65	20	6.3	3.8	5	1.6375
Women are being increasingly viewed as sex objects	18.8	53.8	21.3	1.3	5	2.2
Women dressing in skimpy clothes	15	26.3	40	11.3	7.5	2.7
Easy access to pornography	12.5	37.5	40	3.8	6.3	2.5375
Unsafe and inadequate transport services	25	32.5	31.3	5	6.3	2.35
Poor street lighting	20	43.8	25	5	6.3	2.3375
Lack of police patrolling on the streets	26.3	23.8	32.5	8.8	8.8	2.5

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Ghatkopar (W), Mumbai-400086.

Poor maintenance of open public spaces	30	35	25	3.8	6.3	2.2125
Lack of vendors or stalls/people in the area	20	38.8	30	3.8	7.5	2.4
Men intake of alcohol / drugs	45	28.8	18.8	1.3	6.3	1.95

Sources: Data based on Field Survey, 2019.

The respondents opined that crimes were committed majorly due lack of fear of law and men who were not in their state of men after consuming liquor or any other such substances contribute to the increasing crime rates. This was revealed by the means scores of the factors. All the other factors, showed a neutral opinion. This highlight that most of the responds feel the city is quiet save to travel for young women.

4.2.2 Vulnerable Areas

Past History of crimes show that Using roadside, using public transportation and also waiting for public transports during odd hours was very dangerous due to which girls were not sent to colleges in those days. There were opinions from people of the areas that even now they fear such factors and hence refrain from sending them to colleges. A few of them quoted incidents of molestations because of which they preferred safety to education or even "empowerment" which they consider a novel term. The respondents' neutral opinion of the past crimes that happened in the past leading to crimes happening now was summarized below on table 4.2.2.

Table 4.2.2 Unsafe Area

	Very serious	Serious	Moderate	Minor	Not at all	Mean score
Roadside	27.5	32.5	21.3	3.8	15	2.4625
Using public transport	13.8	28.8	27.5	5	25	2.9875
Waiting for public transport	15	40	26.3	7.5	11.3	2.6000
Market place	11.3	25	35	10	18.8	3.0000
Park	20	25	20	13.8	21.3	2.9125
Public toilet	32.5	10	27.5	12.5	17.5	2.7250
Others	16.3	22.5	27.5	17.5	16.3	2.9500

Sources: Data based on Field Survey, 2019.

Global studies and surveys demonstrate that women feel less comfortable and secure in public places even in developed countries and are afraid of violence and aggression. The mean score predicts that the public places are neutral result of safety concern. To determine the appropriateness of applying factor analysis the KMO and Bartlett's test measures were computed and the results are presented in table above Bartlett's test of sphericity and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy are both tests that can be used to determine the factorability of the matrix as a whole.

TABLE 4.2.3 KMO AND BARTLETT'S TEST MEASURES

Test Measures	
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure	0.685
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	
(i) Approx. Chi-Square	110.902
(ii) Degrees of freedom	21
(iii) Significance	.000

Source: Estimation based on Field survey

It is suggested that if the Bartlett's test of sphericity is significant, and if the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure is greater than 0.6, then factorability is assumed. The KMO statistics is 0.685 signifying higher than acceptable adequacy of sampling. Bartlett's test of sphericity was also found to be significant at 1 percent level providing evidence of the presence of relationship between the variables to apply factor analysis.

Table 4.2.4 Factor Loading for risky areas

Component	F1	F2
Roadside		
Using public transport		
Waiting for public transport		.778
Market place	.814	
Park	.760	
Public toilet		.626
Total	2.269	1.488
percent of Variance	32.421	21.251
Cumulative percent	32.421	53.672

Source: Estimation based on Field survey

Women feel that their surrounding places are threatening, more often they are inadequate in their practice and ultimately, they avoid using the areas that they sense as insecure public places such as highways, roads, public squares, neighborhood streets or public parks, which are more frequently used by men than by women. This certainty contributes to the assumption that women are frightened while moving in certain public places. It can be seen from the above table that these are still safety concerns for women at the market places, public parks and when waiting for public transport. Past studies have shown that transit passengers" fears and concerns about safety influence their travel decisions. According to a survey done by the UK Department for Transport, an extra 10.5 % of journeys would be generated if public felt more secure while travelling, particularly while waiting at the stations (Sideris and Fink 2008). Similarly, another study shows that most women feel insecure while waiting at the bus stop, when they are not comfortable with services, when there is no indication of security and when they receive no information of the bus services (Sham, Omar and Amat 2013). Hence the city is not fully safe for women, as opined by the respondents. Women safety is a concern in Coimbatore city when they wait in a public place awaiting buses, auto rickshaws etc, they visit market places shopping groceries, in public toilets, and in parks.

5.3 Nature and Frequency of Crime
5.3.1 Perpetrators' act of Risks

Respondents were asked to describe how harassers disturbing the women in public places. A frequency illustration is given in table 5.3.1. The respondents' views from mean score depicts that there are serious level of aggravation on Eve teasing', Staring, Sexual assault or rape, and Robbery or having money or possessions stolen. There is moderate level of harass on Sexual harassment and Murder in their places. Women harassment and ferocity in public places reported by urban women in India is 79 %, in Thailand – 85 %, and in Brazil – 89 % (Malik, 2017).

Table 5.3.1 Nature of Risk

	Very serious	Serious	Moderate	Minor	Not at all	Mean score
Sexual harassment	30	21.3	16.3	11.3	21.3	2.7250
Eve teasing'	22.5	42.5	22.5	5	7.5	2.3250
Staring	26.3	40	17.5	6.3	10	2.3375
Sexual assault or rape	38.8	17.5	27.5	5	11.3	2.3250
Robbery or having money or possessions stolen	26.3	36.3	15	7.5	15	2.4875
Murder	27.5	21.3	28.8	10	12.5	2.5875
Other	12.5	27.5	20	27.5	12.5	3.0000

Sources: Data based on Field Survey, 2019.

5.3.2 Personal reason to feel insecurity

There were also questions relating to womens' personal reasons, as their perceptions for feeling insecure. Their opinions are summarized in the table 5.3.2 below.

Table 5.3.2 Personal feeling of insecurity

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean score
Being a woman	52.5	17.5	7.5	12.5	10	2.1000
Being of a certain religion	15	27.5	22.5	27.5	7.5	2.8500
Being of a certain race	8.8	22.5	43.8	16.3	8.8	2.9375
Being from another state/region	12.5	22.5	26.3	32.5	6.3	2.9750
Being from another country	8.8	23.8	22.5	22.5	22.5	3.2625
Sexual Orientation	18.8	17.5	17.5	36.3	10	3.0125
Others	17.5	20	27.5	25	10	2.9500
None	15	17.5	21.3	33.8	12.5	3.1125

Sources: Data based on Field Survey, 2019.

The mean score states that they disagree of being insecure due to a certain religion, race, another state/region or country. But the factor scores of above were all on disagreement or strongly disagree of these factors. They are afraid of being women and that they are being observed as a sexual tool in the society.

5.3.2 Suggestions to reduce the amount of Crimes

Since crime in the society increases the respondents were enquired regarding the measures to be adopted in general to control them. Majority of the respondents insisted on severe punishments (48 percent) and 26 percent insist on better parenting with sons being taught to respect women. Let's become a generation teaching for sons to respect women rather than teaching our girls to be careful.

Table 5.3.3 Most effective steps for crimes against women

Harsh punishment	47.5
Fast-track courts	7.5
Better patrolling	13.8
Better parenting with sons being taught to respect women	26.3
Sensitization of police	5

Source: Estimation based on Field survey

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

From the above analysis, it can be concluded that Coimbatore is a safe city. Women safety has paved for increasing enrolment of women which, in turn has increased the literacy rates of women in the city. The city has provided a relatively safe and secure environment for women.

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