

# A Safety Audit of Rural Public Spaces in Gujarat

*Negotiating safe spaces for women and girls*



**A collaborative study by Utthan-ISST**

Supported by



**Cover page design by**

Monika Sharma, Institute of Social Studies Trust

**Cover photo credit**

Utthan field team

(Consent was taken from all the women in the photograph)

**Publication date**

July 2024



---

Sobti-Rajpal, P, Ghosh, A., Zaidi, M, Shekharan, A, and Pathak, S (2024), Negotiating Safe Public Spaces for Girls and Women in Rural Gujarat: A Safety Audit by Utthan and ISST. Institute of Social Studies Trust. © 2024 by Utthan & Institute of Social Studies Trust is licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0. To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

# A Safety Audit of Rural Public Spaces in Gujarat: Negotiating safe spaces for women and girls

## **Research team**

Pallavi Sobti Rajpal, Utthan

Anweshaa Ghosh, Institute of Social Studies Trust

Mubashira Zaidi, Institute of Social Studies Trust

Abhishek Sekharan, Researcher and PhD Student, University of Michigan

Utthan's field team contributed to the survey tool designing and conducted the qualitative data collection: Arvind, Babu, Javed, Jaya, Jitendra, Lata, Laxman, Megha, Neeta & Rubina

Data entry: Monal Kapadia, Research Volunteer, Utthan

## **Compiled by**

Siddhi Pathak, Independent Researcher

## **The research acknowledges the contributions of the enumerators for the survey:**

Bhanuben, Dhaniben, Krishnaben, Kaajalben D from Shakti Mahila Sangathan, Bhavnagar

Jignasaben, Gitaben B, Kaajalben M, Prafullaben, Rubinaben from Samarthan Mahila Sangathan, Bhavnagar

Bhavnaben, Champaben, Jamanaben from Mahila Vikas Sangathan, Amreli

Dharmisthaben, Gitaben P., Rekhaben, Sonalben, Suhanabanu from Ekta Mahila Sangathan, Mahisagar & Panchamahals

Raghupatiben, Suryaben from Vanita Shakti Mahila Sangathan, Dhanpur, Dahod

The research was conducted under a grant received by Utthan from the EdelGive Foundation for establishing scalable models of village transformation towards justice, financial inclusion and livelihood security of marginalised communities through a gender sensitive, people - centred approach in 4 districts of Gujarat.

Institute of Social Studies Trust (ISST), established in 1980 is a registered charity institution that aims to visibilise the gendered dimensions of labour through a critical public-spirited inquiry and a gender transformative approach necessary to build a just and equitable society. ISST focuses on four thematic areas of Gender based violence and work, Informality, precarious work and care, Gender and digitalisation of work and Women powering the world of work through its program pillars - Research, Evaluation, Community Outreach and Capacity Building.

# Contents

<b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Background and Context.....	5
Understanding Violence and Safety: Legal and Constitutional Provisions .....	5
Rationale of the study .....	8
<b>Chapter 2: Approach and Methodology</b> .....	<b>10</b>
Approach.....	10
Study Design and Sampling.....	10
<b>Chapter 3: Demographic Profile</b> .....	<b>13</b>
Age and Marital Status.....	13
Social category and religious identity distribution of respondents .....	14
Disabilities .....	16
Educational Status.....	17
Household characteristics: Earnings, Decision-making and Work Profile of spouses .....	18
Women’s work profile .....	21
<b>Chapter 4: Prevalent Forms of Gender-Based Violence</b> .....	<b>24</b>
Prevalent forms of gender-based violence (GBV) observed .....	24
Reasons for GBV .....	27
Substance abuse and incidence of violence .....	29
<b>Chapter 5: Time, Place and Women’s Safety</b> .....	<b>31</b>
Open defecation .....	32
Fear of eve-teasing, stalking, molestation and harassment in lonely stretches.....	32
Fear of animals and thieves.....	33
<b>Chapter 6: Mobility of Women and Girls - Safety in public spaces</b> .....	<b>34</b>
<i>Women’s access to public spaces</i> .....	45
<i>Restrictions on women’s entry</i> .....	47
<i>Transect Walks: Understanding the space and concept of safety</i> .....	49
<b>Chapter 7: Women’s Access to Basic Services</b> .....	<b>50</b>
Access to safe and quality drinking water .....	50
Access to cooking fuel .....	51
Access to fodder for livestock.....	53
Access to safe and hygienic toilets .....	54
Access to sanitation including garbage disposal, drainage and sewage .....	56
Access to good quality roads and public lighting .....	57
Access to PDS shops.....	59
<b>Chapter 8: Challenges to Addressing Women’s Safety</b> .....	<b>63</b>
<b>Chapter 9: Conclusion and Discussion</b> .....	<b>66</b>

<b>Chapter 10: What Works? Recommendations and Way Forward</b> .....	<b>70</b>
Major contributors to women’s safety .....	70
Recommendations .....	71
<b>Annexure 1:</b> .....	<b>74</b>
Covid-19 impact on GBV .....	74
Annexure 2:.....	77
Limitations of the data .....	77
Annexure 3 .....	78

## Executive Summary

Utthan has a long history of working on issues of gender – based violence (GBV) in rural communities across Gujarat through mahila *sangathans* (women’s collectives) and creation of Nyay Samitis (Justice Committees) working at the block and district level as informal redressal mechanisms. These committees under the women collectives, work on a range of direct and indirect issues to ensure safety and security of women and young girls. These include awareness on gender-based violence, support to women and girls as survivors of domestic and public violence, land disputes, caste-based violence and discrimination. These activities undertaken in alliance with law providing government actors, Panchayats and like-minded groups are its key areas of intervention. These efforts are geared to challenge patriarchal socio-cultural gender norms along with providing crucial support to survivors to avail justice, while facilitating processes at the level of family, community, Panchayat, mandated support institutions and law providing institutions such as police and the courts.

In this journey of working around issues of gender-based violence, the team at Utthan reflected that it was important to also address the violence women face in public spaces in rural centers, which are mostly inaccessible to girls and women due to strong cultural and gender norms around women’s mobility as well as lack of public infrastructure, services and systems. These restrictions upon women’s movement negatively impact girls and women’s ability to seek education, skilling opportunities, decent work and income, medical help, etc., which adversely impacts their overall well-being.

This concern led to a collaboration between Utthan and ISST to undertake a safety audit of women and girls in rural public spaces. The intention was to understand women’s experience and share the results with mandated institutions for reflection and action. It is also important to note that while several safety audits around women’s safety issues have been conducted globally, few have been conducted in rural areas. Safety audits help build evidence towards state’s accountability to provide better public infrastructures such as safe, regular and cheap public transport, and build robust safety mechanisms and systems. Further, it helps local governance bodies and communities design safer public spaces and programmes towards breaking norms around girls and women’s mobility allowing them and their communities to thrive.

This safety audit delves deeply into the challenges faced by women in rural Gujarat. It provides a nuanced understanding of GBV and women's mobility, revealing the complex and intersectional nature of these issues. Rural areas in India, including Gujarat, present unique challenges for women's safety. The lack of adequate infrastructure, social services, and safety measures disproportionately affects women, exposing them to various forms of GBV. This study, focusing on two tribal and two coastal villages across four districts, offers a detailed examination of these challenges through both qualitative and quantitative methods. By involving 330 participants and using tools such as surveys, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and transect walks, the study provides a rich, disaggregated dataset that captures the diverse experiences of women in these communities.

The findings of this study are both revealing and alarming. Over 22% of women reported experiencing some form of violence in the 12 months preceding the study. Domestic violence, eve-teasing, and stalking are pervasive, affecting women's sense of security in both public and private spaces. The barriers to seeking help, influenced by deeply entrenched patriarchal attitudes and ineffective resolution mechanisms, further complicate the situation. Only 12% of the women approached the police after experiencing violence, highlighting the critical need for alternative support systems and more accessible justice mechanisms.

Women's perceptions of safety are significantly influenced by infrastructural factors such as roads, public lighting, and access to public transport. Better infrastructure correlates with enhanced feelings of safety, underscoring the importance of addressing these physical aspects to improve women's security.

This study is not just a catalog of challenges; it is a call to reflection and action. The recommendations are both comprehensive and actionable, aiming to create a safer and more supportive environment for women in rural Gujarat, with scope for replicability across the country and globe. Long-term goals include improving infrastructure for sanitation, water, roads, and educational institutions, and ensuring political representation of women in local governance. These structural solutions are essential for creating lasting change.

In the short term, informal redressal mechanisms, such as women's support groups, nari adalats, support mechanisms like police station-based support centres and quasi-legal resolution mechanisms like Lok Adalats, can provide immediate support to women facing violence. It is however also imperative that these grievance redressal mechanisms function well and are not lacking in terms of resources, personnel and intent. Community engagement is also crucial. By involving Gram Panchayats and local functionaries in addressing educational barriers for girls and promoting gender-sensitive planning and development, we can ensure sustainable and inclusive solutions.

This study underscores the need for holistic and feminist-informed approaches to address women's safety in rural contexts. By recognizing the intersectional nature of GBV and women's mobility, it calls for comprehensive strategies that promote women's safety and enforce their rights. Inclusive policies, community engagement, and targeted interventions prioritizing women's voices are essential for fostering a supportive ecosystem where women can access public spaces without fear, realizing their right to a dignified existence. Lastly, this safety audit also contributes to the dearth of literature in this space and indicates the need for more studies from diverse geographical locations and across intersectional communities. Such audits will help build inclusive safety infrastructure, mechanism and systems to account for the needs of marginalized women and other sexual minorities.

# Chapter 1: Introduction

## Background and Context

### Gender-Based Violence (GBV): Status in Gujarat

In Gujarat, NCRB data suggests, while the overall number of registered crimes against women have marginally reduced from 2021 to 2022, the rate of crime against women, per one lakh women has *increased* from 22.1% in 2021 to 22.9% in 2022<sup>1</sup>. According to NCRB reports<sup>2</sup>, the number of rape victims per year in Gujarat has increased from 479 in 2017 to 610 in 2022. Annual reports of the National Commission for Women (NCW) show a two-fold increase in the number of complaints made in Gujarat over the last 5 years, from 103 in 2017-18 to 221 in 2022-23.<sup>3</sup> Along with increasing crimes against women and complaints, there are also challenges with access to justice. NCRB 2022 data also reveals that Gujarat has the 6th highest pendency rate<sup>4</sup> in the country, at 95.7%, and the 3rd lowest conviction rate in the country at 5.3% for crimes against women,<sup>5</sup> which highlights the limitations of accessing justice for women in the state.

Both these issues combined, i.e. the increasing number of crimes against women and the limitations in access to justice, pose serious concerns on the safety of women in the state. While significant research has been done on women's safety in urban public spaces, primarily metropolitan cities, the presence of similar cultures of violence against women in villages requires deeper scrutiny. The fear of women regarding rural public spaces centres around the exposure to potential violence, obstacles to mobility and participation in public life, and access to education and opportunities. This is further impacted by women's social identities of caste and religion in the sub-continent's context.

### Understanding Violence and Safety: Legal and Constitutional Provisions

Public spaces are characterised by mobility. It can be understood as the centre of all activity concerning different goods, services, and institutions. For instance, a public space comprises our workplace, markets, recreational centres and so on and so forth.<sup>6</sup> Due to the importance of institutions located within this space, it is imperative for individuals to first, access these spaces and second, freely move about. Hence, an obligation is placed on the State to ensure safe public spaces which furthers access and mobility to all individuals. However, it is also necessary to consider the gendered understanding of safety. Sociological studies have often focused on the general perception of lack of safety while disregarding personal fears which hinder the mobility of a social group, like that of women.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> NCRB report 2021 and 2022

<sup>2</sup> NCRB 2017 and NCRB 2022

<sup>3</sup> NCW Annual Reports 2017-18 and 2022-23

<sup>4</sup> Pendency rate implies the % of cases pending per million population

<sup>5</sup> NCRB 2022

<sup>6</sup> Ash Amin, 'Collective culture and urban public space' (2008) 12(1) *City*, 5.

<sup>7</sup> Stéphanie Condon et al, 'Feeling Unsafe in Public Places: Understanding Women's Fears' (2007) 48(5) *Revue française de sociologie*, 101.



Through this section, we seek to chart the perception of gender-based violence in public spaces and how it impacts the comprehension of safety, considering women as the ‘actor’ in this discussion. Then we stipulate certain nuances specific to rural spaces. Further, we provide the legal provisions, primarily the Indian Penal Code, the Indian Constitution and legislations which address the issue of women’s safety.

The public-private binary around understanding of GBV has led to the matters of the home and family being seldom discussed in the public space and issues of domestic violence or violence by an intimate partner are neglected.<sup>8</sup> This binary has only helped further different understandings of public and private spaces whereas it impinges on each other and the dichotomy is faulty. Public spaces, with respect to women, are portrayed as unsafe. This translates into potential violence which can be committed against women, including but not limited to sexual assault, rape, molestation and eve-teasing. This idea is also buttressed by the media, family, friends etc.<sup>9</sup> Hence, different studies point out how women take precautionary measures while accessing public spaces. For instance, not travelling beyond a certain time, not accessing certain spaces wherein they perceive that their presence is not legitimate, etc. Therefore, a fear of violence and subsequent victimisation has adverse consequences for women’s mobility.<sup>10</sup>

A perusal of this fear of violence shows how it is linked to one’s identity as a woman. In the public narrative, a woman is depicted as weaker and in need of care and protection. The state and its mechanisms in fact considers itself as a protector of a woman’s bodily integrity rather than treats women as citizens with the right to bodily autonomy and safety. As such the various forms of campaigns for women’s safety are built upon this narrative of women’s ‘izzat’ (honour) which is reflective of the state’s patriarchal attitude. Male monopoly over public spaces continues to exist while women reduce their presence from these spaces apart from frequenting institutions necessary for their survival, for instance, their workplaces.<sup>11</sup>

While the above observations are more accurate with respect to urban spaces, lack of infrastructure in rural public spaces also contributes to the issue of women’s safety. Thus, while the perception of safety is the psychological aspect, comprising gender norms and normalising self-imposed restrictions on mobility; the lack of infrastructure in terms of toilets or conducive work environments inhibits women’s freedom in public spaces.

At this juncture, it is also crucial to tie into this argument the fundamental right to life and personal liberty, namely Article 21.<sup>12</sup> Though freedom of movement and accessing public spaces also featured under Article 19(1)(d),<sup>13</sup> in *Kharak Singh v. State of Uttar Pradesh*,<sup>14</sup> the Court refused to consider a

---

<sup>8</sup> Francis Bloch and Vijayendra Rao, ‘Terror as a Bargaining Instrument: A Case Study of Dowry Violence in Rural India’ (2002) 92(4) *The American Economic Review* 1029.

<sup>9</sup> Elizabeth A Stanko, ‘The Case of Fearful Women: Gender, Personal Safety and Fear of Crime’ (1992) 4 *Women & Crim Just* 117.

<sup>10</sup> Carol Brooks Gardner, ‘Safe Conduct: Women, Crime, and Self in Public Places’ (1990) 37 *Soc Probs* 311.

<sup>11</sup> Ross Macmillan and Annette Nierbosiz and Sandy Welsh, ‘Experiencing the Streets: Harassment and Perceptions of Safety among Women’ (2000) 37 *J Res Crime & Delinquency* 306; Rebecca Goodbourn, ‘The Grid and the Unnamed Girl: Women, Identity and Safety in Melbourne’s Unmapped Spaces’ (2015) 41 *Austl Feminist LJ* 43.

<sup>12</sup> Constitution of India, 1950, art. 21.

<sup>13</sup> Constitution of India, 1950, art. 19(1)(d)

<sup>14</sup> AIR 1963 SC 1295

psychological perception of hindered mobility. Thus, for invoking freedom under Article 19(1)(d), it is vital for an objective and tangible obstruction to movement.

Since the perception of women regarding safety and public spaces is important for this discussion, Article 21 assumes a greater role. In *Francis Coralie Mullin v. Administrator, Union Territory of Delhi*,<sup>15</sup> the Court emphasised that the meaning of the term ‘life’ under Article 21 is more than mere animal existence. Underlying this argument is the broader principle of dignity. Similarly, in *K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India*,<sup>16</sup> where the Court discussed the right to privacy under Article 21, it highlighted how if a State action is creating a chilling impact on exercising other constitutional freedoms, then it violates Article 21. Flowing from these precedents, we argue that since there is a fear of violence against women in these villages hindering them from freely accessing the public space, they are unable to exercise other fundamental rights – like the freedom of movement.<sup>17</sup>

Apart from an impingement upon her dignity, the inability of the state to put in place adequate infrastructure like toilets to prevent open defecation, proper lighting on dark stretches of paths, adequate water supply & its disposal, etc. has a disparate impact on women as equal citizens. It exposes her to actors who may perpetuate gender-based violence such as eve-teasing, stalking, molestation, etc. Article 15 of the Constitution stipulates how the State cannot put in place any action which furthers discrimination on the basis of sex.<sup>18</sup> Further, Article 15(3) highlights how the State may take special measures for promoting the welfare of women and children.<sup>19</sup> The term discrimination has been broadly interpreted by Courts to also include ‘indirect discrimination’ which was elaborated upon in *Lt. Col. Nitisha v. Union of India*.<sup>20</sup> Hence, by failing to provide adequate infrastructure for women in public spaces as their rights for their full participation in public lives and consequently not deterring potential violence which may be committed against them, the access of women to public spaces is impeded which violates Article 15(2) of the Constitution.<sup>21</sup> This disparate impact ultimately violates Article 15 and is indicative of indirect discrimination due to the State’s omission to perform a positive obligation.<sup>22</sup>

Apart from constitutional provisions, the offences listed in the Indian Penal Code also form a part of this discussion. S. 354 of the IPC mentions outraging the modesty of a woman. S. 354C covers voyeurism while 354D addresses stalking.<sup>23</sup> While eve-teasing is not explicitly defined in the Code, it is indirectly covered through S. 294.<sup>24</sup> The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013 provides a comprehensive definition of sexual

---

<sup>15</sup> 1981 SCC (1) 608

<sup>16</sup> AIR 2017 SC 4161

<sup>17</sup> Shilpa Phadke, ‘Unfriendly Bodies, Hostile Cities: Reflections on Loitering and Gendered Public Space’ (2013) 48(39) *Economic and Political Weekly* 50.

<sup>18</sup> Constitution of India, 1950, art. 15

<sup>19</sup> Constitution of India, 1950, art. 15(3)

<sup>20</sup> Writ Petition (Civil) No 1109 of 2020

<sup>21</sup> Constitution of India, 1950, art. 15(2)

<sup>22</sup> *Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan* AIR 1997 SC 3011

<sup>23</sup> Indian Penal Code, 1860, s. 354

<sup>24</sup> *ibid* s. 294.

harassment while providing mechanisms for grievance redressal according to the workplace settings.<sup>25</sup>

## Rationale of the study

### **Experiences of Utthan & Women's Nyay Samitis (Justice Committees) in Bhavnagar, Amreli, Dahod & Mahisagar districts**

Utthan has been working to address the issue of violence against women & girls in 5 districts of rural Gujarat by collectivisation of women, capacitation and enabling of Mahila Sangathans and various stakeholders like youth, Panchayats, Government actors etc. The Nyay Samitis of the Mahila Sangathans<sup>26</sup> working at the block and district level function as informal redressal mechanisms. Awareness on gender-based violence, support to women and girls, as survivors of domestic & public violence, land disputes, caste-based violence & discrimination in alliance with law providing Government actors, Panchayats & like-minded groups are its key areas of intervention. These efforts are geared to challenge anti-women attitudes and social norms normalising control over women, and to gain support by emphasising on how violence impacts society and development, as a whole.

Along with focusing on 'Why violence?' Utthan's interactions with these committee members & women leaders delved into the gamut of 'Where violence is happening/could potentially happen?' Discussions with women leaders brought out that along with the manifestation of violence in various forms, there is a huge fear of the possibility and/or threat of violence. In terms of public spaces, this fear is an obstacle to mobility, participation in public life, and access to education and opportunities, thus deeply impacting the daily lives of women and girls. The lack of safe access and freedom in public spaces leads to the constant pressure to strategise around keeping oneself and other women/girls safe.

This brought out the need to systematically explore the grassroots situation and underlying factors around

1. Issues around safety for women & girls in rural, public spaces in the light of safety, security and dignity
2. Factors that make spaces unsafe or safe
3. Impact of Covid-19 on women and girls

This was intended to ultimately inform strategies to fill the gaps.

The aim behind the study was to uncover the different perceptions of women regarding what constitutes a safe and unsafe public space and the prevalent forms of gender-based violence. Further, the study focused on these perceptions vis-a-vis factors such as age, social category, religious beliefs and practices, mobility and access to basic services, while trying to provide feasible recommendations which foster safer public spaces for women while covering structural solutions as well.

---

<sup>25</sup> Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, s. 2(n)

<sup>26</sup> *Mahila Sangathans* are grassroots women's collectives incubated by Utthan. Starting off as village level groups, the collective took the shape as area level Federations, over time. Today they work on issues of women's dignity, gender justice and empowerment in collaboration with Utthan and other stakeholders.

### **Relevance of women's safety audits**

Women's safety audits have been defined as 'a process which brings individuals together to walk through a physical environment, evaluate how safe it feels to them, identify ways to make the space safer and organise to bring about these changes.'(WACAV- Women's Action Centre Against Violence Ottawa-Carleton), 1995, p. 1)<sup>27</sup>. While they were first developed in Canada in the late 20th Century to involve physical safety in spaces, with growing access to internet and mobile phones, there is a scope for widening the understanding of safety further.<sup>28</sup> Based on the experiences of Utthan and the various Women's Justice Committees which bring out the need to systematically understand safety issues for women and girls in their areas of operation, this study was developed using the safety audit approach.

---

<sup>27</sup> Whitzman, Carolyn & Shaw, Margaret & Andrew, Caroline & Travers, Kathryn. (2009). The effectiveness of women's safety audits. *Security Journal*. 22. 205-218. 10.1057/sj.2009.1.

<sup>28</sup> Women's Safety Audits, Jagori, 2017

## Chapter 2: Approach and Methodology

### Approach

A Safety Audit of public spaces in terms of mobility, lighting, use of village facilities, travel facilities etc. in 11 tribal and coastal villages of Gujarat was conducted to understand the obstacles faced by women and girls especially from marginalised communities to access rural public spaces and the factors that make these spaces unsafe or safe. The study also covered some of the impacts of Covid-19 on women and girls in these locations, uncovering some of the unique challenges with regards to safety of women and girls in rural areas during the pandemic. Data on this was collected in the second phase of data collection in mid-May 2021 (Ref. to Annexure 1).

**Partners in the study:** As this was collaborative research between Utthan and ISST, the two organisations mutually designed the research questions and purpose of the research. ISST took the lead in designing the data collection tools. A two-day training workshop was conducted with the surveyors from Utthan and Sangathans on how to conduct the surveys. The survey tool was modified based on comments from the surveyors, who were mainly the Nyay Samitis (Justice Committee) members & other leaders of Sanghathans supported by Utthan. The involvement of the Sangathan leaders was also adopted as a means to learn through conversations and interviews with women and by participating in FGDs and taking the transect walk. These women understood the local context well which helped make the survey tool robust. ISST was also responsible for sharpening the analysis and finalising the study report.

### Study Design and Sampling

The inception of this Safety Audit was in late 2019. The survey along with some qualitative data collection was done in early 2020 which was then abandoned owing to the Covid-19 pandemic. The remaining qualitative data collection was resumed late November 2020. However, the subsequent waves of the Covid-19 pandemic led to further delays. The final analysis and the compilation of the report was undertaken in the early 2024.

The design of study was experimental in nature and a mixed-method approach using qualitative as well as quantitative methods were used to gain a more in-depth perspective of the issue in the coastal regions of Bhavnagar and Amreli, and tribal regions of Mahisagar and Dahod in Gujarat. The sampling was done in order to get the perspective of two different groups and regions and the study covered a total of 528 respondents across various quantitative and qualitative methodologies adopted for this safety audit (see Table. 1). Purposive sampling was used in selecting the villages in the two areas that Utthan works based on two main criteria: (i) villages where Utthan has a good base of work and relationship, and (ii) villages where the community and elected leaders showed seem to be more sensitive and showed some interest around the subject. These criteria were set as per the purpose of the research which was to also initiate some positive initiatives and outcomes around women's safety in these villages. The findings from the study were expected to contribute to the overall knowledge and practice in replication by other Panchayats.

Table 1: Areas Covered and total outreach

Area Covered			
	Tribal	Coastal	Total
Districts	2	2	4
Blocks	3	4	7
Villages	4	7	11
Total Outreach (Through Survey, FGDS, KIIS, TWs)			528

### Role of the collaborating organisations in the study

Having worked for several years around the issues of GBV in rural Gujarat, Utthan felt the need for a safety audit in these areas. They approached ISST to become research partners in this endeavour. After a series of discussions, ISST developed the study methodology and designed the relevant tools for methodology which were further reviewed by the core research team at Utthan. Eventually, the draft survey form was presented during the two-day training session for surveyors (who were members of the *sanghathans* under Utthan) and the form was translated into Gujarati, incorporating the local vernacular terms as used in the survey form.

Utthan surveyors helped in collecting the data, both qualitative and quantitative. The transect walks were also conducted simultaneously while the survey was being collected. While the quantitative data was cleaned by a volunteer with Utthan, the data was analysed by researchers at ISST. The first detailed drafts of the initial chapters were written by both research teams and were reviewed by both teams. However, with Covid-19 pandemic, the focus was shifted to relief and recovery and the study writing was halted. Eventually, the chapters in the report were compiled by a research consultant under ISST. The final chapters were reviewed several times by both the teams before finalisation.

### Safety audit tools for data collection

The Safety Audit consisted of five tools, targeting various stakeholders.

1. **Survey** - Women from the villages were surveyed to understand the various safety concerns of women and girls, in moving around public spaces in and around their villages (see Annexure 3 for details).
2. **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)** - Were done with women and men from various hamlets to bring out an in-depth understanding about the issues
3. **Key informant interviews (KIIs)** - KIIs included members of Nyay Samiti, Panchayat leaders, etc. who could give insights around issues of women's safety and suggest ways in which these problems and concerns could be addressed. Safety Mapping tool
4. **Transect Walks** - The transect walks were undertaken in select villages to understand and locate various points and places in these villages which were of concern for women's safety.

5. **Desk Research** - An analysis of sanctioned government budgets and its use for safety of women and girls to reach solutions was done. These included budgets from the state Women & Child Development, Panchayati Raj, Social Defence, Rural Department, to help to work on solutions.

While a total of 528 participants (men and women) were covered across the various methods adopted for the safety audit (as seen in Table 1, the quantitative survey was conducted with 30 women and girls per village, covering a total of 330 women and girls, across all study sites. Besides the survey, 14 KIIs, 8 FGDs and 4 Transect walks were also conducted. Please see Table 2 for more details.

Table 2: Total data collected, village-wise

Total Data Collected – Sample Size										
No.	Region	District	Block	Village	Quantitative	Qualitative				
					Survey	Key informant interviews	Transect Walk	FGD - Safety Mapping		
1	Tribal	Dahod	Dhanpur	Sajoi	30	2	1		1	
2			Dhanpur	Pav	30					
3			Fatehpura	Makawana na Varuna	30					
4		Mahisagar	Santrampur	Mota Saranaya	30	3	1	1	1	
5	Coastal	Bhavnagar	Bhavnagar	Bhuteshwar	30			1	1	1
6			Ghogha	Mamsa	30					
7			Ghogha	Kharakadi	30	2	2	1	1	1
8			Mahuva	Konjdi	30	2	1	1	1	1
9			Mahuva	Vagnagar	30					
10		Amreli	Rajula	Viktar	30					
11			Rajula	Visaliya	30					
	2	4	7	11	330	9	5	4	5	3
TOTAL - Qualitative and Quantitative data sources									356	

# Chapter 3: Demographic Profile

## Age and Marital Status

325 females and 1 adolescent respondent identifying with the “other” gender were surveyed during the safety audit survey. Of these, 64.42% of respondents (210) were surveyed from 7 coastal villages – Vaghnagar, Viktar, Visaliya, Konjali, Kharakadi, Bhuteshwar and Mamsa. The remaining 35.58% of respondents (116) were surveyed from four tribal villages – Pav, Sajoi, Makwana Na Varuna and Mota Sarnaya.

The range of the age of respondents was from 13 to 60 years, with the highest proportion of women in the age group of 20-29 years (30%), followed by 30-39 years (25.8%) and then 13-19 years (22.4%), as seen in Figure 1 below.

Fig. 1 Age distribution of respondents

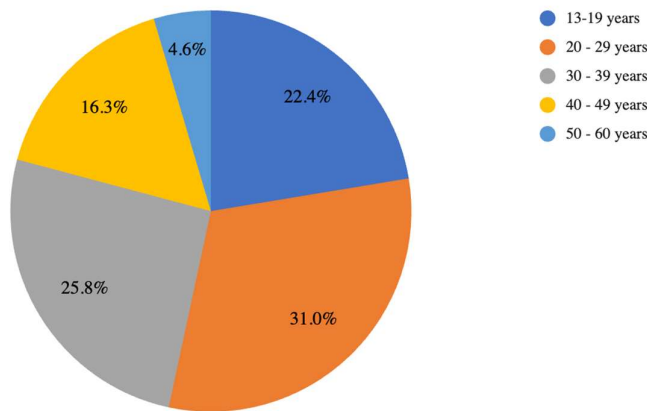
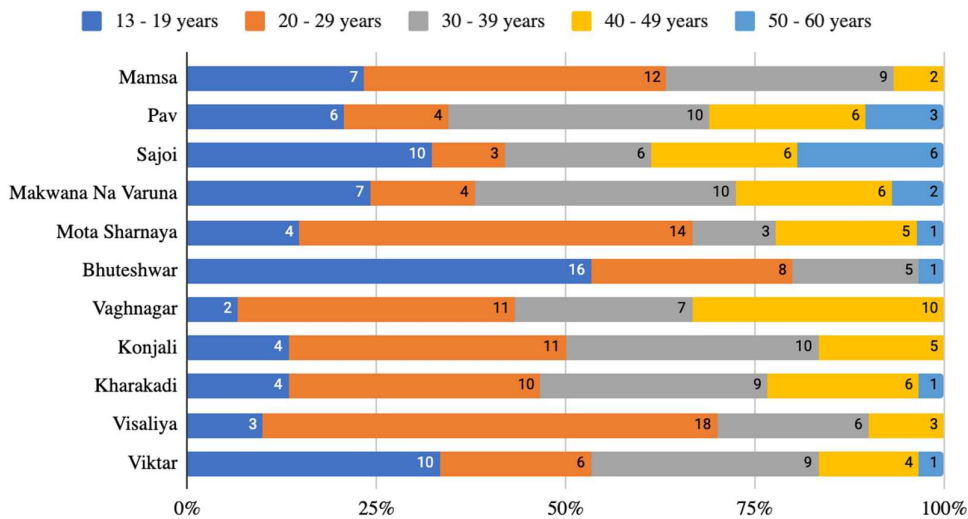


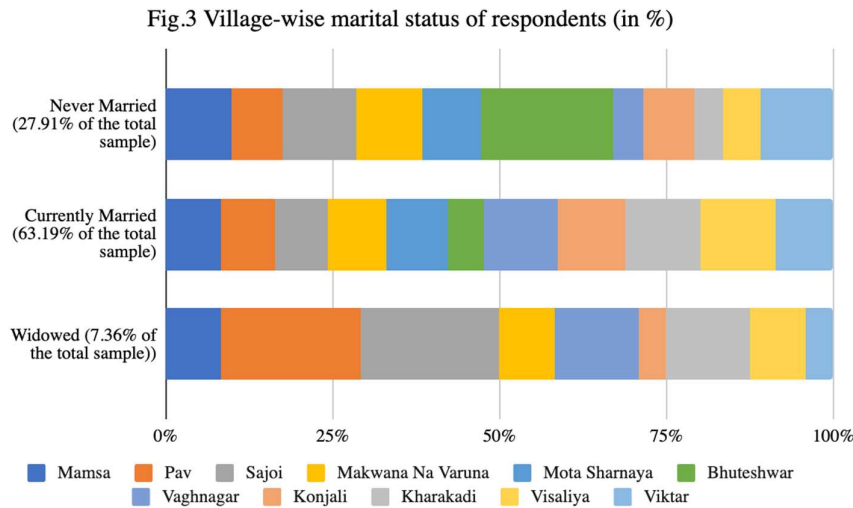
Figure 2 below shows the age distribution of respondents across villages. Bhuteshwar had the highest proportion of respondents between 13-19 years, while Sajoi had the highest proportion of respondents between 50-60 years.

Fig. 2 Village-wise age distribution of respondents





In Figure 3 below, one finds 27.91% of the sample reported to be never married while 63.19% reported to be married. The distribution of respondents across both these categories was largely similar across villages except Bhuteshwar which accounts for approximately 30% of the never married women in our sample owing to most of the respondents belonging to the age group of 13 - 19 years. 7.36% reported to be widows of which approximately 50% belonged to one of the four tribal villages. The remaining 1.53% reported to either be divorced, abandoned or having left their husbands.



### Social category and religious identity distribution of respondents

As seen in Figure 4 below, over 52% of the respondents belonged to Other Backward Classes (OBCs). 7% belonged to Scheduled Castes (SC) while 34% belonged to Scheduled Tribes (STs). Only about 5% of the women belonged to the General category.

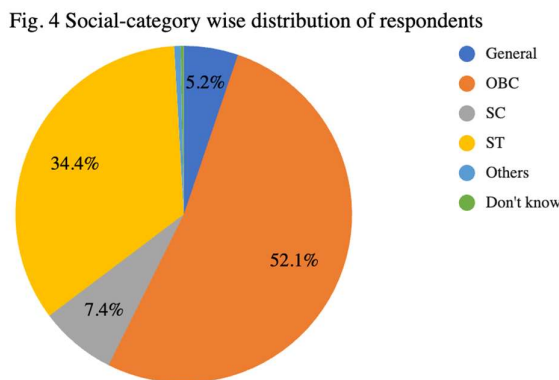


Figure 5 shows the social category wise distribution of respondents across villages. The 4 tribal villages (Pav, Sajoi, Makwana na Varuna and Mota Sharanya) had the highest proportions of STs, while in the coastal villages OBCs make the highest proportion of the sample of respondents. Both these are commensurate with the larger district picture of majority social category.

Fig. 5 Village wise social category distribution of respondents (in %)

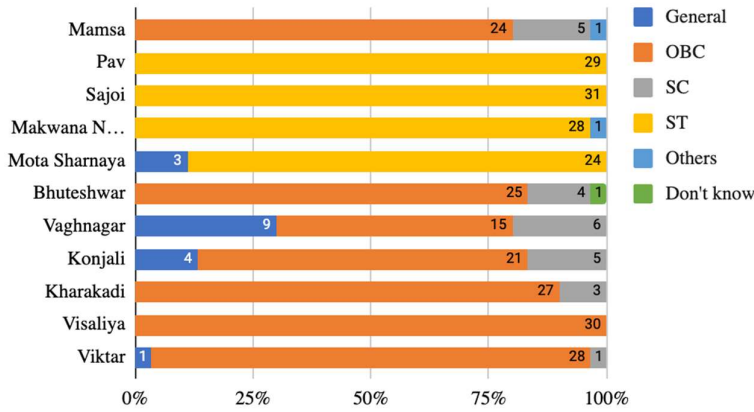
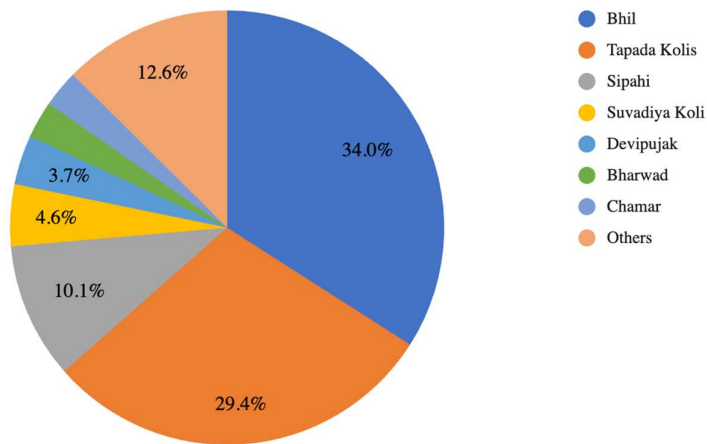


Figure 6, shows the subcategories of the castes and tribes of the respondents where, 34% stated that they belonged to the Bhil tribe, followed by 29% Tadpada Kolis, 10% Sipahi caste, 5% Suvadiya Kolis, 4% Devipujak caste, and 3% each belonging to Bharwad and Chamar caste each. The remaining 10% was composed of several other caste identities.

Fig. 6 Sub-categories of castes/tribes of respondents



In Figure 7 below, 61% of respondents reported to be Hindus while 13% were Muslims. Of those who reported to be Hindus, 69% reported identifying as OBC, 14% as ST, 12% as SC and 4% reported belonging to the General category. Among the Muslim respondents, 76.2% reportedly identified as OBC and 21.43% as General category. About 26% of the respondents followed tribal practices (details provided in figure 6 above).

Fig. 7 Religion/Practices wise distribution of respondents

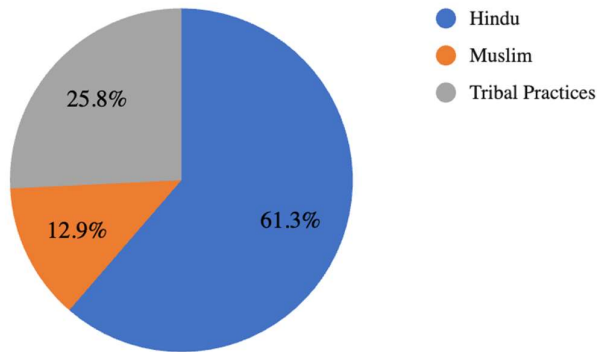
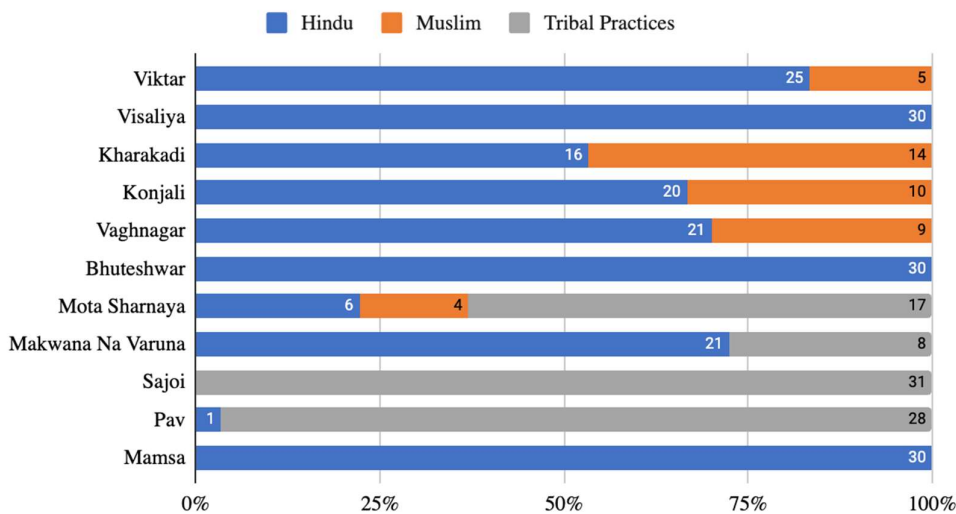


Figure 8 below further shows the distribution of religion or practices of the respondents across the villages, where coastal villages have a high Hindu population.

Fig. 8 Village-wise religion/practices of respondents



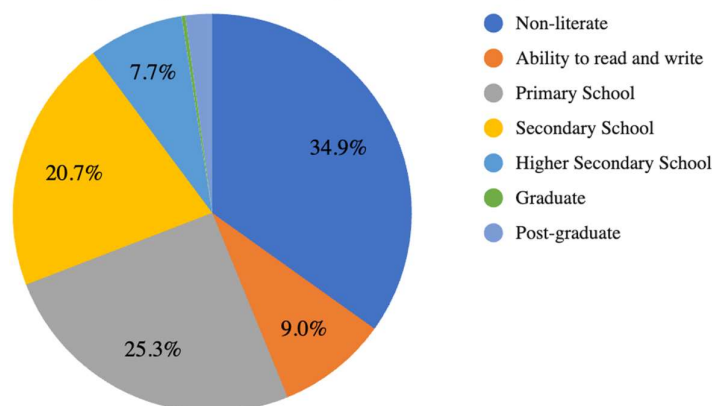
## Disabilities

Approximately 4.3% (14) respondents reported suffering from some form of disability. Of these, 11 were OBCs, 2 were STs and 1 belonged to the General Category. Of these 14, only 2 belonged to the tribal village of Pav, while the remaining were from coastal villages, the highest being in Visaliya (4 disabled people). 1 of these 14 was from the age group 13-19 years, 5 were from 20-29 years, another 5 from 30-29 years, and 1 each from 40-49- and 50-60-year groups. 9 of these 14 reported being currently married while 5 were never married.

## Educational Status

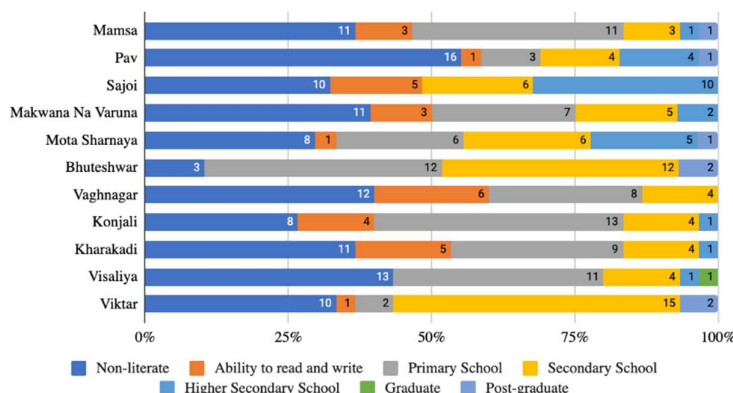
As shown in Figure 9, a major share of the respondents (34.9%) stated that they were non-literate. Another 9% reported having the ability to read and write. 25.3% of the respondents reported going to primary school while 20.7% reported attending secondary school. Only 7.7% of the respondents reported attending higher secondary school and only 2.2% of the respondents stated pursuing higher education. 7 respondents had pursued post-graduate degrees.

Fig. 9 Highest education qualification of respondents



Literacy levels across villages are varied with coastal villages recording a slightly lower percentage of non-literates (32%) when compared with tribal villages (38%) (see Figure 10). In Figure 10, we

Fig. 10 Village-wise educational qualifications of respondents



find that the lowest proportion of non-literates was recorded in Bhuteshwar (11%) and the highest was recorded in Pav (55%). Bhuteshwar and Viktar together accounted for 50% of those respondents who reported pursuing higher education. The latter records the highest share of respondents who reported having attended secondary school (50%). Interestingly, approximately 85% of respondents who reported higher secondary

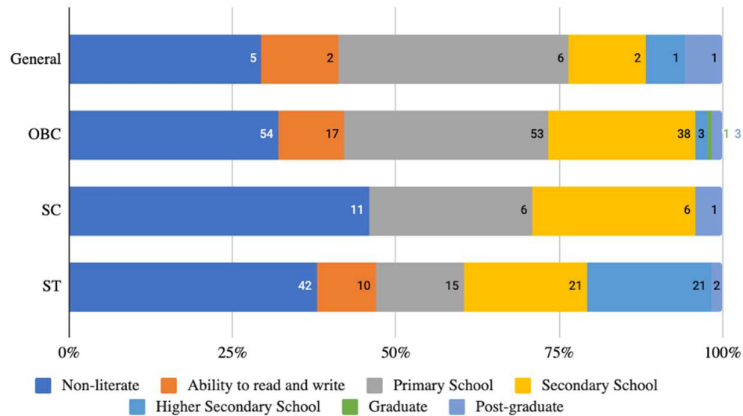
education as the highest educational status belonged to tribal villages. But on the other hand, these four villages – Pav, Sajoi, Makwana Na Varuna and Mota Sharnaya, accounted for very low shares of those respondents who reported primary school and secondary school as the highest educational achievement. Between tribal and coastal areas, the figure clearly shows that a higher share of respondents from the latter.

The data did not reveal any glaring differences between the educational qualifications of respondents based on their Social category as shown in Figure 11 below. However, a larger proportion of respondents belonging to SC and ST categories reported higher shares of those who were non-literate (see figure 11 below). Interestingly, the share of higher secondary education respondents was also highest in the case of STs. Qualitative data further confirms that villages with higher ST population, like Varuna and Sajoi had schools up to Class XII whereas Kharakdi, Bhuteshwar, Konjdi & Vahnagar had schools having classes up to Class VIII.

Approximately 85% of the respondents stated not presently attending any educational institution. Of the remaining, the highest share was recorded in Viktar (23.53%), followed by Sajoi (21.57%) and Pav (17.65%). Adolescent respondents between 13-19 years of age accounted for approximately 56.86% of those who reported presently attending any educational institution.

Moreover, about 30% of respondents presently attending an educational institution reported being above 30 years of age.

Fig. 11 Social-category wise educational qualifications of respondents



*There was an old government school in the village which was demolished and a new building had to be constructed in the same place but the same has not been done since past 3 years due to which the girls have to be sent out to private schools for further education which gets difficult. When the same problem had been addressed to the government they said that since there are less students the school is not been made which is a sheer excuse – Konjadi Village, FGD with Women*

*The village school is only till 8<sup>th</sup> std. For further studies, they have to send their daughters to another village. Although there is a bus facility, the bus comes only twice in a day once in morning and once in evening. The only option is to then send them by private vehicles such as shared autos (chakdas) which is riddled with the fear of eve teasing – Bhuteshwar Village, FGD with Women*

*There is a school in the village but since there are no secondary classes, the girls have to go out of the village to study further. They face a lot of challenges in further studies as they feel quite insecure and unsafe going out. Hence, many they quit their studies. There is a bus service which comes to the village, but that is only once a day. Boys can therefore go out but girls of the village cannot. – Kharakadi Village, FGD with Women*

*The girls in the school are afraid of coming from the forest area, walking in the monsoon, fearing harassment. – Sajoi Village, FGD with Women*

### Household characteristics: Earnings, Decision-making and Work Profile of spouses

Around 78% of women in our sample reported that they had been living in their village for more than 15 years at the time of the survey. Another 9% reported having lived in their village for 11-15 years. Vaghnagar is the only village which had a significant share of respondents who had been living there

for less than 5 years. Respondents from this village accounted for approximately one third of the total number of women who reported having lived in their village for a period less than 5 years. Much of these newer households were engaged in agricultural labour as the primary source of their income. Qualitative data brought out that Vaghnagar being close to Mahuva town has seen an influx from other villages.

As seen in figure 12, 39.6% women from our sample reported their spouses to be the primary earning member within their households, followed by 20.2% who reported another male member to be the primary earning member. About 6.4% of respondents reported to the primary earning members of their household. Of these, a little less than one fourth were aged between 21-30 years,

while 57% were aged between 31-40 years. Of the women who reported being the primary earner, about 42% were widowed. A significant 18.4% of women reported both (husband and wife) to be primary earning members. Of these, the share of respondents reporting this within coastal areas was more than double of those reporting this in tribal areas.

Only 4% of the respondents reportedly decide the major expenditures of the household themselves. Over 30% of these respondents who reported making decisions themselves were aged below 30 years. 33% of total respondents reported that the decisions regarding expenditure are made by their spouses.

The distribution of primary earning members across villages is provided in figure 13. Konjali and Viktar account for the largest share of those respondents who reported them to be the primary earners within their households. On the other hand, villages like Visaliya and Mota Sharnaya composed almost entirely of those who reported their spouses to be primary earners.

Fig. 12 Primary earning member in the household

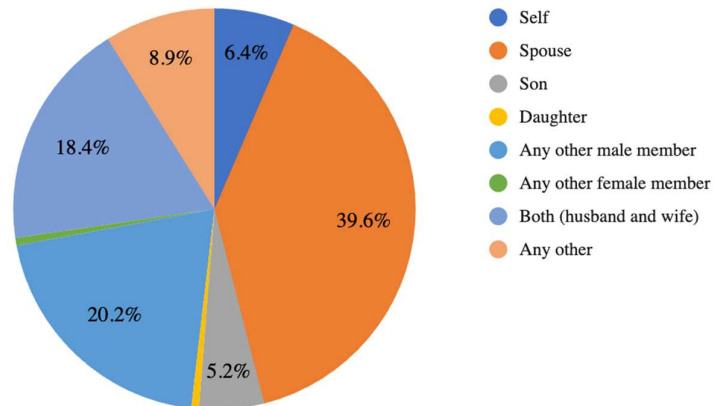
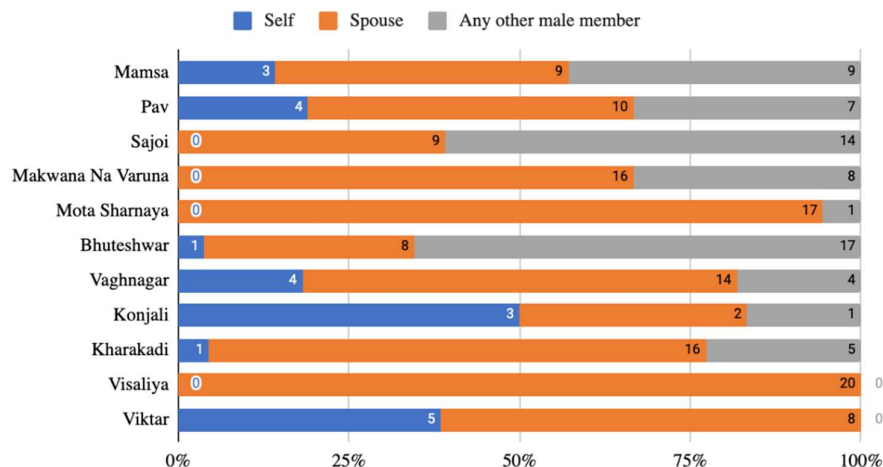


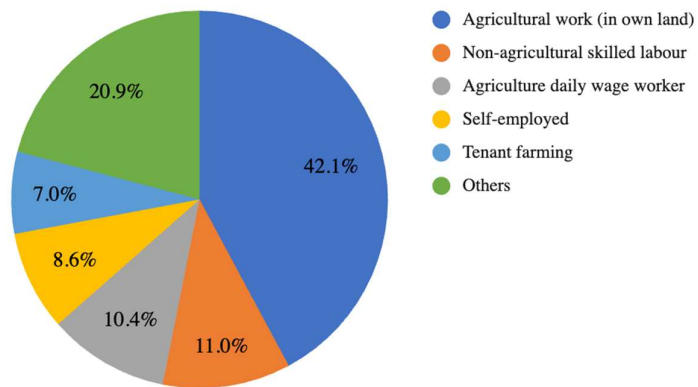
Fig. 13 Village-wise primary earning member in the household



Agricultural sector is the most major employer (see figure 18). 59.82% of women from our sample reported that agricultural work was the primary employment for their spouses. Of this, approximately 71% worked in their own lands. Another 12% were tenant farmers while the remaining 17% worked as agricultural labourers. A significantly higher share of Muslim women (23.81%) recorded the primary employment of their spouses to be as agricultural labourers, when compared to Hindu women (12%) which is comparable to the lower land holding of Muslims in these villages, pointing to occupational, resource ownership and income disparity along identity lines. Agricultural labour, however, emerged as the most significant form of subsidiary employment with up to 36.81% women reporting their spouses to be engaged in this form of work.

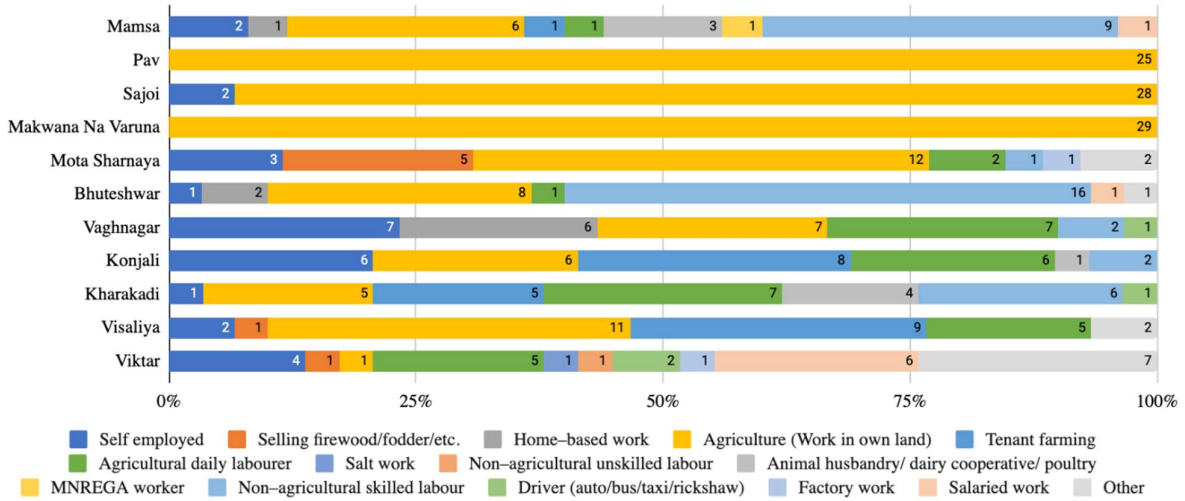
Figure 14 above shows the main forms of work that the spouses of the respondents were involved in. agricultural work in their own land accounted for a majority share of the forms of paid work by spouses, at 42.1%. 11% of the women reported their spouses to be involved in non-agricultural skilled work as their primary occupation. 69.44% and 25%, respectively, of the total number of women who reported non-agricultural skilled work as the primary occupation of their spouses were from OBC and SC caste categories. 10.4% of the respondents reported that their spouses were daily wage agricultural workers. A significant proportion of the women (8.6%) reported that their spouses were self-employed. The others category involved profiles such as salaried work, selling firewood/fodder, home-based work, animal husbandry/poultry/dairy cooperatives, factory work, and drivers (autos/buses/cars), all of which formed 1%-3% each of the total proportion of prominent forms of paid work by spouses.

Fig. 14 Prominent forms of paid work by spouses of respondents



Occupational characteristics also varied significantly across villages. Approximately 80% of women surveyed across the tribal villages stated that their spouses were involved in agricultural work within their own lands as their primary occupation. Interestingly, it is also within these villages that agricultural labour remained the most dominant form of secondary employment. Makwana Na Varuna (21.67%), followed by Sajoi (16.67%), Pav (14.17%) and Mota Sharnaya (10.83%) together account for approximately 64% of those women who reported agricultural labour to be the secondary source of employment for their spouses. Among the coastal villages, Visaliya (12.5%) and Konjali (8.33%) also accounted for significant shares within this occupational category. High rates of self-employment among women's spouses were reported within the samples of villages such as Vagnagar (23.34%) and Konjali (20%). Mamsa (25%) and Bhuteshwar (44.45%) recorded the highest share of those women who reported their spouses to be involved in non-agricultural skilled work as their primary occupation. Finally, women from tribal villages also reported animal husbandry/sericulture/bee-keeping as a major form of tertiary occupation among their spouses. Tribal women accounted for 95% of those who reported this as a tertiary form of spousal employment. Makwana Na Varuna, Sajoi and Pav and Mota Sharnaya account for 35.7%, 25.71%, 22.86% and 11.43% of such women respectively.

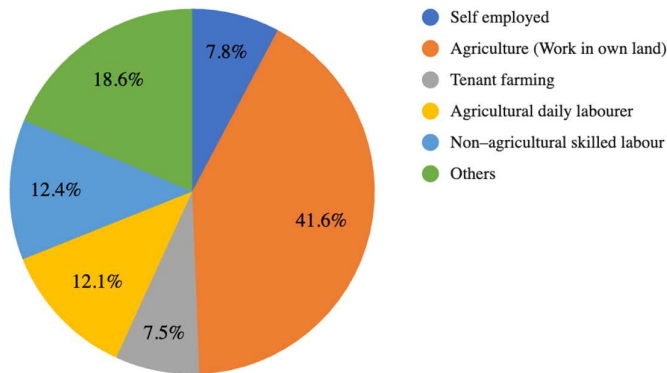
Fig. 15 Village-wise distribution of work profile of spouses



### Women's work profile

Figure 16 below shows that agriculture remains the major employer for women with about 61% of women reporting to be working either on their own lands (41.2%), as tenant farmers (7.5%) or as agricultural labourers (12.1%).

Fig. 16 Prominent forms of paid work by respondents (women)

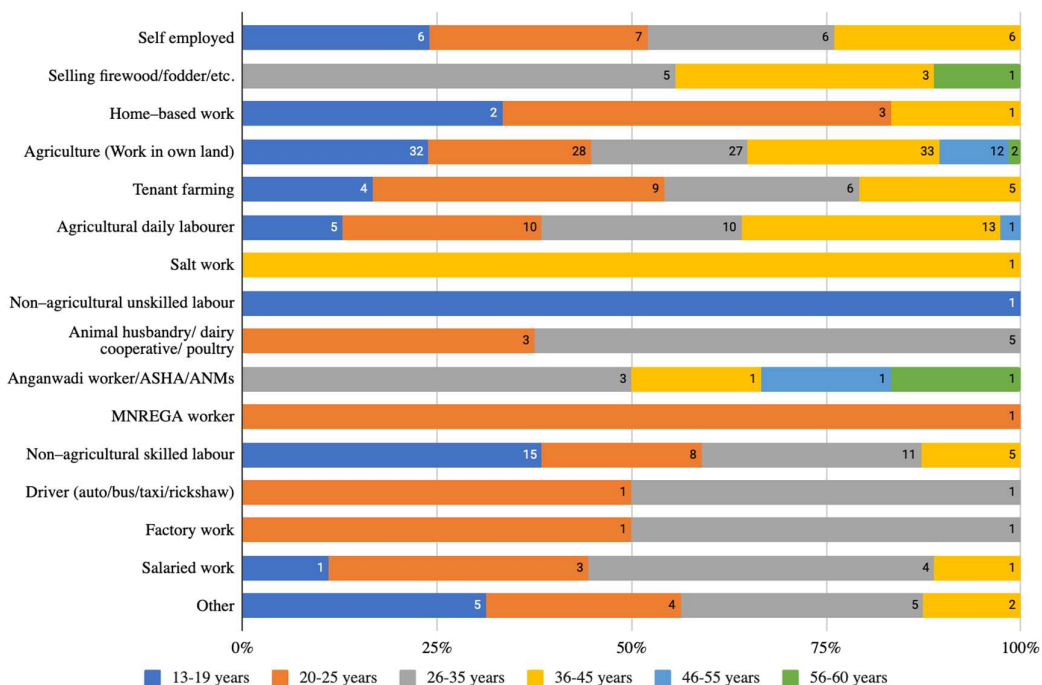


Others included work profiles such as selling firewood/fodder/etc., home-based work, salt work, non-agricultural unskilled labour, animal husbandry/dairy cooperative/poultry, Anganwadi worker/ASHA/ANMs, MGNREGA worker, drivers, factory work and salaried work.

The distribution of respondents according to their primary source of work across various age groups (see figure 17 below) provides several insights. First off, adolescent girls account for around 40% of those women who reported non-agricultural skilled work as their primary source of work. Women aged 36-45 years of age account for 30% of all those who reported agricultural labour.

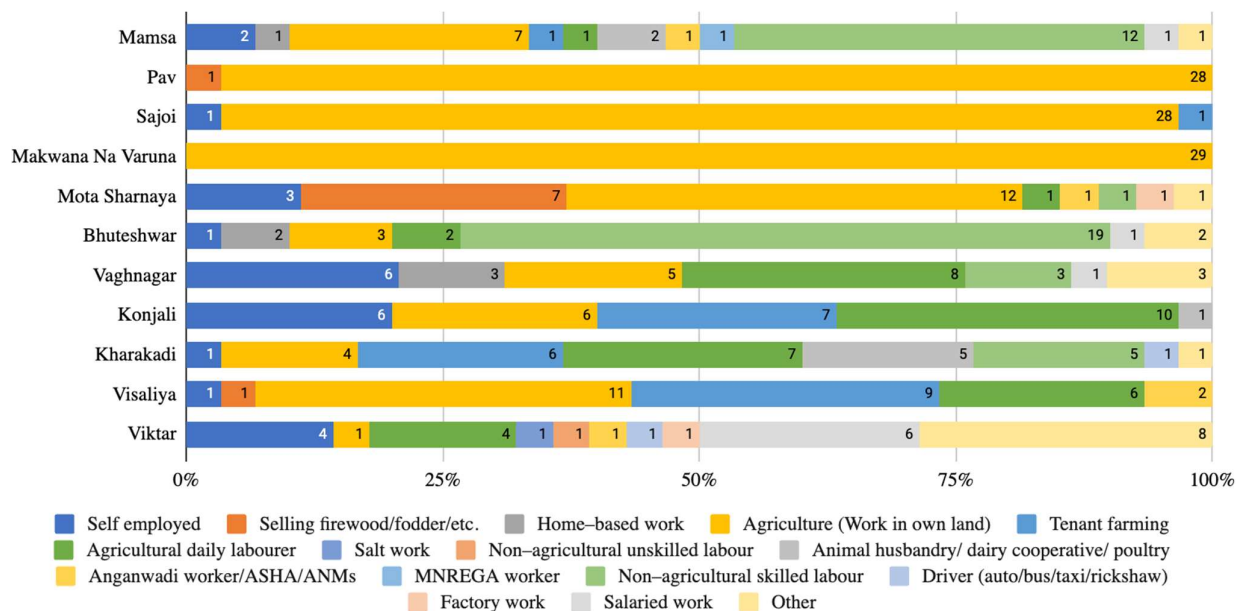


Fig. 17 Age-wise distribution of prominent forms of paid work by respondents



In figure 18 above, 83.62% of women surveyed across the four tribal villages reported agricultural work in their own land to be the primary occupation. The lowest was in Mota Sharnaya where a significant share of women reported to be involved in selling firewood as well.

Fig. 18 Village-wise distribution of prominent forms of paid work by respondents



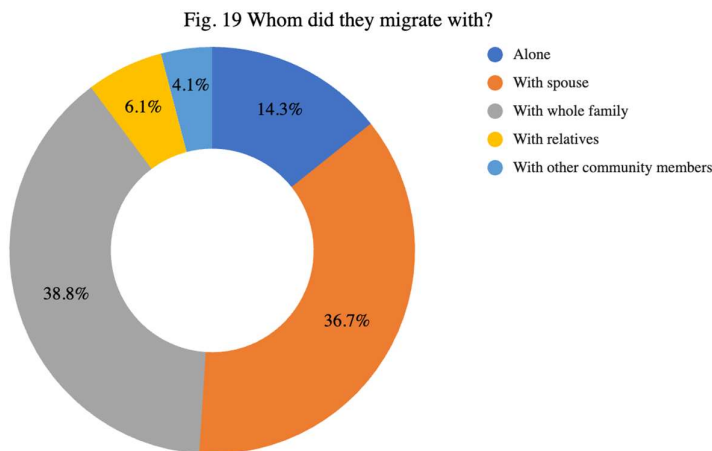
The trends with regard to agricultural labour being a major source of secondary employment are similar as in the case of spousal forms of paid work. The tribal villages in particular reported depending on seasonal agricultural work much more heavily with Makwana Na Varuna, Sajoi, Pav and Mota Sharnaya together accounting for 65% of those respondents who reported this sector to be

an important source of employment second to working in their own fields. In Viktar and Mota Sharnaya where in two thirds of all the women reported salaried work in factories as an important source of paid work. Self-employment also remains an important source of work in some villages such as Konjali and Vaghnagar who each account for 24% of the women who reported this to be true.

Bhuteshwar (47.5%) and Mamsa (30%) together, account for more than three-fourth of all the women who reported non-agricultural skilled work as the primary source of work. Konjali (25.64%), followed by Vaghnagar (20.5%), Kharakadi (18%) and Visaliya (15.39%) account for the largest shares of agricultural labourers within the total sample across all the villages. The latter most also reported the highest share of tenant farmers (37.5%) across the entire sample.

Finally, as the case with the spouses, women also reported animal husbandry to be an important source of work after agricultural work. This is especially true in the case of tribal women who combined accounted for 83.34% of all those who reported animal husbandry as an important tertiary source.

Only 14.72% of the respondents (48) reported having to migrate for work in the twelve months preceding the survey. Figure 19 below shows who they migrated with.



Interestingly, of those who reported having to migrate for work majorly belong to the tribal villages and reported agricultural work on their own farms as the primary source for paid work. Many of those migrating for work are the respondents who reported having lived in their respective villages for more than 15 years or so. Of those who did migrate, 56% were from the two tribal villages Makwana Na Varuna (31.25%) and Pav (25%). About one-sixth of the respondents from Viktar and Sajoi also reported work-related migration. About 45% of those who migrate for work were women aged below 25 years. Another 31.25% of these are women aged between 35-40 years. Among those who do migrate for work, 39.58% stated that they migrate with their entire family, while 37.5% stated that they migrate with their husbands. Only 14.58% (7) women who migrate for work stated doing so alone. Furthermore, 56.25% of women who migrate for work reported migrating to far away districts within the state, while 31.25% reported migrating to neighbouring villages. Among those who reported migrating to faraway places, more than half of the women belonged to the village Pav. These figures point to a pattern of circular migration widespread in the tribal areas. Women routinely also face issues pertaining to safety while migrating for work. As much as two thirds of the total women who migrated for work reported feeling unsafe while doing so. While 31.25% of the women reported feeling unsafe sometimes, 35.42% of the women reported not feeling safe at all.

## Chapter 4: Prevalent Forms of Gender-Based Violence

### Prevalent forms of gender-based violence (GBV) observed

As seen in Figure 20 below, 38.1% women perceived eve-teasing to be the most prevalent form of gender-based violence across all the villages. Another 19.2% cited domestic violence including forms of physical, mental, verbal, economic, sexual violence within households as the most common form of GBV. A significant number of women (6.5%) perceived technology related harassment over mobile phones and internet as being highly prevalent. Furthermore, 5.9% and 4.3% women respectively perceived neglect of the girl child in terms of low nutrition, education, paid work opportunities, high unpaid work burdens; and child marriage as being highly prevalent.

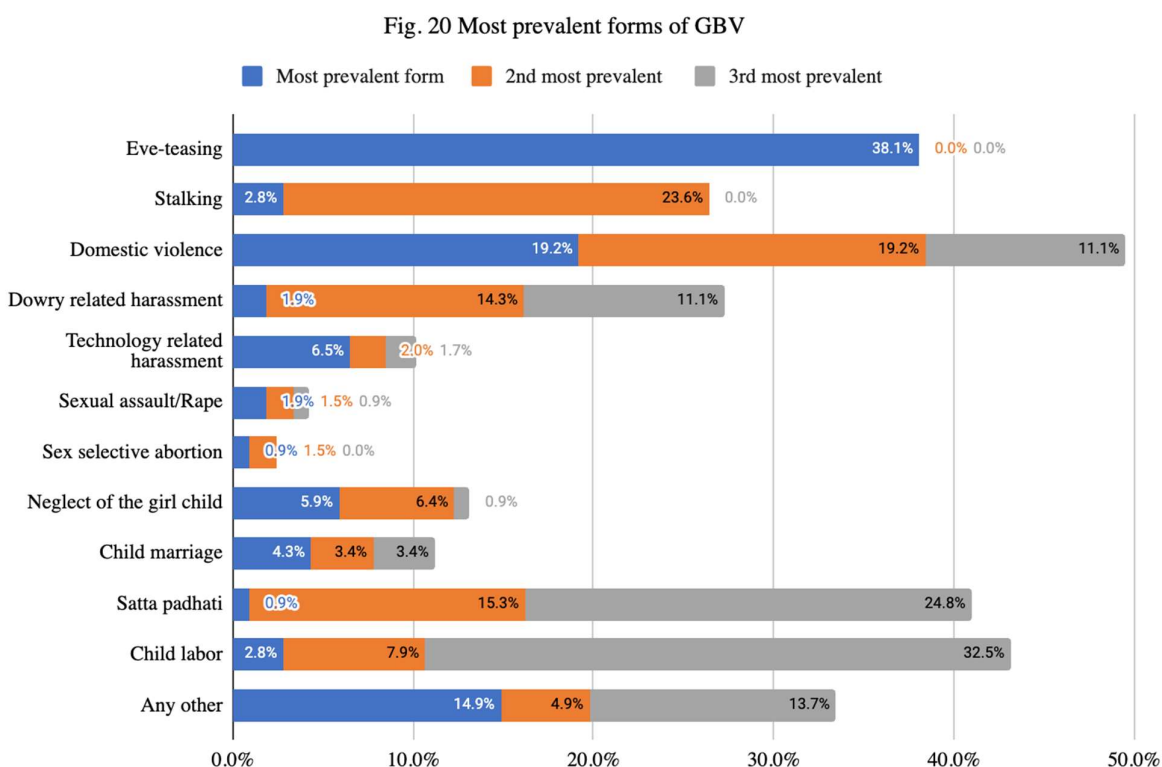


Figure 20 also shows the second and third most prevalent forms of gender-based violence reported by the women. Within the 2nd most prevalent forms of GBV, stalking, domestic violence, Satta padhati<sup>29</sup> and dowry related harassment were the highest. Within the third most prevalent forms of gender-based violence, child labour, Satta padhati, dowry related harassment and domestic violence were the highest. It is to be noted that more than 14.9% of women reported that they face other forms of violence as which needs further probing and research.

As per figure 21 below, approximately 50% of women who perceived eve-teasing as a prevalent form of violence were under 25 years of age. Approximately 35% of women who perceived eve-teasing were unmarried while 59% were currently married. Among adolescent women aged between 13-19 years of age, 42.47% perceived eve-teasing as a major form of GBV. Technology related harassment was perceived as a major form of GBV most significantly by women in the age groups of 20-25 years and 26-35 years. One in three women who perceived this was married. Few women younger than 35

<sup>29</sup> Satta padhati is the tradition of marrying daughters into the family of daughters-in-law

years of age and about 5% of married women also perceived child marriage as a form of GBV. Among women aged between 36-45 years, more than 35.2% of that surveyed stated domestic violence to be highly prevalent. While most women who perceived domestic violence as prevalent were currently married, one in three widowed women and 5.5% of unmarried women also reported the same, pointing to the prevalence of several perpetrators within households, besides merely male spouses. For women above 46 years of age, stalking and dowry related harassment (of their daughters and daughters-in-law) which led to mental harassment were reported as major forms of GBV.

Fig. 21 Most prevalent forms of GBV (age group wise)

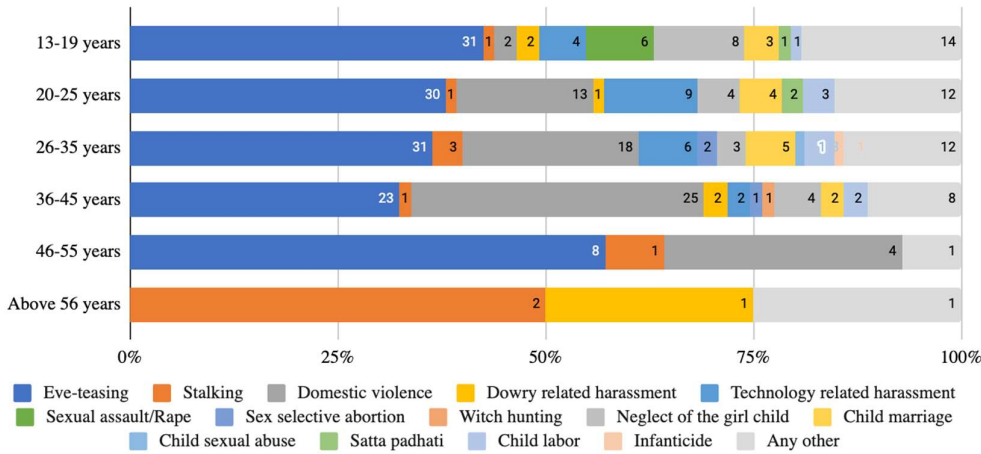


Figure 22 given below presents some insights on the prevalent forms of gender-based violence as perceived by women across various religions. Among all three identities, Hindu, Muslim and Tribals, eve-teasing and domestic violence were the highest forms of GBV perceived. Technology based harassment; sexual assault/rape and Satta Padhati were reported more significantly among Hindu women.

Fig. 22 Most prevalent forms of GBV (religious identity wise)

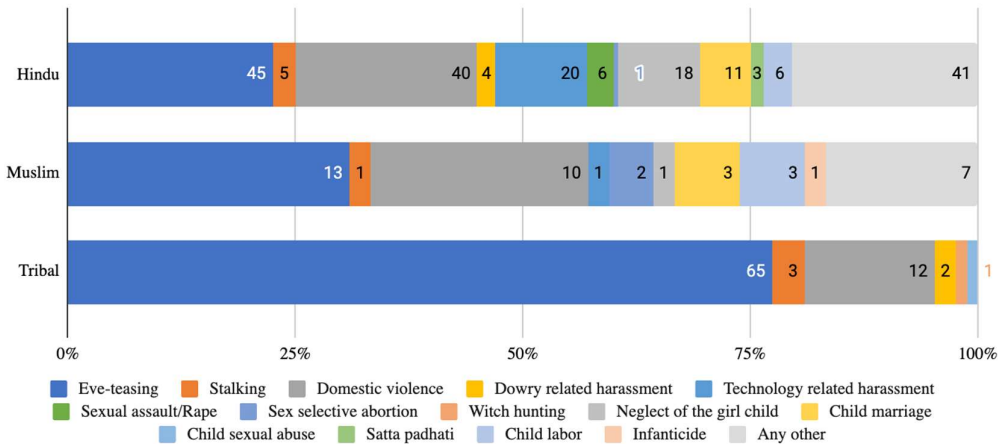
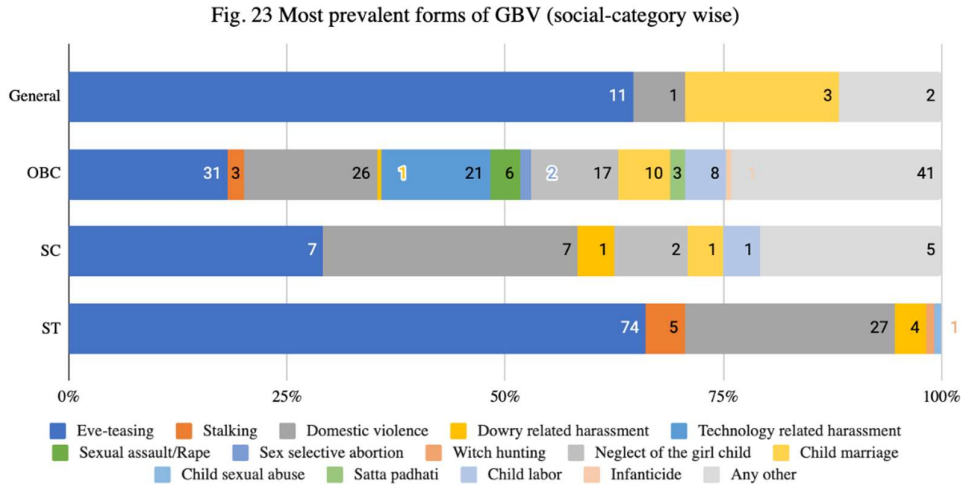
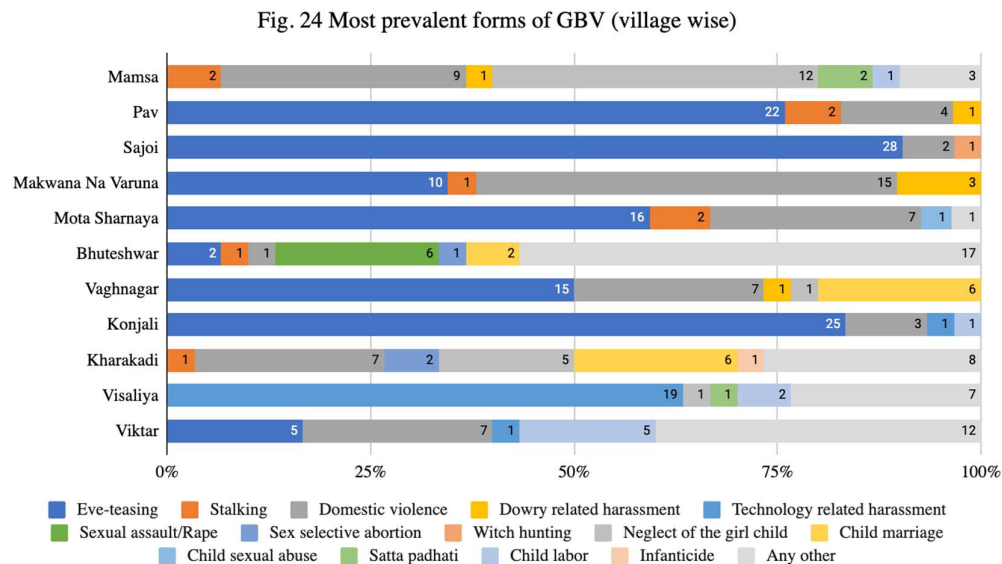


Figure 23, shows the most prevalent forms of GBV as perceived by women across social categories.



More than 60% of women belonging to the general category reported eve-teasing followed by child marriage (20%). Technology based harassment; sexual assault/rape and Satta Padhati were exclusively reported among women from OBC category.

The trends for the question on most prevalent forms of GBV across villages are shown in figure 24 below.



The four tribal villages – Sajoi (22.76%), Pav (17.9%), Mota Sharnaya (13%) and Makwana Na Varuna (8.13%) together account for 61.8% of the women who perceived eve-teasing as the most prevalent form of GBV. High rates of eve-teasing are also reported in the coastal villages of Konjali and Vaghnagar which account for 20.33% and 12.2% of the total number of respondents who reported eve-teasing. There could be a difference in the perception of eve-teasing in both these areas which needs further probing qualitatively. 63.34% of women surveyed in Visaliya perceived technology related harassment and these women accounted for 90.5% of those who reported this form of violence. There needs to be further exploration on why technology related harassment was reported to be so highly prevalent specifically in Visaliya. Half the women surveyed in Makwana Na Varuna perceived

domestic violence as the most prevalent form of GBV and these women accounted for 24.2% of the total number of women who reported the same. High rates of violence were also reportedly perceived in Mamsa by more than 30% of the women surveyed there. Similarly, 23.34% of women surveyed in Mota Sharnaya, Vaghnagar, Kharakadi and Viktar also reported this. Bhuteshwar is the only village where sexual assault/rape was perceived (by one in every five women surveyed) as the most prevalent form of violence. 40% of women surveyed in Mamsa reported neglect of the girl child as a prevalent form of violence. These women accounted for 63.16% of the total number of women who reported this. Child marriage was reported as a prevalent form of GBV by one in five women surveyed in both Vaghnagar and Kharakadi each, accounting for 85% of the total number of women who reported this. More than 50% of women surveyed in Bhuteshwar and 40% of those surveyed in Viktar reported other forms of violence which needs to be probed during the qualitative data collection.

*Men were asked that do you really feel that violence is done with women, to which they said that it is an internal matter and it happens in each and every household.*

– Kharakadi, FGD with Men

*There are family members staying under one roof it happens and is a normal thing. There are many other reasons for violence such as unemployment, household chores, when the needs are not being met with. One women told that she has 3 daughters but there is a lot of pressure to have son*

– Kharakadi, FGD with Women

### **Prevalent Forms of Violence- Responses from KIIs**

Verbal - Eve teasing, singing songs, gestures, following women when they go out for work, using cuss language/bad words, flashing bike lights, staring, whistling, harassment while defecating or getting water, teasing while travelling

Physical - Rape, brushing in tight spaces, alcoholism that leads to physical and mental abuse, polygamy due to woman failing to give birth to a male child, violence by family members on their daughters, violence by the in-laws, violence related to land ownership, being branded as a witch, abducting and marrying of young girls

Overall, it was observed that eve-teasing of women when they go out for work, to study, to fill water, or even to defecate, and domestic violence within the household by male spouses and other members were perceived as the most prevalent forms of violence experienced by the women. The next section takes a closer look at the reasons for the high prevalence of such gender-based violence.

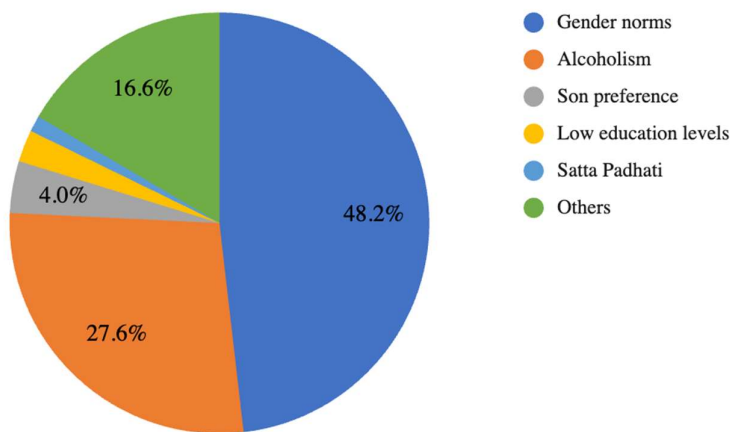
### **Reasons for GBV**

48.16% of women surveyed stated **gender norms** as the primary reason that contributes to GBV in their village. Among these, 62.42% belonged to one of the four tribal villages. 16.6% of these are accounted for by women surveyed in Vaghnagar, while 7.64% belonged to Kharakadi. Majority of women who perceived eve-teasing and domestic violence to be prevalent also felt that gender norms are the biggest contributing factor towards all forms of gender-based violence.

27.61% reported **alcoholism** to be the main contributor. Interestingly, women from Konjali (26.7%), Visaliya (22.22%), Viktar (15.56%) and Bhuteshwar (11.11%) account for the major share of those women who chose this as the first reason. Furthermore, a larger proportion of OBC Hindu women reported alcoholism as the reason for violence when compared to women from other socio-economic and religious backgrounds. Most Muslim women (45.24%) and ST women (85.71%) reported gender norms to be the major contributor to GBV. Interestingly, out of the 21 women who reported technology related harassment, 18 women chose alcoholism as the major reason behind GBV.

As shown in the figure 25 below besides gender norms and alcoholism, son preference, low education levels and Satta padhati were also some of the other primary contributing factors. One in five women from Mamsa chose son preference as the reason for GBV. Women from Mamsa (46%) and Visaliya (30%) account for more than three fourth of all the women who reported son preference as the reason.

Fig. 25 Reasons for GBV as perceived by respondents



Alcoholism, however, was reported as the second biggest contributor to GBV. Among those women who did report alcoholism as the second biggest contributor, 25.33% were from Makwana Na Varuna and 14.67% were from Mota Sharnaya. Another 16% of these women were from Vaghnagar. Two-third of the women surveyed from Konjali identified substance abuse and gambling as the second most significant contributor to GBV in their village.

Similarly, among those women who reported a second reason, low literacy levels (20.4%), lack of law and order (19.22%) and substance abuse (15.7%) were identified as major contributors. Approximately 73% of women from Sajoi and 65.5% women from Pav identified lack of law and order within their respective villages to be the second biggest contributor to GBV. Furthermore, half of the women from Vaghnagar, 36.67% from Visaliya and 30% from Mamsa identified low literacy levels as the second contributor to GBV.

222 women reported a third factor that contributes to GBV. Of these, nearly a quarter of the women reported Satta padhati as the contributing factor.

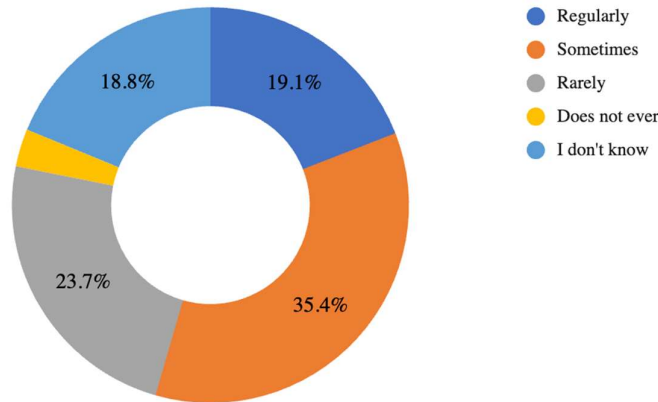
Only 55% of Muslim respondents recorded a third response for this question. Out of these 54.5% reported Satta Padhati as the factor contributing to GBV. Another 16.22% reported social practices such as dowry. Among those who did report Satta padhati as the third reason, 48% belonged to Vaghnagar while another 34.6% belonged to Konjali. Moreover, all those who cited social practices such as dowry as the third contributing factor belonged to tribal villages with the highest share being

in Sajoi (44.44%), followed by Pav (30.56%), Makwana Na Varuna (16.67%) and Mota Sharnaya (8.3%). It is noteworthy that as many as 16 women out of the 31 surveyed in Sajoi cited social practices such as dowry as the third most significant reason leading to GBV. Finally, 15.32% of women reporting a third reason chose low literacy levels while 12.2% cited lack of jobs.

### Substance abuse and incidence of violence

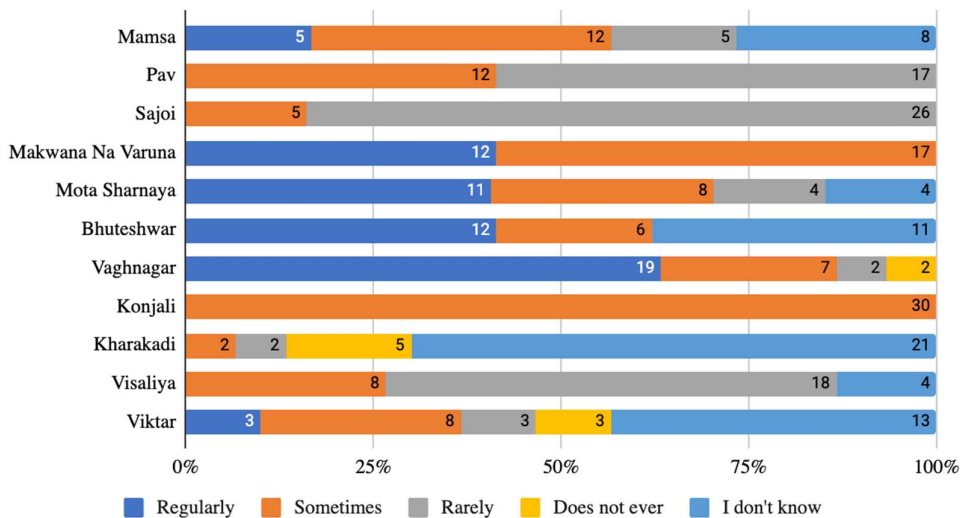
As seen in figure 26, 19% of the total respondents reported that substance abuse regularly leads to GBV. 35.28% stated that it sometimes leads to GBV while 23.62% stated that it rarely does.

Fig. 26 How often does substance abuse lead to gender based violence?



However, the trend varies significantly across villages (see figure 27 ). In Vaghnagar for instance, 63.34% of the total women surveyed revealed that substance abuse regularly causes GBV. 40% of women in Bhuteshwar and Makwana Na Varuna each also reported the same. In the latter the remaining 60% of women stated that it sometimes leads to GBV.

Fig. 27 How often does substance abuse lead to violence? (village-wise)





*There are a lot of alcoholics in the village, Women feel scared in the evening and morning while defecating. – Mota Sarnaya, FGD with Women*

*When men drink they(women) feel unsafe and scared- Konjali, FGD with Women*

*Consumption of alcohol is high in this village. Women are therefore scared to get out of their homes; even during the day time Liquor consumption is high in this village. Local brewing and sale also happens. – Bhuteshwar, FGD with Women*

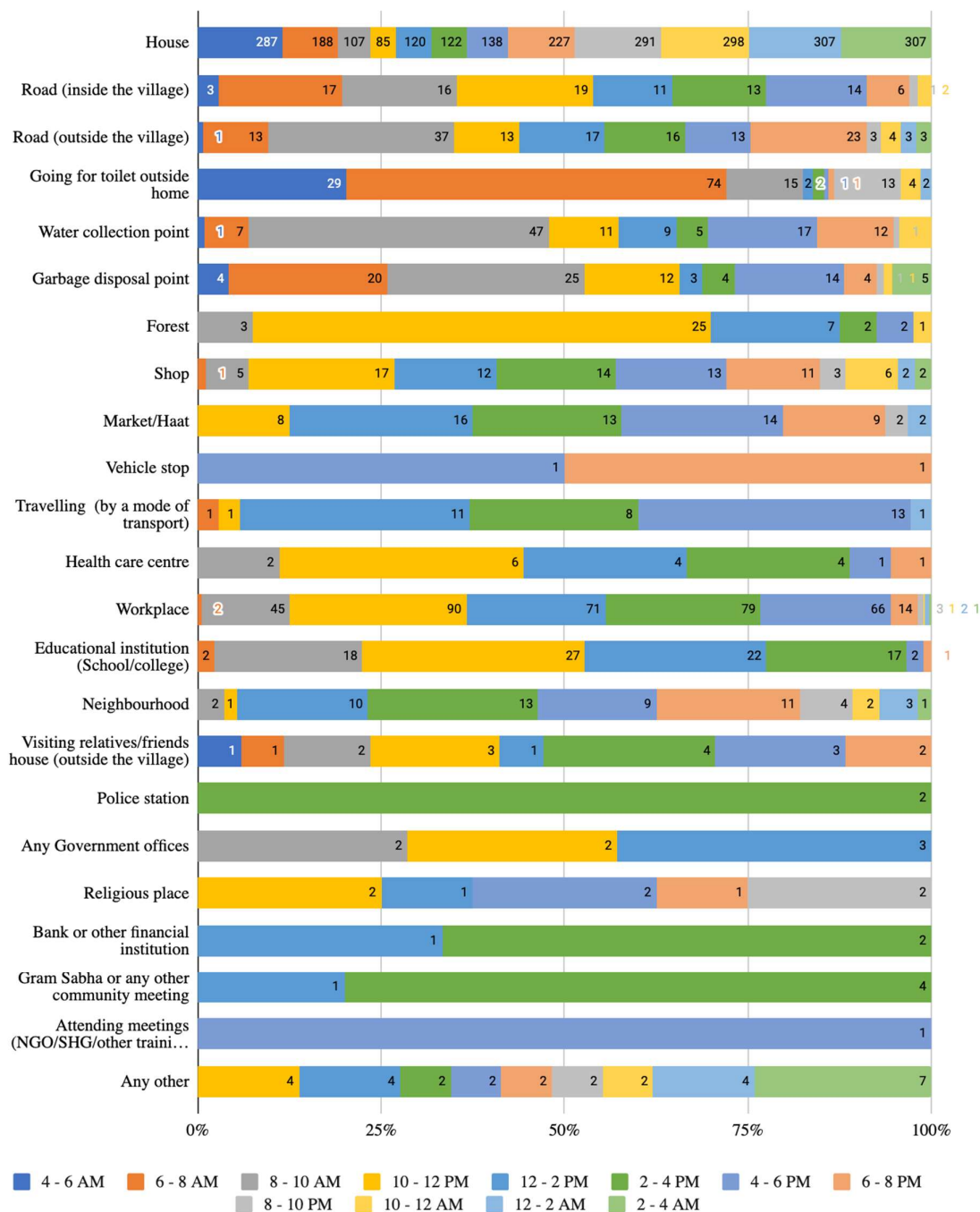
Gender norms, alcoholism and substance abuse, and son preference are the main reasons for the prevalence of gender-based violence as perceived by the women. Besides these, some of the other reasons identified were low education levels and satta padhati. It must be noted that almost 16% of the women reported other reasons for gender-based violence, which must be probed into further.

The next chapter delves into women's perception of safety at different times and places throughout the day.

## Chapter 5: Time, Place and Women's Safety

The survey conducted across villages also recorded women's perceptions of safety and experiences across different times and different spaces they occupy using the recall method of their last 24 hours. Figure 28 shows the locations of women at different times in the last 24 hours.

Fig. 28 Locations of women at different times of the day



According to Figure 28, most women reported their day to start by 6 am. The first activity that most women reported to do in the early morning between 4 to 8 am is going to defecate outside homes, with a significant number shared that they went outside for morning ablutions as early as 4 pm to 6

pm when it would still be dark outside. The next significant activity that most women reported attending to in the early hours of the day was garbage disposal. Majority of women reported being present at the garbage disposal point between 6 am to 10 am. A greater share of women reported being located at the water collection point between 8 am to 10 am. It is noteworthy that an equal share of women also reported being located at their workplaces, i.e., predominantly agricultural work on farmlands, at this time of the day. For most women, 10 am to 6 pm signified work timings and a major share of women reported being at their workplaces (predominantly farmlands) during these hours. Most women reported accessing their neighbourhoods between 12 pm to 8 pm. 8 pm marks the limit for most women's mobility as after this, as is visible from the above figure, very few women reported being outside their homes. A small but significant share of women do report using toilets between 8 pm to 10 pm. This, however, remains a minority in the total sample. This section analyses the time-wise data for women's mobility, location wise perceptions of safety and experiences of violence across different villages. The following factors contributed to the feeling of threat/harassment at various times throughout the day.

### **Open defecation**

Out of the total sample, approximately 15% of women reported feeling harassed, threatened, afraid or intimidated by their surroundings during 4 am to 6 am. Kharakadi (30%) and Visaliya (18%) were the only two coastal villages where a sizable share of women reported so. These are also the villages, which report high rates of open defecation in fields surrounding their villages, as will be revealed by data in the following sections. Among all the four tribal villages though, sizable shares of women reported feeling harassed or threatened by their surroundings at this time of the day. Makwana Na Varuna (31%), Pav (24%) and Mota Sharnaya (22%) reported the highest shares of such cases. When asked about whether they felt intimidated, harassed, threatened or afraid in their surroundings between 6am to 8 am, there was again a very clear distinction between the women's experiences in tribal and coastal villages. As many as 65.5% of women in Pav, followed by 51.7% in Makwana and 48.3% in Sajoi stated in the affirmative. In Mota Sharnaya as well, nearly one in every four women surveyed reported the same. The major reason for feeling so as reported by nearly half of the women in Pav were fears related to open defecation.

### **Fear of eve-teasing, stalking, molestation and harassment in lonely stretches**

In Vaghnagar, the major reason for perceptions of fear of eve-teasing was stated to be lonely stretches with few other women also noting the presence of many boys leading to fear of harassment and eve-teasing being other causes. Women here reported the feeling of fear/apprehension lasted for some time. In Konjali, half of the surveyed women reported eve-teasing, followed by stalking (20%), as the major reasons for their feeling of lack of safety. In Mota Sharnaya besides eve-teasing, feeling unsafe in lonely stretches was also reported as major causes of women feeling anxious or unsafe.

In Pav, the major reasons for such perceptions among women were cited to be lonely stretches, eve-teasing, stalking and fear of animals. Women reported being eve-teased in the forests or shops. All the women who reported stalking stated that they were located in the forest between 8 am and 12 pm, most likely while collecting fuelwood.

A small number of women in Sajoi also reported molestation as a major reason for feeling unsafe while they were located at educational institutions. Similarly, molestation and lonely stretches were

reported by most women in Makwana as major reasons for feeling unsafe. Women reported feeling unsafe by the presence of non-related men, some of these being male neighbours.

*Since Kharakadi is in the interiors the village has school only till 8<sup>th</sup> std., so for further studies they have to send their daughters to another village, for which they have a bus facility. But the bus comes only twice in a day once in morning and once in evening, so they have to send them by private vehicles such as shared autos and they fear of eve teasing cases happening in the private vehicles. The girls feel quite insecure and unsafe in the same and hence they quit their studies.*

- Echoes from FDGs with women and men, Kharakadi

### **Fear of animals and thieves**

In Sajoi, Pav, and Visaliya, owing to being forested tribal areas, fear of animals during (4 am- 8 am) was reported by most women to be unsafe. Among the coastal villages, nearly 30% of women in Vagnagar and 16.67% in Kharakadi reported feeling unsafe due to animals outside. In Viktar, Makwana, and Konjali villages, some women also reported feeling unsafe owing to the possibilities of thefts at night between 10 pm and 4 am.

*Kachla Faliya is a jungle area and there is a lake where women and girls do not go out early in the morning and evening, because there are thieves, animals, and men so the women are scared of harassment.*

*AT 5 in the morning there are no light when women have to go to collect wood. They fear animals and harassment from men. Women do not go if they do not have a partner to go with. There are some men who follow women and behave badly*

*Women and girls cannot go to their distant farms alone for farming or weeding as they are afraid of superstitious and indecent men.*

*To reach Sajoi village from Dudhamali there is a 1 km stretch which is dark the women here fear harassment and with hunting. - **Sajoi, FGD with Women***

Women across the study sites have shown safety concerns across all times in the day. There are variations in terms of concerns and location of the women across the various villages but the data clearly indicates that women live under continuous threat from various men - known and unknown, the fear of animals and thieves. This gets further exacerbated when crossing lonely stretches, in the forests or in crowded public spaces. While none of the respondents reported domestic violence during the day, the fear and threat of it is omnipresent. Lack of access to basic necessities such as sanitation, garbage disposal, and safe public transportation therefore directly induce perceptions. Reporting of domestic violence was low in all the villages as women think of it as a 'personal' issue and 'culturally acceptable' in these areas. Women also do not report any of these violent behaviour to external actors and/or institutions and at best share among themselves.

The next chapter attempts to understand the mobility of women and girls in terms of the public places they visit and their perception of safety in these places.

# Chapter 6: Mobility of Women and Girls - Safety in public spaces

This chapter will discuss women's perceptions about safety in various public places. According to Figure 29 given, the highest number of respondents recorded open defecation spaces to be most unsafe, followed by melas, markets, financial institutions such as banks, workplaces, panchayat offices and courts.

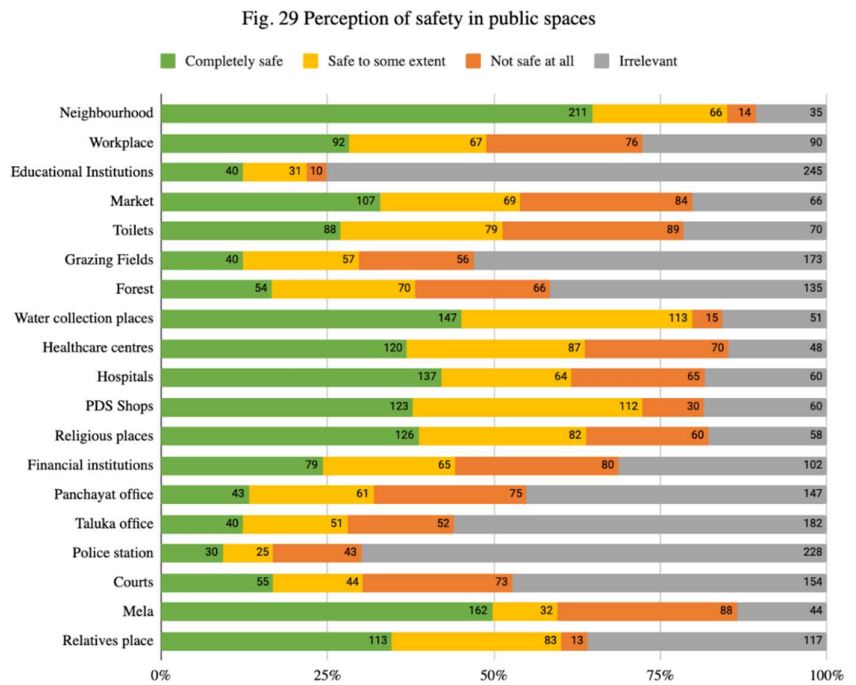


Figure 30 shows the village wise distribution of respondents who reported not feeling safe at all in several public spaces.

Fig. 30 Village wise distribution of respondents who reported not feeling safe at all in several public spaces

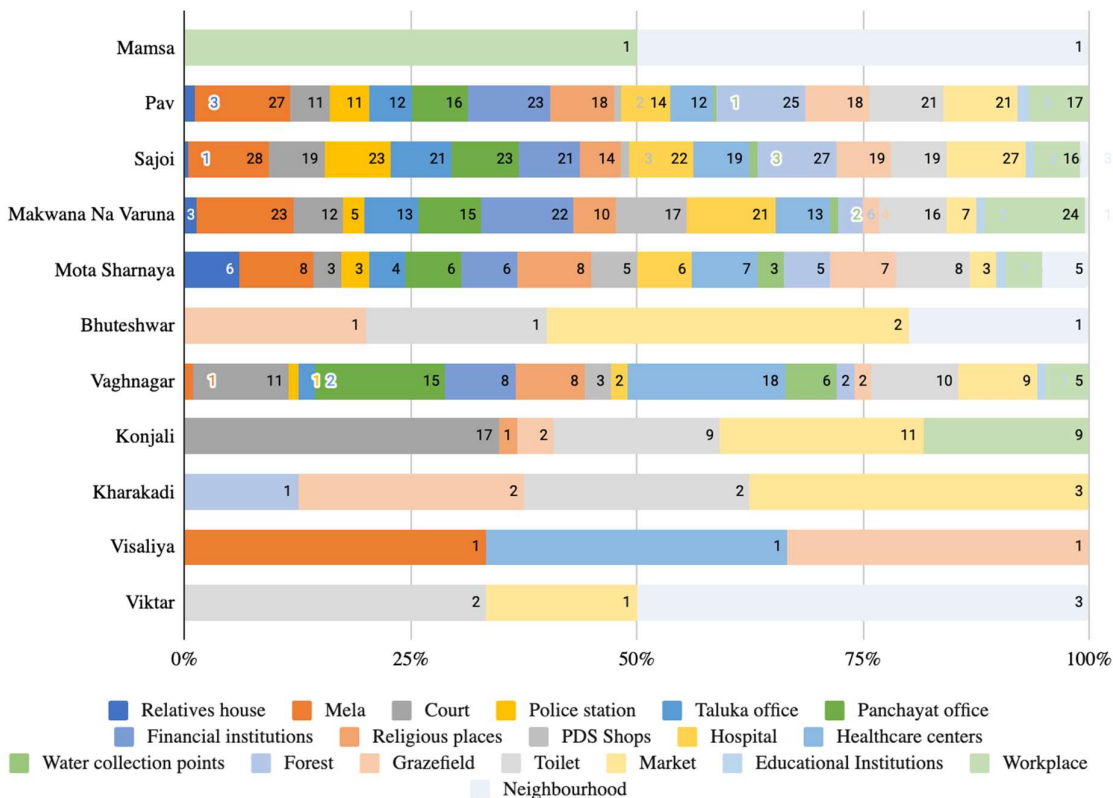
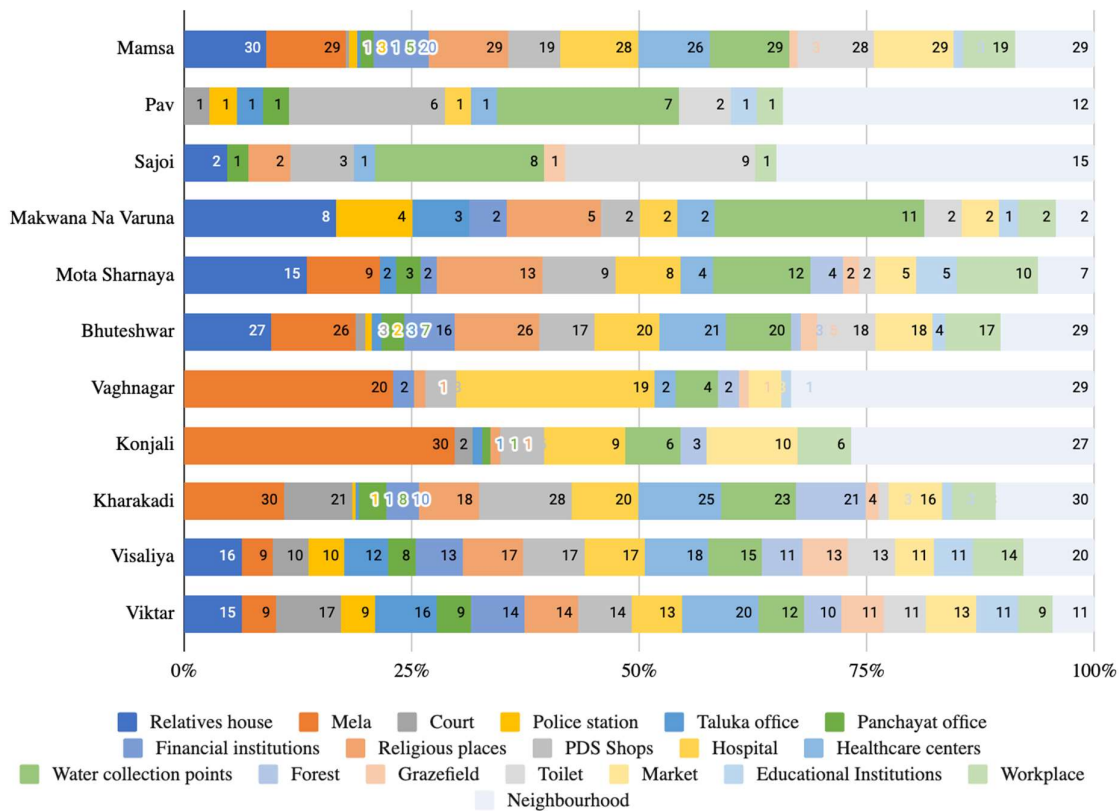


Figure 31 shows the village wise distribution of respondents who reported feeling completely safe in several public spaces. Each public space has been discussed in detail thereafter.

Fig. 31 Village wise distribution of respondents who reported feeling completely safe at several public spaces



### Neighbourhood

Around 65% of the total number of women across all the villages who stated feeling completely unsafe in their neighbourhoods belonged to less than 25 years of age. 18.6% of the respondents surveyed in Mota Sharnaya stated that they felt completely unsafe in their neighbourhood. Another 22.22% stated that they only felt safe to some extent. In Makwana Na Varuna more than 80% of the women surveyed stated that they only felt somewhat safe within their neighbourhoods. In Pav, this ratio was more than half and in Sajoi this was close to 41%. When compared to this, the perception of complete safety in their neighbourhoods was near universal in the coastal villages.

Women’s safety and mobility around neighbourhoods is often dependent upon the availability of public services such as good roads, public lighting, and transport, maintenance of law and order and accessibility to law enforcement officials to address neighbourhood grievances. Most women across all the villages stated that they choose walking to places in their community or village neighbourhoods to save up costs for short-distance travel. Women walk and access multiple neighbourhood spaces for work, to access basic services such as water, toilets, garbage disposal, fodder, cooking fuel, etc. and the lack of neighbourhood safety not just aggravates women’s safety but also increases their time costs, paid and unpaid work burdens. About 90% women from Konjali stated that poor street lighting and condition of roads were the major safety concerns. In Vagnagar as well, close to 90% women raised three key safety concerns – lonely stretches, poor street lighting and poor condition of roads. The latter most was identified as a problem even in Viktar by over one

in three women. In Bhuteshwar, one in three women reported poor street lighting to be a safety concern. In contrast to this, across the tribal villages most women reported a number of safety issues - in Makwana na Varuna, 58.6% reported lonely stretches to be their most major concern. In Mota Sharnaya, 55.5% women also identified this issue. In the former village, one in three women surveyed also identified poor condition of roads as an issue while 17% of women stated that the neighbourhood was difficult for women to access due to no space or designated spaces for women. In Sajoi and Pav too, close to 20% of women had reported similar issues.

### **Workplace**

Around 31% of women who felt completely unsafe at their workplaces belonged to the age group of 36-45 years. Perceptions of workplace safety were also starkly different between tribal and coastal villages. 82.75% of women surveyed in Makwana Na Varuna stated that they felt completely unsafe at their workplace. In Pav and Sajoi, 58.6% and 51.6% of women respectively reported feeling the same. Only 1 woman in each of these two villages reported feeling completely safe at her workplace. This is in sharp contrast to coastal villages where the majority of women stated that they felt completely safe at their workplace. Konjali and Vaghnagar are two exceptions to this trend. Around 50% of women in each of these two villages reported feeling only somewhat safe at their workplace. In the former an additional 40% stated that they felt completely unsafe.

It needs to be reiterated here that the majority of women from these four tribal villages had reported seasonally taking up subsidiary work as agricultural labourers. It is in the tribal villages of Pav, Sajoi and Makwana na Varuna where the majority of women reported their workplaces to be further than 10 kilometres away from their homes. In such a scenario, 61-65% of women in each of these villages reported that rickshaws, shared auto or local transport, and public buses are the options available to travel for work. Despite these options available, most women reported that their first option is to walk to work. The reasons varied from non-availability of regular mode of transport majorly in Makwana na Varuna and Mota Sharnaya to save transport costs in Pav and Sajoi. Along with this, all four villages reported convenience and safety as being decisive factors behind choosing to walk to work. While reporting safety concerns while travelling for work more than 50% of women across Pav, Sajoi and Mota Sharnaya reported lonely stretches and poor condition of roads to be most common issues. In Pav, in addition to these, a large section of women also reported that vehicle/bus stands were located at places which were unsafe. Makwana Na Varuna was the only village where a majority of women reported threat or inappropriate behaviour of people on the route to be a major safety concern. In addition to this, women in this village recorded several issues in small numbers including lonely stretches, poor lighting, and poor condition of roads and crowding.

In most coastal villages, women reported the workplace to be within their neighbourhood itself. As a result, most women reported walking to their workplaces. Konjali was the only village where a majority of women reported workplaces to be further than 500 metres away from their homes. Here, a majority of women reported relying on shared auto or other local transport to travel to work in addition to few stating that they use their own private vehicle. Women majorly reported relying on these modes majorly due to safety concerns along with cost-saving. Vaghnagar was another village where women reported using options other than walking such as rickshaw and shared auto or other local transport mostly due to short distance and convenience. Women in these two villages reported a wide range of safety issues while travelling to work. In the former, the majority of women (~80%) cited two major safety concerns – poor street lighting and poor condition of roads. In the latter, in

addition to these two concerns a major share of women also stated lonely stretches while travelling to work to be a safety concern. Finally, while most other coastal villages did not report any major issues in terms of access to transport while travelling for work or safety, Visaliya and Viktar were two villages where poor condition of roads was highlighted by a sizable share of women as a major safety concern. In the latter, a small share (10%) also stated that the vehicle/bus stand was located in an unsafe place.

### **Educational institutions**

All those who reported to feel completely unsafe at educational institutions were young people below 32 years of age. Respondents across most coastal villages reported feeling completely safe. In the case of tribal villages, 38.71% of women surveyed reported feeling only somewhat safe at educational institutions. Approximately 10% of women surveyed in Pav and Sajoi each stated feeling completely unsafe. These were also the only two villages where a sizable share of women reported the educational institutions to be further than 10 kilometres away from their homes. Most women from these villages reported relying on available modes of transport such as rickshaw, shared auto/ local transport or public buses to travel to educational institutions. Convenience, availability of alternate modes of reliable transport and safety were singled out as reasons for these choices. In Pav, lonely stretches were identified as a safety concern while travelling for education while in Sajoi women additionally also highlighted poor condition of roads and poor street lighting to be issues. It is noteworthy that a high share of women in Makwana Na Varuna stated that they relied on public buses for travel to educational institutions. In this village, women cited vehicle/bus stands to be located in unsafe places along with other safety concerns in smaller numbers such as poor condition of public buses and inaccessibility for women due to lack of designated spaces and overcrowding which aggravate women's perceptions around safety.

*Women were unaware of the fact that they can put across their issues in front of Gram Sabha. Thereafter they were informed by Rubina that whatever issues related to water, toilet, roads they have they can put it on a piece of paper and get it signed by all and submit the same to Gram Sabha. Moreover, Sajjanben who is Panchayat member was of the opinion that each time there is no communication on the Sabha meeting due to which women do not attend the meeting. Few people come and attend the meeting and then they are asked to sign the attendance sheet.*

*Due to social taboo, fear women do not get to attend the Gram Sabha. The women from Darbar community stated that the men of this community believe that women do not go in such meetings. – Kharakadi, FGD with Women*

### **Market**

Among the tribal villages, the majority of women in Pav (87.1%) and Sajoi (72.4%) stated feeling completely unsafe at marketplaces. Even in the other two tribal villages, less than 10% of women reported feeling completely safe. A large share of women across Mota Sharnaya (66%), Pav (58%) and Sajoi (54%) reported that the market was located more than 10 kilometres away from their house. As a result, women used modes of transport available to travel such distances such as rickshaws, shared auto/local transport or public buses. In Makwana na Varuna, by contrast almost all women stated that the market was located within a range of 3 kilometres from their home owing to which



majority reported walking to the market in addition to occasionally using other available modes such as rickshaws, share autos and local transport.

In the coastal villages, nearly all women from Mamsa and Kharakadi reported that the market was located more than 10 kilometres away. Even in Bhuteshwar, two in three women stated this to be the case. As a result, women in these villages use similar modes of transport as those in tribal villages. In addition to this, a large section of women in Mamsa and Bhuteshwar also reported relying on private transport including their own vehicle. Safety while travelling emerged as the most major reason for choosing these modes across Mamsa and Bhuteshwar in addition to availability, distance and convenience which were also the three major reasons reported in Kharakadi. However, the majority of women across these three villages reported no safety concerns while travelling to markets. In the remaining three villages, markets were found to be within the women's neighbourhood due to which they mostly reported walking to the markets. Despite this, close to 30% of women in Vaghnagar and more than 33% of women in Konjali also recorded feeling not safe at all within markets. In the former, only 10% of women reported feeling completely safe. Major safety concerns in these villages include poor street lighting and poor condition of roads. In Vaghnagar women additionally cited lonely stretches as a major safety concern.

### **Open defecation spaces**

Similar to marketplaces, 87% of women in Pav and 59.3% in Sajoi also stated that they feel completely unsafe as open defecation is the general practice. Even in Makwana Na Varuna approximately half of the respondents stated that they do not feel safe at all while using toilets. One in three women in Vaghnagar and 30% in Konjali also reported similar trends.

### **Grazing fields**

More than 70% of respondents from Sajoi and 62% from Pav reported feeling completely unsafe in grazing fields. The highest share of those that reported feeling completely safe in grazing fields was recorded in Visaliya and Viktar. For more insights on women's perception of safety in grazing fields across villages please refer to the subsection Access to fodder for animals in the section access to public services.

### **Forests**

More than 93% of respondents from Sajoi and Pav each reported feeling completely unsafe in forests. The coastal villages have minimal forests and so the question did not merit much response.

### **Water collection points**

Water collection points were reported to be within the neighbourhood by most women across all the villages despite the diversity in source between coastal villages and tribal villages as has been documented in the following section. Therefore, in most villages, women reported walking to collect water due to convenience and short distance. In the tribal villages of Pav and Sajoi, in addition to the coastal village of Vaghnagar, women reported that there was no transport available to collect water owing to which they preferred walking. In Vaghnagar 46% women reported that they sometimes use private vehicles to access water. One in five women surveyed in Vaghnagar reported feeling unsafe at water collection points. In this village women reported three major safety concerns while accessing water – lonely stretches, poor street lighting and poor condition of roads. The latter two safety concerns were also raised by a majority of women in Konjali. However, in tribal areas women majorly reported feeling somewhat safe. Few women in Makwana na Varuna reported issues such as crowding

and threat or inappropriate behaviour by people en route to the water collection point. Approximately, 29% women in Mota Sharnaya also reported lonely stretches as the most major safety concern. All women in Mamsa and majority women in Kharakadi and Bhuteshwar (76.67% and 66.67%) respectively reported feeling completely safe.

### **Healthcare centres including PHCs and CHCs**

Women from Mamsa (86.67%), Kharakadi (83.33%), Bhuteshwar (70%) and Viktar (66.67%) majorly reported feeling completely safe at healthcare centres. This is despite the fact that 90% of women in Kharakadi reported the primary healthcare centre to be more than 10 kilometres away from their homes. 76% in Mamsa and 50% in Bhuteshwar also reported that the PHC was located at a similar distance. In both these villages women largely reported relying on private transport in addition to rickshaws and public buses whenever available or otherwise having to rely on private means. Interestingly, in Vaghnagar the opposite was true where 86% women reported the PHC to be within their neighbourhood yet 60% of women surveyed reported feeling completely unsafe. Vaghnagar was also the only village where women stated that they did not have any transport means to travel safely to the PHC owing to which they choose to walk or rely on private transport to travel safely to the PHC.

Among the tribal villages, three out of four (Pav, Sajoi and Mota Sharnaya) reported the PHC to be more than 10 kilometres away from their homes. In Makwana na Varuna a large share of women reported the PHC to be located between 0.5-3 kilometres away from their homes. Sajoi, Makwana Na Varuna and Pav continued to report high shares of women who felt completely unsafe while travelling to PHCs. Women reported largely using available means of transport such as rickshaws, shared auto / local transport and public buses. In Sajoi a major share of women also reported having to occasionally rely on private means of transport.

In most coastal villages women exclusively reported poor condition of roads as a major safety concern while travelling to PHCs. In Vaghnagar and Konjali, a large share of women additionally reported poor public lighting as well. In comparison to this, women in tribal villages reported a wide range of safety concerns while travelling to PHCs including majority of women stating poor condition of roads, vehicle bus stops being in unsafe locations, PHCs being difficult for women to access due to no designated spaces, threat or inappropriate behaviour by people while en route to PHC and crowding in vehicles while travelling. The latter two were reported by a larger share of women in Sajoi and Makwana na Varuna respectively

### **Hospitals**

Almost all the respondents from Mamsa, except one, stated that they feel completely safe at their local hospital. Approximately, 66% of women surveyed in Bhuteshwar, Vaghnagar and Kharakadi also recorded similar responses. On the other hand, more than 70% of women in Sajoi and Makwana Na Varuna reported feeling completely unsafe at their local hospital. In Pav, women revealed four major safety concerns – lonely stretches, poor condition of roads, poor condition of vehicle and vehicle/bus stand being located in an isolated/unsafe area. The foremost of these concerns was resonated by a major share of women across all the tribal villages. Additionally, in Sajoi, a sizable share of women reported other issues such as threat or intimidation by someone while en route to the hospital and weather-related concerns. In Makwana na Varuna few women also added overcrowding to be a safety concern.

Most villages, except Vaghnagar and Konjali, reported that the nearest hospital was located more than 10 kilometres away from their homes. In these two villages, a major share of women reported that the hospital was located between 3-10 kilometres away from their homes. Women in Vaghnagar revealed several major safety concerns while travelling to hospital – poor lighting in the vehicle, poor condition of roads, poor condition of vehicle, threat or intimidation by someone en route and difficulty for women to access the hospitals.

### **PDS shops**

Women in most villages reported feeling somewhat safe to completely safe in PDS shops. In coastal villages like Kharakadi, more than 93% of women reported feeling completely safe at their local PDS shops. Even in Mamsa, 65% of respondents reported similar trends. One village which was in sharp contrast to all others was Makwana Na Varuna where approximately 60% of respondents stated that they felt completely unsafe at their local PDS shop.

### **Religious places**

Women across most coastal villages stated feeling completely safe at local religious places of worship. Vaghnagar was the only exception to this trend where more than a quarter of the surveyed women reported feeling completely unsafe at local religious places mainly due to poor quality of roads, poor availability and quality of public transport etc.

In tribal villages, large proportions of women in Pav (62%), Sajoi (45%) and Makwana Na Varuna (34.5%) stated that they felt completely unsafe at their local places of worship and religious sites. Women in Sajoi reported the greatest number of safety concerns with large shares stating lonely stretches, poor public lighting and poor condition of roads to be major issues and a smaller share of women also stating others such as difficulty for women to access religious places, threat or intimidation by someone while travelling there, crowding and lack of information regarding routes and timings. These were also issues raised by a small proportion of women in Pav and Makwana Na Varuna.

In terms of distance, there was a clear difference between coastal and tribal villages. Almost all women in coastal villages reported the religious places to be within their neighbourhood while in tribal villages they were unanimously reported to be more than 10 kilometres away from their homes. As a result, there was also a distinction between the means of transport women use to travel to religious places. In the tribal villages women mostly relied on rickshaws, shared autos or public buses to access religious places owing to these being the available means of transport coupled with cost and distance. In the coastal villages most women reported walking to their places of worship due to shorter distance, saving costs, convenience and safety.

### **Financial institutions**

More than two thirds of the women surveyed in Mamsa and approximately half of those surveyed in Bhuteshwar and Viktar reported feeling completely safe at local financial institutions. In contrast to this, the majority of women surveyed in Pav (79.3%), Makwana Na Varuna (75.9%) and Sajoi (67.7%) reported feeling completely unsafe at their local financial institutions.

Women in most villages stated that the local financial institutions were more than 3 kilometres and, in many cases, (Pav and Sajoi) 10 kilometres away from their homes. Vaghnagar was one exception to this where nearly all the women agreed that the local financial institution was located within their



### **Panchayat office**

Around three fourth of the women surveyed in Pav and Sajoi along with half of the women surveyed in Vaghnagar and Makwana Na Varuna accounted for the major share of those women who reported feeling completely unsafe at their local panchayat offices. It is noteworthy that even in the coastal villages which usually have ranked higher on the safety perceptions of women such Mamsa or Visaliya recorded very few who reported feeling completely safe in panchayat offices. The broader perception even in coastal villages is of this place to be somewhat safe. Only in Viktar, about 30% of women stated feeling completely safe at the Panchayat office.

*One of the hamlets of this village have received a notice from the Panchayat stating that they had built their homes illegally so if they do not vacate the houses in a span of 15 days all their homes would be demolished as roads are going to be constructed. Women were worried that if their homes get demolished what will their families do. - Kharakadi, FGD with Women*

Most villages reported the panchayat office being located within their neighbourhood except the three tribal villages of Pav, Sajoi and Makwana Na Varuna. In the former two, more than 66% of women surveyed stated that the local panchayat office was located almost ten kilometres away from their homes. In Makwana Na Varuna the distribution was a bit more even with 27.5% stating this to be the case while 17% each reporting it to be either in their neighbourhood or 3-10 kilometres away. Interestingly, it is the adolescent women who reported the former to be the case while older women largely agreed that the panchayat office was 3-10 kilometres away. In all these three villages women reported relying on rickshaws, shared autos or other local transport or public buses to travel to panchayat offices while in most other villages they walked. Women overwhelmingly cited three major reasons for choosing these modes – availability, cost and safety. Major safety concerns cited by women across these three villages included lonely stretches, poor condition of roads, poor condition of vehicles and overcrowding.

Safety concerns while accessing panchayat offices were also brought up by women in three coastal villages. In Viktar, poor condition of roads which has continued to erode women's access to many of the above spaces, poses an issue even while accessing panchayat offices. In Konjali, in addition to this, women also reported poor public lighting. In Vaghnagar, women reported lonely stretches in addition to the two reasons cited in Konjali and Viktar.

### **Taluka office**

Similar to the trends in panchayat offices, tribal villages account for the largest share of women who reported feeling completely unsafe at taluka offices. Interestingly the share of women who reported taluka offices to be unsafe in these villages is somewhat lesser than those who reported panchayat offices to be completely unsafe. Except Viktar (50%) and Visaliya (40%) none of the coastal villages recorded high shares of women reporting complete safety. As above, the broader perception across villages was of a somewhat safe experience taluka office which needs to be qualified more.

*There is an area named Khaaripaath which is 1.5 kms far from the village wherein there are no street lights so it gets difficult for women to commute till that place. The women do not go alone in this area.*

*At times when any person in the village gets ill or there is some medical emergency then there are no medical services in the village, the person has to be taken at Taluka level for treatment which is 8 to 10 kms far from the main village – Kojali, FGD with Women*

The location of the taluk office was more than 10 kilometres away from women's homes across all the villages except Vaghnagar and Konjali where majority of women reported the distance to be between 3-10 kilometres. As a result, most women in villages like Mamsa, Mota Sharnaya, Bhuteshwar and Kharakadi did not record a response to the question on what transport facilities they use to travel to these offices. Perhaps, women in these villages do not have access to taluka offices at all. In other villages women largely used rickshaws, shared autos or other local transport or public buses to travel to taluk offices. Reasons cited for these options included cost saving, distance and convenience. A high proportion of women in Konjali and Viktar also reported using private vehicles mostly for convenience and safety.

Among the tribal villages, the largest number of safety concerns was raised by women in Sajoi. More than 60% of women here cited two major reasons – threat or intimidation by someone while travelling to a taluka office or overcrowding in vehicles used for transport. A significant share of women also stated that taluk offices were difficult for women to access. In Pav however, the safety concerns differed with majority of women reporting poor condition of roads, poor condition of vehicles and vehicle/bus stand being in unsafe/isolated locations. In Makwana na Varuna, all of these issues were reported albeit by smaller shares of women. All the women surveyed in Vaghnagar reported being threatened or harassed/intimidated while travelling to the taluka office. Additionally, they also cited poor condition of roads as another major safety concern. In Konjali, poor condition of roads was cited by many women to erode their access to taluk offices.

### **Police station**

One in three women in Visaliya and 30% of women in Viktar reported feeling completely safe at their local police stations. Across the rest of the villages recording of this trend remained low even in otherwise well performing villages such as Kharakadi (where only 1 woman reported feeling completely safe) and Mamsa (10%). Sajoi, with about 74% of women reportedly feeling completely unsafe and Pav, with about 37.9% women reporting similar trends, remained the worst performing villages. One reason for this might be that woman in many villages including Mamsa, Bhuteshwar, Vaghnagar, Kharakadi, Visaliya and Viktar did not record a response to the question on the distance of the nearest police station from their homes. This yet again indicates that many women did not even access police stations (discussed later in the report). As will be evident from data in later sections this indeed seems to be true. Reportage of experiences of violence to the police are notoriously low across all the villages and safety while accessing the police stations and within the police stations remain key reasons behind low reportage.

More than 86% of women surveyed in Konjali reported that the nearest police station was 3-10 kilometres away from their homes. In the case of tribal villages like Pav and Sajoi more than 66% of

women surveyed reported that the police station was further than 10 kilometres away. As a result, women in these villages cited several safety concerns which were somewhat different between Konjali and the tribal villages. In the former, poor public lighting and poor condition of roads were reported to be the major safety concerns by a large share of women. In Sajoi however, women added other issues such as lonely stretches, vehicle/bus stands being located in unsafe areas and even threat or intimidation while travelling to the police station. Even in Makwana Na Varuna, similar safety concerns were recorded by small shares of women.

### **Courts**

70% of women in Kharakadi, approximately 60% in Viktar and 33% in Visaliya reported feeling completely safe at local courts. Across all the other villages, the perception of safety at courts remained lukewarm with it being worse in Sajoi and Konjali. Sajoi and Pav were also the two villages where an overwhelming share of women reported the distance to the nearest court to be more than 10 kilometres. This was agreed upon by smaller shares of women even across other coastal villages despite the fact that the trend of not recording a response by majority of the women continued in these villages as possibly women have not been to the courts. As an exception, most women in Konjali reported the nearest court to be 3-10 kilometres away. 61% of women surveyed in Sajoi and 57% in Konjali reported feeling completely unsafe at their local courts. Women in these three villages reported relying on similar modes of transport such as rickshaws, shared autos, local transport or public buses to travel to the nearest court. In Konjali, however, a large share of women also stated occasionally relying on their own motorised vehicle to access the court. Women here majorly revealed three safety concerns – poor public lighting, poor condition of roads and the vehicle/bus stand being located in an unsafe/isolated area. In addition to these, some of the other safety concerns recorded by women in tribal villages include vehicles not waiting for women, courts being difficult to access for women, overcrowding and lack of information on routes (cited majorly in Makwana na Varuna).

### **Mela (Fair)**

Across the seven coastal villages, women in Konjali and Kharakadi uniformly reported feeling completely safe at local melas. The share of women doing so was also high in other coastal villages such as Bhuteshwar (86.67%) and Vaghnagar (66%). Showcasing a totally reverse trend, almost all the women surveyed in the three tribal villages of Sajoi, Pav and Makwana Na Varuna reportedly felt completely unsafe at their local melas. The reason for this may lie in the distance to melas. An overwhelming proportion of women in the tribal villages reported the mela to be located more than 10 kilometres away. While in the case of coastal villages most agreed this to be lower than 10 kilometres with some even stating it to be less than 3 kilometres (except in Konjali). This was not the case in Mamsa where a large proportion of women reported the mela to be more than 10 kilometres away from their homes.

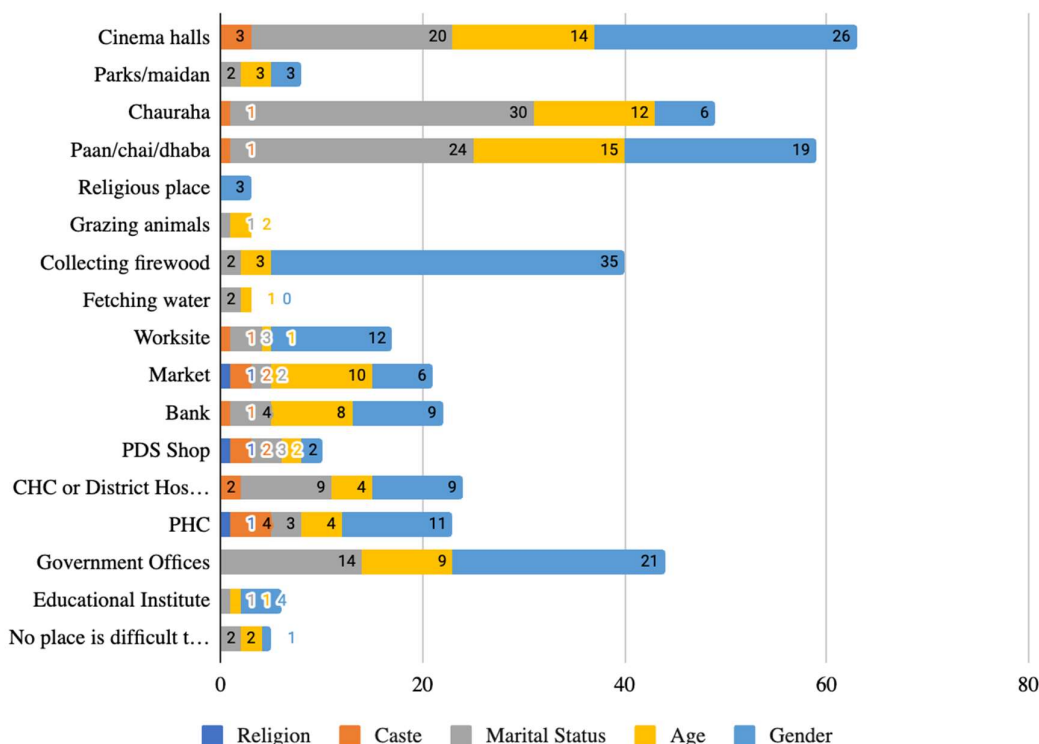
As a result of this spatial difference, women in tribal villages often have to rely on rickshaws, shared auto, local transport or public buses to get melas while those in coastal villages preferred to walk while rarely opting for these options. Across the tribal villages the major safety concerns reported by women included lonely stretches, poor public lighting, poor condition of roads, poor condition of vehicle, vehicle/bus stand location, threat/intimidation and overcrowding. A large share of women in Vaghnagar (65%) reported feeling threatened or intimidated by someone while going to the mela in addition to overcrowding while travelling to the mela.





Figure 33 depicts the reasons for difficulty in accessing various public spaces. Viktar, followed by Visaliya, accounted for the largest share of women who stated that no place is difficult for them to access. Women from Mota Sharnaya, Vaghnagar and a small proportion of those from Sajoi accounted for the major share of those who found educational institutions to be difficult to access.

Fig. 33 Reasons for difficulty in accessing public spaces



All four tribal villages accounted for more than 50% of those women who reported government offices to be difficult to access. A few coastal villages such as Vaghnagar, Kharakadi, Visaliya, Viktar and Bhuteshwar many women reported this. Women from Makwana Na Varuna and Mota Sharnaya accounted for the largest share of those who reported PHCs to be difficult to access. Women from Vaghnagar accounted for the single largest share of women who reported that CHCs or district hospitals were difficult to access for women. A large proportion of women from Makwana Na Varuna also reported this in addition to a sizable share of women from Bhuteshwar.

Women from Makwana Na Varuna accounted for more than 50% of those who reported that PDS shops were difficult to access. The four tribal villages of Pav, Sajoi, Makwana Na Varuna and Mota Sharnaya accounted for two thirds of the women who stated that they had difficulty in accessing banks. A Sizable share of women from Bhuteshwar, Vaghnagar and Konjali also reported this. Bhuteshwar, followed by Vaghnagar and Makwana Na Varuna, accounted for the major proportion of women who stated that markets were inaccessible to them. An overwhelming proportion of women who stated that worksites were difficult for them to access belonged to Konjali, followed by Sajoi and Makwana Na Varuna. Women in Kharakadi and Bhuteshwar were the only ones who reported difficulty in accessing water.

Women from Pav and Sajoi accounted for 75% of those women who stated that they have difficulty in collecting firewood. Sajoi also accounted for a sizable share of those women who stated having difficulty in accessing religious places.

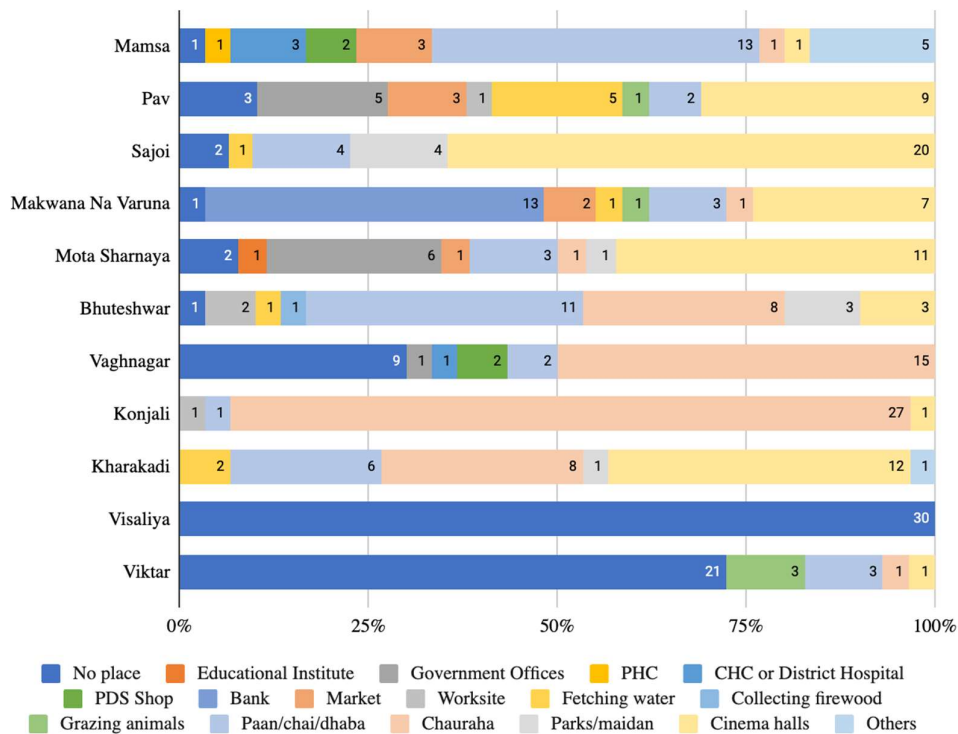
Paan shops / chai stalls or dhabas emerged as one of the major sites which are inaccessible to women in coastal areas. Women from Mamsa, Bhuteshwar, Vaghnagar, Kharakadi, Visaliya and Konjali accounted for the major share of those women who reported this. Even women from Sajoi comprised a sizable portion of this sample of women. Similarly, except for a few women from Mota Sharnaya, a large section of women who reported facing difficulty in accessing village centres belonged to the coastal villages of Bhuteshwar, Kharakadi, Mamsa, Vaghnagar, Konjali and Visaliya. Finally, the cinema hall is another place which was reported in greater proportion by women from coastal villages as being difficult to access. However, Pav and Sajoi accounted for a sizable share of women who reported so.

Difficulty in accessing these spaces also stems from restrictions posed on women to enter certain spaces owing to their gender identity. The following section looks at public spaces across villages where women are denied entry.

### Restrictions on women’s entry

20% of women stated that they are denied entry into cinema halls due to their gender. Another 19% stated that they are denied entry into village centres often owing to their gender identity. Other places which women reported to be denied entry into owing to their identity are banks, government offices and firewood collection areas.

Fig. 34 Village wise distribution of public spaces where women are denied entry



There is a wide contrast between different villages in terms of the number of places where women are denied entry owing to their identity. In Visaliya, all women stated that there are no places where they are denied entry, as seen in figure 34 above. Over 67% in Viktar also stated the same while others here revealed places such as graze fields, paan/chai stall/ dhabas and parks. While on the other hand, women in Mamsa reported the highest number of places where they are denied entry including PHC, CHC, PDS shop, markets, cinema halls, parks, paan/tea stalls/dhabas (highest share among all the villages).

*There is gender discrimination due to which women have to face violence. Menstruating women cannot go to the Meldi mata temple. - Bhuteshwar, FGD with Women*

Among the tribal villages, Pav reported the highest number of places where women are denied entry including government offices, market, water collection points and cinema halls. Denial of entry into government offices was exclusively reported in larger shares only in the tribal villages of Pav and Mota Sharnaya (highest across all villages), except a very small proportion of women in Bhuteshwar and Konjali also reporting the same. A large proportion of women in Makwana Na Varuna stated that they are denied entry into banks. Likewise, denial of entry into worksites was reported exclusively among women from the coastal villages of Konjali (90% of women), Vaghnagar (50%), Bhuteshwar and Kharakadi.

Gender was reported to be the main reason for denial into these public spaces by over 52% of women in our sample. Another 12.3% stated marital status to be the reason while 9% of women stated age to be the prime reason. While gender appears to be a reason for non-entry into most spaces, women's responses reveal that marital status seems to be a barrier which restricts entry into specific public spaces within the villages such as pan shop/tea stall/dhabas, village centres (choro) and cinema halls. Interestingly, 45% of women who cited marital status to be a reason for denied entry into various places belonged to Kharakadi which points to the fact that this might be a significant marker of differential access among women with unmarried younger and adolescent women having very restricted mobility within the village.

*The women from Darbar community stated that the men of this community believe that women do not go in such meetings. -Kharakadi, FGD with Women*

*Men were of the belief that due to certain incidents taking place in the society they are scared to send women and daughters out. Moreover, the social set up is such that if girls go out, it becomes difficult to get girls married. - Bhuteshwar, FGD with Men*

Accessing public spaces is a challenge for most women across villages, owing to restrictions posed on them due to their gender, age, and marital status. To understand public spaces and safety more deeply, transect walks were conducted with women, the findings from which are highlighted in the next section.

## Transect Walks: Understanding the space and concept of safety

Transect walks through the villages were organised to understand and observe the concepts of space, safety, public spaces, accessibility in those villages. The exercise was conducted with a group of women from the respective villages which involved walking through a route, which they felt safe; observing, discussing issues that came up during the walk. This exercise enabled seeing things and places as they are, for the women in the villages.



- *There are water taps but they are not in functional mode. Also, there are toilets in the houses but since there is no water connection they have to go out for defecation. There is water facility in the village but people get water only 3-4 days in a week and during other times they have to go to the main tank to collect water. - **Bhuteshwar***
- *There is water facility in the village but people do not get potable drinking water and have to travel 2 kms to fetch water- **Mota Sharnaya***



- *Roads are in bad condition. During monsoon season there is a lot of water logging so it is difficult to commute- **Konjali**. When the women go to defecate, they face lot of problems. there are lot of unwanted plants grown on the empty land. Roads not disable friendly- **Bhuteshwar***
- *Women have to go out of their homes for defecation which is a big challenge as they fear getting confronted with any male member of the village. They cannot go during the day light for defecation. They have to wait till night for the same which is a big problem.*
- *There are water taps but they are not in functional mode. Also, there are toilets in the houses but since there is no water connection they have to go out for defecation. Two to three women go together for the same. During monsoon season they face a lot of problem as have to go far away and are also scared of poisonous snakes and insects. – **Kharakadi***
- *The women fear going out alone especially near the dairy, paan shops where the men sit, there is no light. With a recent incident of a woman in her farm where a drunkard tried to hold her hand, women are more scared. There is no sewage facility. The women go to the lake for washing clothes. - **Mota Sharnaya***



- *There is electricity in the houses but there are no street lights due to which post 8 pm it is difficult for women to get out of their homes and they fear of getting encountered with male members of the village. There are 2 markets wherein the roads are in average condition rest everywhere its bad. – **Bhuteshwar**.*
- *There are no street lights due to which women feel unsafe to get out of their homes at night. Moreover, there are lots of drunkards in the village and there are no lights in public places so people fear to get out of their homes. – **Konjali***
- *There is electricity in the houses but there are no street lights due to which post 8 pm it is difficult for women to get out of their homes and they fear of getting encountered with male members of the village. – **Kharakadi***
- *The male members also do not allow their women to go alone as there are no street lights and even if they do so then the so-called society shall talk about such women who go all by themselves. There are no street lights in the village - **Mota Sharnaya***
- *There are no lights in Harijan and Dalit Vaas. – **Bhuteshwar***



- *The village has school facility only till 8<sup>th</sup> std. so due to the fear of sending the girls out for further education they leave their studies.*
- *Bus, 108, nurse, doctor, ration facilities are good in the village. The ratio of liquor consumption is higher in this village due to which it gets difficult to get out of homes at night. - **Bhuteshwar***
- *They fear to get out of the house during night as they have a tradition to cover their face and move around so they are scared of some poisonous insects as well. -**Kharakadi***
- *The forest area makes it more difficult for women to access as anyone can come.*
- *Nurse, doctor, Buses do not come on time, the rationing shops do not give bills or coupons.*
- *The school wall is broken. We are not informed about the Gram Sabha. - **Mota Sharnaya***



- *The transect walks revealed lack of access to basic services such as water and sanitation within the household, electricity, street lights, etc., was an important factor in the perception of fear. For instance, the lack of sanitation facilities pushes women towards open defecation at odd hours.*

The next chapter attempts to understand women's access to basic services and safety concerns thereof.

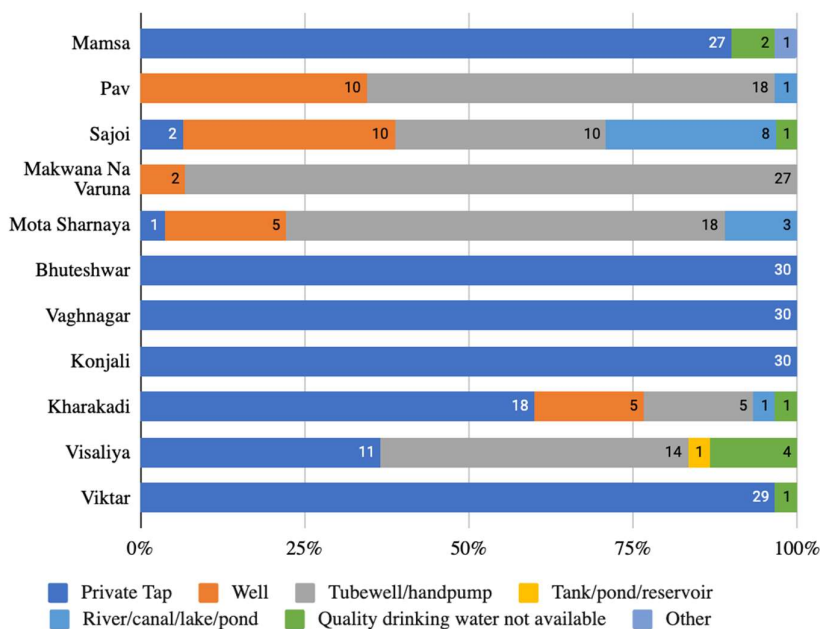
## Chapter 7: Women’s Access to Basic Services

Access to affordable good quality public services has been identified as a structural determinant of women’s agency. Many of the trends relating to women’s perceptions of safety and their experiences of violence and harassment, both within households and in public spaces, depend on the provision of public services. Inadequate provision of public services such as drinking water, sanitation, cooking fuel, community toilets, roads and public lighting poses many added costs and aggravated vulnerabilities for women. It directly leads to increased unpaid work burdens for women who have to spend greater time in accumulating these services for their households. Furthermore, in many cases, women’s experiences of violence are directly related to their conditions of living and access to basic resources. This section details the trends in women’s access to basic public services across the eleven villages surveyed for this study.

### Access to safe and quality drinking water

Only 54% of the total women surveyed reported having a private tap for drinking water. Almost all the respondents in the coastal villages reported using this source. The only exception to this was in Visaliya where, as is the case with all four of the tribal villages, a large majority of the respondents reported relying on tube wells/hand pumps for drinking water, as seen in figure 35 below. In Visaliya, 46.67% of the respondents reported using this source. In comparison to this, the proportion of respondents using this source in Makwana Na Varuna was as high as 93%. This is followed by Mota Sharnaya where two thirds of the women reported relying on tube wells/hand pumps. Even in Pav and Sajoi, 62% and 32% of the respondents reported relying on this source. The following figure contrasts the difference in sources of drinking water between the tribal and coastal villages.

Fig. 35 Village wise distribution of sources of safe and quality drinking water



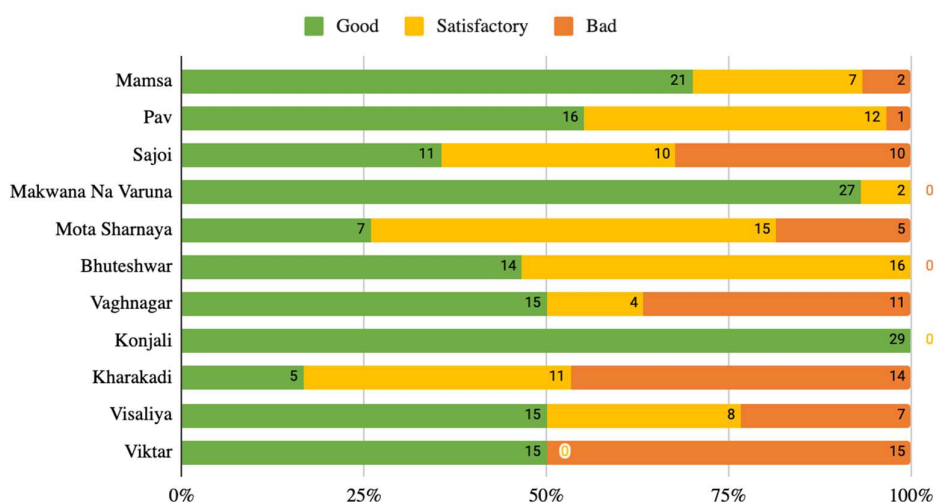
*There is water facility in the village but since Panchayat has not paid the bill there is a problem. As of now the women have to spend lot of time collecting water and have to stand in long queues for the same. The Panchayat's Water bill has been exorbitant (Rs. 2-4 lacs pa.). The Panchayats say they have no resources to pay such hefty bills. Due to non-payment, the connection has been cut. This is the situation of many villages. – Bhuteshwar FGD with Women*

*Women go to the river to get water. After taking some water out, the fresh water comes so they have to wait which makes them feel unsafe. Women cannot go on the roads because it is jungle and trees. Roads to the village are kuccha and right now tuber and Makai farming is done so the women are scared. – Mota Sharnaya, FGD with Women*

*To fill water, the women have to travel long distance- Konjali, FGD with Women*

However, in terms of accessing safe water, regularity of service provision is as important as having a reliable and affordable source. In the aspect of regularity, we see (in figure 36) that this seems to be a serious issue even across coastal villages. Interestingly, none of the respondents from Makwana Na Varuna which largely relies on tube wells/hand pumps for drinking water reported irregularity. In Sajoi, however, as high as 32% of the respondents stated that the water availability was irregular. However, the highest share of respondents reporting irregular water access was observed in Viktar (50%), Kharakdi (47%) and Vaghnagar (34%).

Fig. 36 Regularity of safe and quality drinking water across villages



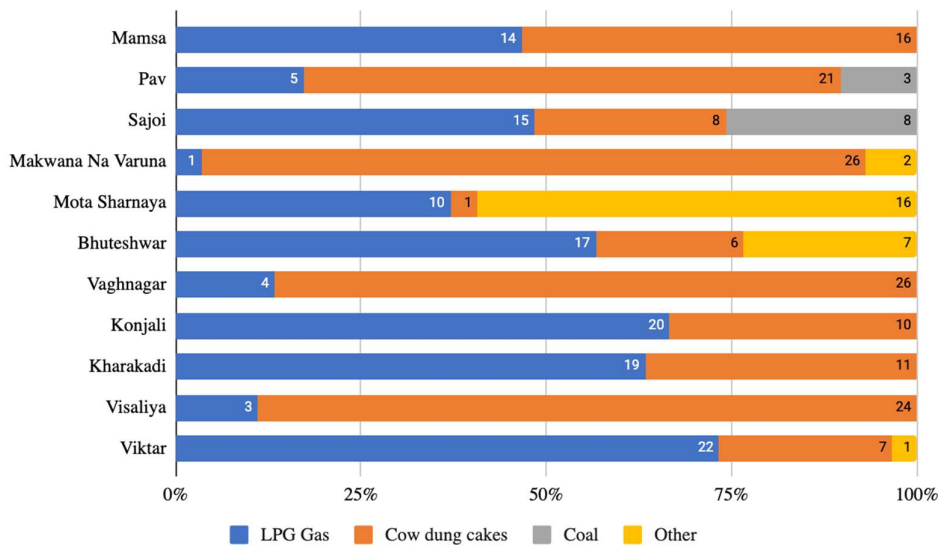
*The people in the village wanted to make a Committee where in there are members from all the communities who review the status of bore well but no one becomes the member and they feel that this is women's problem and not everyone's. – Kharakdi, FGD with men*

### Access to cooking fuel

Around 48% of the total respondents stated that they primarily rely on cow dung cakes as cooking gas fuel. Only about 40% reported having access to LPG gas cylinders. Long term usage of cow dung cakes without proper ventilation is known to cause a wide range of health problems among women. However, the distribution of respondents using cow dung cakes is spread across coastal and tribal

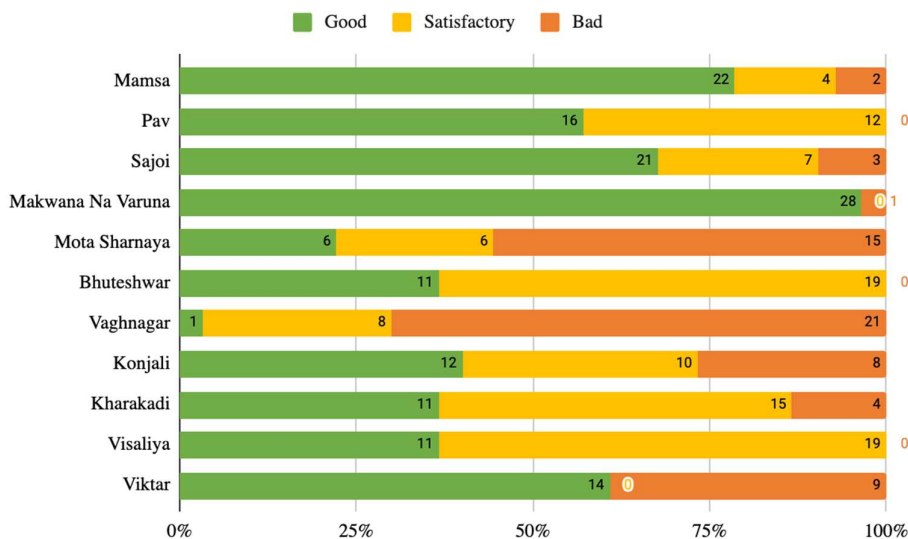
villages, as seen in figure 37 below. Within the former, Visaliya (88%) and Vaghnagar (86%) reported the highest share of respondents using cow dung cakes. Even in other coastal villages such as Mamsa, Kharakadi and Konjali, a significant proportion of women reported using cow dung cakes as shown in Figure 36. Viktar reported the highest share of women (73%) with access to LPG gas. Among the tribal villages, nearly all respondents in Makwana Na Varuna and close to 82% of those surveyed in Pav reported using cow dung cakes as primary cooking fuel. Interestingly, the number of women with access to LPG gas was highest in Sajoi among all other tribal villages with close to 50% reporting so. Approximately 60% of women surveyed in Mota Sharnaya reported using other forms of cooking fuel which needs to be probed further for its effect on women’s health, safety and unpaid work burdens.

Fig. 37 Village wise distribution of primary sources of cooking fuel



In terms of regularity of access to cooking fuel, around 47% reported it to be good, 30.7% reported satisfactory while 19.3% reported that it was bad. Figure 38 below shows the village wise distribution of regular availability of the primary cooking fuel.

Fig. 38 Regular availability of primary source of cooking fuel across villages

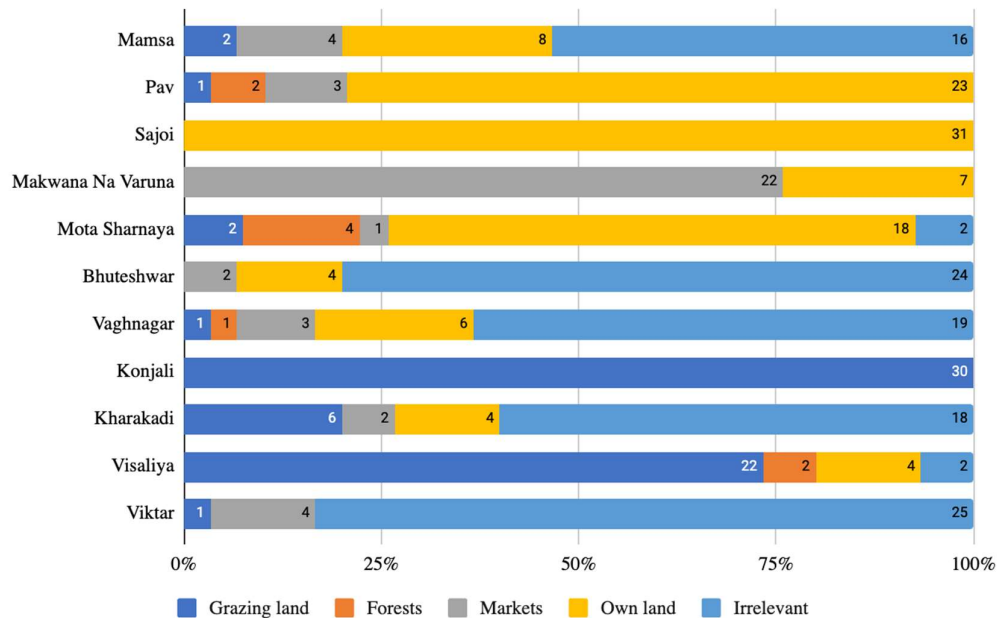


The villages which recorded the highest share of respondents reporting irregularity of cooking fuel were Vagnagar (70%), Makwana Na Varuna (55%) and Viktar (39%). In contrast to this, nearly all respondents in Makwana Na Varuna reported having regular access to their primary cooking fuel. Even in Mamsa close to 80% of the respondents reported having regular and good access to cooking fuel.

### Access to fodder for livestock

32.2% of women stated that they relied on their own land to access fodder for animals. About 20% stated relying on graze fields while about 12.6% reported that they depend on markets. Figure 39 depicts the distribution of various sources for fodder across villages. In most coastal villages this question was reported to be irrelevant by majority of the respondents such as in Viktar (83%), Bhuteshwar (80%), Vagnagar (64%), Kharakadi (60%) and Mamsa (53%) as these areas do not have forests. In tribal villages, with the exception of Makwana Na Varuna, the majority of respondents reported relying on their own land for fodder.

Fig. 39 Village wise distribution of access to safe grazing fields for animals



In Makwana, approximately 77% of the respondents stated that they rely on markets for fodder. It is worthwhile to recall here that almost 86% of respondents from this village had stated that they find markets to be somewhat completely unsafe, with over 20% stating the latter. Over 55% respondents also stated here that the distance from the market to their houses is between 0.5 – 3 kms which about 82% of women stated that they walk to. Even though the availability of rickshaws to travel to markets was reported by almost four fifths of the sample in this village, only 10% used this. Over 55% stated that the reason for choosing to walk is due to issues related to availability of other modes of safe transport. Women from this village have reported several safety concerns while travelling to market spaces including 24% who reported lonely stretches, 17% who reported lack of information on emergency numbers, 14% reporting threat or inappropriate behaviour of people on the way and 10% stating poor condition of roads as a safety concern. Close to 24% women also stated that markets



were not easy for women to access and they did not have any designated spaces for women to safely access.

Almost all the respondents from Konjali and more than 70% from Visaliya reported relying on grazing fields. 40% of the people surveyed in the former stated that they felt only somewhat safe in their grazing fields while in Visaliya almost 43% stated feeling completely safe in their grazing fields. In both the villages, the majority of the respondents stated that the grazing fields were 0.5-3 kms away from their homes. 86.67% women in Konjali and Vaghnagar, reported poor condition of roads and poor street lighting was a major safety concern for women while accessing grazing fields.

A small share of respondents in Mota Sharnaya also reported relying on forests for fodder. This was true even in Pav, Visaliya and Vaghnagar although at a smaller scale. It is noteworthy that in Mota Sharnaya, 18.52% of respondents reported forests to be not safe at all for women while another 45% reported feeling only somewhat safe. A significant proportion of women (33%) stated that the distance between their homes and forests is between 3-10 kms. Women from this village identified several safety concerns that they face while walking their cattle to graze in the forests – lonely stretches (22%), poor condition of roads (14.8%) and weather-related concerns (18%).

*When women go to the forest to fetch firewood, they are scared of animals, and harassment people walking in the village, at early morning at 5 o'clock, there is no street light. So, they are more scared. There are some men who roam around and harass women so some women do not go to get firewood if they do not get any support.*

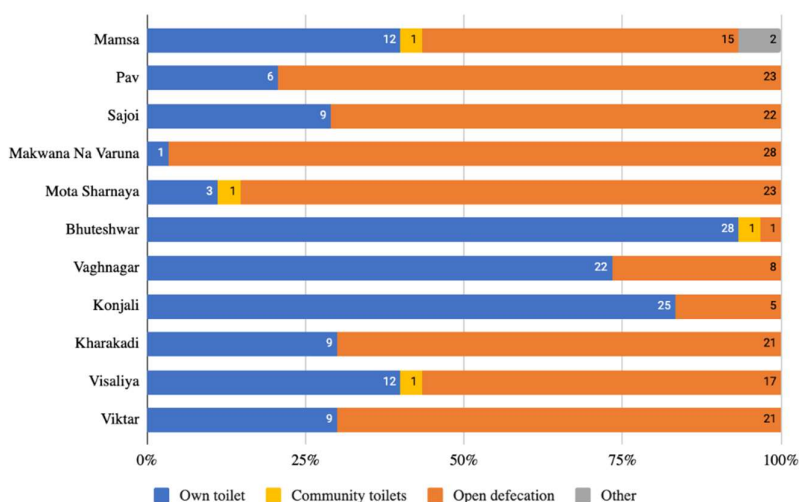
*To reach Sanjoi village from Dudhamali there is an 1 km stretch which doesn't have lights so women feared, looting, teasing and witch-hunting- Sajoi, FGD with Women*

### Access to safe and hygienic toilets

Open defecation was reported by more than 56% of the total respondents surveyed across all the 11 villages while 41% reported using their own toilets. The remaining 5% relied on community toilets.

The share of openly defecating women was highest in Makwana Na Varuna, followed by Mota Sharnaya, Pav and Sajoi, as seen in figure 40. Interestingly, it is in these very villages that the condition of community toilets was reported to be bad or non-existent as reported by a large proportion of women (Figure 45). More specifically, 93.45% of women in Sajoi, 74% in Pav, 86% in Makwana Na Varuna and 63% in Mota Sharnaya reported this trend. The share

Fig. 40 Village wise distribution of access to safe and hygienic toilets

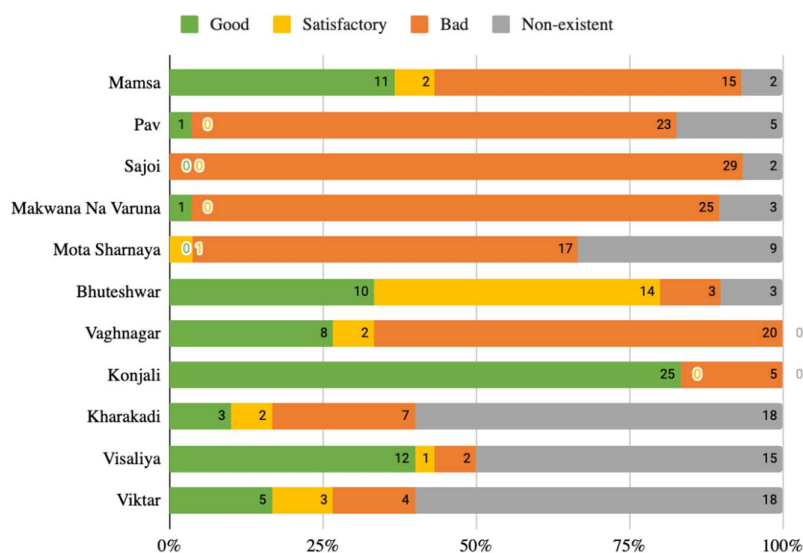


of women reportedly using their own toilets was highest in Bhuteshwar (94%), followed by Konjali (83%) and Vaghnagar (73%).

Even in coastal villages such as Kharakadi, Viktar, Visaliya and Mamsa, a large proportion of respondents reported open defecation as shown in Figure 40 above.

Figure 41 shows the condition of community toilets across villages. In Kharakadi, two out of three women stated that the condition of community toilets in their village was bad. In Vaghnagar, this figure was as high as 65%. In Mamsa, half of the women reported so. Furthermore, in both Kharakadi and Viktar, 60% of women reported that they did not have community toilets in their village or were unaware of the existence of the same. Konjali recorded the highest share of women who stated that the state of their community toilets was good. It is to be noted that the absence of affordable, clean and hygienic community toilets pushes many communities to practise open defecation thereby leading not just issues of safety

Fig. 41 Condition of community toilets across villages



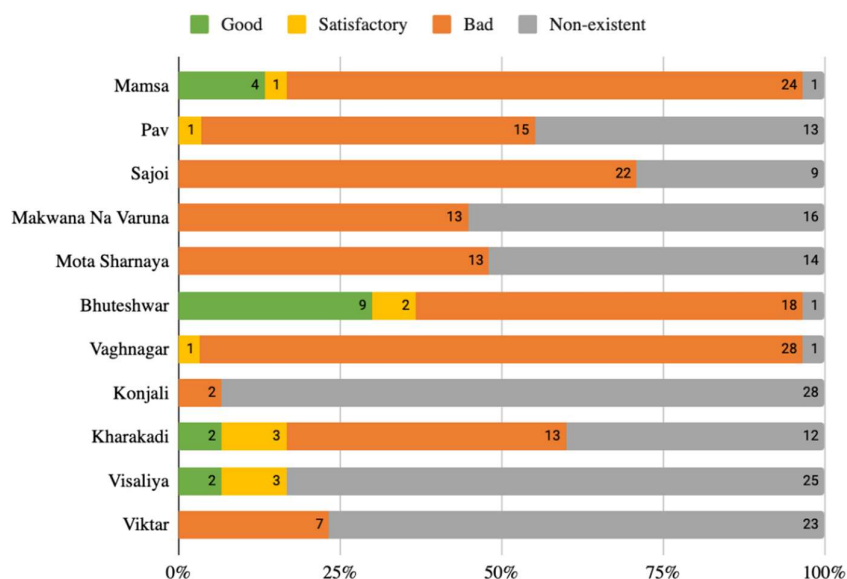
for women but also serious health and environmental determinants for the entire community.

Not surprisingly, as high as 27.3% of women across all the villages stated that they did not feel safe at all while using toilets. Another 24% reported feeling only somewhat safe. 80% of those who reported not feeling safe at all revealed that they practise open defecation. As revealed in the previous section, 87% of women in Pav and 59.3% in Sajoi also stated that they feel completely unsafe while using toilets within their communities. Even in Makwana Na Varuna approximately half of the respondents stated that they do not feel safe at all while using toilets. One in three women in Vaghnagar and 30% in Konjali also reported similar trends. Majority of the women across all these villages stated that the distance of toilets from their homes was less than 0.5 kms. Only in Mota Sharnaya we observe that close to 40% of women reported that the distance of the toilets (most probably sites of open defecation including fields, forests, etc) from their homes was between 0.5 – 3 kms.. In Mota Sharnaya, one in three women from this village identified lonely stretches as being a major safety concern while accessing toilets. This was reported by about 35% of women even in Vaghnagar where an additional 30% reported poor street lighting and 20% reported threat or inappropriate behaviour by people as added challenges. Over 80% of women from Konjali stated that poor street lighting and condition of roads were major safety issues faced by them. Close to 50% of women in Visaliya reported poor condition of roads to be a safety concern in accessing toilets. Approximately 22% of women in Makwana Na Varuna reported crowding at the community toilets as an added safety concern.

## Access to sanitation including garbage disposal, drainage and sewage

Non-provision of good quality, reliable and affordable sanitation services add to women's unpaid work burden and time costs. Women from our sample were asked to rate the condition of sanitation services in their village and an overwhelmingly large majority 47.55% rated it to be bad while another 44% reported that these services were non-existent. Figure 42 depicts the responses across villages for this question. As depicted both tribal and coastal villages suffer from inadequate provision of sanitation services. In villages such as Viktar, Visaliya and Konjali 80-90% of respondents from each stated these services to be non-existent. In Vaghnagar around 95% of the women revealed that the condition of sanitation was bad. In Mamsa, around 80% of women reported this.

Fig. 42 Condition of sanitation services across villages



*There is no proper sewage system so the dirty water gets collated in the surroundings and makes them filthy. The bore well is not in good working condition. There is no facility for garbage collection due to which there are lot of mosquitoes and the surroundings are also filthy and dirty – Konjali, FGD with Women*

*Since toilet is also a major issue in the village the women have to go out of their homes to defecate and due to lack of street lights they are scared to go. – Kharakadi, FGD with women*

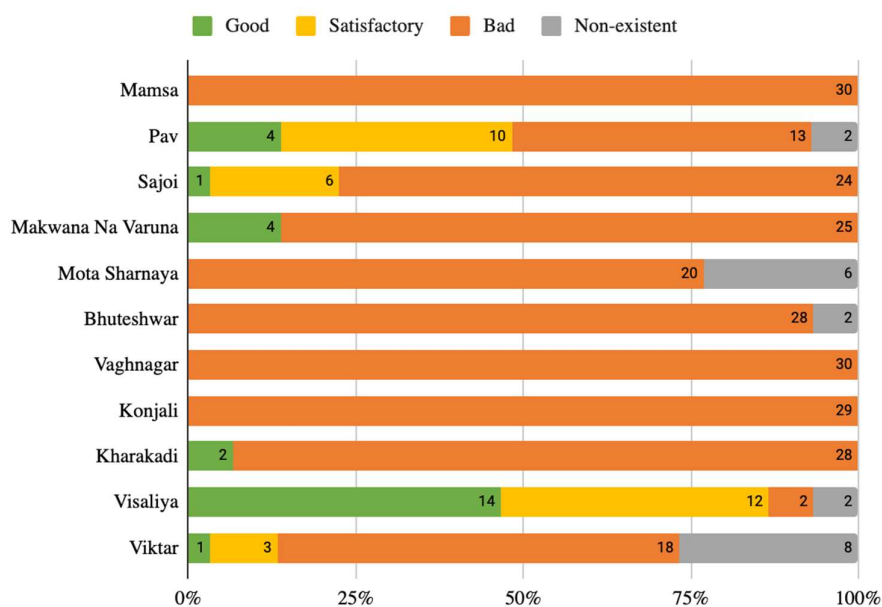
*The primary need for toilet is there for each household but since the toilet facility is lacking they face a lot of problem. For defecation they have to go either late night or early mornings which are harmful for their health. During any time of the day they cannot go, especially when a woman is conceiving she faces lots of challenges. There are lots of people who visit the temple but there is no toilet facility there as well. - Kharakadi, FGD with Men*

*There is a Committee where in there are members from all the communities who review the status of bore well but no one becomes the member and they feel that this is women's problem and not everyone's. – Kharakadi, FGD with Men*

## Access to good quality roads and public lighting

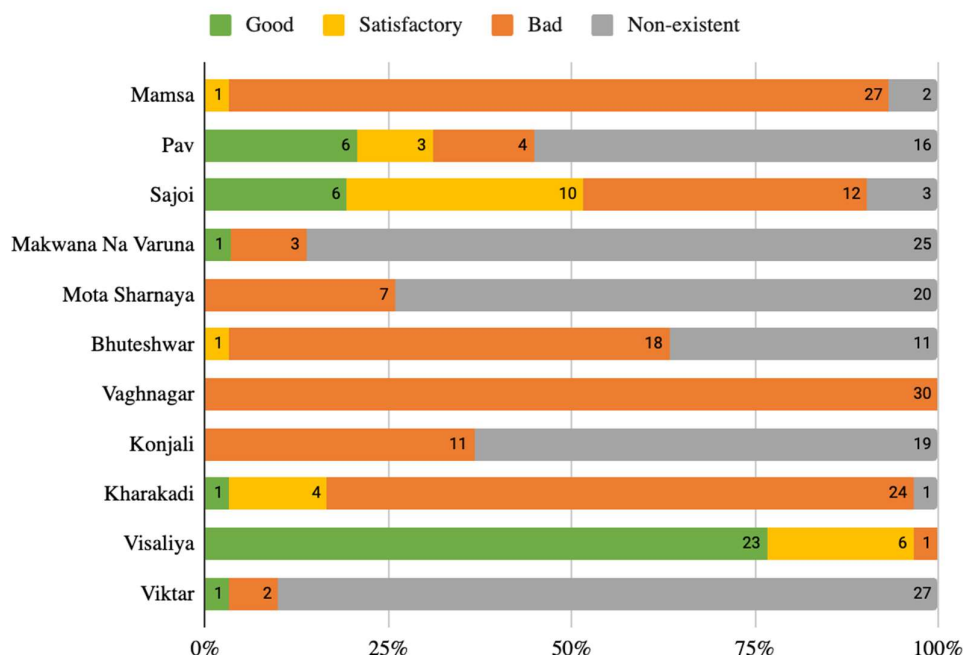
An overwhelmingly large share of women across all the villages (76%) reported the condition of roads in their village to be bad. Again, this was a trend observed across tribal and coastal villages as shown below in Figure 43. In some villages such as Mota Sharnaya and Viktar, 20-25% of respondents each also stated roads to be non-existent. Visaliya was one exception to this largely general trend where up to 46% women stated the condition of roads to be good while another 40% reported it to be satisfactory. Poor condition of roads continued to be cited as a major safety concern for women in Viktar while accessing many spaces including neighbourhoods, water collection points, religious places, financial institutions, panchayat offices, among several others.

Fig. 43 Condition of roads across villages



Coming to public lighting, 42.6% of total women surveyed stated that the condition was poor while another 38% reported it to be non-existent. As shown in figure 44, in Viktar, 90% of women surveyed reported the latter. In Mamsa, 90% of women surveyed reported the condition to be bad. In Vaghnagar, all the women reported this to be the case. Even in coastal villages such as Kharakadi, Konjali and Bhuteshwar a large majority of women either stated the condition to be bad (80%, 37% and 60% respectively) or non-existent (4%, 63% and 37% respectively). Among the tribal villages, over 85% of women in Makwana Na Varuna, 73% in Mota Sharnaya and 55% in Pav revealed no street lights to be present in their villages. Yet again, Visaliya continues to be an exception to this general trend where approximately 76% of women report good quality public lighting. About 20% of women in Sajoi and Pav also report this. Poor quality roads and lack of public lighting are not just general safety concerns but lead to barriers for women in accessing many other services as has been pointed out in the preceding sub-sections.

Fig. 44 Condition of public lighting across villages



*The women from Madari Faliya have to go to the river half a kilometer away in the evening and in the morning to fetch water and they have to wait until fresh water is taken out. They feel scared- Mota Sarnaya, FGD with Women*

*The women are scared to go to the dairy to submit milk as the time for the same is 8 o'clock.*

*The women are scared cannot go on the road because there is forest and bushes since it is a hilly area, the roads are not good and ways to get to the village and at present there is cultivation of tuvar and maize so it is scary for the women. – Mota Sarnaya, FGD with Women*

*The roads in the village are also in bad condition. There are no street lights in the village- Konjali, FGD with Women*

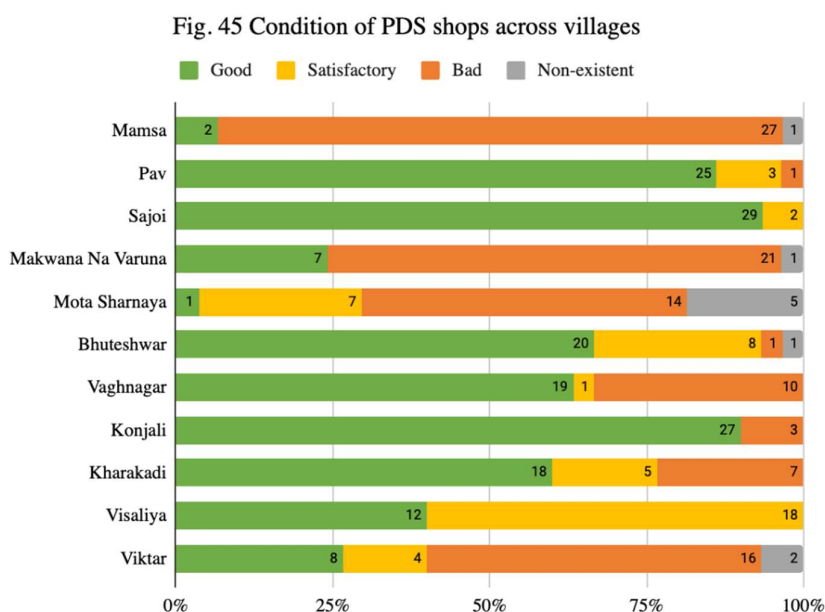
*The girls in the school are afraid of coming from the forest area, walking in the monsoon, fearing harassment. – Sajoi, FGD with Women*

*Despite of there being a bus stop in the village the bus doesn't come so women and girls have to go on highway for the same to which males responded that any one or two males of the village should accompany them so they do not feel unsafe and scared- Konjali, FGD with Women*

*For delivery women have to walk all the way long to the main road, 108 does not come till their doorstep- Konjali, FGD with Women*

## Access to PDS shops

Procuring ration, food grains, cooking oil, etc. are among the many unpaid care responsibilities that usually fall on women owing to patriarchal distribution of entitlements and roles within households. Corruption, non-reliability, inaccessibility, unaffordability and lack of safety are some of the usual issues that aggravate women's time poverty and work burdens while accessing PDS shops. Within our sample 51.53% women stated that the condition of PDS shops was good, 14.72% stated that it was satisfactory and 30.67% stated it to be bad. The distribution of the condition of PDS shops is uneven across coastal and tribal areas as shown in figure 45.



On the one hand, respondents from Sajoi and Pav record an overwhelmingly high share of women stating the condition to be good, while in villages such as Mamsa and Viktar women report the condition to be bad (90% and 53% respectively) or non-existent (4% and 6% respectively). But on the other hand, in Makwana Na Varuna 76% of women and 51% in Mota Sharnaya report the condition of PDS shops to be bad. In the latter, approximately 19% of women state that the PDS shop was non-existent. Other coastal villages such as Konjali (90%), Bhuteshwar (66%), Vaghnagar (63%) and Kharakadi (60%) report a major share of women who state that the condition is good.

As discussed in the previous section, 37.85% of women from our sample across all the villages reported that they felt completely safe at the PDS shop. Another 34.46% stated that they felt somewhat safe while 9.23% said that they do not feel safe at all. A large majority of those who reported that they do not feel safe at all were from Makwana Na Varuna (56.67%). From the total number of women surveyed from this village 58.6% reported that they do not feel safe at all. Another 34% reported feeling only somewhat safe. Coastal villages, in general, reported higher levels of safety when compared to tribal villages, except Konjali and Kharakadi where 80% of the respondents in each village said that they felt only somewhat safe. This was the case with even Sajoi and Pav where a larger majority stated that they only feel somewhat safe.

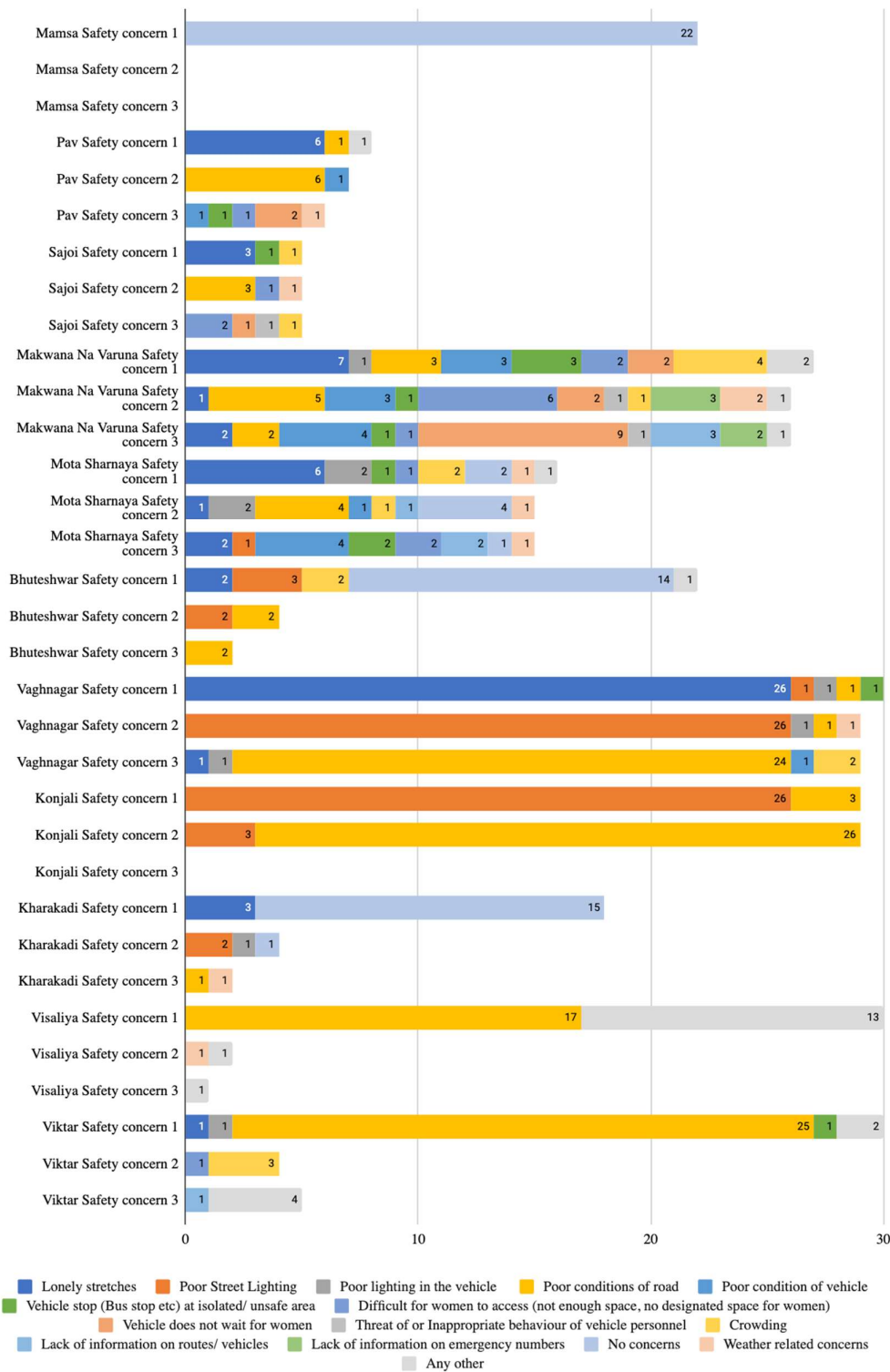
*The government (PDS) shop is located in the Uchwas Flaliya which is a forest area. There is fear of looting and harassment. There are a lot of drunkards in the village. – Sajoi, FGD with Women*

*At the ration shops the villagers did not get appropriate ration and when they asked for their rights, they were told that they shall get only stipulated amount to which women complained to Jilla Collector by writing a letter and then later they started getting proper ration for their homes- Konjali, FGD with Women*

A large majority of women surveyed in the coastal villages of Bhuteshwar (76.67%), Vaghnagar (93%), Konjali (96%), Kharakadi (65%), Visaliya (60%) and Viktar (83%) reported the PDS shop to be within 500 metres of their homes. The remaining few in these villages also stated that their houses were between 500 metres to 3 kms from the PDS shop. This was largely the case even in the tribal villages of Sajoi and Pav. In Makwana Na Varuna, 89% women reported the PDS shop to be between 0.5-3 kms. However, in Mamsa, around 45% women stated that the shop was between 3-10 kilometres away. In Mota Sharnaya, the distance was more extreme with about 48% of women stating that the PDS shop is more than 10 kilometres away from their homes. Despite these differing ranges, women in most villages across both tribal and coastal areas stated that they have no reliable safe means of transport available to reach the PDS shop. This was majorly true for all villages including Pav (65.5%), Sajoi (64.5%), Vaghnagar (86.67%) and Visaliya (70%). An overwhelming majority of women across all the villages stated that they walk to the PDS shop, except in Mamsa and Mota Sharnaya where 51.7% and 40.7% of women respectively, stated that they use the rickshaw to access the PDS shops. The reason for this varies across villages – for those who have to travel shorter distances, walking makes sense. Others who have to travel longer, especially those in tribal villages, reported saving up the cost of spending on transport as the major reason why they choose to walk. In the latter two villages, the majority of women reported distance to be the main reason for opting rickshaw.

Women across all the villages, except Mamsa reported a series of safety concerns while travelling to the PDS shop. Figure 46 summarises the top 3 safety concerns reported across the villages.

Fig. 46 Village wise top 3 safety concerns while accessing PDS shops



In Pav, one in three women surveyed reported poor quality of roads and lonely stretches as the two major safety concerns while travelling to PDS shops while few others also mentioned issues such as poor quality of vehicles, long waiting times for buses, and difficulty for women to access as issues. In Sajoi, similar reasons were reported except by only about 10% of women. Makwana na Varuna



emerged as the village where women experienced the greatest number of safety concerns while accessing PDS shops including vehicle not waiting for women (30%), difficulty for women to access (22%), lonely stretches (24%) and poor condition of roads (19%) among several other issues raised by smaller number of women such as lack of infrastructure on routes and emergency numbers. In Mota Sharnaya, the village where maximum distance was reported, lonely stretches were reported as the primary safety concern along with few women reporting several other issues as shown in the table below. In Vagnagar an overwhelming majority of women reported three main safety concerns – lonely stretches (86.67%), poor street lighting (86.67%) and poor condition of roads (80%). The latter two reasons were also reported by 86.67% of women in Konjali as being central safety concerns while accessing PDS shops. Poor condition of roads was reported as the main safety concern by over 56% women in Visaliya and 83% women in Viktar.

*When women go to the jungle for wood they are scared of poisonous creatures and men who harass. If one wants to go at 5 in the morning there is no light, it is very scary in the dark because of which women do not go if they do not find anyone to accompany them. There are a few men in the village who follow women and behave badly. – Sajoi, FGD with Women*

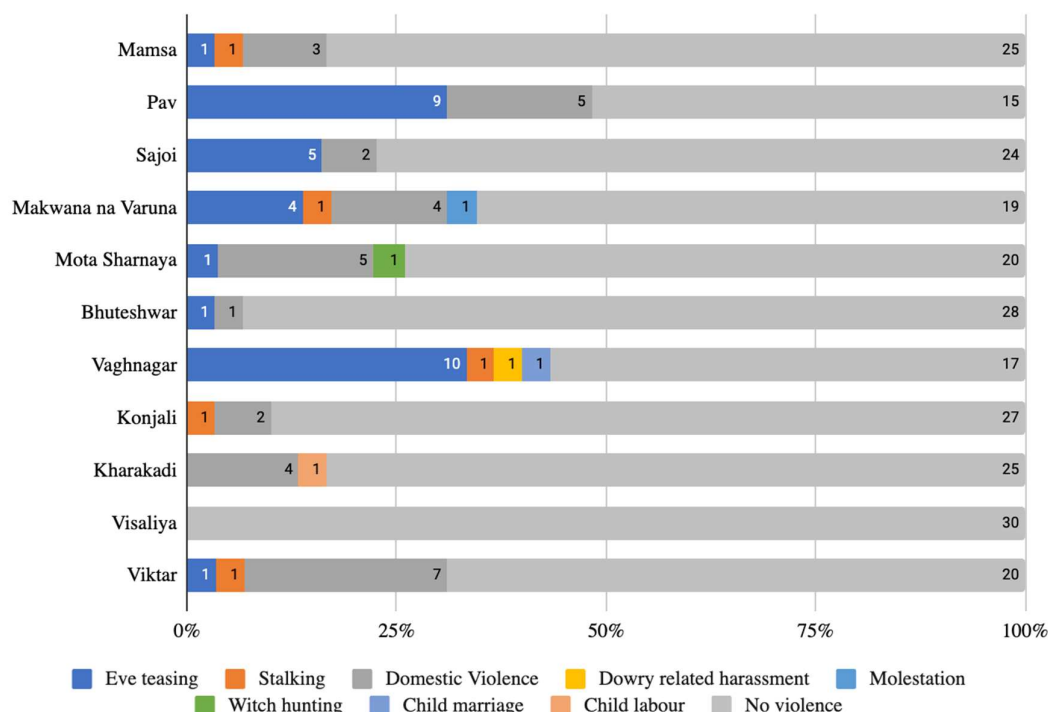
*Women feel scared and isolated while defecating in the evening and morning- Mota Sarnaya, FGD with Women*

Women face difficulties in accessing public spaces, especially due to the lack of access to safe basic services. For instance, poor roads and lighting. Conversely, women need to access public spaces in order to fulfil basic necessities, such as filling water, defecation, collecting fuelwood, grazing animals, which are already unsafe, which further makes accessing basic services more challenging. The next chapter discusses forms of violence experienced by women, the measures they took to address it, and the challenges thereof.

## Chapter 8: Challenges to Addressing Women's Safety

22.46% of women (73) across the 11 villages reported experiencing some form of violence in the 12 months preceding the survey. 48.3% of the women surveyed in Pav, 34.5% in Makwana Na Varuna, 43.33% in Vaghnagar, 31% in Viktar and 22.6% in Sajoi account for the largest share of those who reported this. Interestingly, none of the women surveyed in Visaliya reported experiencing violence in the past 12 months even when there have been concerns around safety in the public spaces in the earlier sections of the study. The culture of silence around issues of GBV are a cause of concern and need more probing in areas of contradictory reportage. Among those 73 women who did, 45.2% women reported experiencing domestic violence including physical, verbal, economic and sexual violence within their households, while 43.8% women reported experiencing eve-teasing. Close to 7% of women across all the villages reported experiencing stalking. Figure 47 below presents the distribution of forms of violence experienced by women across villages.

Fig. 47 Forms of violence experienced by women in the 12 months preceding the survey across villages



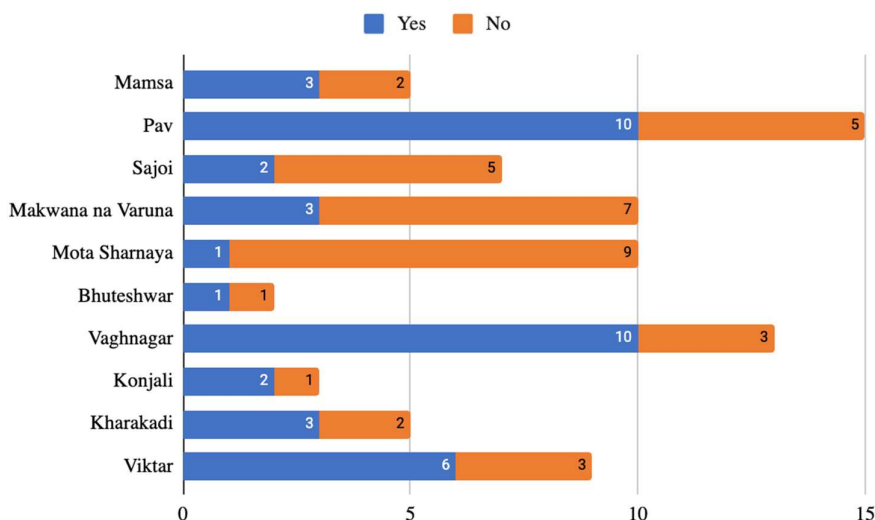
Eve-teasing was reportedly experienced by about 33% women surveyed in Vaghnagar. Even in Pav more than 30% of women reported facing eve teasing. Across two other tribal villages, Sajoi and Makwana na Varuna, high rates of eve-teasing were reported by those women who faced violence in the past 12 months. Rates of domestic violence were highest in Viktar (33%) but were also high across Pav (31%), Mota Sharnaya (16%) and Makwana na Varuna (14%). 26.67% women in Vaghnagar reported experiencing Satta padhati. The following points summarise various other forms of violence that were reported across villages by a very small proportion of women surveyed.

- Stalking is reported across several villages with the highest number being in Vaghnagar, followed by Sajoi, Pav and Mamsa.
- Dowry related harassment was also reported by few women across all four tribal villages each and by one woman in Vaghnagar.

- Pav remains the only village where an unmarried adolescent woman reported experiencing technology related harassment.
- Molestation was also reported by a few women in the tribal villages of Pav, Sajoi and Makwana Na Varuna. Bhuteshwar is the only coastal village where this was also reported.
- Bhuteshwar is the only village where sexual assault/rape was reported by an unmarried adolescent woman.
- A case of witch hunting by a 45 year old woman and another by a widowed woman were reported in Mota Sharnaya and Sajoi respectively.
- Neglect of girl child was reported in Pav and Bhuteshwar.
- Child marriage was reported in the coastal villages of Vaghnagar and Kharakadi.
- Sexual harassment at workplace was reported by 4 women in Pav and 2 in Sajoi. One woman in Makwana Na Varuna reported discrimination at the workplace. This was the only place where one response on the incidence of caste/religion-based violence was also recorded.
- Satta padhati was also recorded in Mamsa and Konjali.
- Child labour was reported by 10% of women surveyed in Vaghnagar and one woman each in Kharakadi and Makwana Na Varuna.
- Pav and Sajoi also reported prohibitions in practices and rituals

56% of women (41) who experienced violence in the 12 months preceding the survey reported seeking help. Interestingly, while 65.6% of women who experienced eve-teasing reportedly sought help (only one reported to the police while more than 80% sought help from female family members), only 45% of those who experienced domestic violence reportedly sought help (with only one reporting it to the police). As seen in figure 48 below, Vaghnagar, followed by Pav, Viktar, Mamsa, Konjali and Kharakadi reported a majority of women who sought help after experiencing violence. The three tribal villages of Sajoi, Makwana Na Varuna and Mota Sharnaya reported a very low proportion of women who sought help. It is nonetheless important to understand that domestic violence is multi-faceted (shouting, regular beating, substance abuse, threats, mental harassment, etc.) and layered and women only report it when it becomes severe or intolerable.

Fig. 48 Women who sought help after experiencing violence across villages



53.66% (22) of women who sought help did so from another female member of the household. Only 12% (5) reportedly approached the police. Three of these were from Mamsa while one woman each

in Pav and Konjali reportedly sought help from police. Another 9.7% (4) sought help from a male member of the household. 50% of these (2) consisted of women from Viktar. 3 women each stated that they approached a friend or a women's group/samiti.

*After the incident they try to get help from Nyay samite and helpline numbers. They expect justice. but they have very little information regarding seeking help. There is no place in the village which is safe. – Mota Sharnaya, FGD with Women*

83% of women who sought help reported that the problem was not resolved easily. 90% of women who sought help in Pav and 80% in Vaghnagar accounted for the major share of those who reported this. Nearly all of the women who faced issues in Vaghnagar revealed behaviour/attitude issues from the person from whom help was sought to be the main reason behind this. Few women in Vaghnagar also reported reasons such as threat/intimidation and lack of infrastructure such as transport. Even in Makwana na Varuna, the majority of women reported the main reason for non-resolution to be behavioural/attitude issues from the person from whom help was sought, in addition to other issues such as gender norms and threat/intimidation. In Pav, the majority of women who sought help felt that the three main reasons for non-resolution were the lack of support from family members, tardiness of the law and lack of resources. In Mamsa, none of the women who sought help reported having an easy resolution to their problem. Reasons for this include lack of support from family, tardiness of the law, gender norms, threat/intimidation and lack of information. Many of these issues were reported across most villages by a handful of women and therefore are nodes which can be probed further during interviews. Interestingly, most women who reported tardiness of the law were also the ones who reported police stations to be highly unsafe and far away from their homes which adds to the cost of women approaching the police to file a formal complaint against violence. Two thirds of women who experienced threat or intimidation belonged to the ST community. The ways in which identity related discrimination plays a role in women addressing violence needs to be probed in the qualitative interviews.

*The Police does not take the complaint and if we go two to three times they refuse. They do not listen to the complaint. There is no safety even for those who are alone in the house when the others are migrating. – Konjani, Nyaaya Samiti Member*

*Young girls between the ages of 13 to 15 years also feel scared and unsafe especially after a rape incident of a minor girl, that took place 8 months back in the village. – Bhuteshwar, FGD with Women*

*Men were of the belief that due to certain incidents taking place in the society they are scared to send women and daughters out. Moreover, the social set up is such that if girls go out, it becomes difficult to get girls married. – Bhuteshwar, FGD with Men*

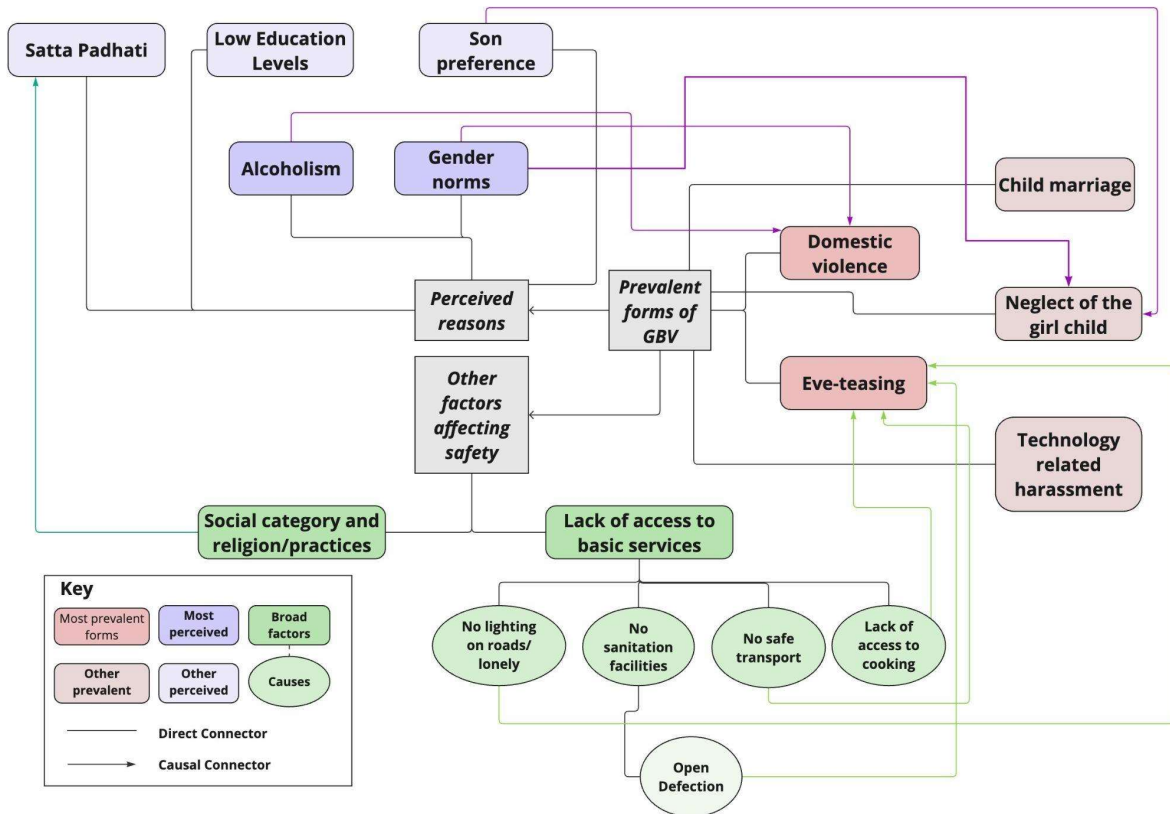
## Chapter 9: Conclusion and Discussion

This safety audit on women's safety was unique as there are few such studies done to evaluate public spaces in rural areas. This audit involves a systematic evaluation of various elements within public spaces to identify potential risks and implement necessary improvements related to women's safety. The triangulation of qualitative and quantitative (using multi-methods) helped in developing evidence required for better implementation of programs and policies by local and state governments. These would include providing affordable, safe and reliable modes of transport, better lighting, provision of clean toilets and sanitation infrastructure, better reporting and timely grievance redressal models, amongst others. Involving women from the *sangathans*, especially the *Nyay Samiti* members for data collection of this study was twofold advantage - (a) on the sangathan and individual level, it helped in developing a holistic understanding of GBV in the area in a structured manner (b) they used this evidence to demand for accountability from the state representatives in making public spaces more safe for women. It aided in their extremely crucial work of supporting women to access justice for various forms of GBV faced by them.

It is important to understand that *spaces* that women occupy are considered 'private', intrinsically linked to their normative roles of 'caregiving'. The 'public' space is considered the domain of the man and this contributes to the violence faced by women, especially in rural communities where your identity as a woman is also linked to kinship, caste and religion. As such, a woman out of her home is considered an anomaly, and hence someone who puts herself at risk for occupying a hyper-masculine and patriarchal public space. The systemic violence that stems from it is evident in the lack of safe transport, lighting, water supply, sanitation, etc; the design of the rural public space, perchance continues to be driven by the needs of the man. This safety audit, thereby brings this normative and systemic violence out in the open in a rural setting.

The study brings out crucial themes around the forms of gender-based violence prevalent in these areas and faced by women across different ages. It also looked at some of the deeper perceived reasons for it. Domestic violence and eve-teasing were perceived as the most prevalent forms of GBV, while gender norms and alcoholism were reported as the most pertinent reasons. The perception of the lack of safety was driven by factors pertaining to mobility, the fear of eve-teasing and the lack of access to basic services. The lack of access to basic services burdens women with the need to fulfil these needs by putting themselves in vulnerable situations. For instance, walking long lonely stretches due to the lack of safe transport or lighting on the road, open defecation due to the lack of sanitation facilities, among others. The mind map below brings out the interconnectedness of some of the themes discussed in the chapters above.

*Mind-map of emerging themes and their interconnectedness*



From the findings in this study, it is apparent that various socio-economic-infrastructural markers influence women’s mobility and perception of safety. For instance, the experiences of tribal women and women from coastal villages are markedly different which could be in congruence with the varied levels of development in the villages.<sup>30</sup> The religious and social categories of women were also important for understanding the economic status of women, subsequently their access to workplaces, marketplaces, toilets, schools, etc. Moreover, the perception of safety differed across different institutions in the public spaces. For example, women largely felt safe in local religious places and health centres. However, marketplaces, educational institutions and panchayat offices evoked fear of violence.

While the understanding of violence is similar to that encapsulated by legal provisions, the low reportage of incidents of violence by women indicates that they do not consider the violence ‘serious’ enough to be complained about. There was also hardly any mention of certain crimes related to social customs and superstitions such as ‘witch hunting’ in these areas. While one finds the presence of criminal provisions which provide punishment to perpetrators of violence along with constitutional provisions, statistics collected in this study show how accessing legal services is a hurdle too. Only 12% reportedly approached the police. Patriarchal mindset of those who women seek support from: individuals or institutions as well the attachment of ‘family’s honour’ towards women’s bodies, emerged as a barrier to reporting as well. Further, the application of criminal provisions depends on specific and actual instances of violence while disregarding the structural factors perpetuating it or

<sup>30</sup> Ajay Skaria, ‘Women, Witchcraft and Gratuitous Violence in Colonial Western India’ (1997) 155 Past and Present 109.

the perception of safety. Thus, women do not seek to complain in the police stations or approach Courts for sharing their grievances. They are much more comfortable sharing their problems with friends or family. This could also indicate the trend of normalisation wherein unsafe public spaces are tolerated by women or they navigate through these spaces with the help of precautionary and self-restrictive measures. This normalisation extends to family, community and institutional structures. Due to lack of reporting due to various reasons, the perpetrators have a higher chance of escaping punishment while giving others impetus to continue to commit violence. At one level, lack of reporting does not enable action by the appropriate authorities.

In light of these specific nuances in the villages studied, there is a need to cull out policy recommendations for the short-term and long-term. The latter should focus on structural solutions, primarily ensuring adequate and appropriate access and functioning of services, infrastructure, behaviour. Further, developing infrastructure for sanitation, water collection, public roads, lighting and educational institutions is another long-term goal.<sup>31</sup> This constitutional obligation should be actively fulfilled by the State and local authorities. With respect to short-term goals, there is a need for developing a quasi-legal solution which is embedded in the context of the rights of women to access basic services while leading a life of dignity without perpetual fear of violence.

As per the quantitative and qualitative data collected in this study, women feel unsafe due to eve-teasing and harassment by men. Hence, it can be inferred that the absence of such violence is perceived as safety by women in coastal and tribal villages. While it is unclear whether women villagers have understanding of different forms of harassment and violence as per the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS),<sup>32</sup> their responses in interviews connotes a sense of discomfort and intrusion in personal space, for instance, when they are teased by men or have to defecate in the open during odd hours. Further, travelling through forests or isolated trails is another source of fear of violence. This is aggravated due to the rampant alcoholism in the village. Hence, the nuances specific to coastal and tribal villages in Gujarat contribute to the general perception of public spaces being unsafe.

Additionally, the issue of open defecation persisted which made women vulnerable to eve-teasing and sexual harassment. It is important to note the causal relation between absence of employment, and poverty with alcoholism and unsafe public and private spaces. Various issues identified under the first section, for instance, travelling long distances for accessing essential services, especially for marginalised communities, or defecation contributed to the perception of discomfort. The pandemic and its consequent impact on the formal institutions for redressing grievances points towards the immediate need for a community-oriented solution which is able to provide instant help and legal counsel to the victims of violence – in private or public spaces.

While the study clearly highlights the perceptions of safety and prevalence of GBV and its reasons, a deeper exploration into some of the facets is required through a broadened understanding of safety to include specific forms of GBV due to technology and access to internet and mobile phones.

---

<sup>31</sup> Siddhivinayak Hirve et al, 'Psychosocial stress associated with sanitation practices: experiences of women in a rural community in India' (2015) 5(1) *Journal of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene for Development* 115.

<sup>32</sup> India Justice Code, earlier known as the Indian Penal Code (IPC)

These findings are crucial in the perspective of efforts towards improving the status of women's safety and reducing the instances of gender-based violence. Some of these recommendations to improve women's safety from a structural lens have been highlighted in the final chapter.



## Chapter 10: What Works? Recommendations and Way Forward

### Major contributors to women's safety

Women were asked to share any three ways through which the situation of violence against women and children could be addressed within their communities. Better roads and public lighting were recorded as a need in 66% of the total responses to this question. Another 45.1% identified access to better public transport as a major enabler in reducing the incidence of GBV. 36.2% responses recorded mentioned better law and order mechanisms (including policing) while 34.6% responses stated that they require access to safe, affordable and reliable public services (including water, toilets, etc.). Approximately 30% of the responses identified the need for strengthening the public education system, especially for girls. 16.6% responses were to do with the need for decent working conditions while another 16.6% reported tackling the problem of substance abuse/alcoholism as a significant measure.

In Mamsa, all the women surveyed reported better roads and public lighting as the most major measure to strengthen women's safety. 86.67% of women also stated better public transport as a measure. 40% women reported the need for access to affordable, efficient and quality public services as a major need. 30% women reported the need for better law and order including policing.

In Pav, 86.67% women reported the need for better law and order (policing) which was the highest across all the villages. 66.67% women also reported better public transport as a measure to strengthen women's safety. 58.6% women reported the need for decent working conditions which was the highest across all the villages. Decent working conditions were suggested as a measure majorly across the two tribal villages of Sajoi and Pav. 21% recorded the need for better access to public services.

*Since there are no street lights in the village the women of the village face problems commuting on a daily basis. They were of the opinion that a committee for the same should be formed and such kind of issues should be addressed in the committee.*

*Important phone numbers in case of any emergency should be put up at bus stands, markets any lonely places so they can be contacted during emergency times*

*Men also suggested in order to ensure the safety of women and girls CCTV cameras should be installed in the streets – Konjali, FGD with Men*

In Sajoi, 90% of women reported the need for better public transport. 80% stated the need for better law and order (policing) while 66.67% reported the need for better roads and public lighting. 41.94% stated the need for decent working conditions (second highest number of responses for this measure recorded across all the villages).

In Makwana Na Varuna, 65.5% women recorded the need for better access to better public services including toilets, water, etc. 62% recorded the need for better law and order (policing). Interestingly, this was strongly reported as a need only across the three tribal villages of Pav, Sajoi and Makwana, with the exception of Bhuteshwar where 36.67% of women reported this as a need as well. 58.6%

women in Makwana reported the need to stop anti women social practices such as dowry, child marriage, witch hunting, etc. This was the only village where this measure was identified as a priority by a major share of women.

In Mota Sharnaya, 48% women stated that in their opinion strengthening the education system, especially for girls, is the primary measure to address violence. 33.33% stated the need for better public transport while small number of women (less than 20%) also reported several other measures like better law and order (policing), no discrimination based on identity, decent workplace conditions and stopping anti women social practices such as child marriage and dowry.

## **Recommendations**

The data collected shows how vulnerable women are exposed to everyday violence, both in the public and private spaces. As per the perception of what women consider violence or a particular act of sexual abuse or harassment, it emerged that they perceive violence as a wide spectrum, including acts from eve-teasing to molestation and rape. There is an indication that women consider severity of violence being directly proportional to qualification for reporting to formal institutions, This perception of violence contributes to evaluating public spaces as safe or unsafe. As argued under the previous chapter, acknowledging these perceptions is also key to understanding patterns of women's mobility. The different strategies adopted by women, for instance, avoiding lonely paths, staying indoors at night and so on indicates their perceptions around safety. These perceptions and strategies are of course based in their lived realities as it is clear from the time survey that women feel threatened or harassed nearly at all times throughout the day. Largely, important public spaces, like marketplaces, water collection points, etc. are perceived as unsafe. This worrying trend shows how women restrict access to services themselves. As the situation is characterised by the absence of formalised restrictions, it becomes difficult to enforce rights.

In this context, it becomes important to come up with certain actionable points and policy recommendations which are in tandem with the unique demography and behavioural patterns of women and communities in tribal and coastal regions. Below are key recommendations that are meant to be supportive of the concerned authorities in their pursuit to ensure safety and security of women and girls.

- **Awareness & Public disclosure**

Various institutions are mandated and regularly conduct awareness around the issue through line functionaries or support cadres like paralegal volunteers. There is a need for effective designing of these events in terms of messaging and mode of communication. Convergence between Departments and collaborative use of resources will also go a long way in judicious use of resources and common messaging especially since the audience is common for all. Better public disclosure of important phone numbers and help lines at appropriate spaces will be beneficial.

Women's groups, social sector organisations having a track record in developing and administering impactful capacity building and sensitization on the issue could be effectively engaged by the mandated State training institutions to develop the content & system to administer training and awareness content and monitor impact.

- **Structured sensitization of various functionaries on their perspectives on gender-based violence, access to justice, their role in championing an environment which promotes prevention, rejects impunity, supports survivors & their families to take forward their journey to access for justice.**

Looking at the extent and scale of domestic and public violence an overall supportive environment at all levels is required. Sensitisation of functionaries at village level is key; Gram Panchayats, Social Justice Committees, Village Secretaries (Talatis), Self-help Groups, Village organisations- Cluster level Federations, Aanganwadi workers, Police Mitras, Paralegal volunteers, School staff. At the block & district level, sensitisation of law providing institutions i.e. protection officers, service providers, nari adalats, police, judiciary, health functionaries etc. will enable survivors to dispel their fears and receive fair/ non judgemental services.

Women's groups, social sector organisations having a track record in developing and administering impactful capacity building and sensitization on the issue could be effectively engaged by the mandated State training institutions to develop the content & system to administer training and awareness content and monitor impact.

- **Expedite Violence Case Proceedings and ensure clearance of pendency, on priority**

There is a pressing need to expedite justice and ensure accountability, by establishing all required mechanisms dedicated to handling cases of violence, to fast-track pendency, along with allocation of required resources for law enforcement and judicial support staff.

- **Ensure all Gram Panchayats address service and infrastructural gaps which act as barriers to safety of women and girls, on a priority basis, through gender friendly Gram Panchayat Development Planning (GPDP) and convergence with public funds**

The solutions which emerged from women themselves highlight the potentiality of increased safety by doing away with barriers like poor public lighting, poor/kutchra roads (including internal ones), open drainage, cleaning up of isolated/deserted points, inadequate & poor transportation services etc.

The Gram Panchayat Planning Facilitation team (GPPFT) needs to undertake a hamlet-wise participatory process to map infrastructural gaps and include these needs in GPDP, link with relevant schemes/subsidies and make appropriate applications for public funds. A Government Resolution towards this end needs to be issued by the Panchayati Raj Dept. to all districts to fast track action. Convergence with relevant Departments like Ministries of Road, Transport & Highways, Power Ministry, Gujarat water supply & sewerage Board etc. to meet these needs must be included as part of the Government Resolution.

- **Ensure Gram Panchayats addressing education barriers for girl children**

Proximity of high school education and adequate & safe transportation facilities emerged as top needs to meet high school dropout amongst girls. An assessment of existing schools and plugging the gap in high school in proximity is required to be taken up on an urgent basis

along with resource allocation. Mapping the routes where adequate and regular transportation is inadequate and/or irregular, schools with inadequate sanitation facilities, is still required to plug the gaps to ensure continuity in education.

- **Further research across intersectional identities and impact**

There is a need for more research around GBV issues from an intersectional lens. Women and girls are not homogenous and contexts vary greatly. Such safety audits, especially in marginalised areas will help in building evidence and help bring state accountability in providing necessary public infrastructure and services contributing towards the well-being of women and girls.

## Annexure 1

### Covid-19 impact on GBV

As a follow up in the second wave of Covid-19, 16 women and girls across age-groups were interviewed in mid-May 2021, during the second wave of Covid-19, by Utthan in its area of operations, including women from the community, local leaders and frontline workers. 5 women from coastal areas (4 from Bhavnagar and 1 from Amreli), and 11 women from tribal areas (3 from Dahod, 7 from Mahisagar, and 1 from Panchmahals), from 16 to 45 years and above in age, were interviewed.

Table 3: Sample covered

		Coastal regions	Tribal regions	Total
<b>Gram Panchayat women</b>		1	1	2
<b>Frontline workers</b>	ASHA worker		2	2
	Anganwadi worker	1	1	2
	Leader (Nyay Samiti/ Sangathan leader)	2	2	4
	Sangathan's Paralegal worker	1		1
<b>Community women</b>			5	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>16</b>

*Covid-19 infection status in the 16 villages*

- Total deaths: **39**
- Total Infected: **391 (201 men, 151 women, and 39 children)**

The following are some of the key observations of the Utthan team during the Covid-19 period:

### Impact of Covid-19 on women and girls

During the pandemic, women's burden of work increased further, including house work, caring for children, elderly, farming and animal husbandry work, etc. They had to take care of their family members. If they tested positive, any support received from the other members was disrupted due to their health. In these cases, it was reported that young children found it difficult to live without the mother and staying together became a challenge as it could transmit the virus to the child. If men were admitted in urban hospitals, then women faced commuting issues, along with financial issues which they tried to address by taking loans. Women were more exposed since they did not get rest, and often got infected while taking care of others or comforting them in need. They often needed to

visit the PHC or CHC for a follow-up but did not. Women's work was not taken up by men, and hence they did not get the time to rest as required for their recovery.

### **Lack of prioritising of women's health**

There was a lack of prioritising of women's health across the villages. Coughs, colds, and fevers were not taken very seriously. Families did not get women tested in a timely manner. Women did not go to the hospitals due to household work and lactating children, even if they had symptoms. Home remedies were employed and medicines were given by ASHAs. They were not sent to isolation centres in lieu of housework and also due to pre assumptions whether these spaces would be safe or not. The lack of testing and checkups for women with symptoms was also due to the backfoot by families to make these expenses for them. Often, it was too late by the time women went for treatments, they only went when it was extreme and the symptoms had escalated.

There was a hesitation to access isolation centres owing to the fear of loneliness, boredom, and feeling of helplessness. There was also the fear of violence at home. Among girls as well, there was the fear of being alone in isolation centres, the anxiety of studies getting disrupted, and difficulties when they were menstruating. There were more problems when they were menstruating, since there were no toilets in the house so even when they were weak and sick, they had to walk far away for defecating. Mental stress was high due to debts, lack of income, and mortgaging of jewelry. There were only a few aware and sensitive families who took care of women. There was also a fear of death in government hospitals due to lack of adequate facilities.

### **Gender-based violence**

Due to factors such as increased alcohol addiction among men, income stress, frustration, expenses on addictions, demands for food of choice, sitting idle, lack of any source of livelihood, there was an increased incidence of violence against women during the lockdown. The men got more suspicious of their wives because they stayed indoors all the time. Men made erratic demands for food and drinks due to which there were fights. There was an increase in sexual demands from men which also caused violence. While MNREGA collective work had started, there was the fear of infection on the work-site so work options remained limited.

### **Specific issues of young girls**

They had stopped going to the schools, online education had started but they did not have android phones so had to leave studies or contact someone who had a smartphone. However, due to Covid-19, nobody could go to anybody else's home. Where there was phone availability it was prioritised for boys. Sustaining interest in studies was challenging. Families put the extra pressure of household work on the young girls, including animal husbandry, labor, farm work, fetching water from afar, and caring for young children or elders or caring for a positive family member.

Many girls dropped out to work in factories or embroider saris at home to earn money. Some girls were married off sooner. Economic constraints adversely affected the diet and nutrition, especially of girls, causing them to suffer from malnutrition and low immunity. Since they used old clothes during menstruation, they did not have enough water or soap to wash them at home. Families did not have access to sanitation facilities at home, so they had to travel far in seclusion and there was a constant

fear of harassment. They also ran away from their homes, if they were engaged and were not able to get married due to Covid-19.

### **Impact of Access to basic needs & services**

Availability of water for drinking and consumption was a challenge. Marginalised community hamlets typically had lesser functional services like handpump, taps etc. and had to walk distances to collect water for their home and livestock. Lack of funds made it difficult to stock fodder, so it became more laborious to collect on a regular basis. Due to fear of contraction to go far, there was a tendency to reduce water consumption by limiting handwash, bathing etc.

The trend of increased risk of violence during the pandemic was also reflected in the data collected for this study. With respect to public spaces, isolation centres were viewed as unsafe places wherein women and girls were afraid of potential violence. Hesitation was noted on their part or that of their families, when they had to access healthcare services for testing, isolation etc.

Overall, the pandemic not only exacerbated the existing gender inequalities and differences in access to basic services between men and women, but also increased instances and the fear of gender-based violence. While all factions of women were affected with the increased burden of household and care work, the younger women were additionally affected due to disruption of education. Further, increase in alcoholism during COVID pandemic led to higher domestic violence, both physical and mental. The situation was exacerbated due to breakdown of State institutions meant to help women in distress. Though some police personnel were able to intervene in a few incidents, overall, many cases of abuse and violence were not reported and many respondents felt helpless and anxious.

## Annexure 2

### Limitations of the data

*High deviation across villages in time taken to complete the survey* – The average time taken across the sample was around 70 minutes to complete the survey. However, as is visible from the table given below, deviations from this average were very high. The standard deviation of total time taken across the entire sample was as high as 26.54 minutes in absolute value which signifies a high level of deviation from the mean time. The average time taken was lowest in Vaghnagar at 44.17 minutes, followed closely by surveys conducted in Mamsa which was conducted for an average of 44.20 minutes. Vaghnagar also recorded the shortest survey recorded in 10 minutes. The average time taken was highest in Visaliya at 101.73 minutes with the same village reporting the longest recorded survey across the sample at 145 minutes. The depicts the distribution of time taken for the survey to be administered as divided into six categories: 10-30 minutes, 30-40 minutes, 40-60 minutes, 60-90 minutes, 90-120 minutes and higher than that. The graph confirms many of the trends as visible from the table. Such a high level of deviation in time taken to administer the survey has to be taken into account while establishing the veracity of many of our trends.

*Table: Time taken to complete survey and standard deviation*

	<b>Average Time taken (in mins)</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Maximum time taken</b>	<b>Minimum Time Taken</b>
<b>Mamsa</b>	44.20	5.47	55	35
<b>Pav</b>	89.48	23.47	135	30
<b>Sajoi</b>	90.00	21.45	135	65
<b>Makwana</b>	85.62	21.60	120	30
<b>Mota Sharnaya</b>	79.56	16.79	120	60
<b>Bhuteshwar</b>	44.97	18.71	126	15
<b>Vaghnagar</b>	44.17	15.44	80	10
<b>Konjali</b>	63.83	19.13	120	30
<b>Kharakadi</b>	59.40	12.36	76	30
<b>Visaliya</b>	101.33	18.07	145	60
<b>Viktar</b>	72.53	19.60	120	45



## Annexure 3

**The survey questionnaire was posed to girls and women respondents (13-60 years) across the sites:**

Synthesis of questions contained in each module in the survey:

**Module 1: Personal Details** - individual social identities, paid work, migrant status in the past 12 years

**Module 2: Situation of VAW in village** - Types of VAW faced by girls and women in the villages, what contributes to VAW and how often does substance abuse lead to VAW

**Module 3: Time of day around women's safety** - Girls and women were asked to recall the time and space that they were in the last 24 hours. Simultaneous questions were asked such as who accompanied them, did they feel safe/unsafe (a range of emotions were added as multiple options, what was the reason for the feeling experiences and if any action was taken regarding the feeling of unsafe.

**Module 4: Mobility of women** - Respondents were asked how safe they felt in various public spaces which they frequented in their villages and around. They were further asked questions around availability and mode of affordable and safe transport for travelling to these places. Questions were also asked around any places that they were specifically denied entry to in their villages.

**Module 5: Access and conditions of public services** - Respondents were also asked about the state of public services available to them in their villages - water, toilets, roads, etc. as the non-existence or poor condition of these also contribute towards VAW. The section also checked the state's accountability and contribution towards the safety of women.

**Module 6: Challenges in seeking help** - this module covered the available grievance redressal systems in the family, community and the state. Respondents were asked from whom they sought help, what was the difficulty in seeking help and what sort of redressal/relief they received for the help sought.

**Module 7: Aspirations around women's safety** - this module asked respondents to give possible recommendations for making their villages and communities safer for women and girls.

