Restrictions on Women's Mobility

What is the issue?

\n\n

The India Human Development Survey (IHDS) was organised by the University of Maryland and the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) reports about Women's reluctance to venture alone into public spaces.

\n\n

What are the facts about harassment?

\n\n

\n
- Also, according to IHDS survey, in 2004-05, when male respondents were asked how often women/girls are harassed in their neighbourhoods, 14% said that this happened at least sometimes.
\n
- While 20% of the women in the same households reported the prevalence of harassment in the same neighbourhoods.
\n
- In 2011-12, when the same households were interviewed again, the proportion of male respondents reporting harassment increased to 21% and women to 31%.
\n

\n\n

What can we conclude from the data?

\n\n

\n
- From this we can say that women seem to consistently report more harassment than men in the same households/neighbourhoods.
\n
- This suggests that either **women don't tell men in their families about incidents of harassment** or men are unwilling to acknowledge and talk about it.
\n

- And, the reported **harassment increased sharply** between 2004-05 and 2011-12, by nearly 10%. It is not clear whether there is an increase in harassment or a **greater willingness to talk** about it.
\n
- Data, however, offer us little clue on where the harassment is concentrated.
\n
- Although female residents of metro cities in 2011-12 reported more harassment in their neighbourhoods, harassment is reported in almost all areas and affects both the rich and the poor.
\n

\n\n

What is the reason behind harassment?

\n\n

\n
- There are few studies of actual experiences of harassment, and among studies that exist, **under-reporting** remains a serious challenge.
\n
- Day-to-day aggressions that women and girls face in their own neighbourhoods is not violence perpetrated by strangers; it is the aggression young men visit upon women who share their community.
\n
- A recent study conducted in Meerut College, notes that many young men, especially those unemployed, seem to feel that they are **entitled to aggressively express their masculinities** through what they euphemistically call ‘eve-teasing’.
\n
- Eve-teasing is not harmless as it leads to **restrictions on women’s mobility and shuts them** out of public spaces.
\n

\n\n

What is the way forward?

\n\n

\n
- Laws against eve-teasing and sexual harassment are necessary but not sufficient to address this challenge.
\n
- The 2017-18 Budget committed to setting up **Mahila Shakti Kendras** in

rural India.
\n
- Young women must be prepared to reclaim their lives from harassment and young men must be taught to take pride in a masculinity that stands in solidarity with women.
\n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: The Indian Express

\n