DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS WORKING PAPER SERIES

Capability Approach to Public-space Harassment of Women: Evidence from India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan

Günseli Berik
Haimanti Bhattacharya
Tejinder Pal Singh
Aashima Sinha
Jacqueline Strenio
Sharin Shajahan Naomi
Sameen Zafar
Sharon Talboys

Working Paper No: 2023-5

March 2023

University of Utah
Department of Economics
260 S. Central Campus Dr., GC. 4100
Tel: (801) 581-7481
http://www.econ.utah.edu

Capability Approach to Public-space Harassment of Women: Evidence from India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan*

Günseli Berik[1], Haimanti Bhattacharya[2], Tejinder Pal Singh[3], Aashima Sinha[4], Jacqueline Strenio[5], Sharin Shajahan Naomi[6], Sameen Zafar[7], Sharon Talboys[8]

March 21, 2023

Abstract

Sexual harassment of women and girls in streets and other public spaces is often trivialized by the label of "eve teasing" in South Asia. While there exists a volume of research on intimate partner or domestic violence in South Asia, the literature on public-space harassment (PSH) is sparse. Based on 2021-22 surveys in Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan this paper examines the prevalence and consequences of public-space harassment using the Capability Approach. We used an online survey and snowball sampling through social media to generate both quantitative and qualitative information. We analyzed the data descriptively and coded the open-ended responses based on human capability themes. The responses to questions about twelve specific forms of harassment indicate that the experience of at least one form of PSH is ubiquitous in all country samples. We find that women are not only unable to lead lives free of violence but also deprived of a range of additional capabilities: to enjoy emotional well-being, to be physically mobile, to seek educational opportunities, to earn a living, and to be free of restrictions overall. Respondents also articulated future directions for action to reduce experiences of PSH, including legal measures, education, awareness.

Key Words: Sexual Harassment, Human Capabilities, Gender, India, Bangladesh

JEL Classification: B54, D63, I31

*We would like to thank Mahima Elahi and Wasima Alam Choudhury in Bangladesh and Dr. Vijul, Dr. Rohini Dua, staff of Mehar Baba Charitable Trust in India, and Armughan Hafeez in Pakistan for their able assistance in implementing the survey and our survey respondents for their time and attention. We gratefully acknowledge the financial support received from the University of Utah VPR Interdisciplinary Seed Grant Award, February 2020.

[1] Professor, Department of Economics, University of Utah, USA (berik@economics.utah.edu)
[2] Associate Professor, Department of Economics, University of Utah, USA (haimanti.bhattacharya@economics.utah.edu)
[3] Associate Professor, Department of Public Health, University of Utah, USA (tp.singh@utah.edu)
[4] PhD candidate, Department of Economics University of Utah, USA (aashima.sinha@utah.edu)
[5] Assistant Professor, Norwich University, USA (jstrenio@norwich.edu)
[6] Assistant Professor, Asian University for Women, Chittagong, Bangladesh (Sharin.Naomi@auw.edu.bd)
[7] Assistant Professor, Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), Pakistan (dr.sameenzafar@gmail.com)
[8] Associate Professor, Department of Public Health, University of Utah, USA (sharon.talboys@utah.edu

Introduction

Public-space sexual harassment (PSH) is a form of sexual violence primarily perpetrated by men and boys against women and girls. PSH is commonly experienced in streets and on public transportation in the form of menacing, staring, following, insults, vulgar gestures or comments, and inappropriate or aggressive touching. In feminist scholarship, PSH is conceptualized as an expression of domination by men mostly over women, and a manifestation of unequal power relations (Fileborn and O'Neill 2021). As such, PSH is a human rights violation that deprives its targets of a range of capabilities—to lead lives free of violence, to enjoy emotional well-being, to be physically mobile, to seek educational opportunities, and to earn a living (Nussbaum 2003). Sexual harassment in the workplace was coined as a legal concept in the 1970s in the US, where it was defined as a form of employment discrimination on the basis of sex (McKinnon 1979). There are now laws against workplace sexual harassment in countries around the world and frequent media attention has been paid to the problem, including the 2017 global #MeToo movement (Williams et al. 2019). Nevertheless, in very few countries do laws against sexual harassment cover PSH and there is debate on whether legal remedies are the appropriate course of action for PSH (Htun and Jensenius 2020; Fileborn and O'Neill 2021). Although often trivialized as harmless behavior, recent research suggests that PSH is pervasive and costly to victims and potentially to society as a whole.

This study focuses on South Asia to examine the prevalence and consequences of PSH for women and girls. In recent years the increasing number of reported incidents of extreme sexual violence in the region, such as kidnappings, assault, and rape, suggests that these crimes against women may be on the rise (Verma et al. 2017). Against this backdrop of extreme violence, there are also many behaviors that women and girls experience more routinely, such as PSH, which are on the continuum of sexual violence (Fileborn and O'Neill 2021). Emerging research suggests that virtually all women and girls in South Asia, more than 500 million in total, are at risk of victimization by PSH every time they leave home. A 2012 household survey conducted in New Delhi found that 95% of women and girls aged 16-49 felt unsafe from sexual violence in public spaces, which ranged from sexual assault to verbal forms of harassment (UN Women and International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) 2012). The survey by Bharucha and Khatri (2018) documented that 91% of women in Mumbai worried about their safety when they were

outside their homes and almost all had experienced some form of harassment. Anwar et al. (2019) reported widespread physical, verbal, and nonverbal sexual harassment based on a survey of female college students from Islamabad, Rawalpindi, and Lahore. Ahmad et al. (2020) showed that in Islamabad, 80% of women university students who commute from their homes to university by public transport experienced or witnessed PSH, the most common of which were staring/leering, following/stalking, and verbal comments. Streets and transportation were the most common locations where women experienced sexual harassment in Pakistan (Imtiaz and Kamal 2021). In Bangladesh, a study of female high-school students in Dhaka showed that 76% experienced harassment, 94% of them by strangers, most of them (88%) on their commute to school on public transportation or the street (Airin et al. 2014). More recently, 94% of women commuters in a 2017 survey reported experiencing harassment, most of it on public transport (BRAC 2018).

This study examines the incidence and consequences of PSH in predominantly urban areas of India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan based on small-scale surveys of women conducted in 2021-2022. We use the Capability Approach developed by Sen (1982; 1999) and Nussbaum (2003) to interpret the adverse impacts of PSH on women's well-being. Our analysis of descriptive statistics and open-ended responses shows pervasive lack of bodily integrity and safety for women in our sample: about 90% in each country report having experienced at least one form of harassment and over half report more severe forms of harassment. Further, PSH deprives women of additional central human capabilities: emotional well-being, physical mobility, education, and livelihood generation, and imposes wide-ranging restrictions on their freedom. While virtually no rspondent took action to address harassing behaviors, they provided ideas on what should be done to stop PSH, which centered on legal measures to deter and punish harassers, educating and raising awareness among boys and men, and changing gender norms.

Public Space Sexual Harassment: Literature Review

Conceptualization of Public Space Harassment

PSH is variously referred to as "street harassment," "men's stranger intrusions," "stranger intrusion," or "eve-teasing" in the South Asian context. PSH is difficult to pin down, since not all such behavior is perpetrated by men, it is not always perceived by recipients as harassing or

harmful and is not always overtly sexualized behavior. However, Fileborn and O'Neill (2021) emphasize that the vast majority of PSH is experienced in gendered ways; it is a spatial manifestation of, and actively reproduces, unequal gendered power relations. While PSH is distinct from sexual harassment in the workplace and educational institutions in that it is typically between strangers, Crouch (2009: 137) conceptualizes the function and effect of all sexual harassment as serving "to keep women in their place," in a subordinate social status, and as a means of controlling their behavior in public spaces. This concept of "continuum of sexual violence" recognizes that PSH is "underpinned by the same gendered power structures" that reproduce and exist alongside other extreme forms of violence (Fileborn and O'Neill 2021: 3). Crouch (2009:137) also emphasizes the interrelated nature of sexual harassment: PSH constrains women's "freedom of movement in *space*," which in turn constrains their "freedom of movement in *status*" (emphasis added). Thus, PSH is as much a form of sex discrimination as harassment in the workplace or academia.

While on the mild end of the sexual violence continuum, PSH is conceptualized as harmful because it momentarily evokes "heterosexual intimacy," as it "draws on the language that is typically used in addressing a romantic partner," which places women as "low-status" individuals on the receiving end of the behavior, unable to reciprocate. And "their nonreciprocal nature reflects and perpetuates a manifestation of unequal power" (Fileborn and O'Neill 2021: 4). Thus, PSH may become normalized as behavior men engage in to control women and women have to endure in silence yet experience their lasting adverse consequences.

Crouch (2009) also draws attention to cross-cultural similarities in the nature and impacts of PSH: the common experience of women is fear, avoidance, and self-blame for the harassment, and harassment cuts their education short, limits their participation in evening activities and equal access to public goods. Nonetheless, where social norms restrict women's access to public spaces, as in South Asia and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), PSH may be a more potent and pervasive form of control. South Asia and MENA are characterized as the region of "classic patriarchy," which Kandiyoti (1988) has proposed to challenge the monolithic notion of patriarchy in feminist scholarship and to underscore the different set of constraints and opportunities faced by women around the world. According to the unwritten rules of classic patriarchy, female

dependency and male guardianship are practiced through rigid division of labor in the household and segregation of sexes in public spaces (Kandiyoti 1988; Kabeer 1994). Under classic patriarchy, the rules of "purdah," or female seclusion, which predate Islam, include not only physical segregation of women and men but also prescribe women's dress (to cover their skin and beauty, and conceal their form). In practice, the strength of these rules varies within the region and they are increasingly challenged by the growing number of women who step out of the social and familial boundaries, to participate in the labor force and pursue their education, especially in urban areas (Hossain 2017). In such a context, harassment in public spaces may take on religious overtones: harassers may sometimes believe that it is within their religious right to harass women in order to establish a strictly segregated society (Ahmad et al. 2020). PSH in South Asia thus may be viewed as a set of behaviors by men and boys that respond to the perceived breach of norms of physical segregation by women, serve as a reminder to women that they are trespassing into spaces they do not belong to, and jeopardize women's safety and well-being.

Impacts of Public Space Harassment

The harm of PSH is experienced in the form of negative emotional states (fear, particularly of further forms of violence, anger, repulsion, and violation), leading women to modify their behavior and avoid public spaces. Women fear that if they challenge the harassment it may escalate. In addition, the harassment "shapes 'women's embodiment' or how they 'live in' their own bodies, with harassment foreclosing women's capacity to act in and on the world" (Fileborn and O'Neill 2021: 5). These emotional states, in turn, can have far-reaching consequences, at the individual, family, and societal levels.

In South Asia survivors often do not disclose their experiences of PSH other than to family members or friends because PSH is considered a source of public shame that would tarnish their reputations as honorable women. Ninety-one percent of university students in a study on Pakistan reported that their family advised them to ignore the harassment (Ahmed et al. 2020). Women are also mostly nonresponsive to PSH when it occurs: A 2017 survey of 415 working women in Bangladesh indicates that in response to harassment 81% of women kept silent and 79% just walked away from the place of harassment (BRAC 2018). The reluctance to report to the police is

the outcome of both the trivialization of PSH and women's perception that it would be futile and entail time and emotional costs (Dhillon and Bakaya 2014).

Research has established negative mental health effects of PSH in India (Talboys et al. 2017). Participants in focus group discussions suggested links between such harassment and depression and suicide. Among young women who reported being harassed, over 61% also reported feeling angry, 47% feeling shame or humiliation, and 39% fear, worry, or tension. The findings suggest an association between victimization and common mental disorders (Talboys 2015). In Bangladesh, PSH has been found to be associated with depression in urban adolescent females. Airin et al. (2014) report that the depression rate was higher among 14-16-year-old high-school students who experienced eve teasing (53%) than those who did not experience eve teasing (29%). An overview based on reports from the first decade of the millennium indicates several consequences of PSH in Bangladesh: suicides, mental illness, early marriage of daughters, fear of decline in marriageability of daughters, and escalation of violence if women/girls or their family oppose eve teasing (Islam and Amin 2016). In addition, given the cultural norms that already inscribe the public space as a masculine domain, PSH can constrain women's and girls' ability to be in public spaces without being accompanied by a male family member, which can lead to women and girls withdrawing from employment or school. Evidence from Pakistan demonstrates these adverse outcomes for education and physical mobility (Ahmad et al. 2020; Ahmed et al. 2019).

Qualitative evidence from story circles conducted among young women living in urban slums in India identifies PSH as a significant barrier to mobility, which can limit women's access to education, and ultimately, labor market opportunities (Hebert et al. 2019). Chakraborty et al. (2018) show that in neighborhoods where there is a higher perceived threat of sexual harassment, women are less likely to work outside the home. They attribute the low and stagnant women's labor force participation in India to rising concerns about women's safety, as an avoidance strategy by women. They find that this deterrent effect of perception of crime against women is stronger for younger women, in purdah-practicing communities, and where patriarchal values are strong. In turn, low levels of women's labor force participation can be costly to society in terms of low economic growth rates (Elborgh-Woytek et al. 2013).

PSH can also shape the nature of women's labor market participation by acting as an external constraint on women's educational and career choices. Using survey data from students at the University of Delhi and safety data from two mobile apps, Borker (2020) finds that women university students are more willing to choose worse-ranked colleges than top-quality colleges if the travel route is perceived to be safer with respect to PSH. This is problematic as previous research from India has found a large wage premium associated with attendance at more elite colleges (Sekhri 2020). This research indicates that street harassment may be indirectly contributing to the gender wage gap. Beyond the choice of the educational institution itself, harassment may also result in missed school days or reduced educational self-efficacy that can additionally impact educational outcomes. Family members may also incur earnings losses as they seek to safeguard a female member from PSH by accompanying them to work or school.

Public Space Harassment and Capability Deprivations

We interpret the consequences of PSH using the Capability Approach, introduced, and developed by Sen (1982; 1999) as a normative, non-monetary framework for assessing well-being. While the Capability Approach is not a lens used in the PSH literature, we believe that it is a useful framework to highlight the range of negative consequences of PSH. Sen conceptualized capabilities as individuals' freedoms to lead the lives they choose as central to the definition of human well-being. While he emphasized gender inequality in capabilities of life and health in many of his writings, mostly focusing on South Asia, it was Nussbaum (2003) and Robeyns (2003) who extended the Capability Approach in gender-aware ways by identifying lists of central capabilities. Nussbaum (2003) has proposed a definite list of ten human capabilities that she argues should be upheld universally through constitutional guarantees, while Robeyns (2003) has delineated a more concrete list of 14 capabilities relevant for the global North with the goal of conceptualizing and measuring gender inequality. Nussbaum (2005) further argued that violence against women, or the threat of such violence (of which PSH can be considered a subset), can impact women's enjoyment of every capability on her list. In this vein, Strenio (2020) conceptualized the consequences of intimate partner violence in the US in terms of a vicious cycle and a life-cycle model of interactions between resources, capabilities, and functionings.

Our review of scholarship on South Asia indicates that PSH undermines several central capabilities. In terms of the lists of Nussbaum and Robeyns, PSH represents a direct deprivation of the central capability of bodily integrity and safety. In turn, the lack of bodily integrity can undermine many other capabilities of women and girls. In this study, we focus on the ways in which PSH interferes with the following five capabilities:

1) Bodily integrity and safety: The ability to be safe from violence is a central capability (to enjoy "bodily integrity" for Nussbaum and "bodily integrity and safety" for Robeyns).

2) Emotional well-being: The ability to have attachments to people and things outside oneself and to experience and express a range of emotions. In particular, Nussbaum emphasizes the capability of "emotions" as "[n]ot having one's emotional development blighted by fear and anxiety" (2003, p. 41). Robeyns (2003: 77-79) includes being able to be mentally healthy on her list of central capabilities, which includes the ability to sleep, and not worry, feel lonely, restless or be depressed.

3) Physical Mobility: According to Nussbaum, being able to move freely from place to place is part of the central capability of bodily integrity, while Robeyns identifies mobility as a separate capability. While Robeyns's references are to gendered constraints on women's mobility in the European context (such as difficulties for mothers of infants to use sidewalks or public transportation) the scholarship on South Asia indicates that PSH works to constrain women's ability to be mobile in various other ways.

4) Education: Having the ability to obtain education and to develop one's talents and skills, which Nussbaum refers to as "senses, imagination and thought" and Robeyns as "education and knowledge."

5) Livelihood generation: The ability to secure one's livelihood through employment or asset ownership is an aspect of "control over one's environment" on Nussbaum's list. Robeyns identifies this capability as "being able to work in the labor market or undertake projects, including artistic ones" (2003: 72). In economic terms, the capability to earn a living is important for ensuring the livelihoods of individuals and their dependents. Distinct from workplace sexual harassment by coworkers or supervisors, which may reduce job satisfaction, productivity and earnings, and result in increased absenteeism and high turnover, PSH may curtail women's ability to access their workplace.

We recognize that the deprivations generated by PSH for women will not be limited only to the five that we highlight, and that these deprivations can undermine other capabilities. For example, emotional deprivation may hamper the ability to study or to keep one's job. In turn, the inability to pursue one's education will likely undermine one's ability to obtain decent employment or become an informed voter. Similarly, restricted physical mobility will likely constrain women's ability to socialize (the central capability of "affiliation") as well as get to one's workplace. Thus, each of these five capabilities are both an instrumental capability, enabling other capabilities, and an intrinsic one. Moreover, taken together, these deprivations can be far-reaching in sustaining gender inequalities in the household, workplace, and society, and in turn undermine societal well-being. As Strenio (2020) has shown, the deprivation of bodily integrity is likely to have adverse consequences over the life cycle. It is expected to undermine not only capabilities (e.g. to be educated) but also achieved functionings (e.g. result in lower quality educational outcomes), which then translate into lower levels of resources to enjoy economic security. Furthermore, economic insecurity can reinforce gender inequalities in the household, women's secondary status in society, and their lower contributions to societal well-being.

This study seeks to add new empirical evidence on the prevalence and consequences of PSH in South Asia, and to interpret the consequences using the Capability Approach, which would allow for a broader understanding of the ways in which PSH may be limiting women's freedom.

Materials and Methods

A cross-sectional online survey of women in India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan was conducted from August-October 2021 in India, August-December 2021 in Bangladesh, and October 2021-March 2022 in Pakistan, preceded by a small pilot of the questionnaire with 30 women in Punjab, India. We built on the Eve-Teasing Mental Health Questionnaire (ETQ-MH) (Talboys, et al. 2015), designed to estimate the prevalence of PSH and assess associations with mental health outcomes, and expanded it to include economic outcomes. The questionnaires were adapted slightly for each country with input from local subject matter experts. The questionnaires were converted to an electronic version using Qualtrics software (Qualtrics, Provo, UT) and administered in English. Given the pandemic, we administered the survey online and promoted it through email and social

networking platforms. In India recruitment was initiated through the Public Health Department at Amity University in New Delhi, the National Dental College in Punjab, and the Mehar Baba Charitable Trust in Punjab. Recruitment in Bangladesh was initiated through Asian University for Women in Chittagong, and in Pakistan, it was initiated at the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS). Recruitment information was distributed by all partners through emails with the digital link, fliers, text via phones, and social media (Facebook, Whatsapp etc.). Our method allowed for snowball sampling by suggesting to recipients that they forward to others. The participants were drawn from the Delhi National Capital Region, Chandigarh, Patiala, Sirhind, and Fatehgarh Sahib in India, Dhaka, Chittagong, Sylhet, Khulna, Noakhali, Comilla, and Coxsbazar in Bangladesh, and Lahore, Islamabad, Karachi, Peshawar and Quetta in Pakistan.

Limitations of this study include its small sample size and non-representative sampling method. By design, the online survey imposes a sampling restriction as the respondents' need to have access to the internet. Since our survey was launched with the help of institutions of higher education in India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan and conducted in English only, young women with higher education are overrepresented in our sample. While the snowball sampling method was adopted by utilizing social media to recruit respondents, which is expected to diversify the respondent pool, the samples have limited geographic coverage in all three countries. An additional limitation is that our sample was not able to capture the cultural and ethnicity differences fully. Given these sampling limitations and the small sample size, we refrain from drawing inferences about the magnitudes of the impacts of public space harassment to the population at large. We report descriptive statistics and implement qualitative analysis of the multidimensional effects of PSH.

We analyzed the survey responses descriptively in STATA16 (STATAcorp, 2019). We categorized the experience of PSH in terms of the 12-item instrument to include "Ever" where at least one of the 12 forms of harassment was reported. We identified PSH as "moderate" harassment if the respondent marked at least one of the following seven forms of PSH: 1) menacing staring, leering, or following; 2) insults or degrading comments based on being a woman or a girl; 3) unwelcome and persistent following and engaging in conversation despite efforts to discourage or avoid the intrusion; 4) comments meant to be funny or romantic, such as "I love you", singing lines from a love song, or comments about the looks; 5) vulgar gestures, such as acting out sexual

acts; 6) vulgar comments or sexual remarks; 7) inappropriate touching, seemingly on accident, such as in a crowd or rush. If a woman indicated that she experienced at least one of the following five forms of harassment, we classified it as "severe" harassment: 1) aggressive touching, such as pinching, grabbing, pulling, groping; 2) threats or intimidation to comply with advances or risk damage to reputation, such as spreading rumors; 3) verbal threats or intimidation to comply with advances or risk bodily harm; 4) any type of harassment by a group of boys or men that made her fear for her safety; 5) unwanted sexual advance such as kissing, holding, embracing, or fondling.

Among those reporting any form of harassment we analyzed the reported consequences descriptively for each country and classified them into the following categories of capabilities: being safe from violence, emotional well-being, physical mobility, education, and livelihood generation. We also applied these categories and an additional capability of "freedom" to the open-ended questions and post-coded them qualitatively using template analysis in Excel (Microsoft Corporation, 2019)

This study was approved by the University of Utah Institutional Review Board IRB_00134270. Participation was confidential, voluntary and without incentives. Informed consent was incorporated into the online survey and participants could withdraw at any time.

Results

Demographic summary

A total of 336 women participated in the survey, 116 in India, 124 in Bangladesh, and 96 in Pakistan. Based on the sampling approach, the respondents were predominantly young, single, and educated urban dwellers. While the three samples were fairly similar, there were notable differences in demographic attributes that are presented in Table 1. Indian respondents were slightly older (+1.9 and +3.1 years relative to Bangladesh and Pakistan), more likely to be married (+11.9 percentage points (pp) relative to Bangladesh and +11.1 pp relative to Pakistan), less likely to be a student (-22.9 pp relative to Bangladesh and -4.6 pp relative to Pakistan), more likely to be employed (+23.3 pp and +10.2 pp relative to Bangladesh and Pakistan), and more likely to belong to a "low income" household (+5.4 pp and +3.9 pp relative to Bangladesh and Pakistan). The socio-

economic status difference may be due to the broader reach of the survey to less urban areas in India where 69% of respondents were urban dwellers compared to 81% in Bangladesh and 73% in Pakistan. Eighty-one percent of respondents in India identified themselves as belonging to the General Caste category that is associated with higher social status (as opposed to the lower social status Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe category, or Other Backward Class (OBC) category), 98% of the respondents in Bangladesh identified themselves as Bengali, which is the dominant ethnic group in the country (as opposed to other minority indigenous groups), and 60% of the respondents in Pakistan identified themselves as Pushtoon.

Prevalence of harassment: Deprivation of bodily integrity and safety

Eighty-nine percent of respondents in India, 91% in Bangladesh, and 97% in Pakistan reported having experienced PSH in at least one of the twelve forms of behavior (Table 2, Panel A). Forty-one percent of respondents in India, 44% in Bangladesh, and 36% in Pakistan reported having seen other women being harassed in their neighborhood.

The aggregate statistics of PSH based on the twelve separate questions reported above are internally consistent as reflected by the high Cronbach's alpha measures in each country; 0.848 for Bangladesh, 0.799 for India, and 0.760 for Pakistan. Experiencing moderate forms of harassment was more common in all countries. There was little variation among respondents in India and Bangladesh with regard to experience of moderate PSH, which was 88% and 90%, while it was higher in Pakistan at 97%. Fifty-four percent, 67%, and 68% of the respondents in India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, experienced severe harassment. The higher incidence of severe harassment in the Bangladesh and Pakistan samples may be a reflection of the higher rates of urban and student population compared to India, but it suggests that when women step out more into public spaces, they are more likely to face severe harassment.

In India, 78% of participants reported harassment occurring in outdoor spaces, 54% in indoor spaces and 63% said it occurred on public transportation (Table 2, Panel B). The corresponding statistics for Bangladesh are 91%, 66%, and 68%, and for Pakistan, 88%, 60%, and 53%. Outdoor spaces included the market, street, local or other neighborhood, and outdoor recreation spots. Indoor locations included schools and public buildings, and public transport included bus, auto-rickshaw, metro, train, and ride-sharing cabs.

We infer the adverse effects of deprivation of bodily integrity and safety on other capabilities of participants from their responses to both closed-ended questions and the open-ended question "*If harassment no longer existed, how might your life improve?"* A substantive proportion of participants (51%) responded to this open-ended question (48% in Bangladesh, 45% in India, 60% in Pakistan), indicating that their lives would be better in the absence of PSH. Figure 1 summarizes the open-ended responses coded in terms of five capabilities, including bodily integrity and safety, and an overarching capability of "freedom" to capture others that we do not delineate. Across the three countries, respondents most commonly articulated the deprivations of emotional well-being, physical mobility, and overall freedom. Below we present the quantitative responses in terms of the five capabilities (besides bodily integrity) that are adversely affected due to PSH.

Deprivation of emotional well being

Eighty-three percent, 91%, and 94% of the respondents in India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, who answered the questions about emotional harm as a result of harassment reported having experienced at least one of the following (Table 3): feeling sad (depression) or worried (anxiety); feeling shame or humiliation; feeling of fear or anger; panic attacks; loss of self-confidence; feeling vulnerable; difficulty in sleeping; difficulty in concentrating; difficulties in relationships. Forty-three percent, 54%, and 64% of the respondents in India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, reported being fairly or very worried about being a victim of harassment in public spaces. The dominant narrative in the responses to the open-ended question, "*If harassment no longer existed, how might your life improve?",* is one of emotional deprivations that are a direct result of lack of safety, namely constant stress, fear, and anxiety when in public and conversely, feelings of unhappiness, anger, and loneliness that come with "staying safe at home."

> *"My thoughts wouldn't nearly constantly be preoccupied with thoughts of harassment when I'm in public or at work. I very nearly always think about my safety in every environment and when with men at work"* (Bangladesh)

> *I would be less worried, less traumatised, more confident, more happy person. (Bangladesh)*

"Getting harassed makes me feel unclean and paranoid, I want to stop having those emotions. (Bangladesh)

My teenage [years] would have been better .. I would have more been more confident (India)

I might not have had PTSD and depression (Pakistan)

Deprivation of physical mobility

Restricted physical mobility can be inferred from responses about stopping or reducing outdoor activities due to harassment. Seventy-seven percent, 83%, and 87% of the respondents reported that they reduced or stopped at least one of the following activities in India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan (Table 3): walking at nighttime; walking in the daytime; daily activities outside the household (like taking children/siblings to school, playing with children, shopping, or running other errands); visiting family & friends; attending religious activities; attending social events (like cinema, dances, clubs, societies etc.). In addition, respondents referred to the likely effects of concerns about PSH on their future mobility: Eighty-five percent in India, 93% in Bangladesh, and 94% in Pakistan of those who answered the questions about conjectured effects of being worried about harassment reported that they will reduce or stop doing at least one of the above activities because they are worried about harassment.

If women changed how they get to work, it reflects a higher cost of mobility due to harassment. Of those who answered the commute question, 25%, 24%, and 28% reported that they changed how they get to work in India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan in one or more ways: a route or mode change or had someone accompany them, and in very few cases the change entailed time or monetary costs. Open-ended responses characterize the nature of restrictions on physical mobility, indicate how they are interrelated with other capabilities, and what respondents would gain if PSH would cease:

"Walking without fear at odd times too without being worried about any kind of harassment. Harassment of any kind can leave one with the fear of going out, so if this

problem is taken care of, then women wouldn't have to depend upon anyone else for their own safety. Even parents would feel at ease and less apprehensive." (India)

"I could walk on the street without the fear of getting touched, without being over conscious of my dress. I could walk or travel like just another normal guy." (Bangladesh)

Deprivation of education and livelihood generation

Respondents report restrictions on their ability to pursue education or employment and to engage in daily unpaid chores that are important in generating livelihoods due to harassment. Forty-five percent, 64%, and 61% of the respondents in India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan reported reducing or stopping at least one of the following activities (Table 3): studying; working (e.g. reduced work hours or quitting job); daily activities in the household (like cooking, cleaning, washing, caregiving). Fourteen percent, 19%, and 23% of the respondents in India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan reported that they altered their schooling, work or career plans due to harassment.

Nineteen percent of the 170 open-ended responses across the three samples specifically noted some form of restriction on their education and livelihood generation prospects or additional costs, such as needing to be escorted in public. As Figure 1 shows, PSH had a smaller adverse effect on these capabilities, especially education, which may be due to samples that have high shares of university-attending students. Several respondents noted how they would be better able to concentrate on their job if they were free of PSH.

"We could walk freely, or some women even might be able to work for night shifts without any fear while commuting, confidence level and personal growth will not be hampered." (India)

"It will definitely boost my confidence- I would be safe knowing I will go home safe, will work even longer hours knowing there is no one outside who might touch, pass comments etc., at me. And all I am saying is the bare minimum that one should FEEL while she/he is working, going for walk or going to cinema or say even a nearby ice cream parlour." (India)

"If it does not exist any longer then I'll be more confident and would go out various places individually at any time without any fear of my safety. It will also improve my performance in the various fields of study where I want to research without being taken lightly and being ignored only because of my gender." (India)

"More mobility. I have often found good jobs that would give flexible working hours and fairly good salaries which are good for college students like me but I am unable to work as of yet as family fears the environment at workplace." (Pakistan)

Deprivation of Freedoms Overall

We consider any response to the open-ended question "*If harassment no longer existed, how might your life improve?"* as an indicator of PSH being antithetical to the expansion of human capabilities. Among the 170 respondents who answered this question all but a few provided a positive to very positive responses and, as Figure 1 shows, about one quarter of the respondents specifically noted their freedoms would expand.

"Life would have been beautiful." (Bangladesh)

"I will feel more free. I won't have to worry what I wear or have to depend on someone to tag along with me every time I go somewhere." (Bangladesh)

"Ease of mind and so much more freedom, respect." (India)

"My mobility, sense of security and freedom would increase. I'd live a more fulfilling and outgoing life. My agency over my own life will increase." (Pakistan)

Limited Agency and Way Forward

While respondents reported that they would gain a wide range of freedoms if they were to lead lives free of harassment, only a small proportion took further action. Twenty-seven percent of the respondents in India, 30% in Bangladesh, and 31% in Pakistan reported the harassment to someone informally or formally or took some action (Table 3). Very few of the respondents in India and Bangladesh (5% and 4%) reported bearing monetary cost of taking an action although in Pakistan many more (21%) reported such a cost. The low levels of agency in addressing harassment is likely

due to the social stigma of the experience and the expectation that not much would come out of reporting the harassment, as highlighted by the scholarship on South Asia.

However, in open-ended responses to the question *"In your opinion, what should be done to stop harassment?"* respondents articulated several ideas for collective and individual agency. We had nearly identical response rates to this question as on the earlier question reported in Figure 1. The most common recommendations were legal sanctions (stricter enforcement of laws, swift and severe punishment, more effective policing) followed by sensitizing and educating men and boys, and spreading awareness to change restrictive gender norms (Figure 2). A small number of our respondents also exhorted women to "come forward," "talk about it," "speak up," "report the case, consult, seek help. Fight for your own right" in order to confront the normalization of PSH.

> *"We need much stricter laws with greater punishments so that if a girl approaches a police station, she is not threatened by the police itself or pushed to suicide just because the accused has more power and money."* (India)

> *"Honestly, I don't think anything or anyone can change their perverted minds. But the penalty should be stricter, and girls should have more privilege to file a complaint without being judged."* (Bangladesh)

> *"Simply start punishing those fuckers. When one knows that there is a system in place that will never tolerate any kind of harassment, they'll keep away from women."* (Pakistan)

Some of these responses indicate that women are not aware of laws on the books to combat PSH in all countries and the need to promote legal literacy. The Indian Penal Code was revised in 2013 to outlaw sexual harassment, stalking, voyeurism, and made them punishable by imprisonment and fines (SafeCity India 2022). In Bangladesh, while there is no specific law on PSH the behaviors that constitute PSH fall under certain provisions of Bangladesh laws, though these do not use the term sexual harassment (Dhaka Tribune 2022). In Pakistan, section 509 of the Pakistan Criminal Penal Code and the Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act of 2010 have outlawed workplace and public space harassment of women in the country (Jatoi 2018).

Participants recommended education, starting at a young age for girls and boys alike, both at school and in the home as well as in religious teachings.

> *"Having lessons of these in school, so that both boys and girls are taught properly and raised right."* (Bangladesh)

> "*Lifelong education that informally begins at the home, and one that encompasses all dimensions."* (India)

> *Mothers should teach their sons never to make a woman feel unsafe instead of teaching their girls how the world outside isn't safe for them."* (Bangladesh)

> *"We need to educate the men first and secondly we need to assure that girls know about safe touch and unsafe touch. Also, we need to stop normalizing sexual jokes and objectifying girls (in any aspect). Family members should be much more open and free minded about discussing puberty, menstruation, sex and consent."* (Bangladesh)

Changing the environment to improve safety, such as safe spaces for women on public transport, were noted, but of lower priority than enforcement, education, and consciousness-raising. Other safety recommendations were to provide helplines for victims, self-defense training and tools, such as pepper spray.

> *"…there should be more security in public spaces especially so that we can report to guards if we face any problem. And also apps should be made so that girls can immediately report if they feel unsafe. Lastly, safety weapons such as pepper spray etc. should be provided."* (Pakistan)

More broadly, awareness-raising about harassment and harmful gender norms in order to "change thinking" was noted, but often paired with doubts about its effectiveness.

"At home as kids, some can witness sexist and abusive behaviour from the male figure towards the submissive female figure. We also see a difference in how we're treated. We see a constant representation of submissive women on our TV and in our films. We see people justify unequal treatment/ preferences on the basis of religious authority. At school, we see our textbooks showcase stereotypical gendered preferences, use softer words for girls and more rough and stronger words for the boys. We see teachers make comments towards rowdy boys differently to girls. In terms of our clothing, we sexualise little girls from a young age through the way we expect them to cover up with their uniform. Our men gawk at women showing the slightest inch of bare skin or roaming without dupattas because they come from families that sexualised body parts of girls and women from a young age (e.g. "cover up your chest, your dad's at home - I mean?!?). There's so much that needs to be done. It is not a straightforward answer nor is it something simply achievable by a short-lived policy intervention organised by some ministry in collaboration with some foreign institution. It needs to be a long-term plan where we work to truly change the way we look at one another. I really hope I can see that day in my lifetime." (India Participant)

Discussion and Conclusion

Public space harassment (PSH) is a form of violence against women that is shaped by the same gendered power structures that reproduce and exist alongside other extreme forms of violence. In this paper we focused on PSH in South Asia, which may be a region where PSH is more pervasive and potent as a means of control of men over women. Using primary survey data from India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, we applied the Capability Approach to interpret the incidence of and consequences of PSH for women and girls. While PSH is often trivialized as harmless behavior, this paper contributed new evidence on South Asia that shows its pervasiveness and costs for its victims and potentially society as a whole. The combined qualitative and quantitative results from our India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan samples show that there is nearly universal lack of bodily integrity and safety for women and girls, which in turn restricts other capabilities. Most common among these deprivations were emotional well-being, physical mobility, overall freedoms.

Importantly, our results show the consequences of a deeply rooted cultural norm where men are entitled to dominate public spaces and the presence of women in public spaces, especially in evenings or unaccompanied, is perceived as provocative.

All of the capabilities that we focus on (except emotional well-being) have long been central to international policy frameworks, such as CEDAW (1979), the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as conceptual frameworks of gender equality (Berik 2022). Moreover, violations of women's bodily integrity and safety in various forms and the capability deprivations that violence generates have been prominent on the international policy agenda and the focus of legislative action (Htun and Jensenius 2020). Recently, as part of this agenda, PSH has also received attention in initiatives such as the Safe Cities program of the UN Women and ICRW (2012), which aim to reduce sexual violence in public spaces. These initiatives include awareness campaigns, effective police response, access to helplines, and systematic tracking of incidents of PSH.

Our study suggests a broader approach to address PSH. Many of the respondents identified gender norms as the root cause of the problem and referred to the need to shift the norms that are reinforced by media. Many more called for stronger laws and implied existing laws are not well enforced. Multi-level prevention strategies are needed that go beyond the focus on women's safety, such as women-only sections of public transport that are widespread in India. We recommend, first, sensitizing men and boys to the harmful effects of their behaviors through educational campaigns, so that the onus on women to ensure their safety by modifying daily behaviors should be shifted to include men's behavior change. These campaigns could encompass bystander intervention awareness. The focus on men's behavior requires more research to understand the perpetrators' mindset and how to engage men in social change. Second, at the level of victims, we recommend awareness campaigns to encourage women and girls to speak out and report their experiences of PSH. The counterpart steps would be to sensitize the community about PSH, that it is a violation of women's basic rights. Third, at the level of policy makers, we recommend reforms to improve the reporting environment along with stricter monitoring and enforcement of laws on harassment in public and the workplace. In combination, these three strategies could begin to change the cultural norms that normalize PSH.

References

Ahmad, Naila Masood, M. Masood Ahmad, and Ramsha Masood. 2020. "Socio-psychological Implications of Public Harassment for Women in the Capital City of Islamabad." *Indian Journal of Gender Studies* 27(1): 77-100.

Ahmed, Bilal, Farhan Navid Yousaf, and Umm-e Rubab Asif. 2021. "Combating Street Harassment: A Challenge for Pakistan." *Women and Criminal Justice* 31(4): 283-293.

Airin, Jinnatul, Afroza Begum, Muhammed Ali, and Mushtaq Ahamd. 2014. "Eve Teasing and Adolescent's Depression." *Journal of Armed Forces Medical College, Bangladesh*, *10*(2): 3–8.

Anwar, F., Österman, K., and Björkqvist, K. 2019. "Three Types of Sexual Harassment of Females in Public Places in Pakistan." *Çağdaş Tıp Dergisi*, 9(1): 65–73.

Berik, Günseli. 2022. "Towards Improved Measures of Gender Inequality: An Evaluation of UNDP's Gender Inequality Index and A Proposal" UN Women Discussion Paper, November https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/11/discussion-paper-towards-improved-measures-of-gender-inequality

Bharucha, Jehangir and Rita Khatri. 2018. "The Sexual Street Harassment Battle: Perceptions of Women in Urban India." *The Journal of Adult Protection* 20(2): 101-109 https://doi.org/10.1108/JAP-12-2017-0038

Borker, Girija. 2020. "Safety First: Perceived Risk of Street Harassment and Educational Choices of Women" https://girijaborker.files.wordpress.com/2020/11/borker_2020_safetyfirst-1.pdf

BRAC. 2018. "94% Women Victims of Sexual Harassment in Public Transport." https://www.brac.net/latest-news/item/1142-94-women-victims-of-sexual-harassment-in-public-transport

Chakraborty, Tanika, Anirban Mukherjee, Swanika Reddy Rachapalli, and Sarani Saha. 2018. "Stigma of Sexual Violence and Women's Decision to Work." *World Development* 103: 226-238.

Crouch, Margaret. 2009. “Sexual Harassment in Public Places” *Social Philosophy Today* 25: 137-148.

Dhaka Tribune. 2022. “FACTBOX: What Bangladesh’s Laws Say about Sexual Harassment of Women” https://www.dhakatribune.com/crime/2022/04/06/factbox-what-bangladeshs-laws-say-about-sexual-harassment-of-women, April 5.

Dhillon, Megha and Suparna Bakaya. 2014. “Street Harassment: A Qualitative Study of the Experiences of Young Women in Delhi” *SAGE Open*, July-September, 1-11.

Elborgh-Woytek, Katrin, Monique Newiak, Kalpana Kochar, Stefania Fabrizio, Kangi Kpodar, Philippe Wingender, Benedict Clements, and Gerd Schwartz. 2013. “Women, Work, and the Economy: Macroeconomic Gains from Gender Equity.” IMF Staff Discussion Note. Available at: https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/sdn/2013/sdn1310.pdf

Fileborn, Bianca and Tully O’Neill. 2021. “From ‘Ghettoization’ to a Field of its Own: A Comprehensive Review of Street Harassment Research” *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse* DOI: 10.1177/15248380211021608

Hebert, Luciana E., Suchi Bansal, Soo Young Lee, Shirely Yan, Motolani Akinola, Márquez Rhyne, Alicia Menendez, and Melissa Gilliam. 2019. “Understanding Young Women’s Experiences of Gender Inequality in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh through Story Circles.” *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth* 25(1): 1-11.

Hersch, Joni. 2015. *Sexual Harassment in the Workplace*. IZA World of Labor, 188. Available at: https://wol.iza.org/uploads/articles/188/pdfs/sexual-harassment-in-workplace.pdf

Hossain, Naomi. 2017. *The Aid Lab: Explaining Bangladesh’s Unexpected Success,* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Htun, Mala, and Francesca R. Jensenius. 2020. “Fighting Violence Against Women: Laws, Norms & Challenges Ahead.” *Daedalus* 149(1): 144–159. https://doi.org/10.1162/daed_a_01779

Imtiaz, S. and Kamal, A. 2021. “Sexual Harassment in the Public Places of Pakistan: Gender of Perpetrators, Gender Differences and City Differences Among Victims.” *Sexuality & Culture* 25:1808–1823. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-021-09851-8

Islam, Md. Akramul and Tahnin Amin. 2018. “Eve Teasing in Bangladesh: An Overview. *Journal of Humanities and Social Science* (IOSR-JHSS). 21(11): 1-6.

Jatoi, Benazir. 8 February 2018. “Sexual harassment laws in Pakistan.” *The Express Tribune.* https://tribune.com.pk/story/1628822/sexual-harassment-laws-pakistan

Kabeer, Naila. 1994. *Reversed Realities: Gender Hierarchies in Development Thought*. Verso: London.

Kandiyoti, Deniz. 1988. “Bargaining with Patriarchy” *Gender and Society* 2(3): 274-290.

MacKinnon, Catharine A. 1979. *Sexual Harassment of Working Women.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

McLaughlin, Heather, Christopher Uggen, and Amy Blackstone. 2017. “The Economic and Career Effects of Sexual Harassment on Working Women.” *Gender & Society* 31(3): 333-358.

Nussbaum, Martha C. 2003. “Capabilities as Fundamental Entitlements: Sen and Social Justice.” *Feminist Economics* 9 (2–3): 33–59

Nussbaum, Martha C. 2005. “Women's Bodies: Violence, Security, Capabilities.” *Journal of Human Development* 6(2): 167-183

Robeyns, Ingrid. 2003. “Sen’s Capability Approach and Gender Inequality: Selecting Relevant Capabilities.” *Feminist Economics* 9 (2-3): 61-92.

Safecity India. 2022. “What Are The Important Laws Governing Sexual Harassment in Public Spaces in India?” https://www.safecity.in/faq/what-are-the-important-laws-governing-sexual-harassment-in-public-spaces-in-india/

Sekhri, Sheetal. 2020. "Prestige Matters: Wage Premium and Value Addition in Elite Colleges." *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 12 (3): 207-25.

Sen, Amartya K. 1982. “Equality of What?” in Amartya K. Sen. *Choice, Welfare, and Measurement*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell, pp. 353-369.

Sen, Amartya K. 1999. *Development as Freedom*. New York: Knopf.

Shaw, Elyse, Ariane Hegewisch, and Cynthia Hess. 2018. “Sexual Harassment and Assault at Work: Understanding the Costs” Briefing Paper IWPR #B376. Washington, DC: Institute for Women’s Policy Research. Available at: https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/IWPR-sexual-harassment-brief_FINAL.pdf

Strenio, Jacqueline A. 2020. “Time Heals All Wounds? A Capabilities Approach for Analyzing Intimate Partner Violence.” *Feminist Economics* 26(4): 31-55.

Talboys, Sharon L., 2015. “The Public Health Impact of Eve Teasing: Public Sexual Harassment and Its Association with Common Mental Disorders and Suicide Ideation among Young Women in Rural Punjab, India” (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Utah). https://www.proquest.com/openview/c2388de2f409ed297c478010d17b3211/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750

Talboys, Sharon L., Manmeet Kaur, James VanDerslice, Lisa H. Gren, Haimanti Bhattacharya, and Stephen C. Alder. 2017. “What Is Eve Teasing? A Mixed Methods Study of Sexual Harassment of Young Women in the Rural Indian Context.” SAGE Open. https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244017697168

UN Women and ICRW. 2012. “Safe Cities Free from Violence Against Women and Girls: Baseline Findings from the “Safe City Delhi Programme” Available at: https://www.icrw.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Baseline-Research-of-Safe-Cities-programme-(1)%5Bsmallpdf.com%5D.pdf

Verma, Arvind, Hanif Qureshi, and Jee Yearn Kim. 2017. “Exploring the Trend of Violence against Women in India.” *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice* 41(1-2): 3-18. DOI: 10.1080/01924036.2016.1211021

Williams, Jamillah Bowman, Lisa Singh, and Naomi Mezey. 2019. "#MeToo as Catalyst: A Glimpse into 21st Century Activism," *University of Chicago Legal Forum:* Vol. 2019, Article 22. Available at: https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/uclf/vol2019/iss1/22

Figure 1

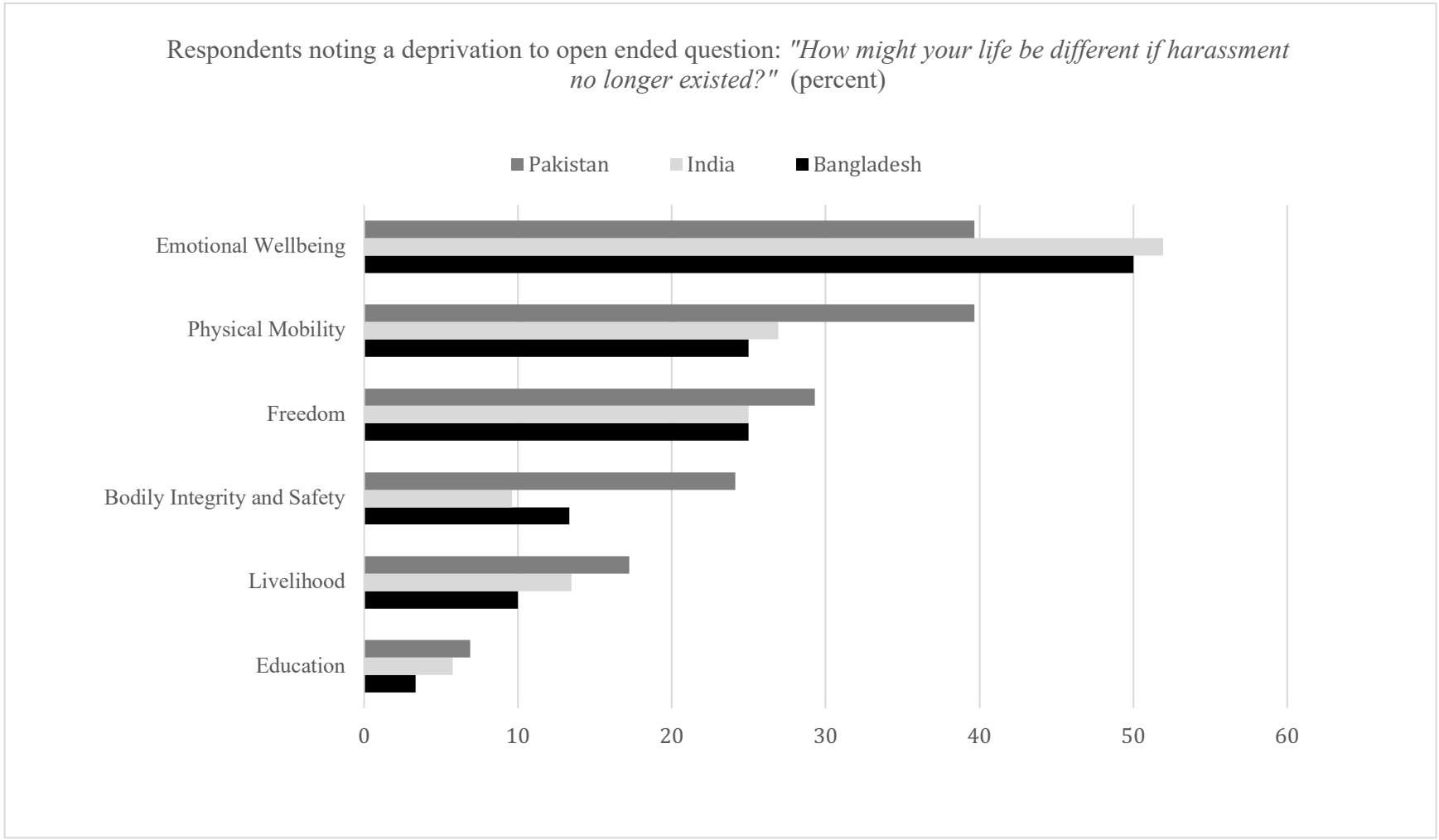
Respondents noting a deprivation to open ended question: "How might your life be different if harassment no longer existed?" (percent)
Pakistan
India
Bangladesh
Emotional Wellbeing
Physical Mobility
Freedom
Bodily Integrity and Safety
Livelihood
Education
0
10
20
30
40
50
60

Figure 2

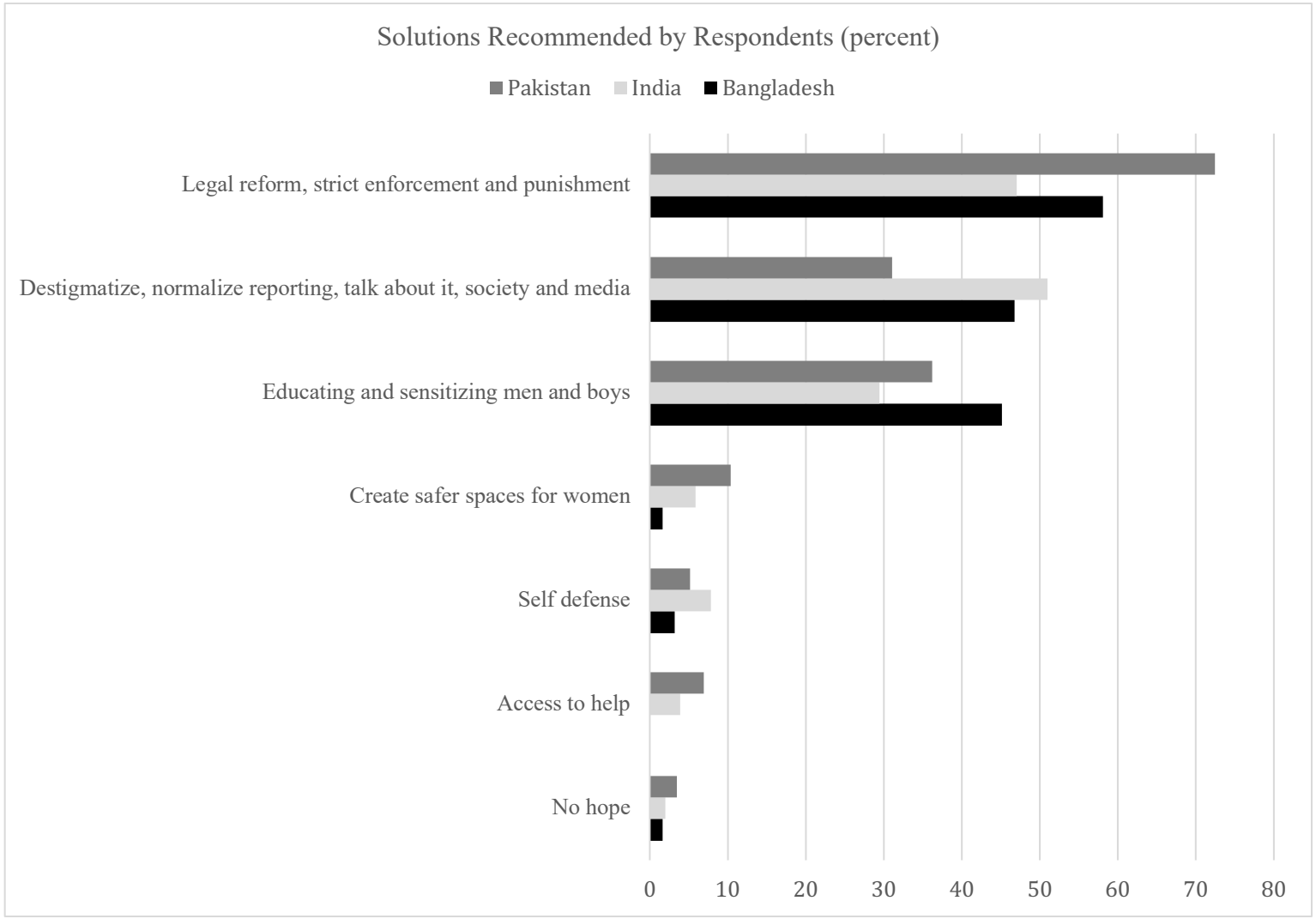
Solutions Recommended by Respondents (percent)
Pakistan
India
Bangladesh
Legal reform, strict enforcement and punishment
Destigmatize, normalize reporting, talk about it, society and media
Educating and sensitizing men and boys
Create safer spaces for women
Self defense
Access to help
No hope
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Survey Participants

	India			Bangladesh			Pakistan		
	N	**Mean (SD)**	**Min (Max)**	**N**	**Mean (SD)**	**Min (Max)**	**N**	**Mean (SD)**	**Min (Max)**
Age	116	25.2 (6.6)	18 (57)	123	23.33 (4.7)	19 (55)	92	22.1 (4.2)	16 (35)
	N	**Count**	**%**	**N**	**Count**	**%**	**N**	**Count**	**%**
Marital status	116			124			95		
Married		25	21.6		12	9.7		10	10.5
Single		91	78.5		112	90.3		85	89.5
Highest level of education	116			124			95		
Higher Education		107	92.2		117	94.4		77	81
Secondary Education		8	6.9		7	5.6		13	13.7
Primary Education		0	0		0	0		2	2.1
Madrassa[1]		-	-		-	-		2	2.1
No education		1	0.9		0	0		1	1.1
Main work status	116			124			96		
Student		66	56.9		95	79.8		59	61.5
Employed		42	36.2		16	12.9		25	26
Annual household income	116			122			94		
Below poverty		1	0.9		1	0.8		4	4.3
Low income		12	10.3		6	4.9		6	6.4
Middle income		82	70.7		102	83.6		64	68.1
Upper income		21	18.1		13	10.7		20	21.3
Major caste/ethnic group[2]	116	94	81	124	121	97.5	95	57	60

Neighborhood (total)	116			123		93	
Urban		80	68.9	100	81.3	68	73.1
Semi-urban		27	23.3	14	11.4	18	19.4
Rural		9	7.8	9	7.3	7	7.5

Note: 1. “Madrassa” was added as a category for the “level of education” question in the Pakistan survey.

2. In India the major caste category in the sample is the General Caste category (the other category includes Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, or Other Backward Class (OBC)). The major ethnic group in the Bangladesh sample is the dominant group Bengali (the other category is not-Bengali indigenous groups). The majority in the Pakistan sample are Pushtoon (the other category includes Punjabi, Sindhi, Balochi, and others).

Table 2: Prevalence of Public Space Harassment Experiences among Women in India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan

	India			Bangladesh			Pakistan		
	N	**Count**	**%**	**N**	**Count**	**%**	**N**	**Count**	**%**
Panel A									
Prevalence and Type of Harassment									
Any form of harassment	96	85	88.5	105	96	91.4	85	82	96.5
Moderate Harassment (1. to 7.)	96	84	87.5	105	95	90	85	82	96.5
Severe Harassment (8. to 12.)	96	52	54.2	105	70	66.7	85	58	68.2
Ever been the target of:									
1. Menacing, staring, leering or following	94	69	73.4	104	81	77.9	84	67	79.8
2. Insults or degrading comments on account of being a woman or a girl	96	52	54.2	104	75	72.1	84	55	65.5
3. Unwelcome and persistent following and engaging in conversation despite your efforts to discourage or avoid the intrusion.	93	40	43	102	57	55.9	83	53	63.9
4. Comments meant to be funny or romantic, such as “I love you,” singing lines from a love song, or comments about your looks	96	60	62.5	103	74	71.8	84	52	61.9
5. Vulgar gestures, such as acting out sexual acts	96	34	35.4	104	36	34.6	85	30	35.3
6. Vulgar comments or sexual remarks	95	31	32.6	103	55	53.4	85	35	41.2
7. Inappropriate touching, seemingly on accident, such as in a crowd or rush	95	61	64.2	103	78	75.7	85	56	65.9

8. Aggressive touching, such as pinching, grabbing, pulling, groping	96	24	25	102	40	39.2	85	34	40
9. Threats or intimidation for you to comply with advances or risk damage to your reputation, such as spreading rumors	95	15	15.8	102	36	35.3	84	25	29.8
10. Verbal threats or intimidation to comply with advances or risk bodily harm	94	6	6.4	102	25	24.5	85	17	20
11. Any type of harassment by a group of boys or men where you feared for your safety	95	21	22.1	102	38	37.3	84	27	32.1
12. Unwanted sexual advance such as kissing, holding, embracing, or fondling	96	26	27.1	102	23	22.6	85	34	40
Seen other women being harassed	96	39	40.6	102	45	44.1	85	31	36.5
Panel B									
Location of harassment									
Outdoor	59	46	77.9	76	69	90.8	65	57	87.7
Indoor	59	32	54.2	76	50	65.8	65	39	60
Public transport	59	37	62.7	76	52	68.4	65	34	53.3

Note: All the variables reported in this table are qualitative binary variables, where 1 represents “yes” and 0 represents “no.” The count and % represent the statistics for the 'yes' category.

Table 3. Consequences of Public Space Harassment

	India			Bangladesh			Pakistan		
	N	**Count**	**%**	**N**	**Count**	**%**	**N**	**Count**	**%**
Deprivation of emotional well being									
At least one of the following:	63	52	82.5	80	73	91.3	64	60	93.8
Feeling sad (depression)/worried(anxiety)	61	44	72.1	77	62	80.5	64	44	68.8
Feeling shame or humiliation	58	30	51.7	74	49	66.2	61	36	59
Feeling of fear or anger	61	48	78.7	78	70	89.7	61	53	86.9
Panic attacks	59	15	25.4	75	27	36	58	19	32.8
Loss of self-confidence	59	18	30.5	74	40	54.1	59	31	52.5
Feeling vulnerable	58	26	44.8	76	57	75	60	39	21
Difficulty in sleeping	60	25	41.7	75	38	50.7	59	31	52.5
Difficulty in concentrating	60	26	43.3	75	50	66.6	57	28	49.1
Difficulties in relationships	58	16	27.6	74	21	28.4	59	25	42.4
Fairly or very worried about harassment	63	27	42.9	85	46	54.1	66	42	63.6
Deprivation of physical mobility									
Reduced or stopped:									
At least one of the following:	60	46	76.7	75	62	82.7	61	53	86.9
Walking at nighttime	58	35	60.4	73	48	65.8	57	45	78.9
Walking in the daytime	56	24	42.9	75	42	56	56	38	67.9
Daily activities outside the household (like taking children/siblings to school, playing with children, shopping or running other errands)	55	20	36.4	69	35	40.7	57	31	54.4
Visiting family & friends	56	21	37.5	69	33	47.8	60	32	53.3

Attending religious activities	54	16	29.6	66	24	36.4	57	25	43.9
Attending social events (like cinema, dances, clubs, societies etc.)	53	28	52.8	67	34	50.8	59	39	66.10
Due to worries about PSH, would reduce or stop:									
At least one of the following:	48	41	85.4	71	66	92.9	50	47	94
Studying	47	2	4.3	69	16	23.2	50	16	32
Working (e.g. reduce work hours or quitting job)	46	3	6.5	66	15	22.7	46	21	45.7
Walking at nighttime	47	32	68.1	65	49	75.4	49	41	83.7
Walking in the daytime	46	18	39.1	65	24	36.9	49	35	71.4
Daily activities in the household (cooking, cleaning, washing, caregiving)	46	6	13	66	24	21.2	47	22	46.8
Daily activities outside the household (like taking children/siblings to school, playing with children, shopping or running other errands)	45	10	22.2	64	25	39.1	47	26	55.3
Visiting family & friends	45	12	26.7	63	17	26.9	48	26	54.2
Attending religious activities	42	9	21.4	60	14	23.3	46	19	41.3
Attending social events (like cinema, dances, clubs, societies etc.)	45	15	33.3	61	29	47.6	47	32	68.1
Helping friends or neighbors	43	9	20.9	60	15	25	47	30	63.8
Higher cost of mobility									

Commute change	67	17	25.4	88	21	23.9	67	19	28.4
Route change	12	8	66.7	19	10	52.6	16	6	37.5
Mode change	13	9	69.2	19	12	63.2	17	14	82.4
Someone else accompanied	13	8	61.5	21	12	57.1	16	11	68.8
Commute change increased monetary cost	54	7	12.9	71	15	21.1	54	17	31.5
Commute change increased time cost	56	12	21.4	70	17	24.3	56	14	25
Deprivation of education and livelihood generation									
Reduced or stopped:									
At least one of the following:	60	27	45	80	51	63.8	62	38	61.3
Studying	59	15	25.4	80	35	43.8	62	30	48.4
Working at a job (e.g. reduce work hours or quitting job)	55	16	29.1	72	24	33.3	56	23	41.1
Daily activities in the household (cooking, cleaning, washing, caregiving)	58	13	22.4	68	24	35.3	58	25	43.1
Altered work or career plans	88	12	13.6	64	12	18.8	65	15	23.1
Agency (action about harassment)									
Took action	62	17	27.4	84	25	29.8	64	20	31.3
Bore monetary cost of action	58	3	5.2	82	3	3.7	61	13	21.3