

6. Index on Women's Safety (Nari) 2025 – Report

The National Annual Report & Index on Women's Safety (NARI) 2025, released by the National Commission for Women (NCW), provides a city-wise ranking of women's safety in India.

Key Highlights of NARI 2025

Safest Cities

Kohima, Visakhapatnam, Bhubaneswar, Aizawl, Gangtok, Itanagar, and Mumbai topped the list of safest cities for women. These cities scored above the national average on indicators such as law enforcement response, public transport safety, and perception-based surveys.

Least Safe Cities

Patna, Jaipur, Faridabad, Delhi, Kolkata, Srinagar, and Ranchi ranked lowest. Common issues include high rates of harassment in public spaces, weak enforcement, and gaps in urban infrastructure design for women's safety.

National Safety Benchmark

The national safety score was pegged at 65%, serving as a baseline for assessing city-level safety performance. Cities above this score were considered relatively safer, while those below faced significant challenges.

Harassment Trends

7% of women overall reported harassment in public spaces in 2024. The figure was higher (14%) among women under 24, showing greater vulnerability for younger women and students.

Hotspots of harassment – Neighbourhoods (38%) and public transport (29%) were the most reported unsafe spaces.

Trust in Institutions – Only 1 in 4 women (25%) expressed confidence that authorities would act effectively on complaints. This low trust discourages reporting and weakens deterrence.

Barriers to Gender-Safe Cities

Institutional & Governance Deficits – Multiple agencies work in silos, leading to fragmented responsibility for women's safety. Weak enforcement of safety standards and lack of coordination across police, transport, and municipal authorities.

Judicial Delays – Investigations and trials are often prolonged. This reduces deterrence, emboldens offenders, and leaves survivors without timely justice.

Transport Vulnerabilities – Overcrowded buses and inadequate women-only spaces create unsafe conditions. Poor last-mile connectivity (especially for working women and students) increases risks after dark. Very few women employed as drivers, conductors, or security staff in public transport systems.

Under-reporting of Incidents – Only about 1 in 3 women report harassment or safety violations. Reasons – social stigma, fear of reprisal, lack of trust in authorities, and victim-blaming attitudes.

Persistence of Patriarchal Norms – Deep-rooted societal attitudes trivialise harassment. Victim-blaming discourages complaints and normalises unsafe behaviour in public spaces.

Over-reliance on Official Data – Statistics often fail to capture perceptions of insecurity. Many women avoid public spaces altogether due to fear, which is not reflected in reported numbers.

Government Initiatives for Women's Safety

Nirbhaya Fund – Established by the Ministry of Women and Child Development to finance schemes and projects that enhance women's safety. Supports initiatives such as CCTV surveillance, safe transport, and emergency response systems.

SHe-Box Portal – A single-window platform for women to lodge complaints of workplace sexual harassment. Open to all women across organized/unorganized sectors, both public and private.

Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013

Applies to all women regardless of age, job type, or work sector.

Mandates –

- Employers with 10+ employees must set up an Internal Committee (IC).
- Local Committees (LCs) established by the government for smaller workplaces or when complaints involve employers themselves.

Strengthens workplace redressal mechanisms but faces gaps in implementation and awareness.

Way Ahead

Short-term Measures – Integrate 24×7 women helplines with police, ambulance, and municipal services for coordinated emergency response. Conduct rapid compliance audits of POSH arrangements in large workplaces and publish anonymised compliance reports to improve accountability.

Medium-term Measures – Introduce mandatory gender audits under central urban development schemes. Link city-level funding/grants to measurable improvements in safety indices. Upgrade public transport with CCTV, grievance redressal mechanisms, trained operators, and safety accountability systems.

Long-term Measures – Launch multi-year gender sensitisation programmes in schools, colleges, workplaces, and community spaces to create behavioural change. Embed gender-sensitivity in police recruitment, training, and performance evaluations. Promote men's engagement programmes that challenge patriarchal norms and encourage shared responsibility for safe spaces. Strengthen community-led safety networks, such as local women's groups, residents' associations, and youth clubs, to rebuild trust between citizens and institutions.

Source – https://www.business-standard.com/india-news/nari-2025-index-ranks-kohima-safest-patna-least-safe-for-women-125082900254_1.html