

OUR HEALTH OUR VOICE

Placing adolescent health at the heart of urban planning, PRIA, University of Glasgow, and Gurugram University have come together to undertake Participatory Action Research with adolescents residing in urban informal settlements in Gurugram. The study titled 'Our Health, Our Voice' seeks to advance the use of participatory research methodology into the thematic area of adolescent health.



Online Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with adolescent boys and girls

Perception of safety varies for boys and girls; within and outside their home; and within their community.

Adolescents feel safe at home. They can confide in their parents, in spite of the fear of reprimand or punishment they have to face.

The journey to school often makes girls feel 'unsafe' because of the catcalls and foul language they hear from pedestrians and motorists.

Exploring perceptions of safety among adolescent boys and girls living in urban informal settlements

How do adolescents perceive 'safety'?

What factors make adolescents feel 'safe', 'unsafe' or 'moderately safe' in different spaces (home, school, markets, etc)?



	Home	School	Community - Colony/Relative House	Roads	Markets /Malls	Parks
Safe	5 smiley faces	3 smiley faces	4 smiley faces	1 smiley face	2 smiley faces	2 smiley faces
Unsafe	1 frowny face	4 frowny faces	3 frowny faces	1 frowny face	0 frowny faces	0 frowny faces
Moderately Safe	1 neutral face	0 neutral faces	0 neutral faces	0 neutral faces	0 neutral faces	0 neutral faces

SAFETY MAPPING

A mapping exercise explored the perception of safety in different spaces. Separate answers were elicited from adolescent boys and adolescent girls in the FGDs. Adolescents defined their understanding of the word 'safety' as 'protection'. Adolescents were facilitated to identify the spaces that they frequently visited.

Spaces identified by the adolescents

Home	School	Roads	Market
Malls	Parks	Cinema Halls	

Perception of safety in these spaces was marked by the facilitator using 'smiley' stickers - 'safe' 😊 | 'unsafe' 😞 | 'moderately safe' 😐. A safety chart was created on Zoom whiteboard. Based on the number of smileys, the spaces were rated for their levels of safety from the standpoint of adolescents.

SAFETY FROM THE VOICE OF ADOLESCENTS

"Home is a safe space for me. I can discuss the harassment I face on the roads with my parents" – adolescent boy



"School is safe for me. CCTV cameras are installed and there is a culture of discipline" – adolescent girl

Majority of the adolescents rated their 'home' as a safe space because they can discuss what happens in their daily life with their parents. They did, however, fear the reprimands and punishments that was meted out by their parents and care-givers for their 'mistakes'.

The 'school' was also considered a 'safe space'.

"I have to take care of traffic in the busy Gurugram roads. Sometimes, cars run at such speed that I fear I may meet with an accident on the way to school." – adolescent girl



"Passers-by on bikes use abusive language. While driving by, some of them use it as a pretext to pass lewd remarks against women." – adolescent girl

Majority of adolescents, especially girls, feel 'unsafe' on their way to school. Speeding cars flouting traffic rules, abusive language and unwarranted comments by pedestrians and riders make them feel 'unsafe'.

Women in the community judge the girls based on their clothes and evaluate us on our morality. If we go out with a boy, the elder women in the community make a big deal out of it." – adolescent girl



"If they [elders] talk about us, or reprimand us, we know how to give it back to them (on the spot). For those who talk about us behind our backs, why should we care?" – adolescent boy

Perception of safety within the community evoked mixed responses and perceptions from the adolescent boys and adolescent girls. While some perceived their community to be a safe space, violence and fear of being judged by members (especially elders) of the community made others perceive their community as 'unsafe'.

"If we go out with our friends, I prefer to go to a mall than the open markets. There is security inside the malls." – adolescent girl



Malls or gated shopping centres were perceived to be more safe than open markets because of the presence of security guards. Crowds in open markets are used as 'cover' for men to inappropriately touch girls. Getting pickpocketed in crowded markets was also a concern.



Click on the thumbnail to access the detailed report of Focus Group Discussion with adolescent boys and girls



Click on the thumbnail to access the A/V on 'Focus-Group Discussions with adolescents and their caregivers in Gurugram'

