



A Pilot Study on Socioeconomic Determinants of Urban Safety Perceptions among Young Adults in India

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Abstract: Urban safety substantially how people use public spaces. Safety concerns affect choices such as routes, travel times, and precautions. These behaviors are pushed by means of immediate threats and broader socio-economic elements. Wealthier individuals often have access to more secure neighborhoods, personal transport, and higher safety, while less affluent people may be more vulnerable in urban environments due to reliance on public transportation and housing in higher-crime regions with poor infrastructure. This study examines safety concerns amongst 19–30 years old Indians through an e-survey (n=30) using convenience sampling. The survey used close-ended questions to capture perceptions of urban protection, experiences in public areas, and safety-related behavioral changes. Data analysis of the collected responses enabled an understanding of protection problems and examined the relationships between socioeconomic popularity, safety perceptions, and public space use. By studying the interplay of socioeconomic factors, protection perceptions, and infrastructure, this study's findings offer insights into how these elements shape public space conduct. The findings emphasize the importance of urban layout and public protection regulations in developing more equitable and more secure urban environments.

Keywords: *Behavioral changes, Public Space, Safety Perceptions, Socioeconomic factors, Urban safety*

1. Introduction

Urban safety is a crucial factor in sustainable city improvement because it affects how human beings engage with public areas and defines their ordinary quality of existence. It has a significant impact on everything from route selections and travel times to non-public safety precautions, demonstrating a complex relationship between immediate concerns such as crime and large socioeconomic issues such as profitability, training, and access to reliable infrastructure. Perceptions of protection are especially challenging in surprisingly urbanizing countries, such as India, where socioeconomic differences are large. Disparities in protection memories and perceptions have a significant impact on how various socioeconomic groups use and interact with urban public spaces.

India's rapid urbanization, which is expected to reach almost 600 million city dwellers by 2030 (United Nations, 2018), presents several obstacles, including inadequate infrastructure, rising inequality, and increased security and protection concerns. Young adults (18-35 years old) make up a large proportion of India's urban population and are particularly vulnerable to these issues. Their protective views are shaped by socioeconomic elements, such as profitability, training, and infrastructure, which in turn influence their interaction with public spaces, access to opportunities, and overall well-being.

Socioeconomic status (SES) plays a significant role in determining perceptions of urban safety. It has been reported that people with lower socioeconomic backgrounds experience greater degrees of insecurity and fear, especially due to inadequate financial capacity, suboptimal housing, and residence in areas susceptible to crimes (Shaw & McKay, 1942; Sampson, 2013). In India, with substantial economic disparities, young adults from deprived regions face governmental impediments that exacerbate their vulnerability. Slum-dwelling and informal sector workers are unfortunate victims of deficient housing and in many cases, have restricted access to law enforcement (Verma and Ramanathan, 2018). Such disparities set a crucial stage for a probe into the possible role of economic inequalities in youth safety perceptions in urban India.

Educational achievement and work position further impact these beliefs. Higher education is associated with increased knowledge of safety concerns and access to risk-reduction measures such as secure housing and dependable transportation (Rukmini, 2019). On the other hand, young adults with low education and inconsistent work have higher levels of economic insecurity, making them more vulnerable. In India, prolonged youth unemployment heightens sentiments of insecurity and social marginalization (Deshpande & Singh, 2021). Addressing these socioeconomic hurdles is critical to promote safety and inclusiveness.

The quality of urban infrastructure and public services has a substantial influence on perceived safety. Poorly illuminated streets, insufficient public transit, and a scarcity of recreational places all add to insecurity and impede safe urban navigation (Bhan and Jana, 2015). On the other hand, well-planned urban settings promote accessibility, diversity, and community activities to increase safety perception and the use of public spaces (Mehta, 2014). Some initiatives, such as the Smart Cities Mission in India, are directed toward

improving urban infrastructure and setting up safety procedures through technological support. However, for this to succeed, the basic issues of social inequality that make people insecure should be addressed

Traditionally, cultural and social norms have had a powerful effect. In a collectivist and community-oriented society, the disbanding of traditional social networks in urban setting may give rise to isolation and vulnerability (Chatterjee, 2015). Simultaneously, digital technology and social media provide a new platform for interaction, experience sharing, and advocacy for safer cities. SafeCity and HarassMap are two platforms where users can map their harassment and violence experiences to raise awareness and create community action. These digital initiatives are indicative of how technology has empowered youth and brought about a change in perspective regarding urban safety.

Most current studies have examined generalized urban safety issues while not touching the interface with socioeconomic backgrounds (Chatterjee, 2020; Swerdlow et al., 2015). While research on urban safety issues in India, especially those related to crime, is increasing (Kapur & Mahajan, 2020), relevant studies focusing specifically on young adults, an increasingly mobile and socially active demographic, are scarce.

Therefore, this study seeks to confront this gap by demonstrating how socioeconomic determinants shape the urban safety perception and behavior of young adults in India. An e-survey will be conducted among young adults aged 19-30 to examine how their safety perception and behavioral choices are influenced by income, education, and employment status. This study specifically examines how socioeconomic background relates to the use of public space, including transport mode of travel, routes taken, and social activities. Knowledge derived from such factors will be useful in developing policies for creating safer and more inclusive public spaces.

The findings of this study are expected to provide valuable insights into how socioeconomic shaped urban safety concerns affect young adults' interactions with public spaces. These insights can inform urban planning and safety policies that address the needs of marginalized groups, improve public infrastructure, and enhance safety perceptions of all residents, regardless of socioeconomic background. By focusing on the intersection of socioeconomic factors and urban safety, this study aims to contribute to the development of more equitable and inclusive urban environments in India.

2. Literature Review

The multifaceted nature of urban safety encompasses the protection of individuals and communities from crime, violence, and environmental hazards in urban areas. Moreover, it is important to foster social interaction and ensure the well-being of residents, given that safe public spaces lead to community engagement and resilience. Urban safety concerns in public knowledge of factors such as urban design and planning and perceptions related to safety have a significant bearing on people's behaviors, determining their willingness to use these spaces. These have proven to be strong predictors of human behavior in urban settings (Al-Ghiyadh & Al-Khafaji, 2021) (Ceccato, 2020). These studies indicate that considerations for personal

safety are significant in urban behaviors, with people frequently altering their activities based on perceptions of risk, an influence leading to social isolation, and inactivity in public spaces. Consideration is given to a triumvirate of urban planning and design strategies such as defensible space planning and environmental surveillance to help alleviate some of these issues while increasing urban safety (Yang, 2019).

Urban design has a significant impact on safety perceptions through factors such as public lighting, travel networks, and the layout of urban places. Redesigning streets with new ideas such as super blocks and shared spaces increases sustainable mobility and improves traffic safety, creating a safe environment for walkers and bicycles (Trpković & Jevremović, 2024). An inclusive public space stimulates social interaction and instill confidence within users (Taccone, 2018). Additionally, some characteristics, such as good illumination and ways of controlling public intervention such as surveillance by cameras have yielded remarkable results in reducing crime rates and building respect for security among community members (Ceccato, 2020). However, planning strategies frequently underestimate the need for safety in public areas, especially at night, which may reduce urban liveliness (Ratnayake, 2014).

Numerous factors influence young people's perceived safety, including their age, friendship groups, and social norms. It has been indicated that the younger the group, especially between 17 and 23, the more it will generally consider urban settings unsafe due to fear of victimization. This can affect their very transferability and behavior in those spaces (Gorkovaya & Miklyaeva, 2020); moreover, spatial and social dynamics have an important role, and, for instance, young adults reported different levels of safe according to their socio-economic conditions relative to those living in neighborhoods that feel unsafe (Vozmediano et al., 2024).

Peer pressure and social norms influence safety perceptions, highlighted in several studies showing how exposure to violence and neighborhood population can impact safety assessments among youth, especially across racial lines (Browning et al., 2024). Media coverage and how social order is maintained are important factors that have been shown to instill fear, especially among women, meaning contextual factors and media influence manifest acutely in a safe perception (“The Influence of Internet Communication and Social Order on Urban Women's Public Safety Perception,” 2024).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study employed a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative research techniques to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. A structured e-survey with closed-ended questions was developed to gather detailed information on participants' perceptions of safety, daily activities, and the influence of socioeconomic status (SES). The quantitative data facilitated the identification of trends and statistical correlations, while the qualitative data provided deeper insights into individual experiences and the nuanced complexities of safety concerns in urban environments.

3.2 Sample

The study population comprised 30 individuals between the ages of 19 and 30, all residing in urban areas of India. Participants were drawn from a range of employment sectors, including private and public sector employees, self-employed individuals, entrepreneurs, and freelancers. This sample was designed to capture security concerns across different income levels and occupational categories. A combination of convenience and snowball sampling techniques was employed for participant recruitment. Initially, convenience sampling was used to select participants based on their availability and willingness to complete the e-survey. Subsequently, snowball sampling was implemented, wherein initial respondents were encouraged to share the survey link with other eligible individuals. This approach aimed to enhance the diversity of the sample in terms of gender, socioeconomic background, and urban living conditions.

3.3 Inclusion Criteria

- a) Individuals between 19 and 30 years old.
- b) Participants had to be employed or self-employed, including those working in the public or private sectors, service industries, as business owners, or freelancers.
- c) Only residents of urban areas in India were included to ensure regular exposure to public spaces for work, commuting, or leisure activities.
- d) Participants needed to have frequent interactions with public spaces as part of their daily routines and safety concerns, such as traveling by foot or public transport or engaging in leisure activities in urban environments.

3.4 Exclusion Criteria

- a) Individuals below 19 or above 30 years of age.
- b) Those who do not regularly engage with public spaces, including individuals primarily working from home or residing in rural areas.
- c) Individuals who were not employed or self-employed, such as unemployed persons or full-time students.
- d) Individuals who were unwilling or unable to complete the e-survey.

3.5 Measures

Data for the study were collected using a custom-designed e-survey, structured to examine multiple aspects of urban safety. The survey comprised sections on Safety Perceptions, Safety Behaviors, Socioeconomic Factors, Social Conditioning, and Urban Space Usage. Its design was informed by established literature on urban safety, theoretical studies on social class distinctions, and social conditioning influences. Participants responded to closed-ended statements assessing their agreement with various aspects of safety, behavior, and socioeconomic status using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree; 5 = Strongly Agree). While the survey tool itself was not standardized, a pilot study involving 30 participants was conducted to refine the clarity and reliability of the instrument before full deployment.

3.6 Procedure

The survey was administered online using Google Forms, ensuring accessibility and ease of participation. To enhance the reach and diversity of responses, a snowball sampling method was implemented, where initial respondents were encouraged to share the survey with eligible individuals. This approach facilitated an expanded and more representative sample.

Completion of the survey required approximately 10–15 minutes. Participants were fully informed about the study's objectives and assured of the confidentiality of their responses. Ethical considerations, including informed consent, privacy protection, and voluntary participation, were strictly upheld throughout the study.

3.7 Data Analysis

Quantitative data derived from closed-ended responses were analyzed using prevalence rates to identify trends in safety perceptions among participants. Additionally, thematic analysis was employed to explore patterns in safety concerns and their relationships with socioeconomic status and behavioral factors. This dual analytical approach provided both statistical insights and deeper contextual understanding of urban safety experiences.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The survey respondents for this study included a diverse group of young adults, aged between 19 and 30 years, with varying gender, education level, occupation, and income brackets. The age breakdown showed that 20% were aged between 19-22 years, 53.3% were between 23-26 years, and 26.7% were between 27-30 years. The gender distribution was relatively balanced, with 60% identifying as female and 40% as male.

In terms of education, 40% had completed a bachelor's degree, 35% had a master's degree or higher, and 25% had completed diploma or vocational training. Regarding occupation, the majority (60%) were employed in the private sector, 25% were self-employed, 10% worked in the public sector, and a smaller portion (5%) were students or freelancers.

Income levels varied significantly among the respondents. 45% earned less than ₹20,000 per month, 30% earned between ₹21,000-40,000, and 25% earned over ₹40,000. Respondents from higher income brackets were more likely to reside in urban areas, with 70% of individuals earning above ₹30,000 residing in city centers, while lower-income participants (earning below ₹20,000) were more likely to live in suburban or rural areas.

4.2 Thematic Analysis of Safety Perceptions Among Young Adults

This study explored how demographic factors such as age, gender, education, income, and employment influenced the safety perceptions of young adults in urban India. Thematic analysis identified several key themes that emerged from the data, providing a comprehensive understanding of how these factors intersect to shape individual experiences of safety.

4.2.1 *Age and Gender: Affective Dimensions of Safety*

Questions related to this theme

- a) I feel safe walking alone during the daytime in familiar public spaces.
- b) I feel safe walking alone at night in familiar public spaces.
- c) I feel less safe in poorly lit public spaces.
- d) I feel safer when public spaces are busy and active.
- e) Women are often expected to avoid certain areas or routes due to safety concerns.
- f) Men are encouraged to appear fearless in potentially unsafe public spaces.
- g) Carrying self-defense tools is seen as more necessary for women than men.
- h) Society emphasizes that women should exercise caution more than men in public spaces.
- i) Men face less societal pressure to plan their routes for safety compared to women.
- j) Women are encouraged to take a male guardian with them in public places.

A prominent theme that emerged from the data was the impact of age and gender on safety perceptions. Younger individuals, particularly those aged 19-22, were more likely to express concerns about theft, assault, and harassment in public spaces. This demographic displayed heightened vulnerability, especially in urban settings, where public spaces can often be perceived as unsafe. The gendered nature of these concerns was particularly striking, as females in the 18-26 age group exhibited a significantly higher level of insecurity than to their male counterparts. Specifically, 65% of women in this age range expressed frequent safety concerns, while only 45% of men did so.

The gender disparity in perceptions of safety, particularly in urban environments, is significantly influenced by social and cultural dynamics, with women often experiencing heightened concerns due to the prevalence of gendered violence such as sexual harassment and assault. Research indicates that women report feeling less safe than men in public spaces, a trend observed across various studies, including those focusing on public transportation and urban design (Awada et al., 2024) (Khalatbari, 2024) (Mela & Tousi, 2023). For instance, a study in Guangzhou highlighted that women provided lower safety scores for urban streets, emphasizing the need for gender-sensitive urban planning to address these disparities (Cui et al., 2023). Additionally, Szczecin's empirical analysis revealed that young women exhibit the highest fear of crime, suggesting that socio-economic factors and perceptions of police effectiveness also play critical roles in shaping these fears (Sypion et al., 2024).

4.2.2 *Socioeconomic Status and Its Influence on Safety Perceptions*

Questions related to this theme

- a) My financial condition limits my ability to live in safer neighborhoods.
- b) Public spaces in wealthier areas feel safer than those in economically disadvantaged areas.
- c) Access to transportation affects my ability to feel safe.
- d) I avoid certain areas due to perceived poverty or crime rates.

- e) I feel safer when I can afford private transportation (e.g., cabs).
- f) Safety resources, such as street lighting, are better in high-income areas.

Socioeconomic disparities were one of the most significant findings of this study. Lower-income participants (those earning less than ₹20,000/month) consistently expressed higher degrees of safety worries than their wealthier colleagues. While 60% of lower-income respondents indicated concerns about theft and burglary, only 30% of the richer respondents (earning more than ₹30,000 per month) shared these fears. This gap reflects wider societal realities in which lower-income people are more likely to live in neighborhoods with higher crime rates and fewer resources, contributing to a greater sense of fear.

Additionally, the study revealed that 70% of lower-income respondents felt unsafe in public spaces, with 55% avoiding certain areas, particularly at night. This is in contrast to 65% of wealthier participants who felt secure and confident engaging in outdoor activities and socializing in urban spaces. The findings regarding individuals' perceptions of safety align with socio-spatial theory, emphasizing that these perceptions are influenced by both immediate environments and broader socio-economic contexts. For instance, residents in Taranto, Italy, navigate environmental risks from industrial pollution while maintaining a strong attachment to their community, illustrating how local conditions shape their safety perceptions (Maaret et al., 2024). Similarly, in Sekondi-Takoradi, Ghana, residents' safety experiences are deeply intertwined with socio-economic inequalities, suggesting that urban safety strategies must incorporate local knowledge and realities (Frimpong et al., 2021). Furthermore, research in Southeast Asia highlights gender differences in safety perceptions, influenced by spatial configurations and socio-cultural factors, which further complicates the understanding of safety in urban mobility contexts (Hidayati et al., 2020).

4.2.3 Educational Attainment and Its Role in Safety Perceptions

Questions related to this theme

- “I feel safer when I can afford private transportation” (as education level may influence income, thus affecting transportation options).
- “I trust local authorities to respond promptly in emergencies” (education could influence trust in public institutions).

Education has emerged as another significant factor influencing perceptions of safety. Respondents with higher educational qualifications (such as a master's degree) reported fewer concerns about safety compared than with only a high school diploma. This suggests that higher education may be associated with better access to safer neighborhoods, stable employment, and improved social resources, all of which contribute to a sense of security.

Individuals with higher educational levels frequently have more social resources, which improves their safety and security, emphasizing the link between education, social capital, and safety. According to research, educated people often have access to secure housing and financial stability, allowing them to live in communities with better infrastructure and lower crime rates, lessening their susceptibility to crime (Ayed &

Clarke, 2024; Tyagi, 2021). The relationship between education, social capital, and safety is underscored by the notion that individuals with higher education levels often possess greater social resources, which in turn enhances their safety and security. Research indicates that educated individuals typically have access to stable housing and financial security, allowing them to reside in neighborhoods with better infrastructure and lower crime rates, thereby reducing their vulnerability to crime (Ayed & Clarke, 2024; Tyagi, 2021). Furthermore, social capital, defined as resources derived from social networks, plays an important role in mitigating crime risks, as individuals with strong community ties are less likely to be violent (Bakel & Horak, 2024; Community Level Social Capital and Resilience¹, 2022). This interaction implies that education not only improves monetary security but also creates a psychological sense of safety, since more educated people report feeling less exposed to crime (Khedir, 2020).

4.2.4 Behavioral Adjustments and Safety Concerns

Questions related to this theme:

- a) I avoid traveling alone at night for safety reasons.
- b) I use safer routes even if they are longer.
- c) I carry personal safety tools (e.g., pepper spray, alarms).
- d) I share my location, or travel plans with trusted individuals when traveling alone.
- e) I prefer traveling in groups to feel safe.
- f) I consciously stay alert in public spaces to ensure my safety.
- g) Past incidents in public spaces affect my safety behaviors.

Another recurring theme in the analysis was the behavioral impact of safety concerns. A significant proportion of respondents (60%) reported changing their travel habits owing to safety concerns. For instance, 40% of the participants stated that they avoided certain areas, especially at night, while 20% opted for private transportation over public transport due to fears of theft or harassment. This behavioral shift was particularly pronounced among lower-income respondents, with 80% reporting that they took extra precautions, such as changing routes or avoiding specific areas entirely.

Fear of crime significantly influences individuals' behaviors and interactions in urban environments, prompting adaptive strategies to enhance perceived safety. Research indicates that this fear can lead to spatial avoidance, reduced mobility, and limited social engagement, particularly among women who often navigate public spaces with heightened anxiety regarding potential victimization (Sur, 2014; Jauregui et al., 2024). Individuals employ various coping mechanisms, such as increasing alertness, arranging companionship, and transforming perceived dangerous spaces into safer environments (Brands & Doorn, 2018). Furthermore, urban design plays a crucial role in shaping safety perceptions; improvements in physical and social characteristics of urban areas have been shown to alleviate fear, thereby enhancing women's quality of life and encouraging greater public engagement (Ceccato, 2012; Jauregui et al., 2024). Overall, these findings

underscore the complex interplay between fear, behavior, and urban safety, highlighting the need for thoughtful urban planning to foster inclusive public spaces (Ferretti et al., 2019).

4.2.5 The Role of Law Enforcement and Trust in Public Security

Questions related to this theme

- I trust local authorities to respond promptly in emergencies.
- Visible policing (security guards/police) or security measures (cameras) increase my comfort in public spaces.
- Adequate street lighting encourages me to use public spaces at night.

Trust in law enforcement and public security has emerged as an important factor in shaping safety perceptions. Higher-income respondents were more likely to report satisfaction with law enforcement and public security services, with 65% expressing confidence in police. In contrast, only 40% of lower-income respondents shared this sentiment. This disparity highlights the role of institutional trust in shaping the perceptions of safety. Individuals in wealthier areas may feel safer because of the presence of effective policing, while those in lower-income areas may be more critical of the police, perceiving them as less responsive to their needs.

This theme speaks to the broader issue of institutional inequality, where individuals in economically disadvantaged areas often lack the resources and infrastructure that contribute to public safety. Inadequate policing, coupled with the challenges of living in high-crime neighborhoods, likely contributes to the greater sense of insecurity experienced by lower-income individuals.

4.3 Interpretation of Findings

The findings of this study offer significant insights into the relationship between socioeconomic factors and safety perceptions among young adults in urban India. Age, gender, education, income, and occupation all play critical roles in shaping how individuals perceive their safety in public spaces. Key findings suggest that socioeconomic status, particularly income is directly correlated with safety perceptions. Lower-income respondents consistently reported higher concerns about safety, reflecting the reality that individuals in these groups are more likely to reside in neighborhoods with higher crime rates and fewer resources. This pattern aligns with the broader socio-spatial theory, which emphasizes the interplay between environmental conditions and safety perceptions.

Age and gender disparities in safety concerns were also evident, particularly among women. Younger women, especially those aged 19-26, exhibited heightened fear of harassment and assault in public spaces, which aligns with previous research showing that women in urban areas often feel more vulnerable to gendered violence. The study also highlighted that individual with higher educational attainment, particularly those with a master's degree, reported feeling safer, possibly because of better access to secure neighborhoods and greater social capital.

4.3.1 Comparison with Previous Literature on Safety Concerns and Socioeconomic Disparities in Urban Contexts

The findings of this study align with global research indicating that low-income groups experience heightened safety concerns due to increased exposure to crime and insecure living conditions. Women, particularly in urban environments, report significantly lower safety perceptions compared to men, a trend corroborated by studies in various contexts, including Belarus and Poland, where young women exhibit the highest fear of crime (Голякова & Карпиевич, 2024; Sypion et al., 2024). Furthermore, the correlation between higher education levels and reduced safety concerns is evident because individuals with greater educational attainment often have better access to resources and safer environments (Clark et al., 2023). This relationship underscores the importance of social capital and financial stability in shaping safety perceptions, suggesting that initiatives aimed at enhancing women's safety must consider socio-economic factors and community dynamics to be effective (Mitiku et al., 2023).

4.3.2 Impact of Urban Infrastructure and the Role of City Planning in Creating More Equitable and Secure Environments

Urban infrastructure and city planning play crucial roles in fostering equitable and secure environments and addressing various social, economic, and health-related challenges. Effective urban planning can mitigate crime and enhance safety through strategic design elements such as street planning and land use, which reduce opportunities for criminal activity (Al-Ghiyadh & Al-Khafaji, 2021). Equitable infrastructure allocation is essential to ensure that all population groups benefit from urban resources, emphasizing the need for procedural equity in planning processes (Durrant, 2017). The integration of social infrastructure, such as healthcare and community facilities, is vital for improving living conditions and promoting sustainable urban development (Ershova et al., 2018). Additionally, recognizing the urban infrastructure of care highlights the importance of planning that supports caregiving roles, thereby addressing gender and racial inequities (Tasrin, n.d.). Ultimately, a comprehensive approach to urban planning that incorporates health considerations, such as access to green spaces and clean environments, is necessary to create healthy, livable cities (Rydin, 2012).

5. Conclusion

This study explored the link between socioeconomic status and safety perceptions among young adults in urban India. Lower-income individuals (earning under ₹20,000/month) reported heightened concerns about theft, harassment, and poor infrastructure, while higher-income respondents, benefiting from better urban amenities, felt safer. A key finding highlights the role of urban infrastructure—well-lit streets and reliable transportation enhance security, whereas inadequate facilities in lower-income areas increase vulnerability. Equitable urban planning can improve safety perceptions by addressing these disparities.

Additionally, gender-sensitive planning is crucial, as women (especially 18-26) reported greater safety concerns, often altering behaviors to avoid risks. An inclusive urban design, better lighting, and community policing can foster safer cities.

5.1 Contributions to the Field

This study contributes to the growing body of literature on urban safety perceptions by emphasizing the significant role socioeconomic factors play in shaping individuals' experiences of safety in urban India. It provides insights into how income levels, education, and employment influence safety perceptions, highlighting the disparities between wealthier and lower-income groups.

Furthermore, the study's exploration of infrastructure and urban design offers valuable implications for future urban planning in Indian cities. This reinforces the importance of creating environments that not only address physical safety concerns but also foster a sense of psychological security among residents, particularly women and marginalized communities.

5.2 Future Research Directions

Although this study provides valuable insights, it is not without limitations. The small sample size and use of convenience sampling may not fully capture the diversity of experiences of young adults in urban India. Additionally, the study's geographic focus on metropolitan areas may not reflect the safety perceptions of those living in rural areas or smaller towns. Future research should aim to include a larger and more diverse sample, with a broader range of socio-economic backgrounds and geographic locations, to provide a more representative picture of safety perceptions across India.

Further studies could explore the experiences of different age groups, particularly older adults, to understand how safety perceptions evolve over the course of life. In addition, future research could assess the effectiveness of specific urban planning interventions, such as enhanced street lighting, increased police presence, and community safety programs, in improving safety perceptions.

By addressing these research gaps, future studies can contribute to the development of more comprehensive strategies to enhance urban safety and security for all residents, regardless of their socio-economic status.

Conflict of Interest Declaration: The authors declare no affiliations with any organization or entity with financial interest in the subject matter. There are no conflicts of interest to declare, as the researcher has no financial or personal interests that could influence the outcomes.

Author Contributions: SSA and WKB (first author) (co-author) conceptualized the study, collected data from personal journals and lived experiences, and conducted qualitative analysis using thematic coding and prevalence data analysis. AGS (co-author) contributed to the study design, provided feedback on the analysis, and assisted with the manuscript revision. All authors approved the final manuscript.

Author's note: We extend our sincere gratitude to all the individuals who contributed to the successful completion of this study. We appreciate the respondents who participated in the survey and provided valuable

insights, without which this research would not have been possible. Finally, we are immensely grateful to our families and friends for their unwavering encouragement and support, which played a crucial role in the completion of this work.

Acknowledgement: This study was conducted with strict adherence to ethical research principles. All participants provided informed consent before their involvement, ensuring that their responses were voluntary and that they had a clear understanding of the research objectives. The confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were maintained throughout the study. Furthermore, the authors affirm that this work is original and free of plagiarism. All sources have been appropriately cited, and any borrowed ideas or data have been duly acknowledged. This research was conducted with accordance with ethical guidelines for academic writing.

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