

Infrastructure , gender and violence: Women and slum sanitation inequalities in Delhi

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Infrastructural violence

‘The notion of infrastructural violence seeks to squarely identify the political economy underlying the socio-spatial production of suffering in contemporary cities by opening a concrete way of discussing society’s responsibility for this harm’.

Rodgers & O’Neill 2011: 405

Active infrastructural violence

‘Active’ infrastructural violence is that which has been designed to be violent, whether in their implementation or in their functioning. It therefore focuses upon the conscious development of infrastructure to regulate normative social and territorial relations’.

Rodgers & O’Neill 2011: 406-7

Passive infrastructural violence

Passive infrastructure violence derives from the limitations and omissions of the infrastructure planning process, particularly in design and implementation.

Living in illegal settlements the urban poor are often excluded from this process.

Inadequate sanitation infrastructures create opportunities for passive violence by -

- Not providing enough community toilet complexes (CTCs) for resident populations
- Not having regular maintenance and repair regimes/becoming broken down
- Unclean and unsafe CTCs force women and girls to resort to open defecation



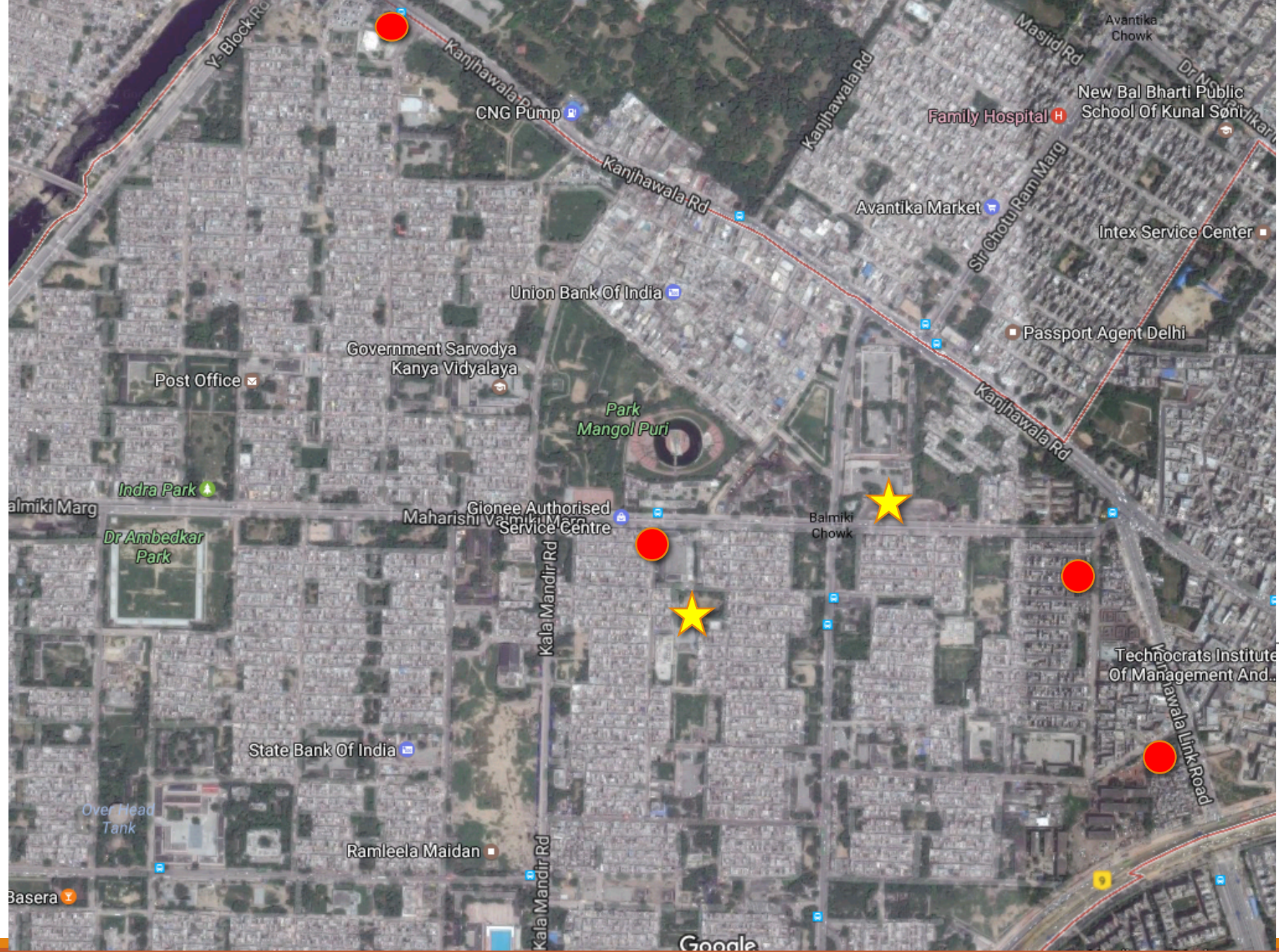
Broken down toilet complex being used by residents of Hanuman Camp in Mangolpuri

Mangolpuri - a resettlement colony in North-West Delhi

- Established in 1975
- 8 pockets of JJC clusters
- Population 300,000-350,000
- Sewer lines laid in formal colony in last 10-12 years
- Mobile toilet in F Block
- Broken down CTC next to Hanuman Camp
- New CTC on Maharishi Valmiki Marg between Hanuman Camp and D block JJC



Map data ©2017 Google 200 m



Colonies surveyed marked in red, and toilet complexes marked in yellow

Kusumpur Pahari – slum in South Delhi

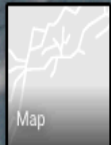
- Adjacent to the Ridge in the heart of South Delhi
- Established in 1975 by the labourers working on the JNU site
- Acute water scarcity
- Population estimated around 50,000
- 4, 909 households according DUSIB
- Only one functioning CTC in B Block



Kusumpur Pahari
Community Center

Sri Maariamman Temple

TURNING POINT



Map

Google

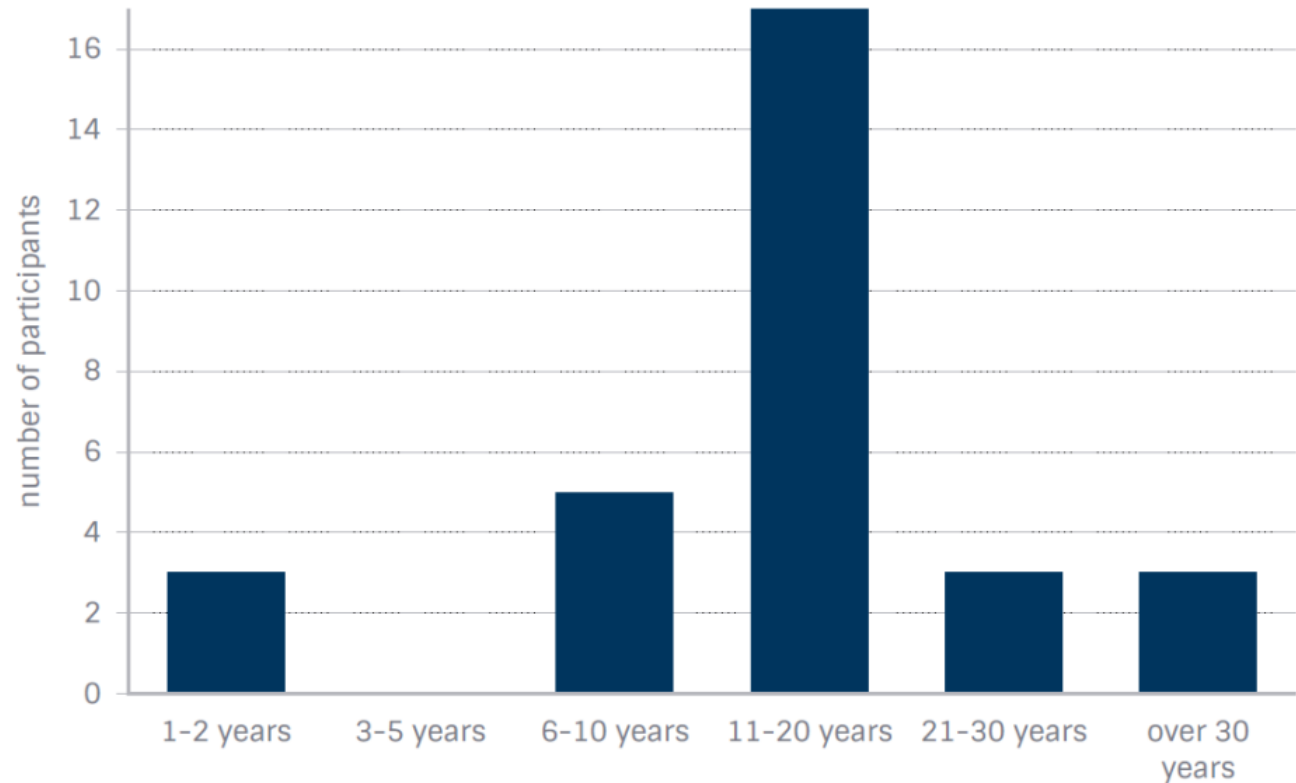


2D



Participants characteristics

Number	31
Age range	17 – 60 years
Married	20
Single	9
Widowed	2
Jhuggi owned	30
Built own jhuggi	16



Private toilets in both localities

	Mangolpuri	Kusumpur Pahari	Total
Total number of households with toilet	9	6	15
Connected to sewer	7	-	7
Connected to septic tank	2	2	4
Cess pit	-	2	2
Empty into drain	-	2	2
Shared access with extended family		2	2



Community toilet complex usage

		Mangolpuri	Kusumpur Pahari	Total
FREQUENCY	Everyday	6	4	10
	Day time only	-	1	1
REGULAR CLEAN	Yes	3	5	8
	No	7	1	8
REASON FOR BEING DIRTY				
Irregular sweeper		3	1	4
No sanitary bins		3	1	4
Lack of water		2		2
Other women make it dirty		2	1	3

Mobile toilets being used by residents of F block jhuggi residents



The only functional toilet complex in Kusumpur Pahari situated in Block B.



Open defecation in both localities

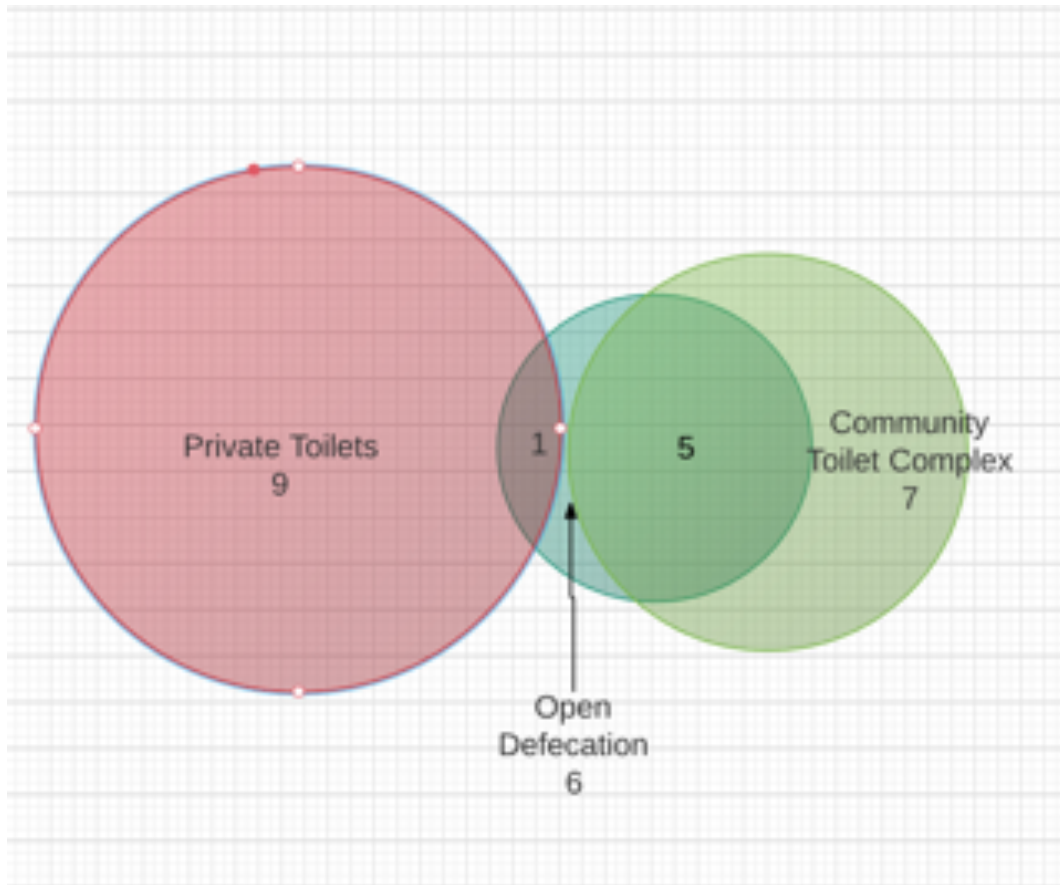
Open defecation	Mangolpuri	Kusumpur Pahari	Total
Yes	6	8	14
No	1	5	6
Everyday	2	7	9
Sometimes	-	3	3
Only at night	4	2	6
When toilet block closed	4	1	5

Open defecation site opposite F block Jhuggis in Mangolpuri

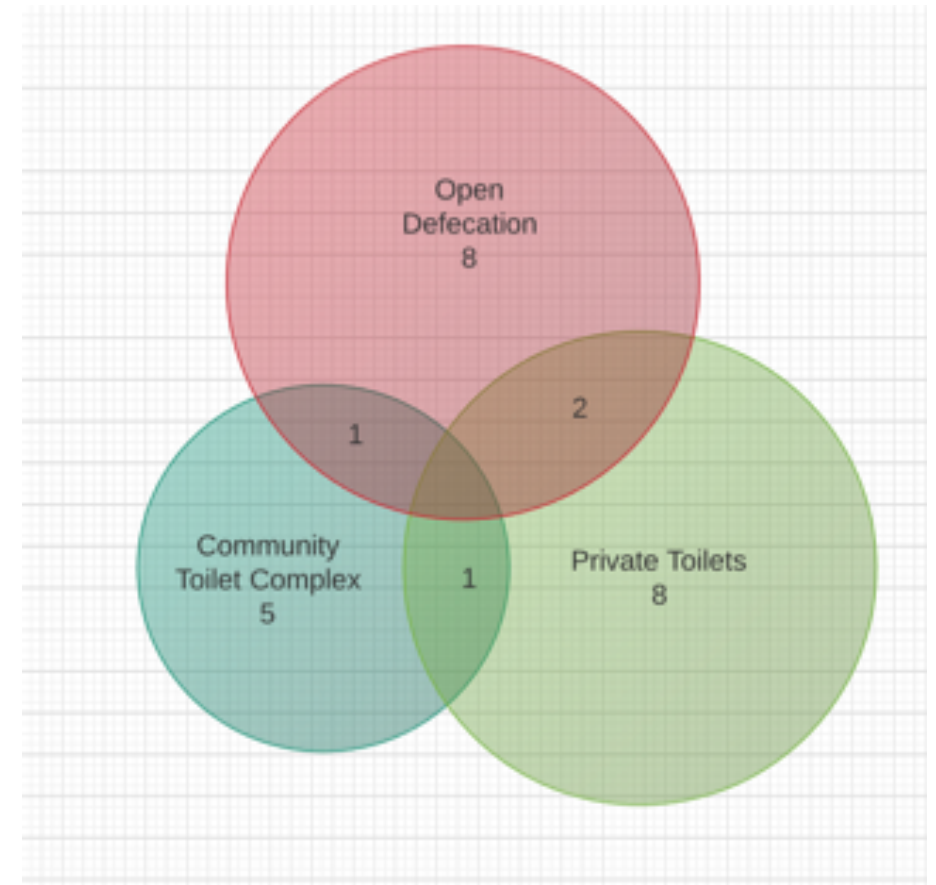


Overlaps in toilet and open defecation use

Mangolpuri



Kusumpur Pahari



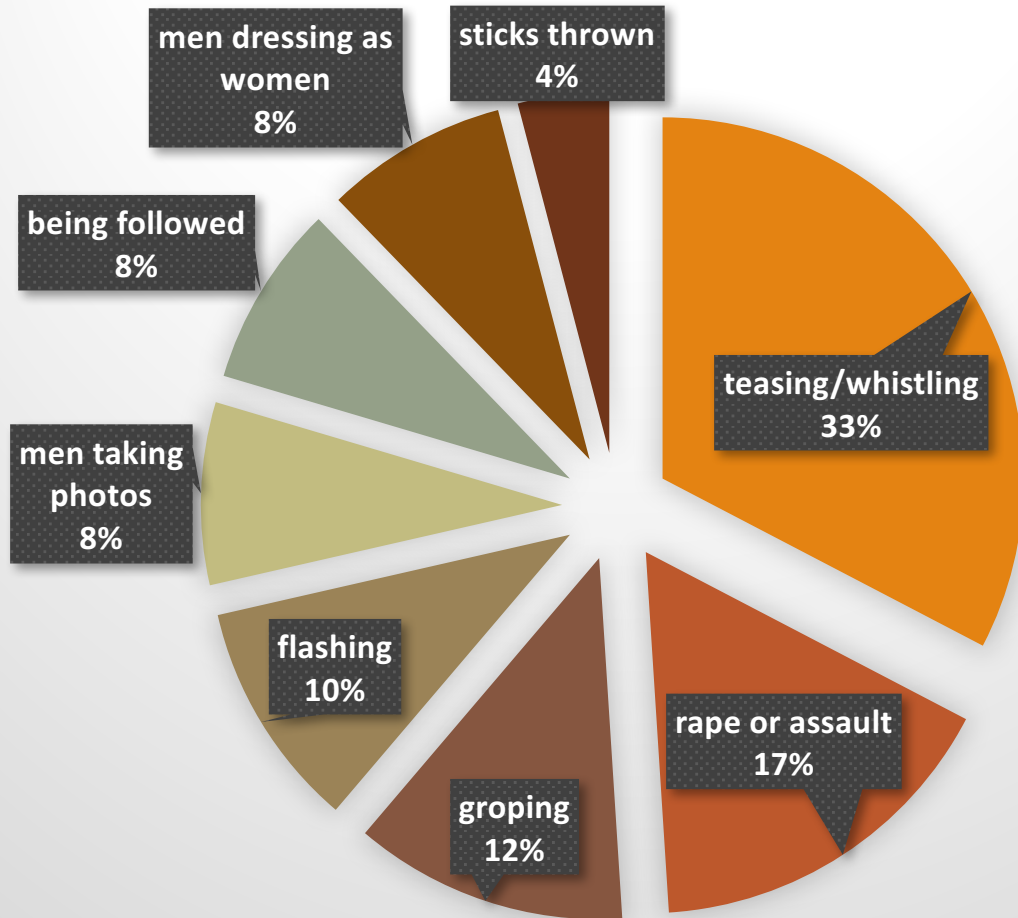
Harms from lack of sanitation infrastructure

Our surveys have identified three types of harms:

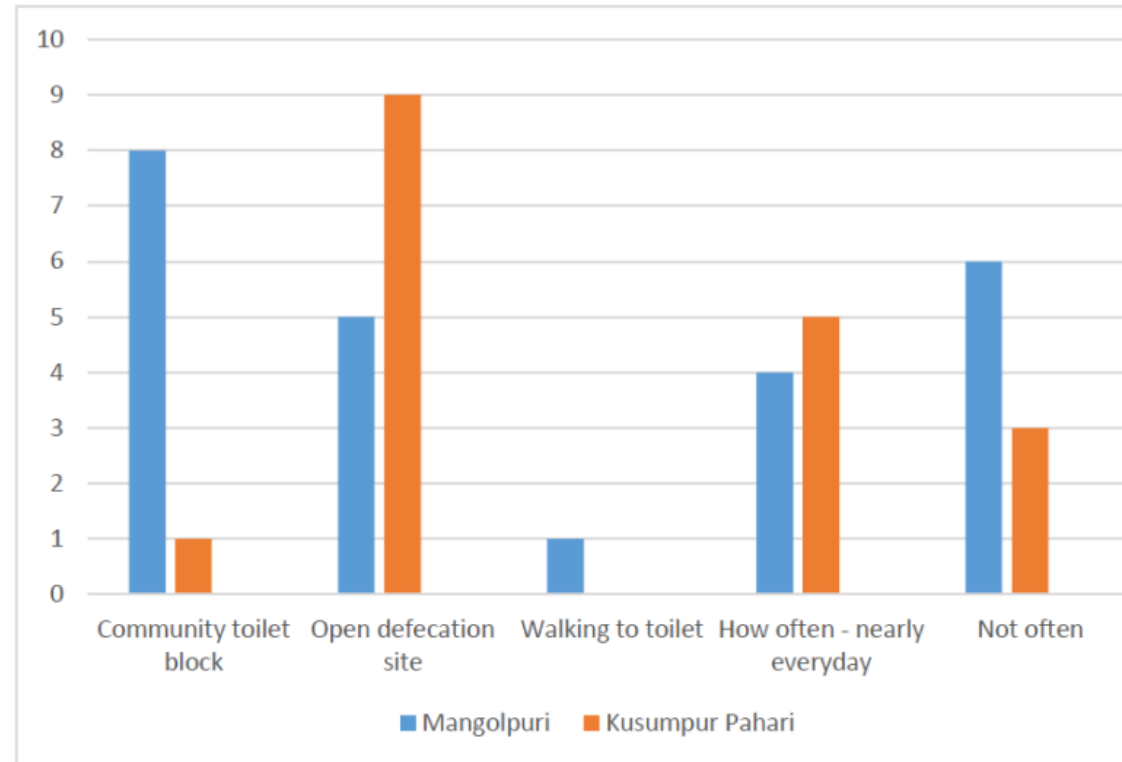
1. Gender-based violence and harassment
2. Psychosocial stresses and impacts on wellbeing
3. Economic impacts on individuals and households

Gender-based violence & harassment

Types of harassment or violence



Places of harassment & frequency



Gender-based violence & harassment (2)

‘Men from block B hang around outside the toilet, and it makes women uncomfortable to go to the toilet. They tend to stare, whistle or sometimes even pass comments’.

-Simran, mid 20s and lived in Kusumpur Pahari for nearly 10 years

‘Our house is very close to the open defecation ground. So we can hear screams and fights. We once heard a group of women chasing a man who tried to attack someone while peeing. It has never happened to me or anyone in my family but we have heard several stories, and sometimes even hear disturbing noises from the open defecation ground’.

- Neeta, mid 20s and lived in Kusumpur Pahari all her life

Gender-based violence & harassment (3)

Frequency of harassment

‘Men harassing women has gone up tremendously. Every other day we hear new stories of some boy following a girl, or teasing or something or other. Earlier we would only hear such stories every once in a while. If there was a toilet for women, or more security, things would be different’.

- Prabha, who has lived in Kusumpur Pahari for more than 30 years

Psycho-social stresses and impacts on wellbeing

- Fear of being bitten by snakes, dogs etc in forest defecation sites in Kusumpur Pahari
- Fear of injury when defecating on slopes and hillsides and in drains
- Fear of sexual assault
- Fear of having to go out at night
- Fear of walking across spaces where men and boys are gathered on the path to a toilet block
- Stress of not being able to report incidences of harassment or violence
- Stress of worrying about their safety and that of daughters
- Shame of not being able to ask guests to visit because you do not have a toilet

Psycho-social stresses and impacts on wellbeing (2)

Stress of not be able to report an incidence of violence or harassment

‘Men dress up as women to attack girls and women who go to the forest to defecate. I have experienced such incidents many times, and whenever I would tell other women about it, they would ask me why I am telling everyone, that I should be ashamed and not tell the whole world what happened’

– Veena, mid 20s, lived in Kusumpur Pahari for nearly 10 years.

‘People refrain from complaining to the police because that mostly leads to more harassment, and attacks the dignity of their daughters. But in reality, it is a frequent occurrence’

Anu, who is in her mid-50s and has lived in Mangolpuri for more than 30 years

Psycho-social stresses and impacts on wellbeing (3)

2. Impact of fear of violence on women's sanitation choices

For Usha, who has grown up in Kusumpur Pahari, a particular fear that discourages her from using the community toilet in B Block is:

‘There is a park on the way to the toilet, and we have to cross that area when we go. That is a very bad area and strange men keep sitting there. They pass lewd comments and stare uncomfortably at girls going into the toilet. Although nothing has ever happened to me, I have heard of incidents where drunk men sitting at the park have attacked women’.

Psycho-social stresses and impacts on wellbeing (4)

3. Impact of fear of violence on women's mobility

'Half the men here are drunks. Somebody or the other gets into a fight everyday. Men will be drunk, lying on the road, screaming obscenities. Women can't cross over and go out at night. In fact no one can'

-Aarti, mid 55s, lived in Kusumpur Pahari for more than 20 years

4. Loss of social life from a lack of a household toilet

'No guests come to our house because we have no toilets. It becomes very uncomfortable if they come here and have to use the washroom. They aren't used to using open grounds or public toilets, and we feel ashamed that we have to make them use such facilities. That is why we don't have any guests at our place'.

- Priya, early 20s, has lived in a JJ Cluster in Mangolpuri for more than 10 years

Economic harms

1. Time 'lost' going to toilets or open defecation site

'It takes about 10-15 minutes to reach [the community toilets]. The whole business would take half an hour or more. So it is not worth it [for me]. This forest is very close by. I can't waste 45 minutes every time I have to pee'

-Prabha, mid-40's and lived in Kusumpur Pahari for more than 30 years

'The mobile toilets are very crowded, and take a lot of time. I don't use it because I have a lot of household work, and spending so much time every time I need to defecate or urinate it not conducive for me'.

- Meena, mid 30s and has lived in in Kusumpur Pahari for more 10 years

Economic harms (2)

2. Cost of using toilets

‘It’s too expensive at Rs. 2 per use. The open defecation ground and the public toilet are at the same distance, but one is free and the other is not. The toilet is mostly dirty anyway, so what’s the use of paying Rs. 2?’

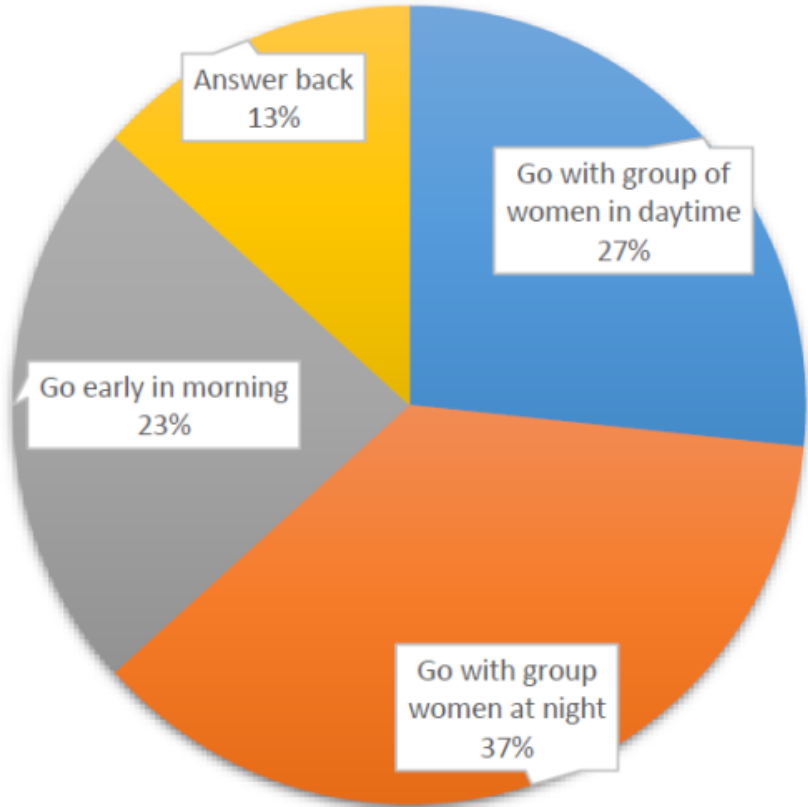
- Preeti, early 40s and lived in Kusumpur Pahari for more than 10 years

‘It’s Rs 2 per use, which means if we are unwell and we go four times, that Rs 8 in one day for one person. We can’t afford that’.

- Aarti, mid 55s, and lived in Kusumpur Pahari for more than 20 years

Coping measures & health impacts

Measures to cope with harasssment at toilets or open defecation sites



Health impact	No of participants
Constipation	4
Dignity/loss reputation	4
Fear of going alone	4
Urinary tract infections	2
Gastro, stomach complaints	3

Coping strategies (2)

1. Practising bodily control/discipline

‘We have to stop ourselves from going to the toilet even when we feel the urge to. Sometimes, during emergencies, we may have to resort to peeing in the storm water drains inside the colony’

- Roopa, mid 20s, and lived in Mangolpuri for more than 10 years

2. Going with a group of women to toilets or defecation site

‘We go in the mornings only [to the forest] only after the sun has risen. Not before that. That time most women go so there is safety. In the evenings we don’t go after sundown...If its later than 10pm then I have to take my husband. Otherwise I take a woman from the neighbourhood, or go with my mother in-law, or a friend. I can’t go alone’.

- Prabha, late 40s and lived in Kusumpur Pahari for more than 30 years

Coping strategies (3)

3. Women fighting back

‘We throw stones, sandals at them. I never knew how to swear until I came here. Once I had asked my husband to come along because I was scared and he said what will people think, you’re taking your husband to the latrine with you? But he is a good man - he comes with me if I am really scared’.

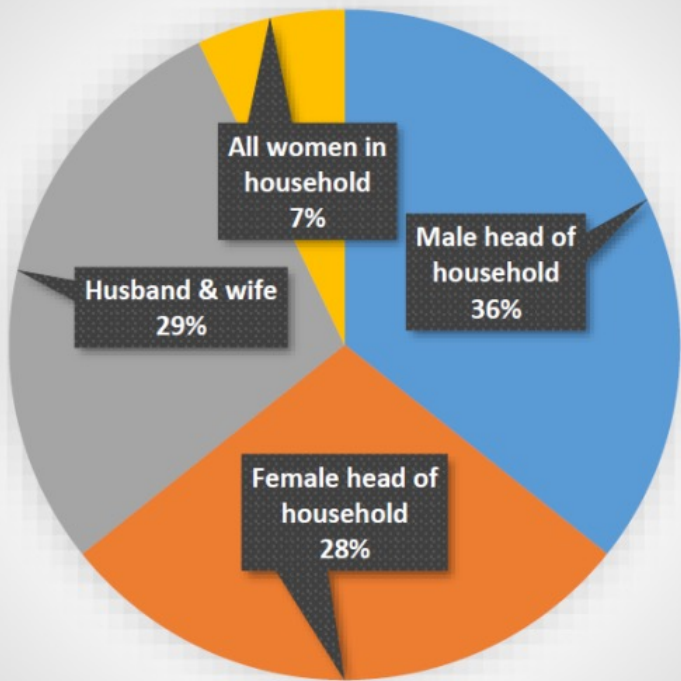
- Veena, mid 20s and lived in Kusumpur Pahari for less than 10 years

4. Coping with poor maintenance of mobile toilets

‘Earlier there were lights in the toilets, but now the lights have become dysfunctional. Often we have to take our cell phones with us so that we can use the torchlight from our phones. This is very uncomfortable since we have to squat, hold our balance, use one hand to wash and the other to hold our phones. Sometimes we make our friends or sisters throw light from the outside, in which case we have to leave the door a little ajar.

- Priya, mid 20s and always lived in Mangolpuri

Role of women in decision making about toilet building



Decision making	Mangolpuri	Kusumpur Pahari	Total
Yes, having several women in household influenced decision to build toilet	9	6	15
REASONS – Make safe for women	7	4	11
Worry about dignity	4	4	8
Stop harassment	1		1
Disabled/elderly family member	-	3	3

Role of women in decision making about toilet building (2)

‘We built a toilet especially for the children. I was worried someone would abduct them. I was also scared for my own safety’.

-Asha, mid 40s and lived in Mangolpuri for more than 10 years

‘As I was concerned about my safety , that is why my husband and I decided to get a toilet at home. I told him what goes on there, and eventually he managed the finances’ .

-Sita, early 30s and lived in Kusumpur Pahari for more than 10 years

‘Mother-in-law sanctioned the construction of a private toilet in our home to ensure our safety’.

- Devi, late 20s and lived in Mangolpuri for more than 10 years

Who is responsible for such harms and social consequences?

The state and its responsibilities

There are two factors that facilitate gender-based violence and sanitation inequalities in Indian cities:

1. A lack of political will at all levels of the state to take a systematic approach to the planning, implementation and maintenance of sanitation infrastructure.
2. Continuing lack of analysis of gender as a process (based on unequal power relations), in the policies, design and location of community toilet complexes.

Lack of political will

1. Government sanitation policies have largely NOT been based on funding the entire whole sanitation service chain in cities.
2. Have instead just been setting targets for building toilets which are often NOT connected to sewers or mains water pipes.
3. The failure of urban local bodies and agencies to take **responsibility** for regular cleaning and maintenance.
4. No concerted effort to ensure local **women's participation** in the design, construction and selection of sites for public and community toilets.

Consequences of a lack of gender analysis

- Inappropriate locations for community toilet complexes in slums.
- A lack gender-sensitive design deters women and girls from using toilet complexes.
- Pour flush toilets often just increase the work load for women.
- Women's participation is often a technical solution **INSTEAD** of being a social process that seeks to address the spatial inequalities they experience everyday.

Why households don't have a toilet

6 women said even if they had the money they wouldn't build a toilet. Some reasons are:

1. Not a priority for men in their household

‘My father is an alcoholic. He is completely disinterested in the wellbeing of his family members. As long as he gets his fix of alcohol, he doesn't care about anything else’.

- Roopa, mid 20s who lived Mangolpuri for more than 10 years

2. No space available in our house, or nearby

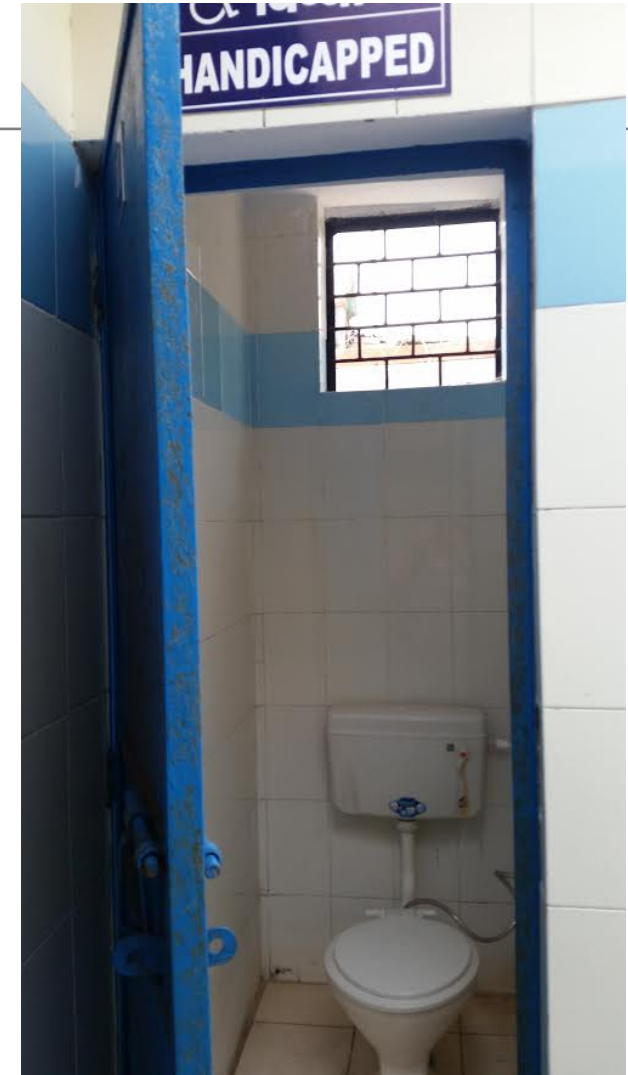
‘Where is the space? Even if there was space, there is no sewer connectivity. People have built toilets that directly drain out into the ditch but our house is in the interiors so there is no mechanism for a toilet. Even if we have a pit latrine, the lanes are so narrow the truck to clean it also won't be able to enter’

- Savitri, early 30s, and lived in Kusumpur Pahari for more than 10 years

Current design of community toilets

Current toilet designs do not address 2 critical needs for women and girls:

1. Biological needs - menstrual hygiene management, cleanliness to prevent spread of diseases and appropriate toilets for those who are elderly or disabled.



Current design of community toilets (2)

2. Socio-cultural concerns - privacy, dignity and safety for themselves and their children



Participant suggestions for safe and clean toilets

From 15 women in order of importance to them:

- 1. Must have doors that close and have locks**
- 2. Separate toilet block for women and girls**
- 3. More lighting**
- 4. Bins to dispose of sanitary napkins**
- 5. Women should be consulted before toilets are built**
- 6. Higher toilets for elderly & disabled women**
- 7. Adequate water facilities to stop competition amongst users**
- 8. Entrances to the men's and women's toilets at opposite ends of block**

Conclusions

1. Passive sanitation infrastructural violence often means women have **NO CHOICE** but to resort to open defecation.
2. Households **will build toilets** if they have the money and space.
3. Gender-based violence means many women and girls **experience fear everyday** when using community toilets or open defecation grounds.
4. Women have developed **many personal coping strategies** to try to mitigate possibility of violence and harassment.
5. Coping strategies often impact women's health and well being.

Suggestions

1. Local urban authorities must develop **effective maintenance regimes** for CTCs before building them
2. Consider making CTCs **multi use facilities** to increase safety and cleanliness
3. **Local women must participate** in decisions about design and location of CTCs
4. CTCs must be open **24 hours a day** to prevent open defecation at night
5. Need **more than one caretaker** per toilet block to ensure safety of women and prevent theft of taps, locks etc
6. Need **more lighting** on roads and lanes leading to toilets
7. CTCs must have **reliable** water supply
8. Loans or funding to be given **directly to women** to build household toilets

References

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