KS TRANSCRIPT

RESEARCHER: R

PARTICIPANT: P

R: Hi, I'm Khadijah Nizamudeen. I am a masters student from Christ University. I invite you to take part in my study concerning women's safety perceptions following relocation. Have you read the informed consent sheet that I've sent you?

P: Yes.

R: Do you consent to being recorded and having your data used in my dissertation?

P: Of course, absolutely.

R: Thank you so much. Can you please pick a pseudonym?

P: KS

R: Okay KS how old are you?

P: I'm 23

R: Okay, what gender do you identify with?

P: I am a female

R: Okay where did you relocate from and where did you move to?

P: So, I relocated to- I relocated to Bangalore from this place, Ajmir. It's in Rajasthan.

R: What was your reason for relocation?

P: So, I'm studying here in a college. I'm doing my master's and that's the reason I moved here. So, for education.

R: Okay. And what's your living arrangement?

P: I'm staying in a PG, in a 1BHK.

R: Okay, thank you. Shall we start?

P: Yeah.

R: Can you please tell me what does the concept of safety mean to you?

P: So, safety is something where you're absolutely comfortable, both physically and emotionally and you don't have to pretend to be anything or anyone else and you can be yourself and it's also about absence of external harm that is there in the environment so yeah.

R: Okay that's your safety- when you first came here, what was your initial perception of safety in this new place?

P: I think safety was just about keeping myself unharmed. So, as a woman, you know, you have to take care of yourself, both physically, emotionally, and making sure that you're not getting manipulated because it is easier for a woman to get manipulated so- what was the question?

R: What was your initial perception?

P: Yeah, so I thought that it would be much more simple and for me, I guess it has been slightly simpler because I do take care of things- I do take care of things beforehand so yeah.

R: Can you elaborate on that?

P: I guess my perception of safety earlier; do you want me to compare it all? Okay, so I guess safety was just about keeping myself unharmed and being with the people that I love and I guess from a place of- I'm speaking from a place of independence. So, I think I am the most safe when I am alone or when I am with two or three of my close friends. That is how I would define safety. And also I feel that after coming here to Bangalore, I feel that I have been much safer as compared to my home place in a lot of areas so for example, people in my city, they used to be more narrow minded that you shouldn't or you should do this thing. But here in Bangalore, I guess the only times when I feel insecure or unsafe is when, you know, you're traveling and people are just looking at you. That is the only time that I felt unsafe. Yeah, mostly in public, but that is also not that much present. It's mostly about language that I feel unsafe about because I see all these reels and videos where people are getting harassed for not speaking Kannada or not speaking any particular language, not just Kannada, but Marathi or Hindi or whatever. So that makes me feel unsafe here.

R: Can you please tell me if your perception of safety has changed after you moved from what you felt initially and what you feel now?

P: I would say that it's more or less the same like I mentioned that there are different domains of safety when you talk about it so as a woman, I would say that I'm much safer here in Bangalore Bangalore is rated as one of the safest cities in India, but again if you go- go to some place in Agra or some other place, maybe North India, it's not that safe physically for a woman and rape cases and sexual assaults are much higher there as compared to here. Not that it's absent, but I feel that people are more insight and knowledge here. So my perception would be that it depends on the people around you if they are making sure that you are comfortable or not.

R: Were there any specific events or incidents that influenced how you view safety here here or there?

P: It's just, I guess the people here if I get out in shorts or something- if I get out in half sleeves, I don't feel that I'm being extremely you know judged by others, but from where I come in Rajasthan, people would judge me for the same there so I think here, like I said, it's completely on the people around you. If they are making you safe or not so I am the same person here and there, but the people there maybe they didn't make me feel safe safe here I am safe. I feel that way so my perception, I guess has changed that it is about the people- people and their brains, which will determine if you are safe or not.

R: Can you please tell me if there were any incidents that made you feel unsafe since you relocated if you're okay to talking about that- any challenges?

P: So, like I mentioned, the major challenge was language and I feel that if I don't speak a particular language here, then I may be you know I may be threatened or I may be hit or whatever is out there. Also another thing is that because Bangalore is very expensive, if you're not able to pay at some place on time or you know, if you don't have that cash or if you don't- if you're not able to pay online, if you're giving cash, then people might take offense to that and they might get frustrated and angry very easily, which is something I've seen here. So people are very short- tempered here in this city so that I guess makes me feel a little unsafe and other than that, most of the people I've met here are very nice, but yes, I do feel unsafe sometimes here not regarding my clothes, not regarding my physical appearance, but I guess language is one thing then money is another thing. Yeah.

R: So, has there been any specific event or something that has made you feel unsafe or thankfully nothing like that yet?

P: One incident happened near my college, so I was walking down the road and there was this drunk man. He was clearly drunk and his nose was beding. And he continiously kept staring at me and looking at me for at least 15 to 20 seconds and then I stopped and I asked him that what's wrong why are you staring so so he he smoked and then when I looked back, he joined his hands and he apologized to me that he shouldn't have stared at me and all of that so that incident made me feel unsafe, for sure. And one of my friends, she was walking down the road and someone stopped and that person started leaking pictures of her and it didn't happen to me, but seeing that I felt unsafe for her and for myself so yeah, that is one thing.

R: Are there any measures or strategies you take to cope with the safety concerns?

P: So, I just make sure that I'm physically strong and that if at least one man attacks me, then I'm able to fight that person off or hit him where he should be hit and I just feel that that's one of the measures. I don't carry pepper spray or anything because I don't think when you're attacked, you have the time to take it out and spray it so that and also I make sure that I'm not on my phone in public when I'm traveling. I mean, you have to be aware when you traveling when you're at least entering a new place, a new area so it's very important to scan that area that you're going to step into so that is one thing that I do. Another thing that I do and then not being on call in public, that is not what I do yeah.

R: You use any technology or anything of that sort to keep yourself safe or anything like that? Avoid certain roads or anything?

P: No, I don't think so. I don't use any technology for safety, but back in my home, I used to. There was this app so if you were ever in danger, even though I've never used that app, but I had it downloaded so if you were in danger, you could tamp on that button and some some help could come. So yeah. Okay.

R: How did your living arrangement and the physical layout of your new environment affect your sense of safety? So, where the campus is located, where your PG is located, how the streets are, streetlights, stuff like that, how has that influenced your sense of safety?

P: Okay, so one thing is that there have been two three incidents where I'm scared because there are multiple dogs here in our area so because I've been bit by a dog, I feel that what if suddenly they start chasing me so that is one thing but it got settled. Another thing was that when I moved into the PG, I heard that you know a lot of the times the PGs, they don't give the deposit back and they have a lot of monetary issues and things going on. So that is another thing that made me feel unsafe and once I heard that in my PG itself, some boy had come and got into a PG so so I just make sure that I'm locking my doors properly and yeah for that where the campus is located or the area itself has that influenced your safety in anyway I think that this area particularly there are people who would stare at you and who would you know chase you or who would pass comments on you. This has happened two or three times with me, but I know people that have gone through it multiple number of times so hearing that I feel more unsafe because I know that today if someone is staring at me or chasing me, I would stop and ask them and I would make sure that I'm in a position of safety while I'm doing so, but for them, I'm scared you were for someone who may not be able to depend, who may not be able to defend themselves and who may not be and who may get manipulated by the person who's doing it like

R: Do you feel like the lack of security cameras or lighting and stuff would add to any sense of like unsafety?

P: No, I don't think so.

R: Uh, like you mentioned you used to see some reels about people harassing someone if they didn't know the language. So has any similar news stories or social media reports about your new location made you feel unsafe before moving here or even after moving here, seeing any of that influenced your sense of safety?

P: Yes, definitely. Recently there was this case which happened in Yeshwanthpur. It's very nearby where I live and there was this person he was walking down the road and he had something in his hand and when they checked, it was his wife's cut face so that happened very close to our area around 3 to 4 kilometres and that was pretty scary. So that is one incident. It happened very recently.

R: Did that affect how you use public transport any of that?

P: No, no, I think that here public transport is very convenient and safe not sure about the bus, but for Metro, at least in the I've always traveled in women's compartment because I don't feel safe in the combined one. because I don't like people touching here in there. So I travel in the women's compartment and I feel safe there. So I would say that public transport is not a problem for me.

R: Before you move, did you say anything about Bangalore that gave you a positive or native sense of safety?

P: I had heard from people that the you know? typical South Indian prejudice that people there are not welcoming and you know they're not nice, all of that, but majority of the people I've met here, they are very sweet and nice. Yes, there is a cultural barrier, but that does not change the nature of a person. If they're good, they're good. If they're not, they're not. So most of the majority of the people I met here, there have been amazing to me so I mean..

R: That's nice. How was making new social connections influenced your sense of safety, like making friends or like getting to know the people around you? How has that helped your sense of safety?

P: I won't say that it has played that much of a role for me and again, like I said that if I'm travelling alone, I would feel much safer if I'm travelling with my friends, I would feel responsible for them as well and if I'm traveling alone, I wouldn't really worry that much because I know that people will not approach me. I don't have that kind of personality that I'm masculine in nature, so men don't like that gladly and yeah, so I don't think it has played that much of a role.

R: Or has like knowing that there is somebody you can call, if anything, has that added to your safety or in any way?

P: No, I do not like asking for help so I depend a lot on myself. And if there is something I call my partner if that is the case. Oh yeah, I have a very close guy friend. He lives very nearby, so I would call him. I am never called him, but I would.

R: So do you do anything actively to make sure that you can be independent like you physically train or anything like that?

P: Yes, I go to the gym. I will have to start again. I will to start again. I was going to the gym in the vacation not before that and I work out here at my room itself, but I think it's more about the quickness that you have. It's not always about the strength that you have. It's about your Yeah, being aware and vigilant and smart So if you hit the person in one right spot, that person will probably collapse there. So you need to figure out how to do that and yes, in my school and in my previous college, we were given self-defense cut training. So I have some knowledge from there.

R: You feel that that knowledge has influenced your sense of safety in any way, knowing that you can defend it?

P: Definitely, definitely. So there are certain areas in our bodies, which are much more yeah sensitive. Like eyes, your knees, your foot, your this thing, neck, and also your elbow. So these are some areas and your chest. So you should not hit in a place where there is a lot of muscle, so you should probably hit in the areas that I mentioned earlier and you would be safe. And of course, the main this thing. Yeah.

R: Can you please describe how the stress of relocation may have affected your perceptions of safety? For example, when you first come here, you are defined a place to live, unpack all of that

can be very stressful for a lot of people. So has such stressful anxiety of not knowing like what's going to happen influenced your sense of safety or made you feel vulnerable or anything?

P: Actually, it's the opposite. For me, moving here was a great opportunity, because I love exploring new things. I love, you know, waiting for the next thing to happen. So I do like being stuck. I like it when things are always moving and things are challenging. And yes, PG was one of the main concerns that was there and with time, I think it took me around four or five months to get settled in until unless- sorry until I felt very safe and then after that, it's been comparatively it's more stable for me.

R: Last question can you please share if an experience where cultural differences in your new environment if any, influenced your sense of safety, like you mentioned earlier, there's definitely kind of a cultural barrier. So has that influenced your sense of safety, any incident of that sort?

P: Not at all. I think I don't think it has a shape. Yeah, I don't think it has shaped my sense of safety, like the language barrier culture. Language is one thing, but then that depends on the person who is getting offended if I'm not speaking their language. As far as culture is concerned, I'm more interested in knowing about different cultures so I won't say that it made me feel unsafe in any way. In fact, I would say that it made me feel that, you know, people here are also normal people and we've made so much prejudice against them that their culture is so different, their way of living is so different. But when you look at them closely, you see that you know they are just living and existing in their own world. They're following their own traditional and culture and actually love having the things that they make here Pongal [tamilian dish] they make Kheer [pudding] and stuff yeah. So I really like that. I don't think it has made me feel unsafe. Language, definitely, because people do get offended when you don't follow their thing.

R: Thank you so much. Is there anything else you would like to say about the topic or ad or anything?

P: I would just say that safety, even though it's very objective thing, I would say that it depends on the place that you're moving from and where you're getting relocated so like I said that from a place that I come Rajasthan it's a pretty conservative town and when you come from that kind of a place to a place like Bangalore, you feel much more comfortable and safe because at least for me, I'm not that close to my family as such, other than a few people and, you know, I always felt very judged there. But since I've come here, I feel that I can be on my own and I can do whatever I want and I've started to you know take care of myself physically emotionally, and also safety wise so when you live alone, you realize that you can also take care of yourself and that increases your confidence and self-belief.

R: Thank you so much.