KIRTANA TRANSCRIPT

I: INTERVIEWER

P: PARTICIPANT

[0:00] I: Hello, I'm Khadija, a master's student from Christ University. Thank you so much for taking part in my study about women's safety perceptions following relocation.

[0:09] I: Have you had the chance to read the consent form?

[0:10] P: Yes, I have had the chance.

[0:11] I: And do you consent to me using your audio for my dissertation?

[0:13] P: I do consent.

[0:19] I: Thank you so much. Only me and my research guide will have access to it. Is that fine?

[0:22] P: Yeah, that's fine.

[0:24] I: Okay. Can we start with some intro questions, if you're ready?

[0:26] P: Yeah, sure.

[0:33] I: Can you please pick a pseudonym, a fake name that I can use for you when I use your data?

[0:35] P: Kirtana.

[0:36] I: Okay, Kirtana. How old are you?

[0:38] P: I'm 21.

[0:40] I: And what is your gender?

[0:41] P: I'm a female.

[0:43] I: Where did you relocate from? And where did you move to?

[0:45] P: I relocated from Coimbatore and I moved to Bangalore.

[0:49] I: Okay. And when did you relocate?

[0:50] P: It's been about two and a half to three weeks.

[0:52] I: And what's your reason for relocation?

[0:54] P: I'm pursuing higher education here in Bangalore.

[0:56] I: Okay, great. And last question, can you please tell me your living arrangement?

[0:59] P: I live in a PG cum hostel.

[1:01] I: Great. If you're ready, can we start with the main questions?

[1:03] P: Okay, great.

[1:06] I: Let's start with something simple. Can you tell me what the concept of safety means to you — what helps you feel physically safe or emotionally secure in a space?

[1:39] P: Safety would mean probably that I don't have to always be paranoid of my surroundings. Like, I don't feel like there are men always looking at me. I'm very cautious, so if I don't feel that from inside, then I know I'm safe.

[2:13] I: So would you describe your safety as feeling physically safe in your environment, and able to navigate your space?

[2:17] P: Yes.

[2:18] I: And what about emotional comfort? What makes you feel emotionally safe or unsafe?

[2:31] P: Could you define emotionally safe?

[2:34] I: Sure. You're able to fully express yourself, not worried about discrimination, able to dress how you want, hang out with who you like, etc.

[2:55] P: Unsafe would be if someone talks to me loudly or stares at me. Or if someone says something that makes no sense out of nowhere — that makes me feel emotionally unsafe and vulnerable.

[3:32] I: You've mentioned you came here two to three weeks ago. What was your initial perception of safety when you arrived?

[3:51] P: My initial impression — the first day I was out with my parents shopping, a guy kept looking at me. I brushed it off, but when I said my phone number at the counter, he texted me later. I freaked out and blocked him. I told my parents right away. It was scary, but the hostel I live in is very safe.

[5:00] P: I feel really safe inside my hostel. They have great security. I go to the gym early morning, around 4 AM, and even then, I feel safe.

[6:10] P: But after that incident, I was anxious and paranoid. I became more cautious. I kept thinking — is someone listening when I share information?

[6:35] I: Has your perception changed since then? Gotten better or worse?

[6:50] P: I had to take the metro. I was anxious. My dad was not okay with me going, but I had to. The ride was okay. But on the way back, a guy sat next to me and said something I didn't understand, then complimented me. I responded coldly, he left. It was fine. I haven't gone out much since, but I feel a bit more confident.

[8:02] I: How did that incident on the metro make you feel?

[8:04] P: I was able to brush it off. There were people around, and they noticed. But you never know — people might just be bystanders. Still, I try not to generalize.

[8:40] I: So how would you describe your safety perception now?

[8:45] P: It's like a spectrum — I'm still cautious, but I won't let it stop me from doing necessary things. I avoid unnecessary outings and prefer to go with someone I know.

[9:19] I: Are there any specific measures or strategies you use to feel safer?

[9:23] P: I try to return to my hostel before dark. I carry a metal water bottle — just in case. I also stay aware of my surroundings.

[10:18] I: How does that help you feel?

[10:20] P: It makes me feel I have some control. But I know I can do more. Some of my friends haven't had extreme experiences, but I believe better safe than sorry.

[10:56] I: Any other challenges or incidents that made you feel unsafe?

[11:00] P: Once me and my friend took a Rapido to community service. The driver got angry about the distance and told us to cancel. We refused. He started speaking rudely in Kannada even though he knew English and Hindi. We were cautious throughout.

[13:24] I: How did you cope?

[13:26] P: We talked in Hindi, even joked to reduce tension, but I was watching the route the whole time.

[14:00] I: Did you continue using Rapido after that?

[14:02] P: Yes. The next time it was fine. I try not to generalize, but being in a group helps.

[14:28] I: How has making social connections impacted your safety?

[14:32] P: It really helps. My friends validated what happened to me. Sharing experiences helps us learn how to respond. Being in a group also deters others.

[15:00] I: Was there a period you didn't have friends yet? How did you handle that?

[15:06] P: Yes. Once, my roommate wasn't there and I had to go out alone. I stayed on the phone with my mom the whole time. Another time, I called a UG friend while walking back alone at night.

[15:49] I: Would you say that's a common strategy for you?

[15:51] P: Yes. I use it often.

[16:01] I: Did the stress of relocation impact your sense of safety — missing home, not making friends immediately?

[16:30] P: I'm not someone who gets homesick easily. But yeah, I miss having that one constant person. In Kerala or Coimbatore, I felt safer stepping out alone. Here, even if I'm dressed conservatively, people stare — that didn't happen back home.

[18:32] I: Does that change how you behave? Do you avoid dressing how you'd normally dress?

[18:36] P: Definitely. I brought sleeveless tops, but now I only wear T-shirts. It's sad. I like to dress up once in a while, but now I can't. Even if someone says it's fine, I won't feel comfortable.

[19:48] I: You mentioned the roads. How does the physical environment affect your sense of safety?

[20:00] P: During class hours, it's crowded. But otherwise, the roads are quiet. There's a park nearby where men sit and smoke. Even if I'm walking straight, I'm hyperaware. I wasn't this cautious in Coimbatore or Kochi.

[22:05] I: Have you seen news stories or social media posts that affected your safety perception?

[22:10] P: Yes. Even before getting in, my mom and I saw stories about Bangalore — harassment in broad daylight, language-related arguments, people not intervening. It made me cautious.

[24:45] I: Can you elaborate on those news stories and how they affected you?

[24:50] P: Stories about auto drivers getting physical, women being attacked, and no one helping. It made me fearful and cautious.

[25:36] I: You lived elsewhere for UG. Have you experienced any cultural differences or misunderstandings here?

[26:09] P: Mainly the language barrier. I also don't understand why men stare here. Back in Kerala and Coimbatore, people mind their own business.

[27:08] P: I stayed in city areas before. Maybe the area makes a difference.

[27:40] I: Was there anything you wished existed here to help you feel safer?

[27:55] P: I didn't notice major infrastructure differences. Maybe it's the mindset or upbringing. I'm not sure.

[28:27] I: Did the lack of safety ever affect your views on education or make you regret choosing this place?

[28:32] P: No. I don't regret it. I believe I'll still have good experiences. But I wish people were more like in Kerala — more chill.

[29:26] I: Is there anything else you'd like to share?

[29:36] P: I hope there's a solution. No girl should feel unsafe anywhere. We need interventions.

[29:59] I: What would that intervention look like?

[30:00] P: Better upbringing — for both boys and girls. Also more law enforcement, like pink police units, especially in sensitive areas.

[30:40] I: Do you think being vigilant or carrying pepper spray is vital for women away from home?

[30:43] P: Yes. It's vital to be cautious and not alone. It's frustrating that we have to do all this. My brother had more freedom. I can't do the same things he did.

[31:10] I: Thank you so much for that. That was really great. I really enjoyed hearing your insights. If you have any questions or want to withdraw your data, please let me know. Thank you!

[31:20] P: Thank you.