

1. REACHOUT ANTI-DISCRIMINATION PROJECT



1. REACHOUT ANTI-DISCRIMINATION PROJECT

- KISHALAY BHATTACHARJEE

August, 2014. A couple from Delhi with their only child decide to visit the Taj Mahal over a weekend. They are both business school graduates working in corporate houses. Ethnically they belong to the eastern Indian state of Assam. While the man and the child find their way into the monument, the lady is struggling to explain to the guards that she is an Indian citizen. In India foreigners have higher entry charges to national monuments and the guards at the Taj Mahal are convinced that the lady is a foreigner because she doesn't look 'Indian' to them. Not just the guards, even the visitors in the queue join the chorus insisting that she indeed looks like a foreigner. She shows the guards her government identification cards like the PAN card and AADHAR card but they want her to produce a passport that most Indians do not carry around with them in their own country. Humiliated and embarrassed at this experience, the family decides to first walk away but due to the rush of visitors the guards eventually allow them in. Nothing describes so pithily the feeling of discrimination based on physical appearance and ethnicity.

Reachout Anti-Discrimination Project was launched to address the need to recognize ethnic and racial discrimination that is so prevalent in India.

To take effective measures to prevent and combat discrimination needs deepening the understanding of discrimination, its causes and extent - as well as the impact of policies and practices designed to tackle it.

With frequent reports of alleged racist attacks in Delhi and the National Capital Region, Reachout Foundation perceived a lack of comprehensive data on the nature of alleged discrimination against people from Northeastern India in cities like Delhi. Our emphasis thus has been to generate comprehensive and defensible empirical data on the

extent and variation of racist attitudes and experiences, in order that they could inspire or guide anti-discrimination policies.

We tend to make negative generalisations about the 'other' and discrimination is not just an attitude in Delhi-NCR, it is experienced everywhere. Even in India's Northeast it is a daily emotion but the scope of this report is contained to Delhi-NCR.

If stereotypical perceptions are to change and the inclusive idea of India has to become a reality rather than a concept there is an urgent need for policymakers, academia, the media, civil society and public and corporate stakeholders to come together and strengthen people to people relationship. The way forward is to look for more partnerships and alliances so that we can retain the diversity of this country.

Howard Winant the well-known race theorist says,

“Will race ever be "transcended"? Will the world ever "get beyond" race? Probably not. But the entire world still has a chance of overcoming the stratification, the hierarchy, the taken-for-granted injustice and inhumanity that so often accompanies the "race concept." Like religion or language, race can be accepted as part of the spectrum of the human condition, while it is simultaneously and categorically resisted as a means of stratifying national or global societies. Nothing is more essential in the effort to reinforce democratic commitments, not to mention global survival and prosperity, as we enter a new millennium.”

2. DISCRIMINATION IN INDIA



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2. DISCRIMINATION IN INDIA

- **SATYABRAT PAL**

There is a famous story in the UN about the three senior officers of the Indian Army contingent sent to Sierra Leone in 2000 for a peacekeeping operation, men from Himachal, Darjeeling and Tamil Nadu, whom the rebel leader refused to believe were Indians. He thought the Pahari was European, the Gurkha Chinese and the Tamil one of them. Since West Africans are racially homogenous, and the only “Indians” most of them have seen are the descendants of Gujarati traders, sallow-skinned and aquiline, he was naturally bewildered by men who claimed to be Indians, though none of them looked like each other or like the Indians he had known. “Where”, he asked suspiciously, “are the Indians?”

That delightful befuddlement in the African bush sums up the infinite variety that makes India unique. While we boast that India is a sub-continent, not just a country, our diversity makes us not just a sub-continent, but a microcosm of the world. That is something to marvel at, to cherish and to celebrate. It is the greatest pity, therefore, that so many Indians too have such false and narrow ideas of what and who an Indian is, that they too exclude Indians who do not fit into their bigoted and ignorant mould. We truly are a rainbow nation, even more than the South Africans who now proudly say this about themselves, but many Indians would much rather not have this brilliant range of Indianness, they would prefer the synthesis of white.

That obsession with the “fair and lovely”, as if only the fair can be lovely, reflects the dark and ugly side of India, and a deep inferiority complex, possibly rooted in our colonial experience, though other races, including the African, which have suffered as much, have no such delusional aspirations. Tragically, it sets off paroxysms of racism

against Africans in India. For decades, African students have studied on scholarships in India, but very few carry fond memories of their stay; they speak with sadness of isolation, of being met by suspicion, contempt and fear. Tagore pilloried the Indian phobia about colour in a superb poem on the beauty of a village girl: the villagers call her black, he wrote, I call her *krishnakoli*. They would still call her black, and despise her for being darker than them, though she might well claim descent from royalty, since Bengal was briefly ruled by an African dynasty in the 15th century.

The Indians who despise Africans as culturally inferior because they are darker draw their lineage to Gandhi, who once described his campaign on behalf of the South African Indians as a “continued struggle against degradation sought to be inflicted upon us by the European, who desire to degrade us to the level of the raw Kaffir, whose occupation is hunting and whose sole ambition is to collect a certain number of cattle to buy a wife with, and then pass his life in indolence and nakedness”.

That someone like Gandhi could disparage Africans in such crude terms shows how deep-seated our prejudices are. It is, sadly, not the only crass and cruel manifestation of extreme prejudice in India, though Article 15 of the Constitution prohibits “discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth”. The International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which India has ratified, having helped to draft it, prohibits “any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life”. Each one of the prohibitions of the Constitution and the Convention is honoured more in the breach than the observance in India.

The laws enacted and institutions set up to end discrimination and protect victims are overwhelmed by the prejudices that permeate our society. The two National Commissions, for Scheduled Castes and for Scheduled Tribes, established by the Constitution, are voices in the wilderness, almost powerless to help. The National Human Rights Commission holds public hearings in areas where this discrimination is most rampant, to offer redress to victims and to educate them about their rights, but this is like trying to drain an ocean with a colander. The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act details the endemic practices that are now crimes, spelling out how they should be prevented, how victims should be protected and their tormentors punished, but most civil servants either do not know the law, or willfully ignore their duties under it, or argue that there would be riots if they enforced it. Only a fraction of the crimes committed against the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes is recorded by the police, only a further fraction is investigated diligently enough to end in a charge-sheet, a minuscule percentage of these is prosecuted with any vigour, and acquittals are therefore common. Across the board, it seems to be the astonishing view of the State and its institutions that racial and caste prejudice is a safety-valve, which they dare not turn off.

Part of the problem clearly stems from the fact that, uniquely among the world's great religions, Hinduism, which most Indians practice, is founded on a two-fold discrimination. While others lay down different standards for believers and non-believers, only Hinduism also discriminates between those who practice the same faith. The pernicious system of caste, so central to the Hindu weltanschauung, poisons and narrows the minds of many Indians. They read in the Bhagavad Gita, for instance, that the loss of dharma breeds impiety, if women are impious there is an intermingling of castes, a confusion of castes leads to hell. The spirit of Arjuna breathes through the khap panchayat. Honour killings can invoke heroic sanctions.

A brilliant and profound report prepared for the NHRC on the status of Scheduled Castes in India held that “the entire issue of curbing violence against Scheduled Castes is not simply one of effectively administering criminal justice and punishing the offenders, but involves massive transformation of a society steeped in the social legacy of centuries. What was not quite foreseen, at least not so vividly, was that the battle for this transformation would be so hard and brutal, vested interests so entrenched and institutions of governance so fragile to deal with the forces involved.”

Compounding this is the fact that, until recently, most Indians rarely travelled out of their States, marrying only within their language group and in their caste. The only traditions and culture they learnt were those of their linguistic group. Everything else was alien. In the Bengal that I grew up in, India was divided between Bengalis and non-Bengalis. Anything not Bengali was *outré*. It needed no further definition. The words used in polite Calcutta society for the workers from UP, Bihar and Odisha were all derogatory, the counterparts of “nigger” in the US of the 20th century. Whereas it would now be unthinkable to use that word in the US to describe a black man or woman, Bengalis still think nothing of using their equivalents for their neighbours. What is true of Bengal is, I am sure, true of the other States as well. We are blind and deaf to the pain we casually cause others, and particularly to those whose insecurities and sensitivities a caring society should be most solicitous of.

The Sachar Committee, set up in 2005 to study “the social, economic and educational status of the Muslim community of India”, began its report with the bold and absolutely true assertion that “in any country, the faith and confidence of the minorities in the functioning of the State in an impartial manner is an acid test of its being a just State”. Its conclusions therefore were deeply troubling. The Committee found that “the Community exhibits deficits and deprivation in practically all dimensions of development. In fact, by and large, Muslims rank somewhat above SCs/STs but below Hindu-OBCs, Other Minorities and Hindu- General (mostly upper castes) in almost all indicators considered. In addition to the ‘development deficit’, the perception among

Muslims that they are discriminated against and excluded is widespread, which exacerbates the problem.”

That Muslims, and other minorities, have this perception is of no interest to the majority, settled in its belief that its insularity and brutality have the sanction of holy writ. Any pain their victims suffer from the discrimination they experience is their karma, also divinely ordained.

In the sporadic debate about the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, it is rarely accepted as a point of concern that this law, a blot on our democracy, is in force only in the North-East and in J&K. These lands are part of India, but most Indians do not quite see those who live there as Indians; the tribes of the North-East are uncomfortably like the Chinese, the Kashmiri Muslims are closet Pakistanis. However, the fact that the Army, whose primary mission is to fight enemy soldiers, is used against only these citizens of India deepens the conviction in these States that the rest of India sees them as hostile foreigners. And that the Army has an impunity to act against them that it would not enjoy in a war against a foreign force only deepens their alienation.

The report of the Justice Verma Committee set up after the particularly egregious gang-rape in New Delhi in 2012, reminded us that the victims of discrimination in India suffer cruelties in every aspect of their identities, including for their sex, ethnicity and religion. It noted bluntly that “the brutalities of the armed forces faced by residents in the border areas have led to a deep disenchantment, and the lack of mainstreaming of such persons into civil society. Serious allegations of persistent sexual assault on the women in such areas and conflict areas are causing more alienation. The nation has to account for the tears of millions of women and other marginalized sections of the society which has been ignored owing to institutional apathy.”

Whether society can be shaken out of its apathy remains to be seen, but it cannot be allowed to inflict so much suffering in a smug trance. The first step must be to hold a mirror up to society, and to persuade it to look into it. Mirror, mirror on the wall... This means detailing the horrors that it sleepwalks through. It means putting together the facts and figures that establish the range and depth of discrimination in our country, forcing society to listen to the traumas and the anguish of those whose lives it has blighted. Initiatives like the *Delhi-NCR Discrimination Survey Report* are therefore invaluable. They need to be supported. Even more, they need to be read, heeded, understood, and above all, acted upon.

3. DELHI-NCR DISCRIMINATION SURVEY 2014



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3. DELHI-NCR DISCRIMINATION SURVEY 2014

3.1 Methodology Notes:

- **ASHISH RANJAN**

The main objective of the present survey is to understand the extent and scope of ethnic/racial discrimination perceived by people from India's Northeast living in Delhi-NCR. The targeted population for the survey were people from all the eight north-eastern states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura who are currently living in Delhi and the NCR (Ghaziabad, Noida and Gurgaon). The respondents were selected using mixed sampling techniques of probability and non-probability methods. The targeted sample was of 1000 respondents across thirty different locations in Delhi and the NCR. (The list of the locations can be found below).

A multi-stage sampling technique was used. For instance, at the first stage all the locations in Delhi and NCR were selected purposively. Since exact locations of the targeted population were not easy to identify, therefore snow ball sampling, a non-probability technique, was used to identify the locations where the targeted population could be approached. Since the issue of discrimination is very sensitive and everyone may not want to participate, therefore at second stage where selection of respondents was to be made, the simple random sampling method was used as a tool. Through the simple random sampling method this survey approached more than 2000 people and there was a completion rate of almost fifty percent, with 947 participants proceeding with the interview.

The face-to-face interviews were conducted using a standard structured questionnaire by trained field investigators. As English language is spoken and understood by the majority of the respondents, therefore the English questionnaire was executed in the

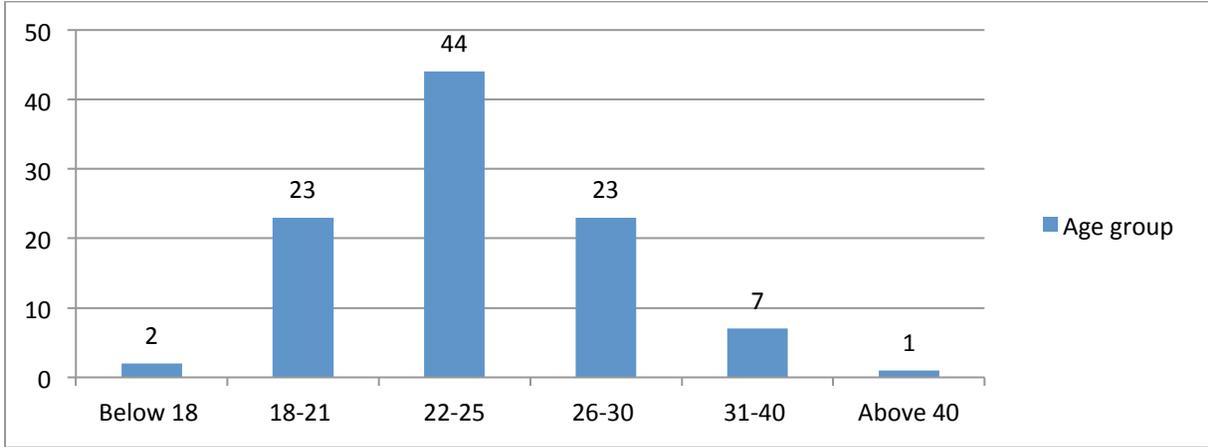
field. The questionnaire has been developed over the period of time by a team of researchers under the guidance of Kishalay Bhattacharjee.

A pre-test of the questionnaire was done and important changes were made as per the inputs received during pre-test. The survey was conducted between September and October 2014. The survey was designed and analyzed by Kishalay Bhattacharjee from Reachout Foundation, Bengaluru and Ashish Ranjan from Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi.

3.1.1 Demographics Of Respondents

This survey aims to understand the perception regarding discrimination against people from India’s Northeast residing in Delhi-NCR. A total targeted sample was of 1000 respondents. This sample was distributed in various locations in Delhi and NCR region among the 8 different states of Northeast India. We spoke to different age group of people who are living in Delhi since last one year to 13 years. 67 per cent samples were male respondents while rest 33 per cent were female respondents and their age groups are as follows:

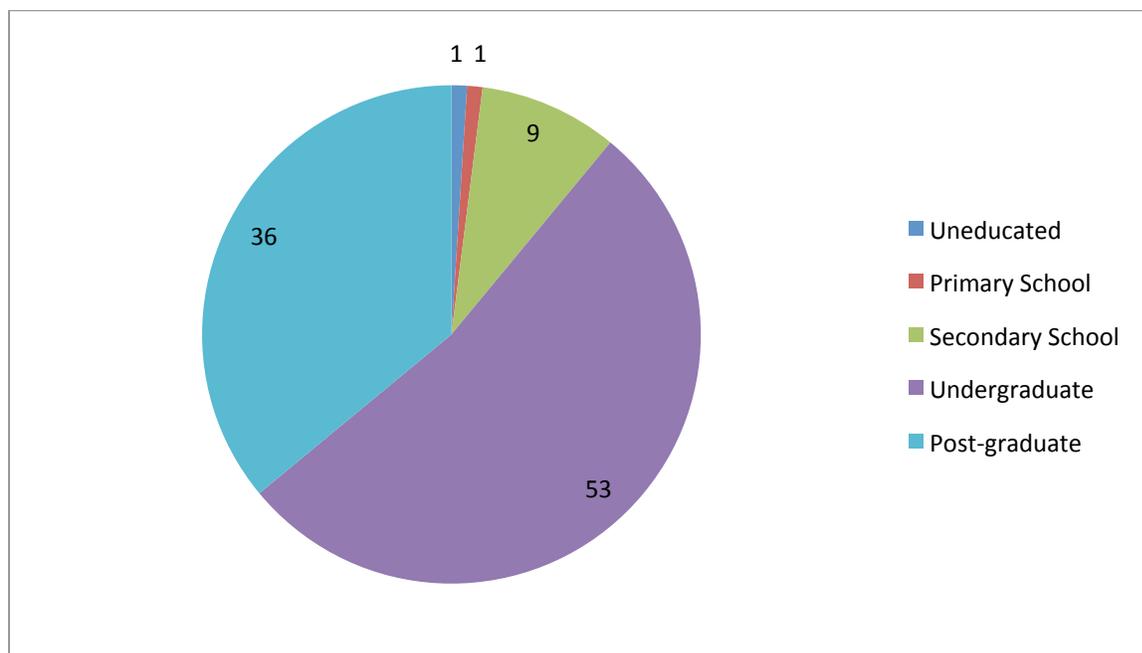
Figure 1: Age group of the respondents



Note: All figures are in percentage

As we know the literacy rate in Northeast is significantly high. We found that the majority of respondents (99%) had received some level of education, with the greatest percentage having completed their undergraduate studies. Additionally, over one third had obtained post-graduate degrees.

Figure 2: Education level of the respondents



Note: All figures are in percentage

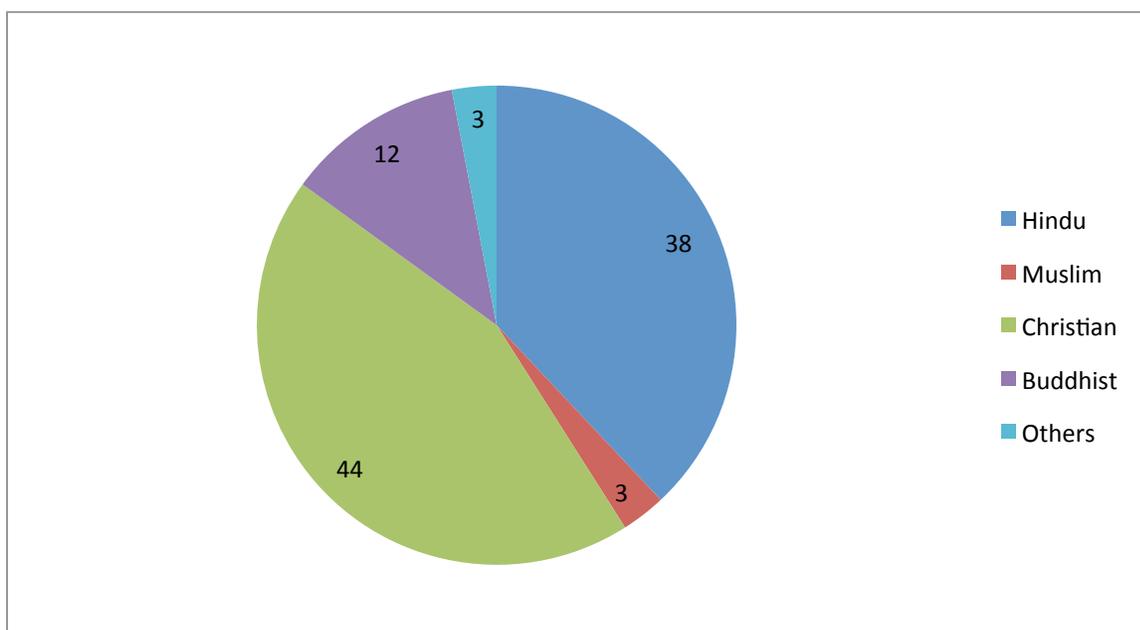
Interestingly, the majority of people surveyed are students and relocated to Delhi to pursue their university degree. The majority of them are studying at Delhi University and Jawaharlal Nehru University.

Due to lack of data on location of people from the Northeast in Delhi-NCR, this survey found disproportionate state wise figure. The data reveals that majority of the respondents were from Manipur, followed by Assam and Nagaland. The sample from states like Sikkim and Tripura were very low but when we disaggregated the data, the study found that the experience of discrimination is almost the same as the overall figure about the feeling on discrimination in Delhi by the people from Northeast.

Interestingly the data indicates that respondents from states like Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Tripura experienced more discrimination than the respondents from high proportion of the sampled states.

Most of the respondents were Christian (44%) while second highest were from the Hindu (38%) community. Other religions reported by respondents included Buddhist (12%), Muslim (3%) and other (3%).

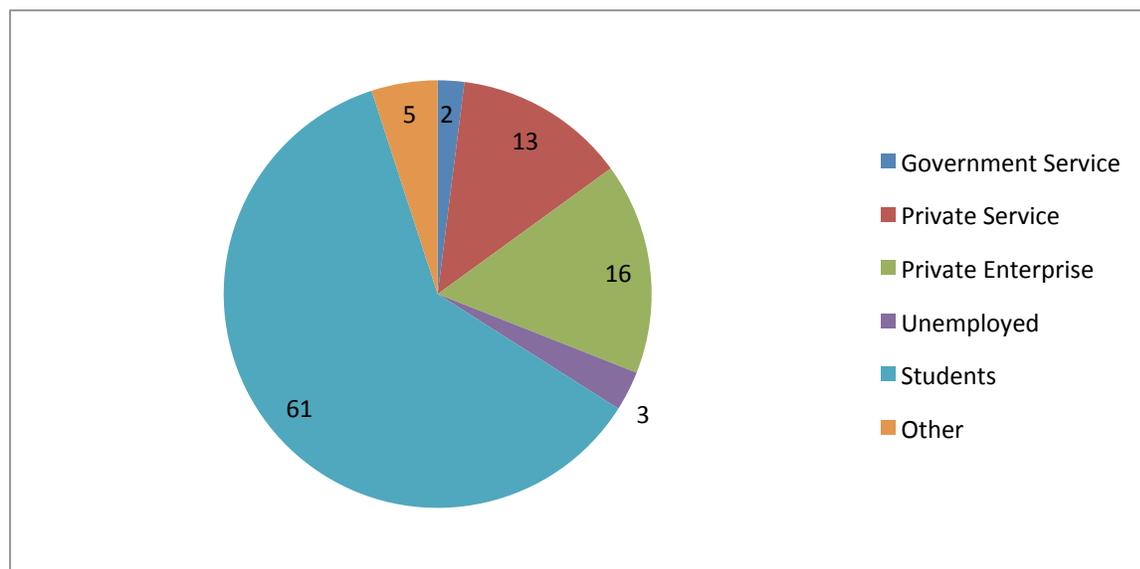
Figure 3: Religion of the respondents



Note: All figures are in percentage

Looking at the respondents' employment, the team found that 2 percent of the surveyed sample is working as a government employee and around 30 percent are working in either private services or engaged in private enterprises. According to the data gathered, the majority (92%) of respondents rent their homes.

Figure 4: Profession of the respondents



Note: All figures are in percentage

3.1.2 List Of Sampled Locations

North Delhi: Hudson Lane, Indira Vihar, Gandhi Vihar, Dhaka, Sant Nagar, Vijay Nagar,

South Delhi: Amar Colony, Lajpat Nagar, Sunlight Colony, Malviya Nagar, Sarojini Nagar, South Extension, Safdarjung Enclave, Munirka, Vasant Kunj, Ashram, Greater Kailash, HauzKhas, R.K. Puram, Maidan Garhi,

East Delhi: Laxmi Nagar, Mayur Vihar, Trilokpuri, Rohini,

West Delhi: Rajori Garden, Tri Nagar, Janakpuri, Krishna Nagar

Other places in Delhi: Gol Market, Budh Vihar, Dayanand Colony, Jivan Nagar, Panchsheel Vihar, Mohhamadpur,

Delhi-NCR: Ghaziabad, Noida and Sikandarpur (Gurgaon)

4. BASIC FINDINGS: DELHI-NCR DISCRIMINATION SURVEY



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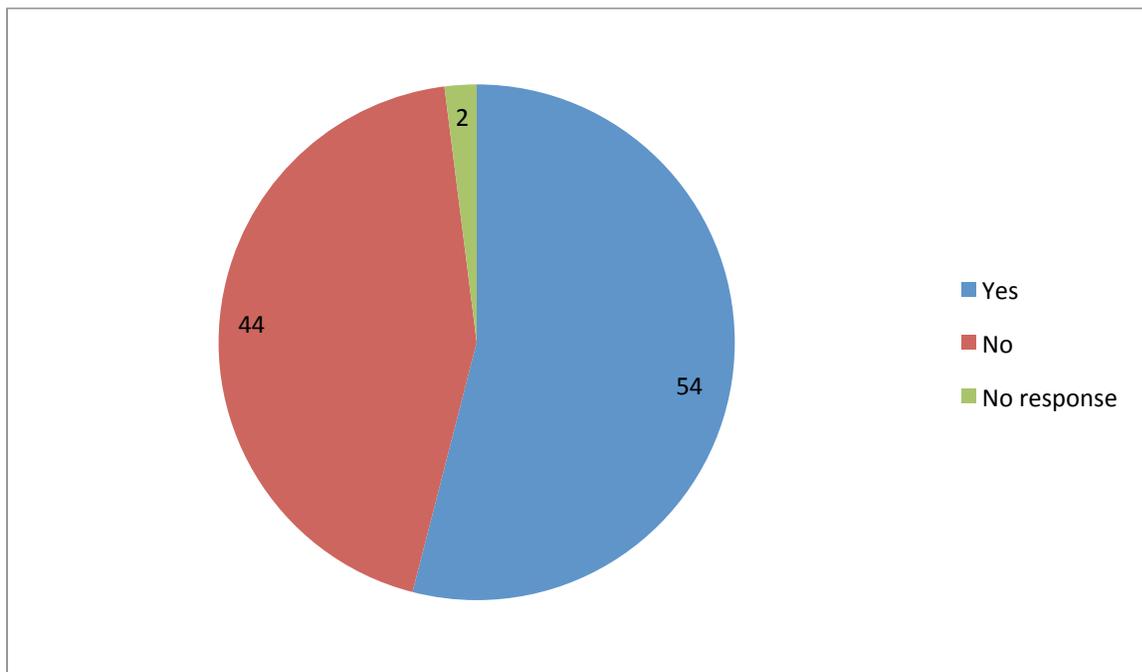
- KISHALAY BHATTACHARJEE

- ASHISH RANJAN

4.1 Is Discrimination A Reality?

Is discrimination a reality for those individuals from the Northeast who are living in Delhi? While we can't say for certain whether or not these individuals have been discriminated against, the study reveals that slightly more than half of respondents perceived as such.

Figure 1: Perceived discrimination

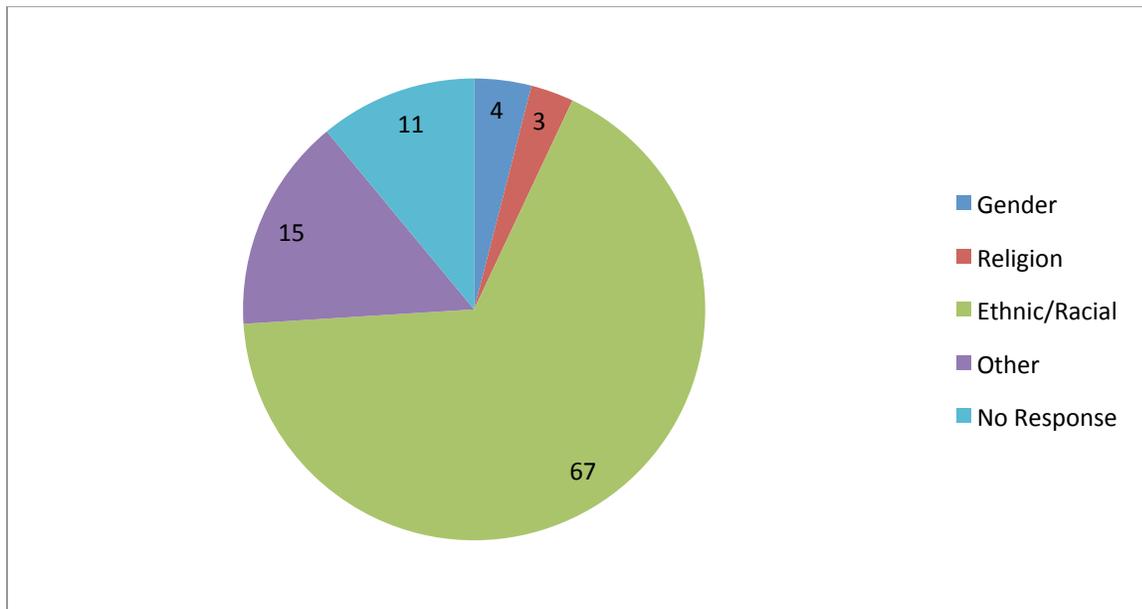


Note: All figures are in percentage

4.2 What Are The Kinds Of Discrimination?

The study reveals that majority of respondents who felt discriminated said that they faced ethnic or racial discrimination. 67 per cent respondents said that they were the victims of ethnic/racial discrimination while 4 per cent claimed gender discrimination and 3 per cent said they were discriminated on basis of their religion. 11 per cent respondents did not express any opinion on this.

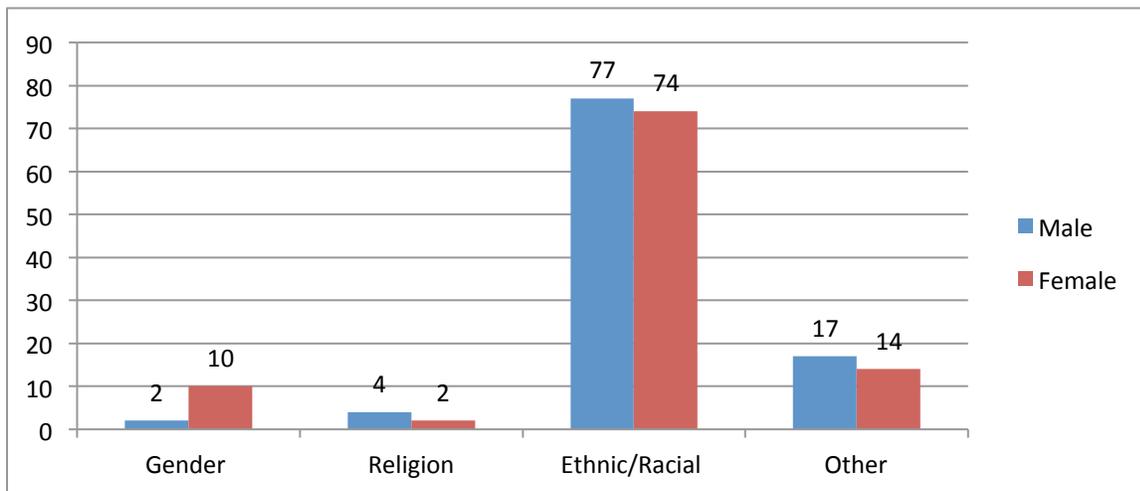
Figure 2: Kinds of discrimination



Note: All figures are in percentage

Males and females reported along similar lines when it came to the basis of discrimination. Both females and males identified their ethnicity as the greatest determinant of discrimination. Ethnic/ racial discrimination exist among 77 per cent of male as compared to 74 per cent female respondents who think that ethical/racial discrimination is what they have experienced in their stay in Delhi-NCR.

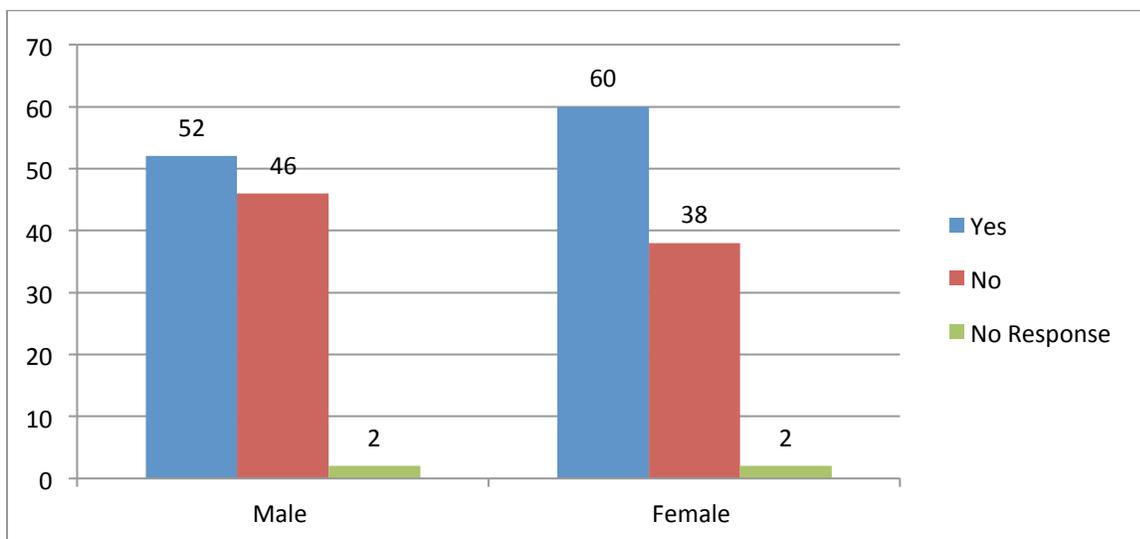
Figure 3: Gender opinion on different kinds of discrimination



Note: All figures are in percentage

If we see the gender division for admission of facing discrimination we find that women are the worst victims of discrimination though the gender ratio is not much different.

Figure 4: Discrimination and gender

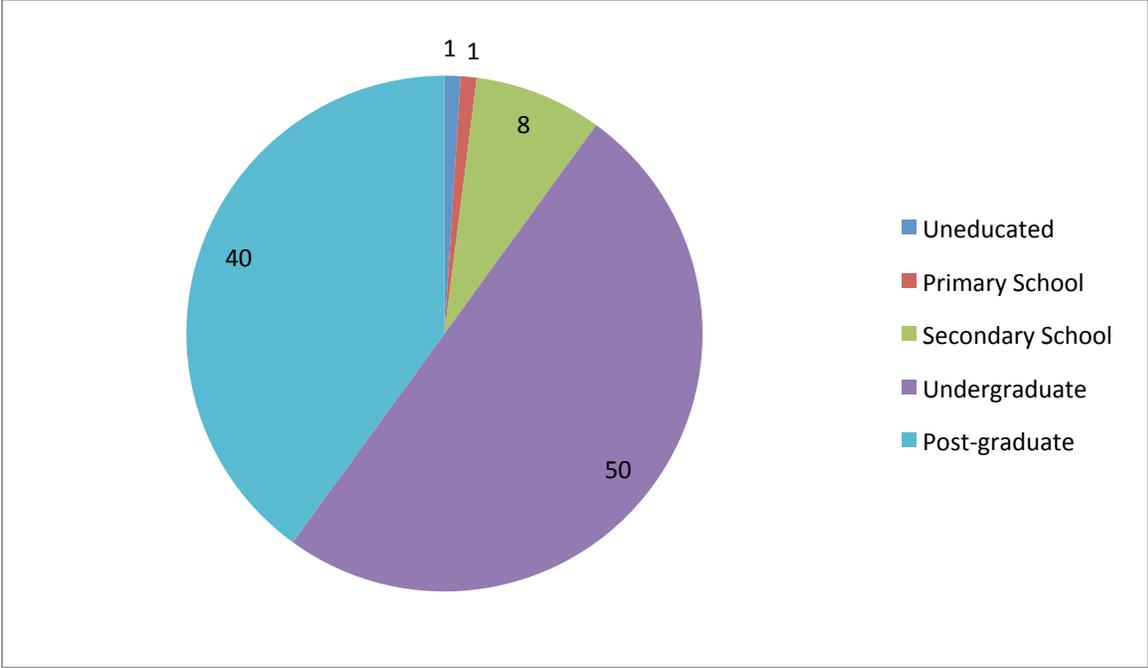


Note: All figures are in percentage

If we look at the educational background of those who experienced discrimination, two aspects emerge. First, the achieved sample overwhelmed with the educated respondents

and found such a small portion of individuals who received lower level of education. Second, of those who endured discrimination, 90 per cent of them were either undergraduate or post-graduate and they claimed that they have faced discrimination of some sort. The table below indicates that how people from different levels of education have faced discrimination.

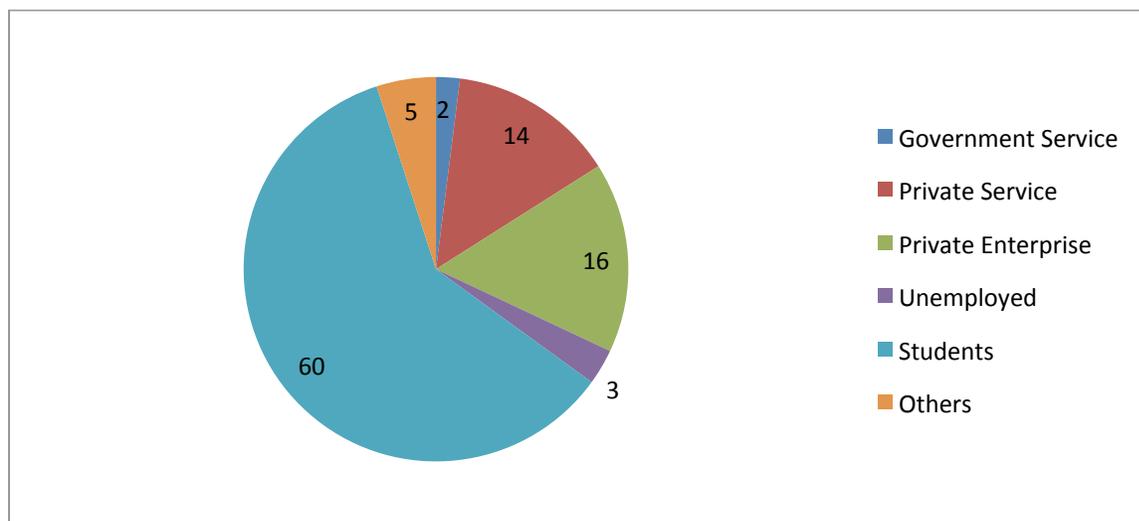
Figure 5: Discrimination by educational background



Note: All figures are in percentage

If we consider the profession of the respondents, students are more likely to report having experienced discrimination. Their proportion is very high as against other groups. Among those who have faced discrimination, 60 per cent were students followed by people engaged in private enterprises and private services. Government employees are the least who admitted to have faced discrimination. The graph (Figure 6) indicates this division.

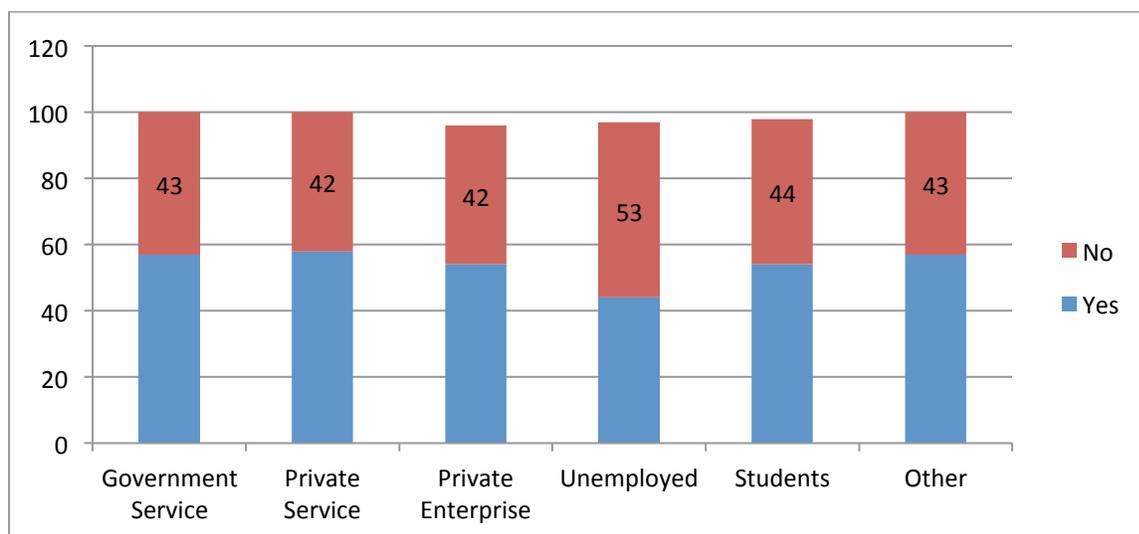
Figure 6: Discrimination by profession



Note: All figures are in percentage

Although the difference among the victims of discrimination are very different in terms of their profession which also depends on their number in Delhi, but across the various professions the opinion is more or less the same. The graph (Figure 6a) displays the percentage of individuals who reported experiencing discrimination by profession.

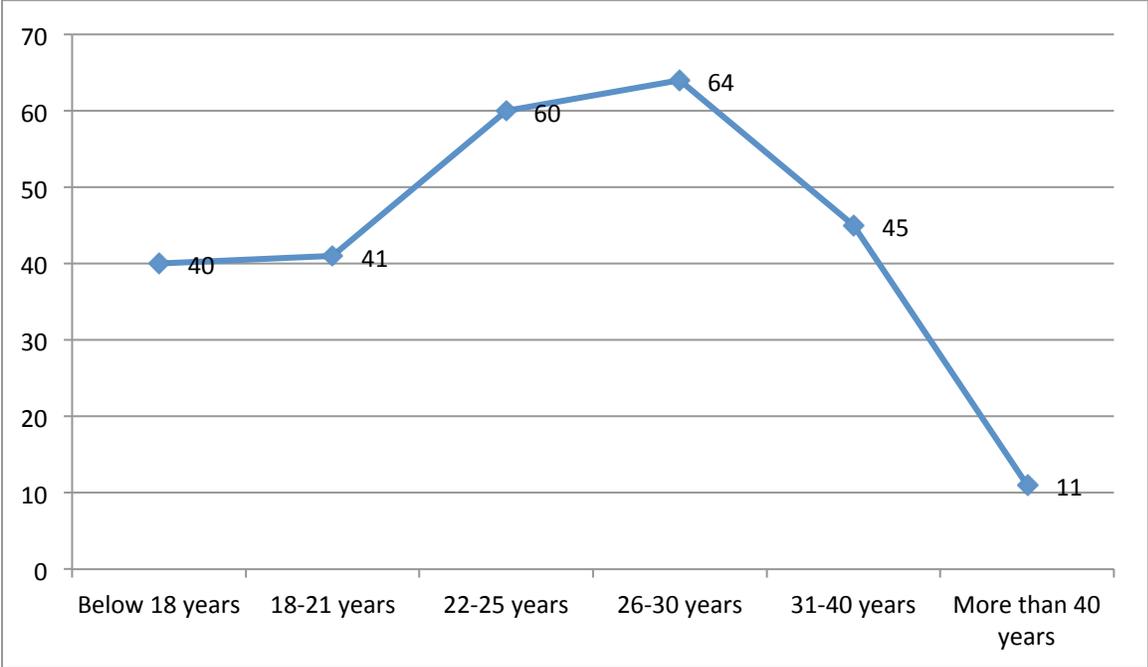
Figure 6a: Discrimination by profession



Note: All figures are in percentage. Rest did not express their opinion.

Of those individuals who were surveyed, the greatest percentage (60%) reported they had been discriminated against were between the ages of 22 and 30. Forty percent were below 22 years of age, and 11% were over the age of 40.

Figure 7: Discrimination and age group

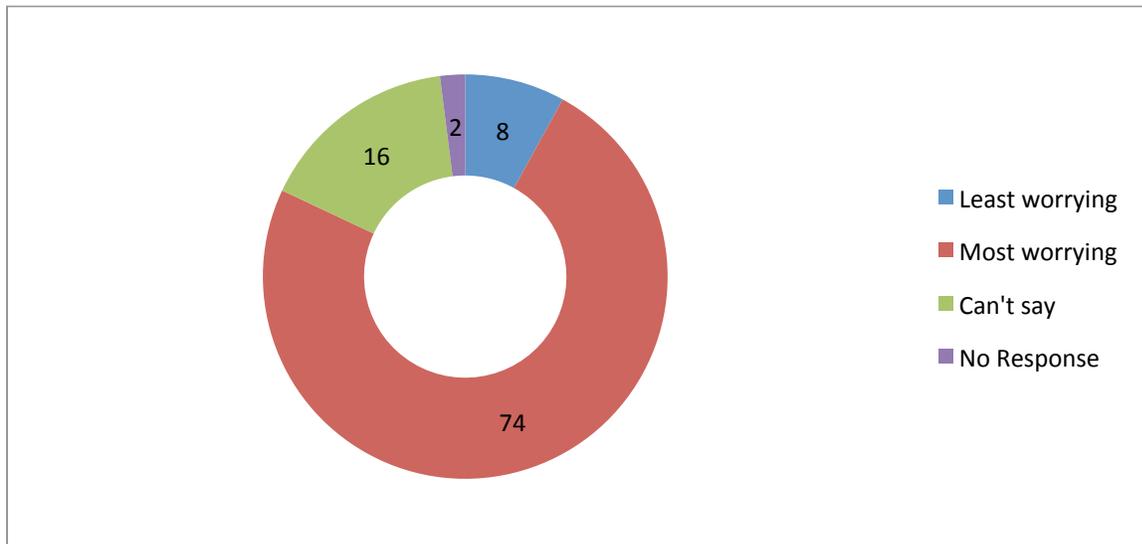


Note: All figures are in percentage.

4.3 How Is The Situation In Delhi In Terms Of Discrimination?

The situation in Delhi regarding racial/ethnic discrimination is most worrying at least for the Northeast people. 74 per cent respondents said that Delhi is the most unsafe place in terms of ethnic discrimination. Only 8 per cent felt that it is the least worrying place regarding ethnic discrimination while 18 per cent did not express their opinion about it. The table below indicates the different opinions regarding this.

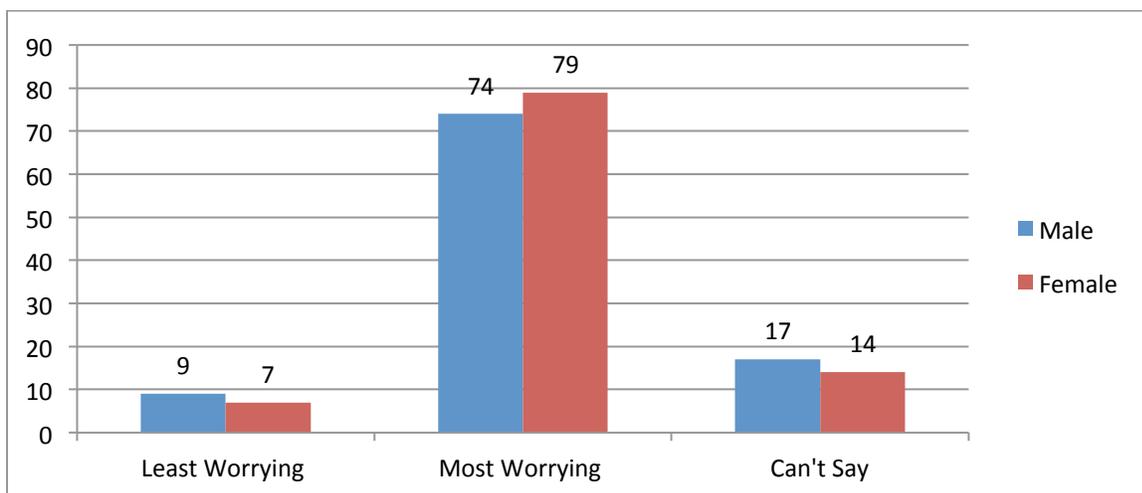
Figure 8: Perception on the situation of racial/ethnic discrimination in Delhi



Note: All figures are in percentage

The survey reveals that both male and female respondents are on the same page when they talk about the issue of discrimination in Delhi. The graph below depicts that three-fourth of male and female respondents said that the problem of discrimination in Delhi is most worrying. The number of female is little higher than the male.

Figure 9: Perceptions of worry disaggregated by gender.



Note: All figures are in percentage

4.4 Locations Where Respondents Reported Experiencing Discrimination:

Knowing where individuals reported having experienced discrimination can help us target advocacy work around those locations. The majority of respondents who reported experiencing discrimination experienced it either at a restaurant or sporting or public places (27%). These locations were followed by 24 per cent at the educational institutions and 23 per cent during buying or renting of houses. 13 per cent of them said that they faced discrimination at their work place and 7 per cent people informed that even police did not treat them equally.

Figure 10: Locations of discrimination

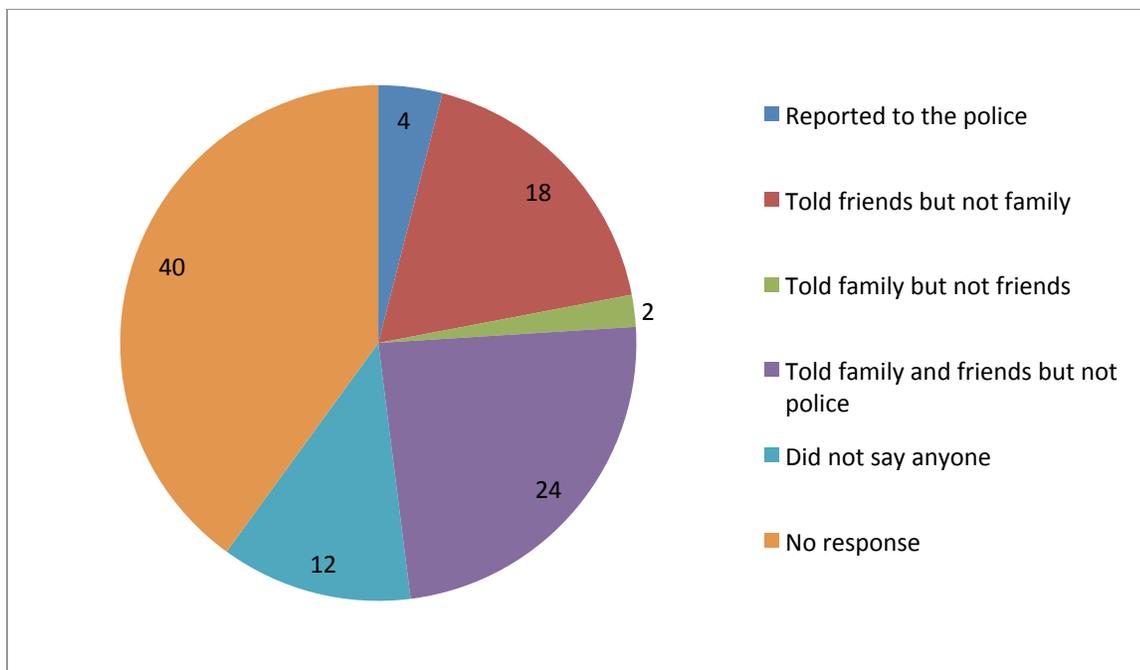


Note: All figures are in percentage

4.5 Response To Discrimination:

Most of the respondents who faced discrimination did not give any response on the question about what measures they took when they faced this problem. The worrying statistic is only 4 per cent of the victims of discrimination reported it to the police. While only 4 percent reported the discriminatory act to police, 24 percent shared their experience with a friend or family member. The experience of being discriminated is so embarrassing to them that only 18 per cent of them informed their friends but not their families while 12 per cent did not say anything to anyone. The graph below shows the people in Delhi who faced discrimination and the measures they took after experiencing a discriminatory act.

Figure 11: Measures taken against the discrimination

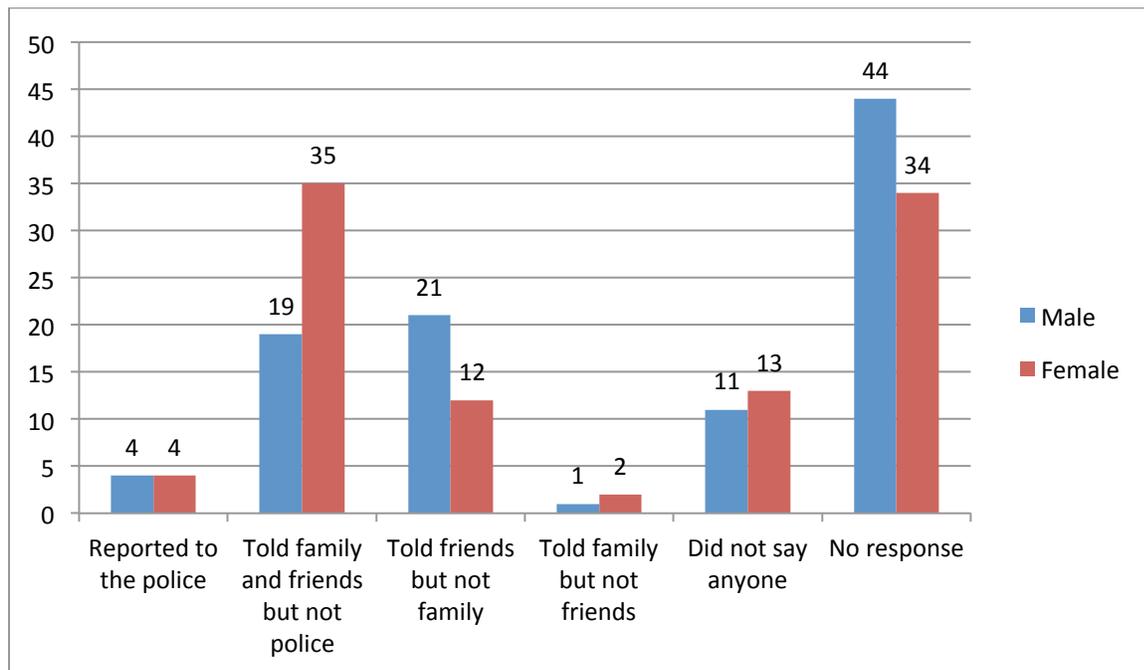


Note: All figures are in percentage

The findings of the survey reveal that more male are indifferent about this issue than female. However, the data suggests that more males decline to answer this question

than females. 44 per cent of males did not respond as compared to 34 per cent females. Most of the males just shared their experiences with their friends but not with their family. Far more females as compared to the males have discussed it with their family and friends. 35 per cent females have reported about being discriminated to their family and friends but haven't informed to the police as compared to 19 per cent of male respondents.

Figure 12: Response to discrimination disaggregated by gender/sex



Note: All figures are in percentage

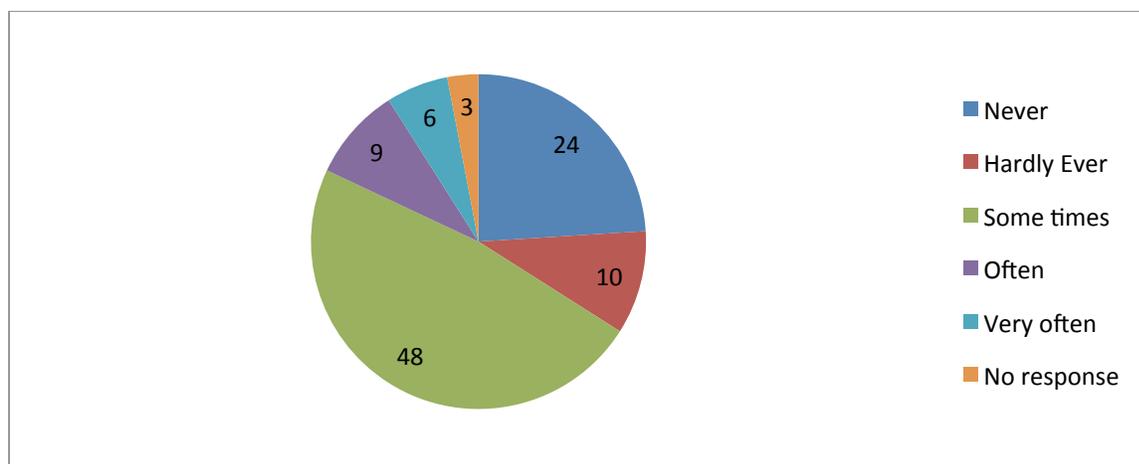
In a reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha (Indian Parliament) on 19.02.2014 regarding “Discrimination against People from NER” the government provided number of cases registered in Delhi during the last three years by people from the Northeast. In 2011, 27 cases were registered against a total of 59249. In 2012 there were 50 cases against 60367 FIRs and in 2013, 73 cases were filed against the total number of 86564. Since there is no specific data on the number of people from Northeast India residing in Delhi,

one cannot establish the population ratio and infer the proportion of cases registered by people from Northeast from this data.

4.6 Perception About Themselves

The main reason for discrimination against them was their ethnic origin. 63 per cent of the sampled respondents asserted that they faced discrimination due to their ethnic origin. Amongst them who asserted discrimination due to their ethnic origin, 15 per cent of them said that they faced it very often or many a times while 48 per cent said that they faced discrimination due to their ethnic origin only some times. While only 24 per cent said that they were never discriminated due to their ethnic origin. The graph below indicates this story.

Figure 13: How often do they feel discriminated due to their ethnic origin?

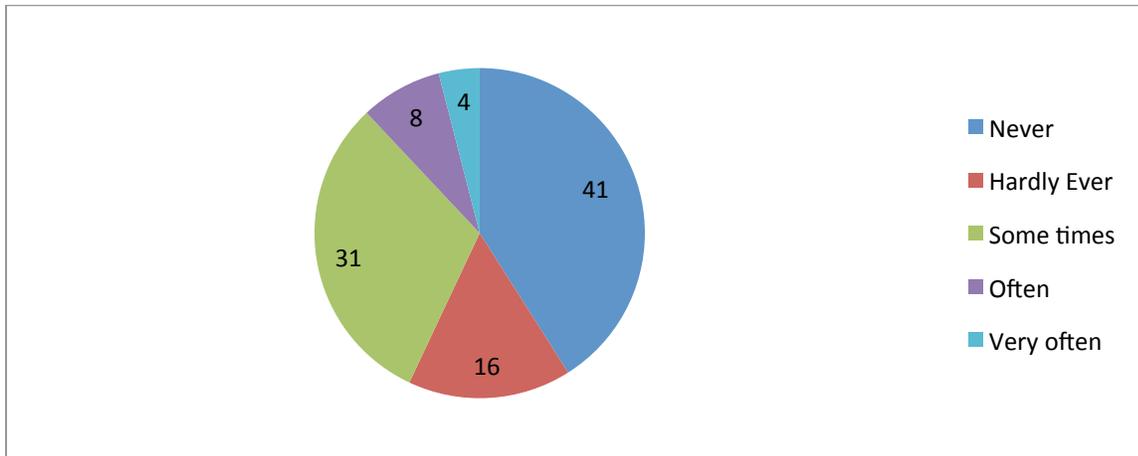


Note: All figures are in percentage

One of the most worrying trends is that the respondents feel they are being looked upon with suspicion. Only 41 per cent said that people never treated them with mistrust. Most of the respondents said that there is trust deficit between them and other 'Indian people'. 12 per cent of them have very negative feelings about this issue and they claimed that often people do not trust them. 31 per cent of them said that people suspect

them some times while 16 per cent of said that they hardly ever came across such kind of issue.

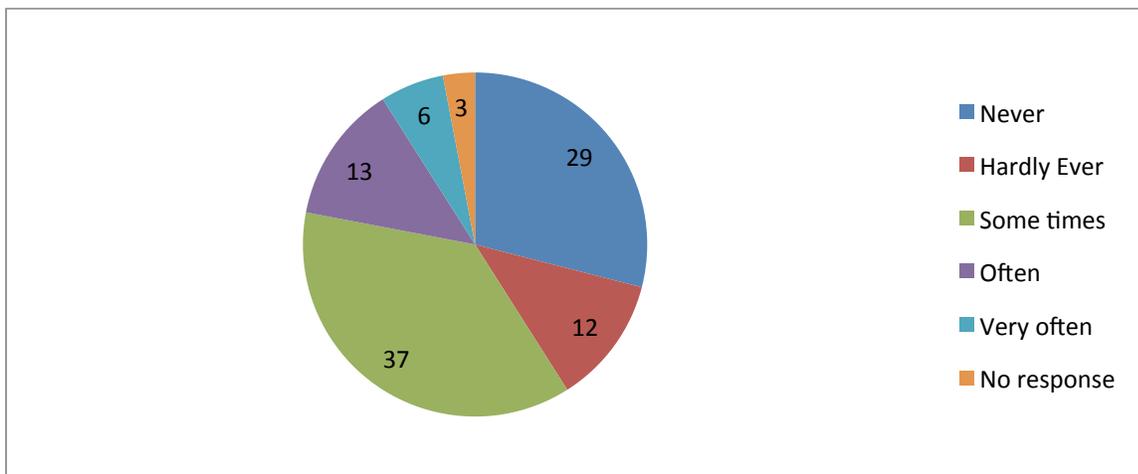
Figure 14: Trust factor



Note: All figures are in percentage

Identity is very important in our lives. But it can be humiliating if we are addressed by offensive names/ terms. 56 per cent respondents say that they were addressed by offensive names. Around 20 per cent claim that people used offensive words to identify them. While 37 per cent said they have faced such slur only sometimes.

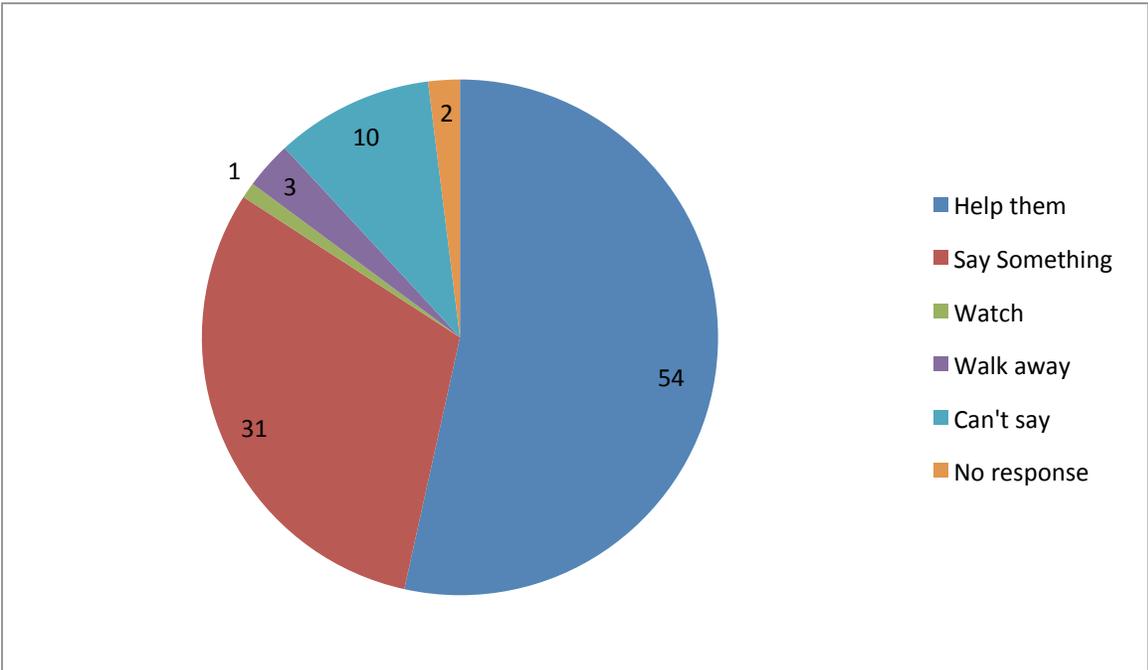
Figure 15: How often are they called by offensive names?



Note: All figures are in percentage

They may be victims of discrimination themselves but they recognize that discrimination happens with others as well. The data suggests that when they came across ethnic groups being discriminated, most of them said that they did take measures to protest. More than 80 percent respondents say that they have gone out of their way to help others. Among them 54 per cent said that they helped them while 31 per cent claimed that they have spoken against the offence. 12 per cent respondents did not say anything on this issue while 3 per cent said they would walk away in such a situation.

Figure 16: What would you do if ethnic groups are being discriminated?



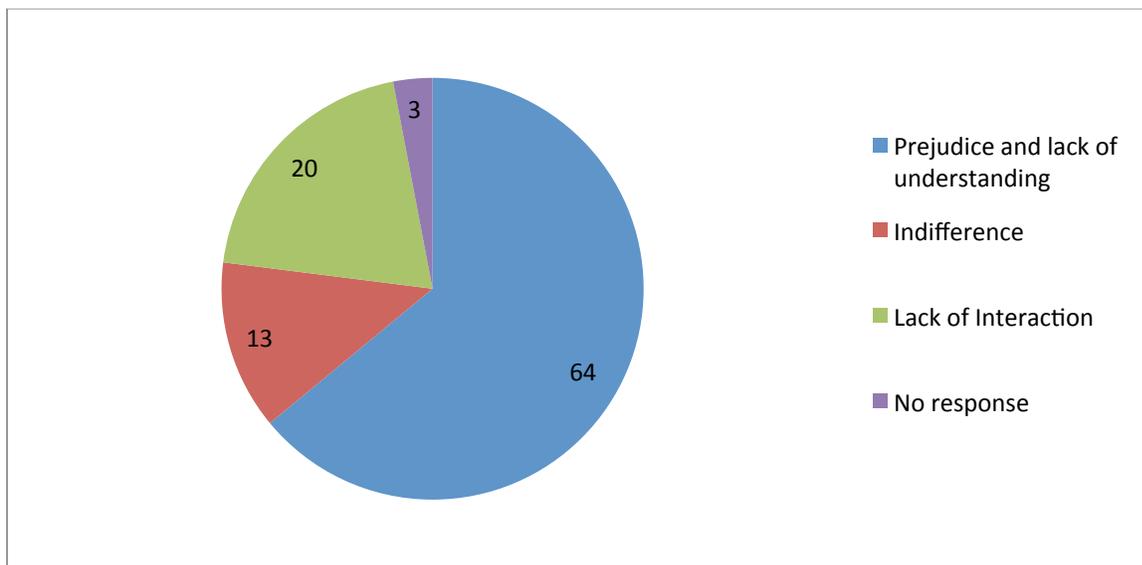
Note: All figures are in percentage

4.7 The Causes Of Discrimination:

The major cause for discrimination that emerged from the survey was prejudice and lack of awareness about the Northeast people. 64 per cent respondents said the reason behind discrimination is the lack of understanding/ awareness about people from the Northeast. 13 per cent claimed that it is the indifference towards people from the Northeast by others that lead to discrimination against them. While 20 per cent said

that the major cause of discrimination is lack of interaction among the people from Northeast and others.

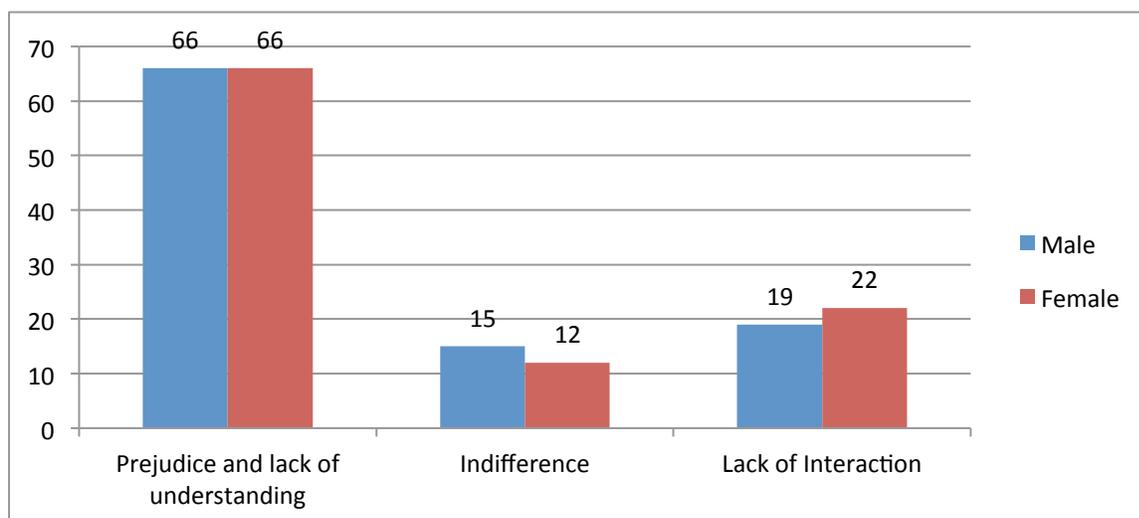
Figure 17: The causes of discrimination



Note: All figures are in percentage

There is not much difference between male and female respondents regarding their views on the causes of discrimination. Both male and female think that prejudices and lack of understanding against people from Northeast are the major causes for ethnic discrimination. Similarly there is not much difference between male and female who think that indifference and lack of interaction are the main causes of the discrimination.

Figure 18: Gender wise opinion on the causes of discrimination

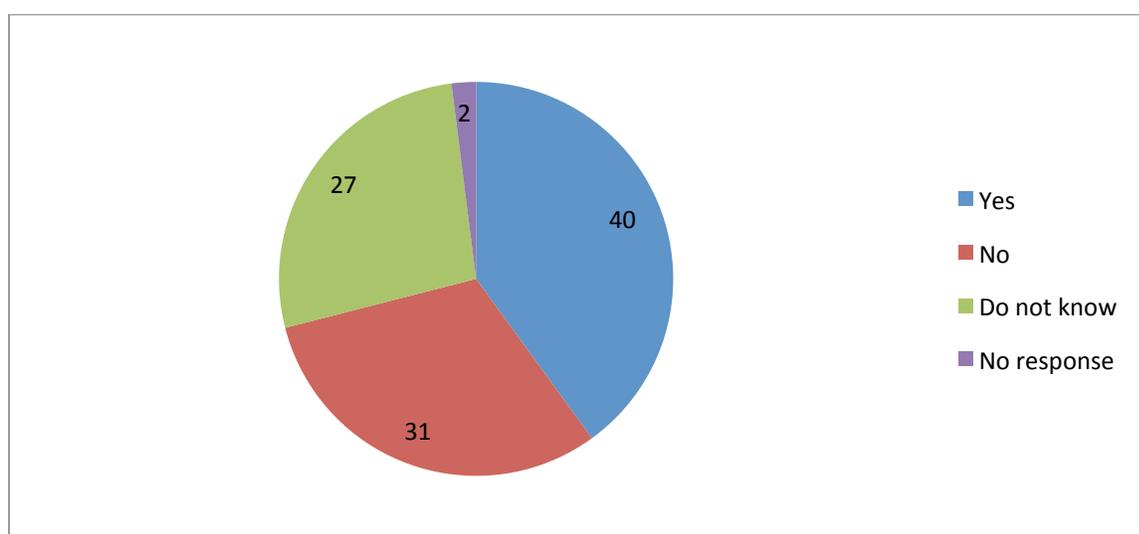


Note: All figures are in percentage

4.8 Awareness About The Law And Procedure:

Only 40 per cent respondents know of a department set up by the government that can help the ethnic groups facing discrimination while rest 60 per cent do not have any idea about this kind of set up which could be of some help to them.

Figure 19: Awareness about government set up

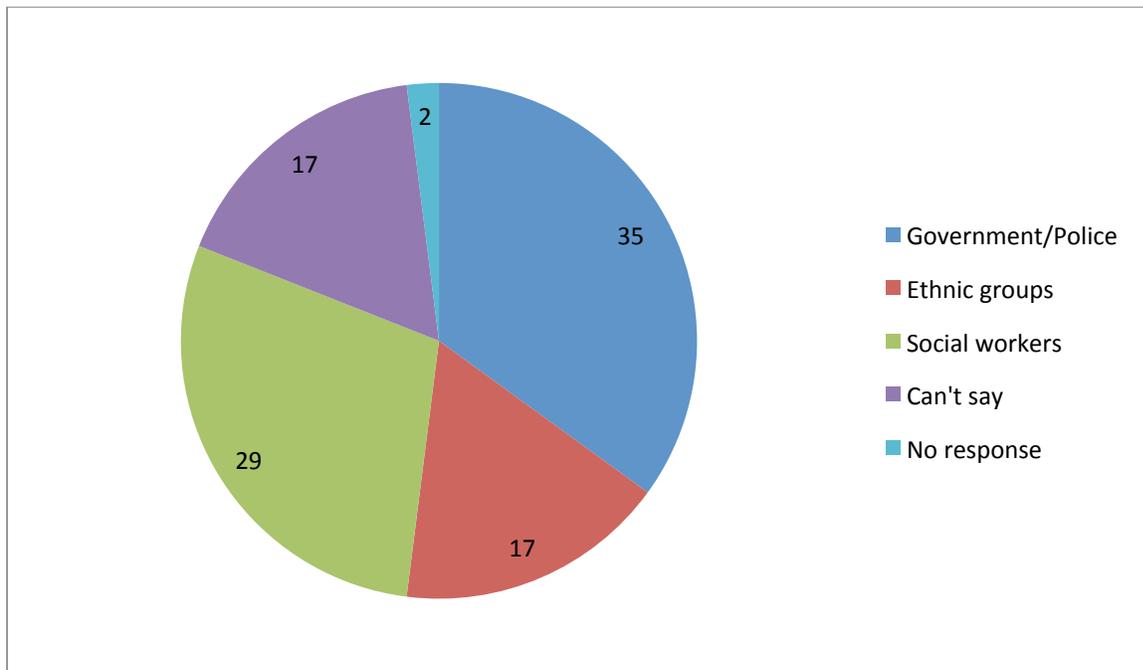


Note: All figures are in percentage

4.9 Way Forward:

The most positive response is that most people hope that discrimination will be eliminated. They feel that the government and social bodies will be integral in addressing the problem of discrimination. 35 per cent of them said that government would be the most important driver in this while 29 per cent think that social workers would be the best suited to solve the problems. 17 per cent respondents said that ethnic groups themselves have to play a part to reduce discrimination. 19 per cent people could not say anything on this.

Figure 20: Most critical party to solve the problem

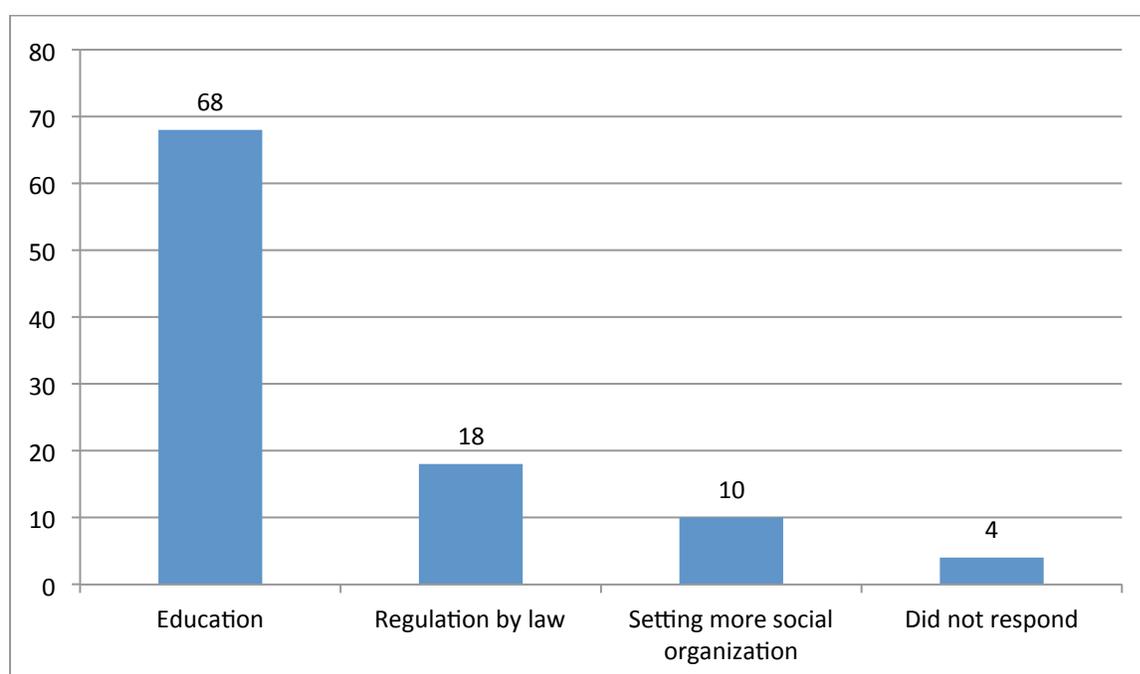


Note: All figures are in percentage

4.10 What Would Be The Best Way To Handle The Problem Of Ethnic Discrimination?

The respondents think that education is the most preferred way to handle this problem. 68 per cent respondents chose education as most effective vehicle, while 18 per cent consider that only regulation and laws can solve it. 10 per cent said that setting up more social organization would be helpful to deal with this issue. Rest 4 per cent did not express their opinion.

Figure 21: Effective manner to solve ethnic/racial discrimination

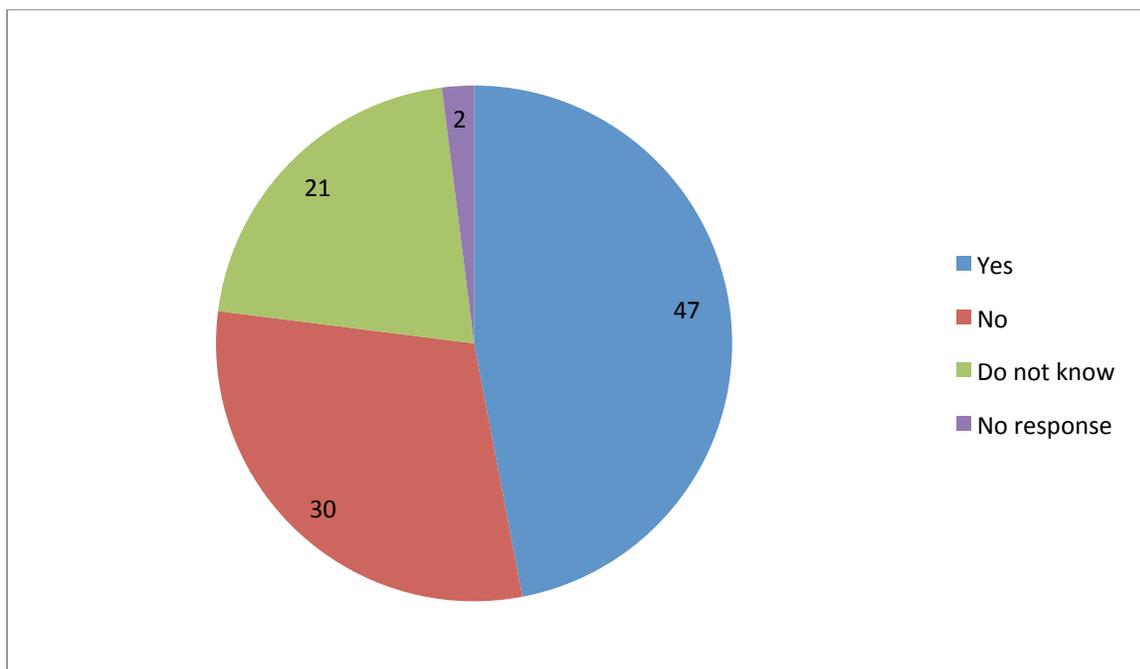


Note: All figures are in percentage

4.11 What they think about Delhi?

Delhi can be free from discrimination. At least 47 per cent respondents have hope that this city can be free from discrimination in the future while 30 per cent have negative feelings regarding this and they think that it cannot be free from this attitude. 21 per cent do not have any concrete idea whether Delhi would be free from discrimination or not.

Figure 22: Can Delhi be free from Discrimination?



Note: All figures are in percentage

5. A MANIPURI AS A DEHALVI



5. A MANIPURI AS A DEHALVI

Har Ek Baat Pe Kehte Ho Tum Ke 'Tu Kya Hai?' Ghalib

When I first came to Delhi almost a decade back I had no intention of staying this long. From the stories I had heard I did not like the capital of this country at all. "Delhi is selfish & mean" I was informed. So when I came to this city I stayed with "our group"; people from my community. This provided me with a sense of security. Whether going out shopping or hanging out somewhere if there were members from "our" community, I felt safe.

Couple of years later in the same city when I made new friends from other communities, a new face of Delhi started unfolding. "Men in Delhi are always on prowl to attack women from other states" started sounding exaggerated. There were good people around or maybe I just got into the company of good people. Meanwhile I was no longer limping in Hindi. I could speak full correct sentences in Hindi, my accent improved. I started liking Delhi. I was working for a reputed company in Gurgaon. My passion for photography took me around the streets of Delhi; my love for literature and arts took me to numerous cultural events from where I met people with similar passion for poetry, music, dance, etc. I could roam around the city alone without fearing much. Something I still can't do in Manipur, because of safety. We feared the Armed Forces. From childhood, we had seen numerous cases of people going missing after they were "picked up" by the Indian Army/Assam Rifles (in short Armed Forces). Life under Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) never gave us a sense of security of going out alone. I thought AFSPA to Manipur was what Kavach & Kundla was to Karan; born with it & you can't do anything about it.

Such chains were not there in Delhi. I started realising the meaning of "freedom" & "liberty" which until some years back were just words which I had studied in my school books. I would often ask myself what the preamble to the Indian Constitution meant? It was answered by my own experiences then; those are mere words and naught much. But

Delhi changed that feeling to some extent.

I worked in two multinational companies in the last nine years of my stay in Delhi. I left my job recently to start a new venture. I could do this because of sense of security Delhi has exposed me to. Back in Manipur, I couldn't think of any job apart from the few government departments.

Delhi started growing in me in all these years. I could happily eat kebabs and not complain if Ngari (fermented fish with pungent smell) wasn't there. My love for poetry took me to Urdu poetry and I picked up the language with much love, as a Dilliwalla of Balimaran would do.

Today I can recite Urdu shayaris (couplets) standing on the podium of Amphitheatre, IHC with much pride and confidence. Meanwhile it's been almost fifteen years since Hindi language programmes and films have been banned in Manipur. No Hindi films, no Hindi music, no Hindi at all. A generation back we could sing Hindi songs proudly and dance on Hindi film songs at schools or at functions in the locality. It is a taboo now though on satellite television one can watch anything. The generation of 2K has no knowledge of Hindi. When they come out of Manipur and go to other states of India especially in the North, there is a major language challenge.

Few years back when I was standing at an auto stand in South Delhi, two girls from one of the Northeastern states came out of an auto rickshaw. They were arguing with the autowallah about overcharging. The autowallah was quite rude to them & then one of the girls angrily said, "Baiya! Bolne ka bhi rasta hota hain". Next moment I saw the autowallah bursting out laughing.

I have had people laughing at my grammar, accent when I speak in Urdu or Hindi even when I am on the stage. But if there are a hundred people laughing at my "Urdu/Hindi", I have at least two people correcting my mistakes & helping me learn more. I don't mind the laughs as long as it doesn't become physical.

I remember an incident in Delhi when I was stammering in Hindi. Once I was at the

local kirana shop near the locality I was putting up. Some boys aged around 10-13 years would tease me calling "Chinky-Ponky" each time I come to the shop. I never reacted to them thinking they are just kids. One day when I was at the kirana store, these kids came and started teasing me as usual. One of them started throwing stones at me & ran. That moment I dropped my things at the shop, ran after the kids who were escaping towards the nearby block of apartments. I caught hold of two of them, thrashed them & almost threw them in the garbage bin. The locals came out & asked me why I was beating them so badly. I explained to them in my broken Hindi & they took away the kids.

Another incident happened again a year or two later. My company cab would drop me 5 houses away from my house and I would walk everyday to my flat. Some local boys probably in their 20s would tease me on the way back often, again calling me "Chinky-Minky" and singing "From Chandni Chowk to China". It was around Holi, when I was walking back home, they threw water balloons at me, which hit my back hard. I confronted them and they started jeering at me. I dialed up the women police helpline. Though the local police station was just 5 minutes away, a police van arrived with one ASI and two constables in about forty-five minutes. There was no woman police personal with them. Police was quite helpful though. They rounded up the boys, called out the families. The entire locality came out and watched the episode like a typical Hindi cinema scene where crime happens and people watch as spectators. I filed an FIR against those boys and told if something happens to me in Delhi, take in people from that locality into custody and frame charges against them.

Since that day I have never had any problem in the locality where I live on my own.

Such incidents however have not frightened me out of Delhi. I have become stronger instead. I will not say Delhi is a hostile area. Yes, Delhi is not safe for women but which part of India is safe anyways?

Today Delhi is city full of opportunities for me. I can choose my profession, my way of life, my language at will.

I call myself a "Green Card Holder" of Delhi. Even after staying in Delhi for almost a decade now, I can't call myself a Delhiwala. I know I will remain an outsider. My looks & my origin draw an opaque line permanently from the rest. But who is a Delhiwala? I think most of the original Delhiwalas were lost in 1857, 1947 & 1984. Those who are residing in Delhi today have come from UP, Punjab, Lahore, Karachi, Bengal etc. This itself forms a unique identity of Delhi of having no identity.

When people ask me "Where are you from", I reply "Delhi". They would often repeat their question clearly "No. I mean originally where are you from?" Then I would reply "Originally my fore-fathers were from China. Then they moved little further and started living in a place that later on was called Manipur. After 1947, India annexed Manipur. And now I live in Delhi".

I have accepted the fact that if I live in India, I cannot avoid this question ever in my life. My look pops up this question at the first glance in the eyes of the 'original' people of India. Whether they voice it or keep asking in their mind is a personal thing but I cannot escape it. Despite its own issues, Delhi has been a wonderful place for me.

In the words of Ustad Zauq,

" Kaun jaye Zauq par Dilli ki galiyan chhod kar"

Nicky Chandam, Imphal, November 2014

