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The heavy shackles of fear and vigilance

(The Hindu, 27-08-24)

The article discusses the psychological burden of constant vigilance that women in India carry due to safety concerns. This state of alertness, while necessary, is exhausting and often goes unrecognized

How does this constant state of vigilance impact women's lives?

- It shapes how women interact with the world and perceive themselves
- It curtails freedoms such as exploring new places, taking risks, and connecting with others
- It affects career choices, personal relationships, and everyday activities
- It creates a dissonance between how women live and how they wish to live

How does the burden of vigilance vary across different social groups?

- Women from marginalized groups face intensified discrimination and more immediate dangers
  - Example: A Dalit woman working as a domestic helper might face a higher risk of sexual harassment or assault from her employers, compounded by the threat of losing her livelihood if she speaks up. She may also face discrimination and safety concerns within her own community.
- While privileged women may have access to safer environments, they are not immune to harassment.
  - Example: A upper-middle-class woman living in a gated community may feel relatively safe within her residential area, but still face harassment or stalking when using public transportation or walking alone in a shopping mall.
- Caste, class, and religion add complexity to the safety concerns women face
  - Example: A Muslim woman wearing a hijab might face increased risk of targeted harassment or violence in public spaces, especially in areas where communal tensions are high, adding religious discrimination to gender-based safety concerns.

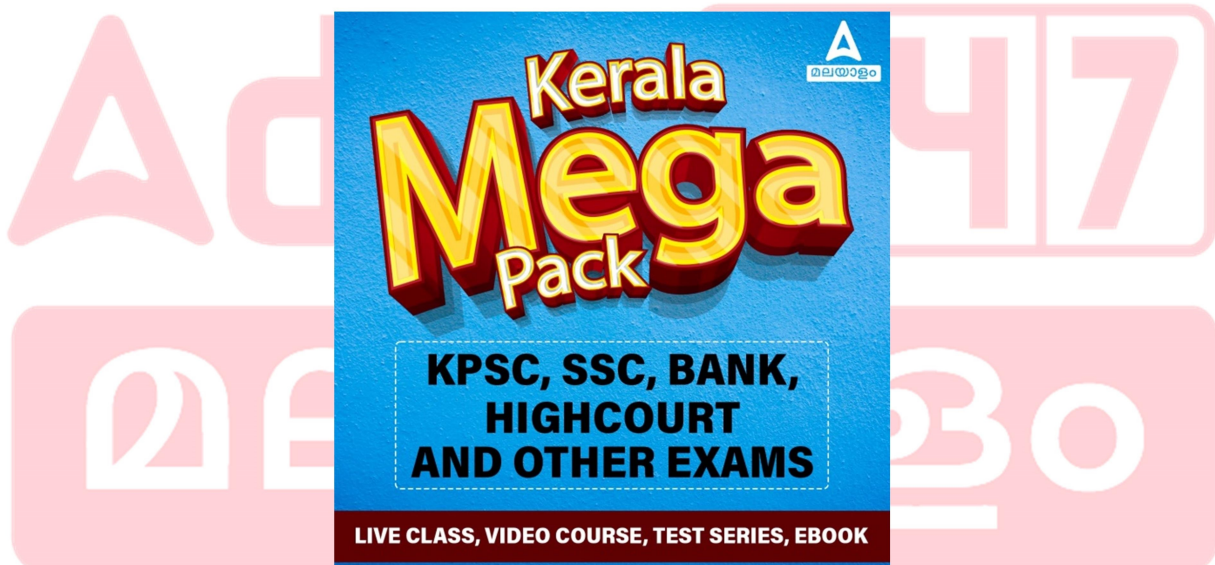## What are the broader societal implications of this constant vigilance?

- It limits women's experiences and deprives society of their potential contributions
- It reinforces the idea that women are responsible for their own safety rather than society taking collective action
- It creates intergenerational effects as the burden is passed from mothers to daughters
- It hinders the building of a more equitable society

What is the way forward?

- Comprehensive public safety reforms:
    - Improve street lighting and public infrastructure
    - Increase police presence and responsiveness
    - Implement technology-based safety solutions (e.g., emergency alert systems)
- Education and awareness programs:
    - Integrate gender sensitivity and respect in school curricula
    - Conduct community-wide campaigns to challenge harmful stereotypes
    - Promote bystander intervention training
- Legal and institutional reforms:
    - Strengthen laws against sexual harassment and violence
    - Ensure swift and fair justice delivery
    - Establish specialized units to handle gender-based violence cases
- Economic empowerment initiatives:
    - Promote equal employment opportunities
    - Support women's entrepreneurship
    - Ensure safe working conditions and transportation for women
- Cultural shift through media and public discourse:
    - Encourage positive portrayals of women in media
    - Promote male allies and role models
    - Foster open dialogues about gender equality and safety in public forums

Can you answer the following question?
Examine the psychological and societal impacts of the constant state of vigilance experienced by women in India due to safety concerns. Discuss the measures that can be taken to address this issue while ensuring women's freedom is not further restricted under the guise of safety.

NPS and Unified Pension Scheme

(The Hindu, 26-08-24)

What is the current situation regarding the Census in India?

- The Census has been long-delayed
- The government is considering including caste enumeration in the Census
- As of June 2024, India is one of 44 out of 233 countries that have not conducted a Census this decade. India is grouped with countries affected by conflict, economic crises, or turmoil in terms of Census delay
- The deadline to freeze administrative boundaries for the Census has been extended 10 times since 2019

What are the implications of not having an updated Census?

- The 2011 Census data is becoming increasingly outdated as many statistical surveys for policy-making use Census data for their sampling frames
- Many public schemes depend on Census data (e.g., National Food Security Act, National Social Assistance Programme)
- Reliance on sample surveys to fill the data gap leads to debates over methodology and cherry-picking of conclusions
- It hinders understanding of important phenomena like migration, urbanization, and suburbanization
- It affects public policy and relations with states

What are the concerns about including caste enumeration in the Census?

- The Socio-Economic and Caste Census of 2011 resulted in inaccurate and unusable data
- There are concerns about rushing into caste tabulation without proper preparation
- It might further delay the already overdue Census