
**Policy Considerations for Strengthening Women Safety
according to Life Cycle(Ⅱ): with Emphasis on the Safety of
Women in Public Places**

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Due to the increase of crime in public places, the level of women safety in the Korean society has been questioned at the fundamental level. Therefore, the public demand is increasing for the need to identify the current status of women safety and to seek not temporary but long-term solutions.

To meet such need, this study has been launched. It is a continuation of the study started in 2016 with emphasis on the family. In 2017, this study looked into the current status of women safety in public spaces and suggested measures

for policy improvement. The research methodologies used are as follows: 1) literature review, 2) <Survey of Women Safety in Public Places> for quantitative research, 3) Focus Group Interviews for qualitative research, 4) project analysis by participatory observation, and 5) hosting of an international forum.

Public places refer to shared areas used by multiple people and include places such as playgrounds, schools parks, libraries, and museums. While accidents in public places can be a threat to anyone, women are more vulnerable to such accidents than their male counterparts because they are more vulnerable physically. Currently in Korea, regulations and policies pertinent to safety in public places are scattered here and there in different laws and departments. The majority of such regulations and policies are limited in that their focus is only on facility maintenance.

This study first analyzed press material to identify the current status of safety awareness for public places. In particular, the study focused on contents related to safety in public restrooms. The scope of the material analyzed was set to the year 2016. Analysis results showed the majority of counter-measures to be short-term and limited in scope. The measures only address adult women; discussions for females in their childhood and elderly stage in life were lacking. In case of serious crimes such as murder, the government was found to put more focus on punishing the perpetrator rather than paying attention to the victim. Also, more emphasis was put on ex post facto measures rather than prevention.

To investigate the actual conditions of women safety in public places, a questionnaire survey was administered to 3,000 adult males and females over 19 years old. Specifically, 35 public places were categorized into seven (7) categories and listed. Then, the respondents were asked to answer the following for the places listed: use experience, risk level for safety accidents, experience of safety accidents, measures taken after safety accidents, and necessity of

safety education. The questions were posed according to life cycle. Survey results came out as follows: First, females showed a higher percentage than males when asked if they considered public places to be dangerous. Second, when having experienced a safety accident in a public place, both males and females showed relatively passive levels of action to prevent recurrence. Third, regarding necessity of safety education, gender differences were significant in all life cycle stages except old age. Thus, the survey confirmed the need to identify the different needs for safety education according to life cycle and gender. In addition, when developing and providing safety education, there is need to consider accessibility and field applicability.

To identify safety awareness and experience of safety accidents and education, a Focused Group Interview (FGI) was conducted with women in their thirties and forties. Answers from the interview revealed that public rest rooms, streets, and public transportation were areas considered to most threaten the safety of women, children/adolescents, and the elderly. Additionally, the following areas were noted to pose risks of safety accidents - for women: underground parking lots, for children: shopping and leisure facilities such as department stores and large size marts, and for the elderly: public bathhouses.

To analyze women safety education in terms of gender sensitivity, the study looked into the 'Citizen Safety Watchman' program current being led by Seoul City. Results showed the following. First, there exists a slight discrepancy between the educational objective of 'Citizen Safety Watchman' and the education being actually given. Second, looking from a gender perspective, the education did not reflect differences in safety awareness according to gender. Also, there was almost no safety education according to life cycle. Third, the competence of the instructors played a significant role in the curriculum. At the moment of the investigation, majority of the students arrived in groups rather than alone. During the sessions, the lecturing skills of the individual instructors greatly affected the education being given.

For a gender sensitive approach to safety education, the study conducted a FGI with students and instructors of the 'Citizen Safety Watchman' program. Looking from a gender perspective, females in Korea have less opportunities than males to receive safety education. The education contents is also not women-friendly. Although a large portion of the safety accidents that happen in everyday life occurs in the home, the full-time homemaker is in a blind spot when it comes to safety education. Additionally, no standard guidelines were available for how to deal with safety accidents in the home. Rather than one-time sporadic events, there is need to provide continuous safety education according to different life cycle stages.

Lastly, this study suggested possible ways to strengthen the safety of women in public places according to life cycle. First of all, legislation pertinent to public places are scattered throughout different government departments. Thus, the scattered regulations are not consistent with one another when addressing women safety. To provide a legal basis for women safety, then, there is need to look into a drafting of a new legislation which can act as the foundational framework for all current laws pertinent to women safety. Under current legislation, restrictions imposed for not carrying out required safety measures or not providing necessary safety education are either non-existent or minimal. Thus, such restrictions need to be tightened in order to guarantee the effectiveness of safety policies. In order to comprehensively consider women safety, safety regulations for public places should consider women and should also include a gender perspective. Additionally, there is need to designate a department to act as a control tower so that women safety can be considered as a top priority. Facilities need to be installed and the environment should be improved as well for women safety.

There is also need to develop safety education contents customized for various places and to provide safety guidelines accordingly. Currently, safety education for public places is not included in the education items stipulated in the 'Basic

Act on the Promotion of National Safety Education'. The types of safety education are wide in scope and it is not easy to find suitable instructors that can meet the various educational needs. Consequently, there is need to create a registration system that keeps track of safety education instructors and recipients. Safety education sessions should also be supplemented. Currently, a generalized type of education is given with generic cases. But education contents should be strengthened so that the characteristics of the education recipients are considered and gender sensitive perspectives are included.