

# Violence and Discrimination Against Asian American and Pacific Islander Women and Girls during the COVID-19 Pandemic



Drishiti Pillai, Ph.D., MPH, Aggie J. Yellow Horse, Ph.D., Russell Jeung, Ph.D.

Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) women and girls are prime targets of hate and discrimination against the AAPI community. Hate incidents against AAPIs rose sharply over the past year, with over 6,600 reports collected by Stop AAPI Hate (SAH) between March 2020 and March 2021 [1]. In particular, AAPI women and girls report these hate incidents two times as often as AAPI men. We further disaggregate AAPI women's experiences by different subgroups using data from SAH and the NAPAWF national survey [2].

## Experiences of Racism and Discrimination Among Asian American Women

Of 3,943 Asian American women who reported their experiences to SAH, East Asian women (67.5%) were the most likely to report having experienced any form of violence or discrimination followed by Southeast Asian (16.2%), Multiracial/Multiethnic Asian (1.3% and 8.1%), and South Asian women (1.3%), respectively.

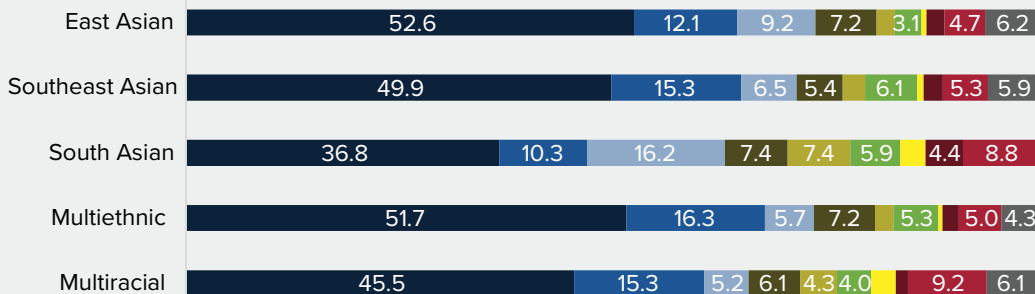
### Types of Discrimination

- The most frequently reported type of hate incident experienced by all Asian American women was verbal harassment and/or name calling (51.4%) (Figure 1).
- South Asian women experienced the highest rate of physical assault with over 16.2 percent of all incidents involving physical assaults (compared to 9.2 percent for East Asian women and 6.5 percent for Southeast Asian women).

### Sites of Discrimination

- Public streets and/or sidewalks (28.3%) and places of business (28.0%) were the more frequently reported sites of hate incidents for all Asian American women, with some differences among different Asian American subgroups.
- For East Asian and Multiethnic Asian women, public streets and/or sidewalks were the most

**Figure 1: Types of Hate Incidents by Asian American Women, by Subgroups (n = 5,098 types) [In Percentage]**



- Verbal Harassment/Name Calling
- Avoidance/Shunning
- Physical Assault
- Coughed At/Spat Upon
- Barred from Establishment
- Workplace Discrimination
- Barred from Transportation
- Vandalism/Graffiti
- Online
- Other

common sites of hate incidents; whereas for Southeast Asian, South Asian, and Multiracial Asian women, places of business were the most common sites of hate incidents.

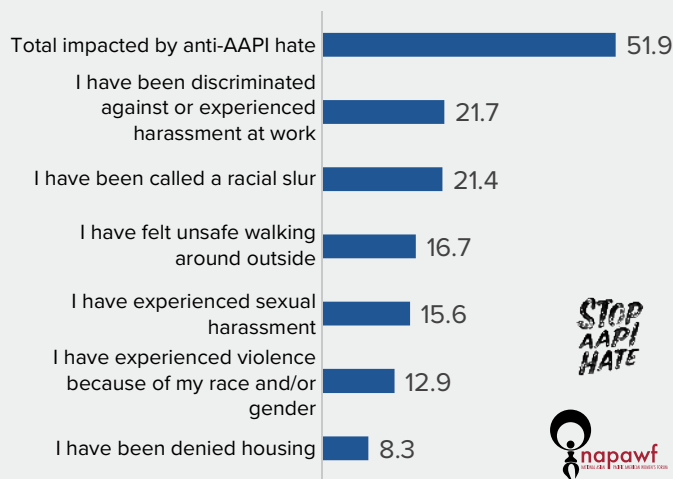
### Reasons of Discrimination

- East Asian and Southeast Asian women were more likely to report mask-wearing as a reason for experiencing hate incidents.
- South Asian women were more likely to report their language and religion as reasons for experiencing hate incidents.

### Experiences of Racism and Discrimination Among Pacific Islander Women

- Among the 415 Pacific Islander women from the NAPAWF national survey, 51.9 percent reported that anti-AAPI racism had affected their lives in 2020 and 2021.
- 21.7 percent reported facing discrimination or harassment at their workplace, 21.4 percent reported being called a racial slur, 16.7 percent reported feeling unsafe while walking outside, 15.6 percent reported experiencing sexual harassment, 12.9 percent reported experiencing violence due to their race and/or gender, and 8.3 percent reported that they were unfairly denied housing (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Lived Experiences of Pacific Islander Women (n = 415)**



### Policy Recommendations

Confronting the violence and discrimination faced by AAPI women before and during the pandemic requires centering their unique needs and experiences and addressing the multiple and intersecting barriers and hardships they face. We urge policymakers at the local, state, and federal levels to dedicate the resources and enforce and enact the laws necessary to ensure AAPI women are free from racial and gender violence and oppression, and offer three recommendations to start:

1. Provide culturally-competent and language accessible services
2. Provide resources to local communities and community-based organizations
3. Provide quality data for meaningful data disaggregation
4. Give attention to the violence and discrimination at the workplaces of AAPI women
5. Expand civil rights infrastructure

For more details, please see the full report on NAPAWF's website at [www.napawf.org/stop-aapi-hate-report](http://www.napawf.org/stop-aapi-hate-report).

### References

- [1] Jeung, Russell, Aggie J. Yellow Horse, and Charlene Cayanan (2021). Stop AAPI Hate National Report, 3/19/20-3/31/21. San Francisco, CA: Stop AAPI Hate Report Center. <https://stopaapihate.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Stop-AAPI-Hate-Report-National-210506.pdf>.
- [2] The National NAPAWF COVID-19 Survey. More information about the survey can be found here: <https://napawf.org/s/NAPAWF-Survey-Deck-041321.pdf>