

Impact of Eve Teasing On Self Confidence and Well Being Among Rural Adolescent Girls of Haryana

Chandni Laroia¹, Rajni Arya²

¹Research Scholar, ²Research Scholar

¹Department of Education, Panjab University, Chandigarh, India

Email - ¹chandnilaroia6@gmail.com , ²rajni9888@gmail.com

Abstract: *Eve teasing or sexual harassment of women in public places is one of the most challenging community problems in India which inhibits liberalization of women and deprives them of basic human rights. The study was conducted in the rural area of Haryana, India to assess the relationship between Eve teasing and Self-confidence of adolescent girls. A mixed method research design was used for the study including direct questionnaire administration and focused group interviews. Questionnaires of eve-teasing and self-confidence were directly administered on 60 adolescent girls. The focused group interviews were conducted in 6 phases (n=10) in each phase. The significant and positive relationship ($r = .501$) was observed between eve teasing and self-confidence. Quantitative responses were assessed in form of response percentages to ascertain the attitude towards eve teasing which suggested 78% experiencing eve teasing mostly in school or during the routine commute to school, 21% felt vulnerable or helpless in such situations and 12% were found to be unaware of sex education. Student well-being which is effective academic, social and emotional functioning of a student in their school community is often evaded for those undergoing such experiences. Focus group interviews assisted in the emergence of major themes depicting declining student well-being in the form of decreased attention and concentration during lectures, persistent stress or anxiety and also the development of a negative attitude towards male counterparts.*

Key Words: *Eve teasing, Self-confidence, Student well-being, Sexual harassment, Haryana, Crime against Women*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Women have the indomitable spirit, determination and dedication to be emancipated as self-reliant beings. The fairer sex always remains under the scanner and is questioned for its aspirations, depriving them of the choices which are otherwise well ensured for their male counterparts. Indian society is a patriarchal society is ridden with male dominance in such forms that men question the very being of a female presence at academic, social, professional and personal levels, which elicits from a latent insecurity inherent among men to prove themselves as superior beings. This insecurity can manifest itself sometimes in form of intimidating behavior of eve teasing wherein objectification of women as sexual objects are translated in form of objectionable verbal or nonverbal behavior.

Eve teasing is a euphemism and an umbrella term for sexual harassment or molestation of women which can range in severity from stalking, name calling to higher order sexual aggressiveness of groping or physical imposition. Eve teasing is a regular occurrence for women while traveling through public transport, moving on streets, festivals or all types of crowded public places. Men usually offend women by eye stares, singing inappropriate songs, making lewd comments or under influence of covert sexual aggression resort to incongruous touching, flashing of genitals and other heinous activities.

National Crime Records Bureau, New Delhi, India has prepared a report related to crime against women in India which provides a detailed statistical status of atrocities committed against women per year. In the year 2012, sexual harassment and molestation comprised 22.5% of the total crime against women in India. This rate of crime against women has steadily incremented by 9.2% till 2014. In the year 2014, cases reported for crime against women are 3,37,922 under which the states of Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, and Madhya Pradesh are the most crime-prone areas. For the year 2011 incidences of eve teasing reported all over India were 8570, with Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra contributing highest number of cases relating to eve teasing along with Haryana steering in at third place. The origin of attitude towards eve teasing commences in response to the gender biased socialization process followed in Indian households [1]. Boys are usually brought up with a set of societal norms that provides them with opportunities to express masculinity through freedom of movement and speech, parents also tend to remain unperturbed by their decremental attitude towards women. Girls, on the other hand, are always expected to behave timidly, remain vulnerable and predisposed to the insensitive attitude shown by the male members. This flawed socialization process exhibits itself overtly among the men, to humiliate and harass women as a means of gratifying their social, psychological and emotional needs.

The repercussions of eve-teasing can be a lot more than one can anticipate, especially in the case of young girls who are exposed to such distressing situations; it leaves an indelible mark on their character and personality for life. It has been reported that eve teasing among adolescent girls led to a psychological impact of stress, depression and even in adverse conditions a thought of suicide [2]. Physical, sexual and psychological harm or suffering has also been highlighted in women [3, 4]. Eve teasing has been also found to be one of the primary concerns for school college dropout and curtailment of education for women in India. It has also been reported in an interview of sarpanch of village Nihalawas, Haryana, [5] wherein he said that security of girls is the main concern as they have to travel two to three kilometers on lonely paths while attending school. As the parent's insecurity and apprehensions towards the well-being of their girls increase, they often have been found to stop schooling them. Sometimes, even girls themselves develop fear and anxiety which clips their educational aspirations.

The sense of well-being also forms an essential component of life as it ensures active performance throughout one's life while making a significant contribution towards society. Student well-being also holds prime significance and is defined as the degree to which student is functioning effectively in the school community [6]. Well-being may refer to its different forms in cognitive, social, physical and spiritual dimensions but in case of an educational setting [7] it primarily refers to a sustainable state of positive mood and attitude, resilience, and satisfaction with self, relationships, and experiences at school, thus helping in maximizing one's potential. School environment can also contribute significantly to building safe environment which prevents any type of physical damage (injury or harm) and emotional damage (negative attitude, bullying).

Therefore, keeping in mind the aforementioned factors, the current research study was designed to assess the relationship between Eve teasing, self-confidence and sense of well-being among female adolescents. Also, such traumatizing and appalling situations can influence the sense of well-being of females.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The current study will fulfill the following objectives

- To study attitude towards eve teasing of adolescent girls.
- To study the relationship between attitude towards eve teasing and self-confidence of adolescent girls.
- To assess the impact of eve teasing experiences on the well-being of adolescent girls.

3. SAMPLE FOR THE STUDY:

In Haryana Crime rate (eve-teasing) is 5.7 and incidence of eve teasing per 1,00,000 inhabitants are 190 as reported by Statistics on women in India, 2014 [16]. Also in light of a high rise in recent events of rape, molestation, and harassment of women, it was quite pertinent to assess the impact of eve teasing on the self-confidence of adolescent girls and its further subjugation on the psychological well-being of these students. Therefore, a sample of 60 students was randomly selected for the study from, Government Senior Secondary School, Bharog, situated in rural area of Haryana.

4. METHODOLOGY FOR THE STUDY:

A mixed method approach was adopted for the study, therefore it was conducted in two phases. During the first phase, descriptive survey method was used to assess student's attitude towards eve teasing and self-confidence. In order to measure attitude towards eve teasing, eve teasing scale by Deepa Ghosh (2011) [8] was used and Self-Confidence Inventory by D.D. Pandey (2007) [9] was also administered. Scores obtained by students were assessed using SPSS version 16 for Product moment correlation. Questionnaire items from Eve teasing scale were also categorized into broad themes for which mean of students responses were generated in order to assess their attitude towards eve teasing such as eve-teasing experiences, retaliation, vulnerability, gender insensitivity and awareness of sex education

During the second phase, 6 focus group interviews were conducted (n=10) for girl students. Topics of discussion were their perceptions about eve teasing, immediate response, and effect on student well-being, relationship with peers, teachers, and parents. Students were assured of full confidentiality for the responses given by them. Discussions were primarily held in Hindi and notes were taken in English from which emerging themes were categorized based on the frequency of responses given in relation to a particular sub-topic of discussion.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS:

A. Quantitative Analysis of Data

The foremost objective of the study was to assess incidences of eve teasing among rural adolescent girls and study their attitude towards eve teasing. For this questions asked using questionnaire were broadly categorized into main themes and mean responses were calculated to obtain a percentage of students. Questions asked were basically yes or no type with both favorable and unfavorable items.

Variables	Sample item	Interview participants with eve teasing questionnaire (n=60), n%
Eve teasing experience	<i>Boys tease me</i>	78
Retaliation to incidence	<i>I protest if I see any boy teasing my friend, I protest against eve teasing</i>	90.6
Feeling of vulnerability	<i>I ignore the situation because I feel helpless/alone.</i>	21
Gender insensitivity (self, parents and family members)	<i>My parents discriminate between boy and girl</i>	11
Unaware of sex education	<i>I am aware of sex education</i>	12
Masculinity show off as a cause	<i>Boys tease to show off their masculinity</i>	35

Table 1 mean percentages obtained in response to items on eve teasing questionnaire

Relationship between Eve teasing and student’s Self-confidence

In order to address the second objective of the study, Pearson Product moment correlation was performed to find out if there was a significant association between self-confidence and attitude towards eve teasing. An r value = 0.501 (significant at 0.01 level of significance) was obtained depicting a positive and meaningful relationship between Eve teasing and self-confidence of adolescent girls.

A. Qualitative Analysis of Data

As has been noted earlier many researchers have highlighted the impact of eve teasing towards the education of girl students. Negative attitude of parents, development of fear among girls are few of the many causes which lead to curtailment of education among girl students. Apart from these, there are many factors which need to be ascertained as contributory measures disrupting the well-being of girl students. In order to understand the traumatic issues pertaining to eve teasing experience by girl students relating to both academic and personal life, focus group interviews conducted for 60 students helped elicit some ingenuine responses.

Students were interviewed to understand the basic nature of eve teasing instances pertaining to type, place of eve-teasing and immediate response of victims in such situations. It is important to understand these demographics so as to gather a generalized view of the psychosocial mindset of both victims and the perpetrators which can help formulate an action plan to target these issues.

- Place of eve teasing encounters- Government Senior Secondary School, Bharog lies in the rural district of Haryana and its student population mainly comprises of boys and girls from surrounding villages. There is no major source amusement and public outing nearby except for few marketplaces that serve necessities; hence main reason cited by girls for unrestricted mobility was daily commutation to school. Therefore more than 90% participants agreed traveling to school as the main place of eve teasing. Around 60% of participants also agreed to in school events of eve teasing primarily by peers during sports hour, lunchtime and after school hours.
- Type of Eve teasing – Out of three different forms of eve-teasing – physical, verbal and nonverbal, 85 % of the participants had experienced verbal and nonverbal forms. More than 50 % had experienced verbal forms such as the singing of sexually suggestive songs, passing lewd comments and catcalling even by peers. 70 % reckoned nonverbal forms like staring, making indecent faces and actions.
- Immediate action response - 90% of the girls had tried to evade confrontation due to fear that responding back might aggravate the situation, validating idealized Indian women stereotype of being submissive and nonviolent. Only 10% of them had tried to answer back the assaulter and most of the time it helps to bring the situation under control. In the case of peer victimization, only a few (4 out of 60) had brought the situation to teacher’s notice, for which teacher had necessarily reprimanded the defaulters.

Student well-being has a nonlinear relationship with Eve teasing, in which the latter ascertains their inferior position in the society as it affects their self-confidence and reinstates the long existing gender stereotypes among the young minds conditioning them into restricted docile beings. The aftereffects of eve teasing which highlight their psychological state have been categorized into main concerns which are discussed as follow.

- Persistent stress and anxiety affecting academic performance – More than 80% of the girls agreed that they faced stress because of eve teasing incidences which lead to hindering their academic performance. Since most of the girls reported to have faced eve teasing in form of passing of lewd comments while coming to

school, they said such anecdotes left an impact on their studies. To quote one student's experience where she shared that previously she used to travel to school with her parents but from new academic session she traveled on her own and used to face harassment regularly. The occurrence of such incidents has led to a steep decrease in her academic grades. Another girl shared the stress to travel alone to school was so much that in order to avoid a group of rowdy boys she changed the route that made her late to attend school, and therefore she had to start from her home early every day.

- Declined attention and concentration during lectures- A large numbers of respondents validated that such incidents altered their attention and concentration while taking lectures. It is well known that eve teasing causes distress and disrupts the mental peace by creating an attitude of fears. This feeling sometimes lingers on and can digress student life where focused attention is required to comprehend subject knowledge. Students discussed that after facing such situations they could not discuss with someone immediately, hence feelings of distress kept them away from concentrating and being attentive in classrooms.
- Negative attitude towards male counterparts- A conducive learning environment requires cohesiveness within the members of the groups so that they can work together effectively. Incidents of eve teasing created a negative attitude towards male among girl students which they usually generalize to their classmates also. Respondents agreed that after facing such incidents led them to limit their interaction with male friends and in extreme cases they had stopped talking to their male classmates altogether. Earlier they had known to help and perform group tasks with male students but after instances of eve teasing they refrained their interaction during group tasks.
- Involvement of parents, teachers and school authorities– Only 40% of the participants shared such incidences with their parents; others did not follow the same suite out of apprehension that they will be held responsible by their parents for the act of disgrace. As in India, it is the responsibility of the women to safeguard their family honor. In order to avoid such incidents school teachers had advised girls to travel in groups. Complaints against in school eve-teasing were handled by the school principal, for which offenders were reprimanded but no proper measure to counsel such behavior was made.

6. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND SUGGESTIONS BASED ON FINDINGS:

The findings of the current study align towards a general understanding wherein its impact is felt not only with affective outcomes such as self-confidence but also in terms of delineating an individual from psychological well-being. Table 1 depicts percentage scores of questionnaire responses categorized under broad themes. 78% of the girls have directly agreed upon to have faced one or the other form of eve-teasing while present in school or during commutation to school which calls for the more vigilant role of school authorities in controlling the menace. Although 90.6 % of girls agreed to retaliate against such incidences, during focus group discussion only a few reported to have shown reprisal, this shows that females want to protest but feel inhibited and unequipped to handle these circumstances. Therefore, teachers and parents should work together to instill austerity among girls against such situations, also self-defense training should become a necessary part of the curriculum. 21% of respondents showed a feeling of vulnerability or helplessness which was again evident during focus group interviews that most of the students did not share such instances with teachers or parents out of a feeling of shame. Counseling sessions should be therefore initiated at both school level and community level to aware parents and teachers also with challenges faced by the students. 11% of respondents agreed upon that their parents and family members discriminated between boys and girls, even 10% of girls themselves agreed that boys and girls are not equal. Such mindset gives rise to faulty socialization processes and upbringing males with an overbearing attitude or special treatment give them the right to objectify women. Around 12% of girls were unaware of sex education, which cannot be ignored in today's scenario, therefore schools should involve with more sessions on sex education to help aware students. 35 % agreed that men tease to show off their masculinity, validating the male dominating statute of the society.

For the second part, a significant positive relationship is observed between attitude towards eve teasing and self-confidence of girls. These findings are consistent with others such as [10, 11] who have related harassment with diminished personality outcomes like self-esteem, self-confidence, and psychological well-being. In one study [12] females that have been sexually harassed reported experiencing embarrassment, feeling self-conscious, feeling less sure or less confident of themselves following sexual harassment. It is important for schools to create a positive school environment which is conducive for female student learning and is free from negative emotional barriers such as bullying or sexual harassment which is directly related to self-esteem and is a predictor of academic engagement and academic success [13].

The focus group interviews highlighted the sense of well-being among students in the relation to experiences of eve teasing. Students usually resort to avoidance or denial as a coping strategy against these experiences. Other forms of strategies deployed by victims are formal support from organizational authorities and emotional support and advice from trusted others [14, 15]. Under these categories role of government, school authorities and teachers hold a high level of pertinence in ensuring the well-being of the individual. Even at village panchayat level, the issue can be

addressed, village panchayats hold a high level of responsibility in decision making, as was reported by [5] that six villages of Mahendragarh, Haryana had banned girls from attending school after an incident of eve-teasing in a nearby village. Thus, asserting anti-women mindset of villages leading to curtailment of education. Since the respondents cited commutation to school and in-school scenario as more prominent contributors to eve teasing experiences, therefore it is important for school authorities to be more vigilant towards the issues pertaining in the context. Regular counseling sessions for boys, girls, and their parents should be held to address and create awareness about psychosocial issues associated with eve teasing.

7. CONCLUSION:

The present study contributes by assessing perception of adolescent girls towards eve teasing in the context of rural, gender sensitive region of Haryana, India. Further investigation found out the positive association between eve teasing and self-confidence of adolescent girls. Focus group interviews threw a light on how student well-being is affected under influence of eve teasing experiences, which is in the form of declined academic performance, persistent stress /anxiety and disrupted concentration. India being a developing country needs to give rise to women who are self-sufficient, uninhibited and deserve the equal respect of basic human rights. But are we able to conquest all this? The bigger picture remains unclear, as women are still termed as “weaker sex”, secondary citizens who cannot partake in decision making and liberate themselves from walls of society which objectifies them as invalid beings. Although the situation has improved, women are realizing their position in the society, but certain elements still confine them from metamorphosing into a self-reliant individual ready to take the world into its stride. Therefore, here comes the role of teacher, parents, school and even society to ensure right kind of environment is being provided so that all individuals can flourish uninhibitedly and rise as better and contributing citizens of the country.

REFERENCES:

1. Ghosh, Eve teasing: the role of the patriarchal system of the society, *Journal of the Indian Academy of Applied Psychology*, 37, 2011, 100-107.
2. U. Gadekar, Eve teasing and its psychosocial influence among the adolescent girls, *International Journal of Current Advanced Research*, 5(6), 2016, 1028-1031.
3. C. Akhtar, Eve teasing as a form of violence against women: A case study of district Srinagar, Kashmir. *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, 5(5), 2013, 168.
4. Shally, R. *Women and Our Society, A Survey Report of UnnayanPadakkhep*, Dhaka: Bangladesh, 2005.
5. C.S. Dogra, Eve-teasing incident leads to ban on girls going to school, *The Hindu*, Retrieved from <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/eveteasing-incident-leads-to-ban-on-girls-going-to-school/article4718792.ece> on May 6, 2013.
6. J. Fraillon, Measuring student well-being in the context of Australian schooling: Discussion paper, *The Australian Council for Educational Research*, 2, 2004, 1-54.
7. T. Noble, T. Wyatt, H. McGrath, S. Roffey, and L. Rowling, *Scoping Study into Approaches to Student Wellbeing: Final Report*, 2008, Available from <https://docs.education.gov.au/documents/scoping-study-approaches-student-wellbeing-final-report>
8. D. Ghosh, *EveTeasing Scale for Girls* (New Delhi: PrasadPsycho Corporation, 2011).
9. D. D. Pandey, *Self Confidence Inventory*, (Agra: National Psychological Corporation, 2007)
10. J.B. Pryor, and L. F. Fitzgerald, (2003). Sexual harassment research in the United States. In S. Einarsen, H. Hoel, D. Zapf, & C. L. Cooper, (Eds). *Bullying and emotional abuse in the workplace: International perspectives in research and practice* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2003, 79–100).
11. C. R. Willness, P. Steel, and K. Lee, A meta-analysis of the antecedents and consequences of workplace sexual harassment, *Personnel Psychology*, 60, 2007, 127–163.
12. S. Kopels, and D. R. Dupper, School-Based Peer Sexual Harassment. *Child Welfare LXXVIII* (4), 1999, 435-460
13. B. M. Ayenew, and T. G. Gebremeskal, Sexual Harassment, Self-Esteem and Academic Engagement as Predictors of Academic Success of Female Secondary School Students, *Science, Technology, and Arts Research Journal*, 3(2), 2014, 229-236.
14. D. E. Knapp, R. H. Faley, S. E. Ekeberg, and C. L. Dubois, Determinants of target responses to sexual harassment: A conceptual framework, *Academy of Management Review*, 22(3), 1997, 687-729.
15. V. J. Magley, C.L. Hulin, L.F. Fitzgerald, and M. DeNardo, Outcomes of self-labeling sexual harassment, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 84(3), 2002, 390.
16. National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development, *Statistics on women in India* (New Delhi, India, 2014).