

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WOMEN MOBILITY AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT: EMPIRICAL STUDY OF METROPOLITAN CITY OF LAHORE

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Abstract

This article is based on a research conducted to see the relationship of sexual harassment with mobility of females, going out daily, in Lahore Metropolitan. Forms, causes, effects and strategies (individual/mass level) to handle the problem were studied using mixed methods including structured schedule, in-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussions. While using purposive sampling technique, 600 females were grouped into three categories of: students, working women and housewives to get their opinion about extent of the problem and suggestions to tackle the problem of sexual harassment in the absence of legal definition (including legal response) of street sexual harassment in Pakistan. Data, thus collected, were analyzed using descriptive as well as inferential statistical (averages, correlations, ANOVA). To solve the problem, all study participants demanded a more serious role of law enforcement agencies.

Keywords: Sexual harassment, Females, Mobility, Male domination.

1.Introduction

This paper discusses the results of a study into the relationship between mobility and sexual harassment of women while they go about their everyday lives, the consequent effect on women's mobility, their future aspirations, the need for a cultural shift in terms of women's perceived and real status and place in society, and

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the resulting need for a consideration of the safety of female's person and her worth and dignity as a citizen of Pakistan.

The publication of this paper is timely against the backdrop of the Harvey Weinstein case and the resulting '#MeToo' social media campaign (The Washington Post, 2017) to highlight the fact that the harassment of women is common, and yet, it is largely ignored throughout the world. The significance of this paper is increased as little has been published in Pakistan about street harassment of women, which is directly linked to their mobility, constraining which is detrimental to their already lower socioeconomic status in the society. This relationship is highlighted as earlier as in Pakistan's National Report on the Fourth World Conference On Women held in Beijing in September 1995, which highlighted the fact that women in Pakistan are hampered in taking a major role in economic development due to their restricted mobility. Sexual harassment outside the house is a major reason for this restricted mobility of females. However, not much has been done, especially by the state, to resolve this serious issue.

Street harassment may represent the most common and frequent type of sexual harassment encountered by women whereas sexual harassment includes unwanted sexual actions in the public places, particularly on roads, on public transport and at work places. (Joseph, et al., 2006) Women suffer the emotional repercussions of victimization; fear, humiliation, feelings of powerlessness, and rage, thus, affecting the psychological health of the individual. (Naveed, et al. 2010) As highlighted earlier, it also restricts women's mobility and negatively impacts the socioeconomic status of women, and therefore, this harassment prevents the sufferers from attaining their equitable place in the society. (Sigal, 2006).

Sexual harassment of women has a strong cultural dimension as well, especially since it relates to gender roles, that is, public spaces being appropriated by and for men, and women belonging to, therefore, should be confined to the private sphere. This cultural dimension is highly significant, and is often misrepresented, in the context of Pakistan being an Islamic Republic where women are understood as and expected to be symbol of honour and modesty. Allah promises in the Holy Quran forgiveness and vast reward to men and women who protect their modesty (33:35) and orders the

believing men to lower their gaze and be modest. (33: 59) The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) said to avoid sitting on the roads. (Abu – Dawood).

In the same vein, the Constitution of Pakistan (1973) provides that there is no discrimination on the basis of sex and all citizens will be protected equally. In addition, according to the Pakistan Penal Code, any kind of harassment is a crime which has punishment with imprisonment up to three years or fine up to five lacs or with both. (Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2010) In Pakistan, female breadwinner families are increasing; with handling domestic tasks, they are facing many other restraints. (Tacoli & Satterthwaite, 2013) Safe traveling can improve the quality of their life. (Thynell, 2016) This paper is an effort to contribute to this end.

2. Literature Review

In countries with gender discrimination, women face sexual harassment during travel. (Graglia, 2013) Researches have been done in other countries on sexual harassment during mobility but not in Pakistan. As World Development Report, 2012 on gender and mobility reveals that transport sector has been gender-blind, it is further revealed that compared to men, women are more reliant on the public transport and women's capacity to combat poverty is highly limited by their restricted mobility.

Women's safety and different transport means were studied in Southampton in 1986. Insecurity level was found high, especially when waiting for transport in isolated places, for walking at night, in parks and underpasses. (Lynch & Atkins, 1988) The results of a survey in the Sanjay Camp, Delhi indicated that sexual harassment during mobility is worsened due to the poor lights on the streets and subways. (Anand & Tiwari, 2006) Results of a research conducted on the students of Shiraz University, Iran revealed that suffering sexual harassment is very much correlated with the presence in public places, how the people are socialized and women are dressed up. (Lahsaeizadeh & Yousefinejad, 2012).

iHollaback (2012) reported rates of sexual harassment in public spaces in 2012 in Poland, Croatia and Turkey as 85%, 99% and 93% respectively. In the US in 2014 a 2,000-person national survey found that 65% of all women had experienced street harassment. Among all women, 23% had been sexually touched, 20% had been

followed, and 9% had been forced to do something sexual (Kearl, 2014).

Sexual harassment during travel generates fear in women and this fear changes travel behavior in a negative way. (Hsu, 2011) A research was conducted to assess the harassment in public transport in Karachi. About 31% of students, 23% of working women and 20% of housewives reduced the use of public transport and started using taxis and rickshaws. Nearly 40% of students avoid travelling after dark and about 45% have started to wear the hijab. (Asian Development Bank, 2014) Harassment of women in public spaces including streets and in various means of transport has serious consequences for women. As Bowman (1993) declared that harassment is a harm and this harm deeply effects the females' full participation in public affairs.

3. Material and Methods

Female population within the age group of 15 to 35 years who daily go out, in metropolitan Lahore, were the universe of the study. As it was a heterogeneous universe so to cover all the sub groups, it was divided into further groups: 1) Students; 2) Working women; 3) Housewives.

These three sub groups include public transport users, drivers of personal vehicles and those who travel on foot.

3.1 Study Design

The study was of preliminary importance. No data, facts and figures or basic information was available before hand, therefore, to acquire basic numerical data and to develop an in-depth understanding of the experiences of the respondents, mixed method/s research was adopted.

3.1.1 Quantitative Method

Five hypotheses were developed which were tested by collecting data on a structured questionnaire.

Hypotheses

- Younger females would have more aggressive reaction towards/against sexual harassment.
- Greater frequency of sexual harassment will restrict the mobility of women.

- Those women who use public transport will experience/face more sexual harassment.
- Qualified females would have more knowledge of their legal rights regarding sexual harassment.
- Younger females will experience more sexual harassment.

3.1.2 Qualitative Method

Two commonly known qualitative methods were used:

- In-depth interviews (with unique cases)
- Focus Group Discussions (with each sub-group of sample)

3.2 Sampling

Purposive sampling technique was used. As the sampling frame was not known, data was collected till the saturation point, making the sampling size 600.

3.3 Data Analysis

The data was analyzed manually and through SPSS software. Percentages and averages were calculated. Correlations were applied to check the relationship of different variables. Regression analysis was run to find out the predictors. Analysis of variance was computed to compare means of three different groups of females according to their status.

4. Study Findings

4.1 Quantitative Findings

Out of 600 respondents, majority (65%) were between ages of 15 to 25 years with mean of 24. Half of them (50%) were students with equal proportion of house wives and working women. Majority of the respondents (50%) used public transport and 23% moved on foot. Only 15% used personal transport.

Table 1
Opinions and Experiences of Harassment

Frequency of going out daily	f (%)
Once	325 (54)
Twice	187 (32)
Thrice or more	88 (14)
Facing incident/s of harassment in a day	
Once	146 (24)
Twice	244 (41)
Thrice or more	210 (35)
Type of harassment by conductors and drivers of public transport	
Touching	149 (25)
Fixing view mirror	247 (41)
Delay tactics	73 (12)

Meaningful songs	112 (19)
Considering harassment as a crime	
Yes	586 (98)
No	14 (2)
Awareness about legal rights	
Don't know any thing	389 (65)
No such provisions in constitution	52 (09)
Have some legal rights	105 (17)
Provisions to punish the offender	54 (09)
Respondents ever used their legal rights	
Yes	21 (04)
No	579 (96)
Causes of harassment	
Male domination	183 (30)
Sex is taboo	94 (16)
Poor law & order situation	160 (27)
Ignorance of religious values by females	163 (27)
Role of Media	
Misguiding the female towards glamour	261 (43)
Arousing the male emotions	216 (36)
Portraying the female dilemma	77 (13)
Presenting the solution of the situation	46 (8)
Solution of incident/s of harassment	
Face the situation	188 (31)
Change the route	148 (25)
Change the frequency of going out	128 (21)
Stay at home	136 (23)
Respondent's anticipation about the reaction of their family, on sharing an incident of harassment	
Feel helpless	60 (10)
Reaction against offender	151 (25)
Encourage respondent	234 (39)
Unfavorable to respondent	155 (26)
The effect of sexual harassment on work	
Normal	250 (42)
Transfer tension	109 (18)
Over work	55 (9)
Can't work	186 (31)

Mostly (54%) respondents go out once a day and they face incident of harassment at least twice (41%). Majority of the respondents (41%) told that drivers of public transport fix the view mirror on females to disturb them and 25% said that drivers and conductors touch or try to touch the female travelers. Though considering harassment a crime (98%), majority of respondents (96%) never availed legal rights. Mostly (65%) were not even aware of their legal rights. Respondents explained male domination (30%) and ineffective law (27%) as major causes of harassment. Majority of respondents considered role of media negative as misguiding females (43%) and arousing male emotions (36%). 31% told that they face the situation, 25% changed their route, 21% changed the frequency of going out and a sizeable population of 23% decided to

stay at home. 39% respondents thought that they would be encouraged by their family, 26% anticipated to get unfavourable response, another 25% told that their family would take action against offender. 42% respondents felt normal whenever they come across any such situation, however, 31% could not work whole day.

Table 2
Relationship between age and harassment

Frequency of being harassed Age in years	Always <i>f</i> (%)	Often <i>f</i> (%)	Rare <i>f</i> (%)	Never <i>f</i> (%)	Total
15-20	416 (69)	129 (21)	46 (8)	09 (2)	600
20-25	266 (44)	262 (44)	68 (11)	04 (1)	600
25-30	101 (17)	197 (33)	280 (47)	22 (3)	600
30-35	66 (11)	92 (15)	329 (55)	113 (19)	600
Distribution of age of males who harass females					
Young	310 (52)	151 (25)	126 (21)	13 (2)	600
Middle aged	157 (26)	218 (36)	196 (33)	29 (5)	600
Aged	106 (18)	102 (17)	246 (41)	146 (24)	600

Mostly females between ages of 15 to 20 years (69%) are always harassed while mostly perpetrators are young boys (52%).

Table 3
Types and places of harassment

Forms of Harassment	Always <i>f</i> (%)	Often <i>f</i> (%)	Rare <i>f</i> (%)	Never <i>f</i> (%)	Total
Stare	276 (46)	171 (28)	104 (17)	49 (9)	600
Touch	53 (9)	86 (14)	186 (31)	275 (46)	600
Cat calls	124 (20)	202 (34)	184 (31)	90 (15)	600
Chase	45 (7)	118 (20)	208 (35)	229 (38)	600
Meaningful songs	98 (16)	198 (33)	177 (30)	127 (21)	600
Sexual gestures	87 (15)	162 (28)	163 (28)	196 (33)	600
Place where the females are harassed more					
Female crowded	124 (21)	97 (16)	191 (32)	188 (31)	600
Male crowded	301 (50)	178 (30)	82 (14)	39 (6)	600
Over crowded	310 (52)	184 (31)	79 (13)	27 (4)	600
Deserted	360 (60)	148 (25)	78 (13)	14 (2)	600
Problems faced by female drivers					
Horn behind	53 (32)	60 (36)	36 (21)	18 (11)	167
Over taking	30 (18)	63 (38)	61 (36)	13 (8)	167
Blocking the way	26 (16)	39 (23)	75 (45)	27 (16)	167
Types of harassment by riders for pedestrian					
Closely/swiftly pass	152 (25)	202 (34)	170 (28)	76 (13)	600
Sudden horn	95 (15)	203 (34)	175 (29)	127 (22)	600
Break up abruptly/closely	80 (13)	146 (24)	199 (33)	175 (30)	600
Pose to start	43 (7)	96 (16)	145 (24)	316 (53)	600
Relationship of harassment with the get up of females					
Covered face	185 (31)	141 (23)	193 (32)	81 (14)	600
Open face	131 (22)	234 (39)	211 (35)	24 (4)	600
Bare headed	266 (44)	195 (33)	119 (20)	20 (3)	600
Covered head	88 (15)	178 (30)	290 (48)	44 (7)	600
Exposing outlay	453 (75)	87 (15)	41 (7)	19 (3)	600
Non-exposing outlay	49 (8)	144 (24)	299 (50)	108 (18)	600
With make up	327 (54)	194 (32)	75 (13)	4 (1)	600
Without make up	46 (7)	149 (25)	321 (54)	84 (14)	600

As far as forms of harassment are concerned, 46% were always harassed through staring, 34% often received cat calls and 33% were often harassed through meaningful songs. Mostly respondents revealed that females are always harassed at deserted (60%) and overcrowded (52) places. Out of 600 females, 167 used to drive themselves. Out of 167 respondents, 32% always faced the problem of unnecessary horn behind, when they drive and 38% often faced undue overtaking. 34% respondents said that riders often very swiftly pass by them, and another 34% often faced sudden horn which scared them during walk. Respondents revealed that females are always harassed with exposing outlays (75%), with make-up (54%), with bare head and with covered face (31%).

Table 4
Reactions Regarding Harassment

Feeling of the respondents when they are harassed	Always f (%)	Often f (%)	Rare f (%)	Never f (%)	Total
Happiness	28 (5)	24 (4)	62 (10)	486 (81)	600
Normal	162 (27)	156 (26)	122 (20)	160 (27)	600
Depressed	181 (30)	153 (25)	160 (27)	106 (18)	600
Frightened	133 (22)	114 (19)	155 (26)	198 (33)	600
Reaction on facing an incident of harassment					
Slap the offender	16 (3)	24 (4)	87 (14)	473 (79)	600
Faced the incident	137 (23)	90 (15)	125 (21)	248 (41)	600
Call for help	19 (3)	17 (3)	37 (6)	527 (88)	600
Felt helpless	135 (22)	97 (16)	107 (18)	261 (44)	600
Frequency Responses of People who witness any act of harassment					
Unconcerned	188 (31)	148 (25)	128 (21)	136 (23)	600
Blame females	45 (8)	64 (11)	79 (13)	412 (68)	600
Discourage male	83 (14)	135 (22)	149 (25)	233 (39)	600
Enjoy it	258 (43)	161 (27)	92 (15)	89 (15)	600

All of the respondents had unpleasant feeling regarding harassment. Mostly never called for help (88%) and felt helpless (22%). While mostly people who witness such incident, enjoy (43%) the harassment of females or become unconcerned (31%). They never discouraged (39%) males.

Table 5
Suggestions for the safe mobility of females

Suggestions	f (%)
Separate conveyance for females	227 (27)
Strict legislation/law and order	216 (25)
Parent's role	86 (10)
Self-development of females	186 (22)
Positive role of media/Mass education	135 (16)
Total	850 (100)

27% suggestions came in favor of separate transport for females and 25% were in favor of strict legislation against harassment and maintenance of overall law and order situation.

4.2 Qualitative Findings

In the words of a 35 years old journalist, "Now a days no female is safe whether she is a 6 years old girl or an old lady of 60." She is quite pessimist about the solution of the problem, as she says, "even if you want to send your girls to educate them, arrange a personal vehicle for them otherwise let them stay at home, uneducated but at least safe." A 24 years old Master student, has become neurotic due to some bitter incident of harassment as she talks about an unsuccessful attempt of suicide.

All three groups were in simple consensus that sexual harassment outside the house does exist and is on increase which restricts their mobility. During the discussions, it was observed that students get affected from severe frustration. House-wives not only become nervous at the spot, they also get worried about safety of their daughters and character building of young boys. Working women generally had courage to face such incidents.

5. Conclusion

This paper has presented the findings from a study of the relationship between everyday harassment women have to contend with when they are going to and from work/school/college/university, the markets or leisure activities. In the nut shell, the study concluded that there are so many ways, including staring, cat calls, touching and so forth, to harass females when they are out and without any male company. During analysis, five hypotheses were tested and results are as follows:

1. The analysis shows that the response or reaction of younger females is more offensive. As a negative relationship is found between age and slap ($N=600$, $r = -.100^*$). ($N=600$, $-.299^{**}$) was found between age and facing the situation of harassment which means more the age of respondents, lower is the tendency of facing the situation or vice versa. So the **first hypothesis**, "Younger females would have more aggressive reaction towards/against sexual harassment" is approved.
2. **Second hypothesis**, "greater frequency of sexual harassment will restrict the mobility of women" been approved as results

reflected a +ve relationship between frequency of harassment and restricted mobility of women ($N=600, r=.142^{**}$).

3. **Third hypothesis**, “those women who use public transport will experience /face more sexual harassment has been approved because results reflected a significance +ve relationship between mode of transportation and frequency of harassment ($N=600, r+.130^{**}$).
4. **Fourth hypothesis**, “qualified females would have more knowledge of their legal rights regarding sexual harassment” is rejected as more qualified females have less knowledge about prevalence of any legal rights against harassment. Qualification of respondents has a -ve relationship ($N=600, r=-.112^{**}$).
5. Age of respondents has -ve relationship ($N=600, r=-.099^{*}$) with frequency of harassment that means younger females have to face more harassment than aged women. So **fifth hypothesis** “younger females will experience more sexual harassment” has been approved.

Further, quantitative data when analyzed with qualitative data, helped arrive at certain conclusions that:

- No female is safe from sexual harassment irrespective of their age, get up and status.
- Causes of sexual harassment are poor law and order situation, improper socialization and male domination.
- Females know that harassment is a crime but majority don't call for help. They observe 'tolerate and ignore' policy, change their routes, minimize the frequency of going out or decide to stay at home.
- Females are pessimist about role of police and law enforcement agencies. Results show that sexual harassment is one of the most under reported offences.
- Harassment affects females badly as they feel nervous, frightened, depressed, frustrated and even neurotic.
- Almost all respondents demanded a separate transport system for females and overall maintenance of law and order situation.

6. Recommendations

1. There should be separate transport system for females on all routes by the government, it may be provided from social policy

- package of the country or from funds for women development or gender development programs such as GRAP.
2. There should be separate and equal compartment for females in all types of public vehicles and on bus stops.
 3. At school/ college/ office time, there should be a special transport service for females.
 4. Strict legislation is need of the time i.e. laws covering all forms of sexual harassment, and heavy penalties should be imposed on offenders. This also includes revising existing anti-harassment law to include street harassment.
 5. There should be police officer/s including female officers on bus stops with necessary equipment (mobile, bike etc.) and authority to check and respond to such incidents.
 6. A cultural shift is needed, and therefore, there should be a mass campaign through media to train/educate women as to how to avoid/handle harassment, and to teach boys/ males to respect females.
 7. Status of females in Islam should be highlighted in our syllabus.
 8. The concerned government departments, NGOs, women rights activists and social advocacy groups should work to strengthen females' self-image, their awareness regarding their status and legal rights, and train and equip women with technology, e.g., mobile phone camera and apps, to respond to street harassment.
 9. The concerned government departments and NGOs should train women to support each other and record such incidents and share with law enforcement to get fines and penalties imposed.
 10. There should be more constructive/recreational facilities for men available in the country so that they could not deviate to such kind of negative activities.

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