



Perception of students regarding sexual harassment

Sarita Dubey¹, Tanima Verma², Suman Lata³, Trupti Bharti⁴, Shams Tavrej⁵, Komal Schan⁶, Priyamvada Kashyap⁷,
Neelu Gautam⁸

¹⁻³ Clinical Instructor KGMU College of Nursing, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India

⁴⁻⁸ Nursing officer, AIIMS Reshikesh, Uttarakhand, India

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Abstract

Background: Sexual harassment means unwanted sexually determined behavior such as physical contacts and advances, making sexual derogative comments, and sexual pressure whether by verbal or -nonverbal actions. Young female adults are most vulnerable to harassment and violence towards them. Despite of high literacy levels young female adults show tendency to tolerate harassment and delay in early identification of warning signs, leading to sexual harassment. Therefore, it becomes very important to understand how the students perceive different types of sexual harassment.

Objective: To assess the perception of undergraduate girl students regarding Sexual Harassment

Method: A descriptive, cross sectional survey design on 100 female undergraduate students from the King George's Medical University of Lucknow, India was undertaken using convenient sampling technique. A self structured perception questionnaire developed by researchers was used.

Result: The data gathered from the study suggests that majority (81%) of the participants responded that sexual harassment is related to all unwelcome sexual behaviour, 72% of the participants feel most afraid of sexual harassment during night, and 83% of the participants responded that the most probable place for sexual harassment is public transport. 91% of the participants believed that the incidences of the sexual harassment has increased in the last 10 years and majority (81%) of the participants didn't had knowledge of any legal provisions regarding sexual harassment.

Conclusion: The data shows that the definition of sexual harassment can differ according to individual's perception. To understand how people perceive and define sexual harassment is crucial for explaining and understanding how they react to sexual harassment and why they often do not stand up against sexual harassment.

Keywords: substituted Li ferrite, magnetostatic and spin waves, microstrip array antenna, X-band frequency range

Introduction

Harassment is a form of discrimination. It involves any unwanted physical or verbal behavior that offends or humiliates an individual. Generally, harassment is a behavior that persists over time. Serious one-time incidents can also sometimes be considered harassment. There are many different types of harassment like visual, verbal, physical or sexual. On other basis, various forms can include racial harassment, religious harassment, workplace harassment etc ^[1].

Sexual harassment includes, "such unwelcome sexually determined behaviors as physical contact & advances, sexually colored remarks, showing pornography, and sexual demands – whether by words or actions". Sexual harassment is the expression of unhealthy human relationship, it is not just the violation of dignity, right to social security and right to equality guaranteed to human beings in every social system but it is also a violation of right to life and peaceful existence guaranteed by law. Though sexual harassment in the context of employment has received much attention in the social and legal scenario in the last two decades, including the enactment of Sexual Harassment Act of 2014, the cause and impact of sexual harassment in educational institutions has not received much attention until recent times.

Need of the study

In the last few decades, the crime against women in India has increased by 6.4 percent in 2012 from the previous years. Karnataka has an incidence of 10366 which accounts for 4.24 percent of the total incidence in the country. Out of this, 1621 were the cases of rape which was found to be the highest in the age group 18-30 years. Sexual harassment is irrespective of gender that means a person can be sexually harassed by another individual of different or even that of the same gender. But in all the cases of harassment, female is found to be the victim and male is found to perpetrator ^[2]. A descriptive, cross sectional survey 2017 by assess the difference in perception of avoidance strategies against sexual harassment females students in women and co-educational in Delhi in which 200 female UG students undertaken using convenient sampling technique and finally concluded that females in coeducational college had more awareness regarding description of sexual harassment, are identification of high risk situation, actions against sexual harassment and prevention of sexual harassment, female in women college had a view to ignore sexual harassment incidence than coeducational college females ^[3].

2017 Assess Harassment and Mental Distress Among Adolescent Female Students by Sexual Identity and BMI or Perceived Weight Status Data on female students from the

National 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (n=7,006) were analyzed and concluded that a cross sexual identity/BMI groups, being overweight increased heterosexual females' odds of being bullied or experiencing suicidal thoughts and behaviors. Regardless of weight status, sexual minority females had greater odds for each outcome than heterosexual females. Sexual minority females who perceived themselves as overweight had greater odds of suicidality than all other sexual minority/perceived weight group [4].

Methodology

A Quantitative non-Experimental approach used for the present study, Cross- sectional Survey designed under which the 100 undergraduate girl students studying in King George’s Medical University; BSc. Nursing Batch 2016; BSc. Nursing Batch 2017; MBBS Batch 2017 were selected with Convenient Sampling technique. The Inclusion criteria for Participants; should be the student of KGMU, willing to give consent & able to communicate in English and those were not willing give consent were excluded. Data were collected by Structured questionnaire containing 24 items (17 single answer questions and 7 multiple answer question).for assessing the perception of undergraduate girl students regarding sexual harassment and demographic data sheet. The content validity of the tool has been established by two nursing faculty, three Psychiatrist, one News Editor. The Ethical clearance was obtained from ethical committee of KGMU, Lucknow and Informed consent was taken from the subject to maintain Confidentiality of the information provided by the subject and anonymity. The data were collected from 15th May to 15th June 2018. All participants

undergoing undergraduate courses who met the inclusion and before obtaining the consent from the participant’s queries about the topic were discussed.

Analysis and interpretation

The data collected were first coded & summarized in master data sheet and analyzed based on objective of the study using SSP software

The demographic data were; the mean age of the participant was 20.63±1.739 years and the minimum age was 18 years and the maximum age was 29 years. Nearly quarter (27%) of the participants were pursuing Bachelors in Medicine and Surgery (MBBS) and rest of the participants were pursuing graduation in Nursing. The monthly family income of 27% of the participants was between 40000 to 60000, 26% of the participants were from the family income 20000-40000, 20% had their family income less than 20000 and 23% belonged to the group that had the family income of more than 60000. Most (89%) of the participants belong to Hindu religion, 6% belong to Muslim religion, 3% belong to Christian religion, and 2% belong to Sikh religion. Almost all (99%) of the participants were students and only 1% was doing part time job. Most (67%) of the participants had a nuclear family and 33% of the family had joint family. Most (67%) of the participants were residing in urban area of Lucknow and 33% of the participants resided in rural area of Lucknow. Most (65%) of the participants were currently residing in the hostel, while 30% of the participants lived with their family and 4% of them were residing in rental accommodation and 1% of the participants resided as paying guest.

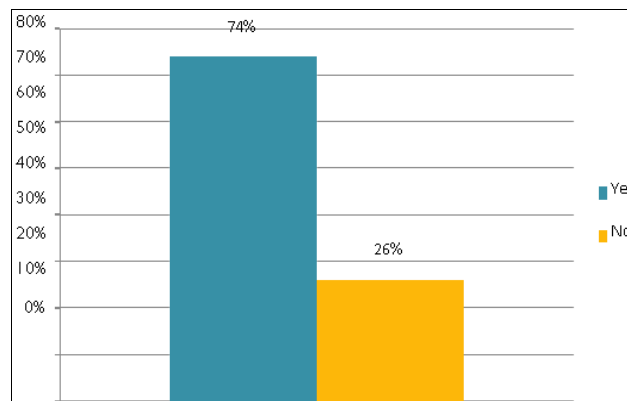


Fig 1: Bar diagram showing the frequency percentage that whether the female may also harass a female despite the belief that the male harasses a female. (n=100)

As shown in fig. no. 1 that 74% of the participants responded that the female may also harass a female despite the belief that the male harasses a female.

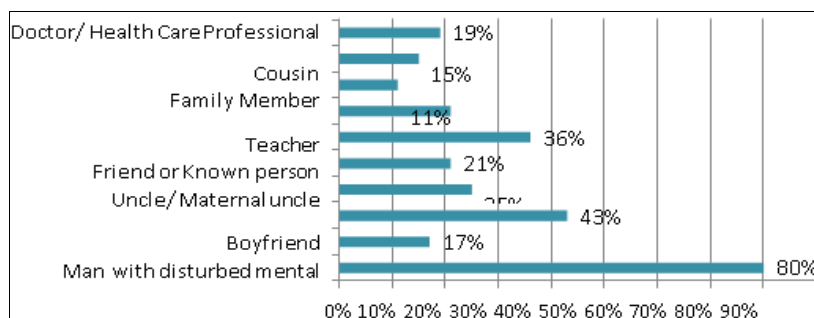


Fig 2: Bar diagram showing the frequency percentage of the most probable male harasser, (n=100)

As shown in fig. no. 2 that most (80%) of the participants responded

That an unknown person is the most probable male harasser.

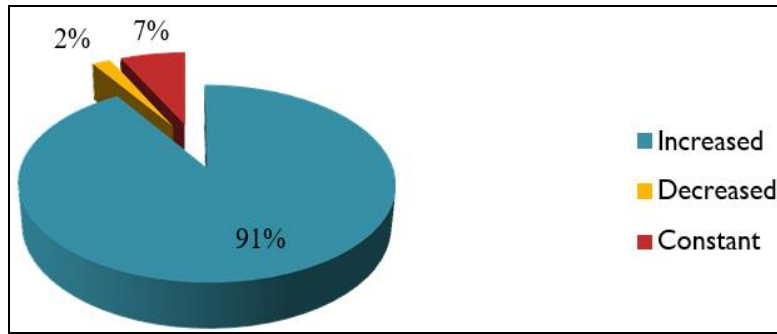


Fig 3: Pie diagram showing the frequency percentage about the occurring rate of sexual harassment in last 10 year in India. (n=100)

As shown in fig. no.3. that maximum no. of participants (91%) feels that the occurrence rate of sexual harassment in

the last 10 years in India has increased.

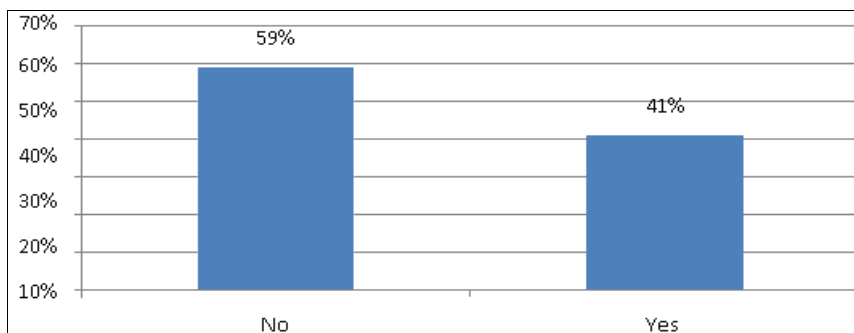


Fig 4: Bar diagram showing the frequency percentage about the participants witnessing the sexual harassment. (n=100)

As shown in fig.no.4 that almost half (59%) of the

participants have witnessed sexual harassment.

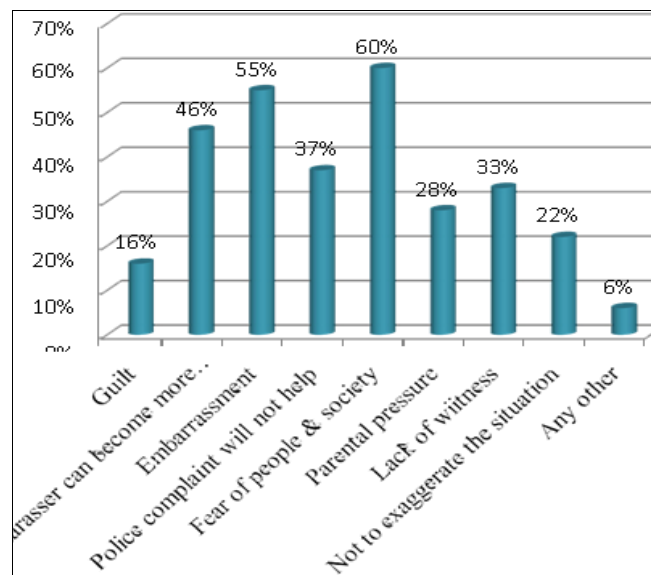


Fig 5: Bar diagram showing the frequency percentage about the reason that the girl or a women don't report sexual harassment to police or higher authorities (n=100).

As shown in the fig.no.5 that 60% of the participants feels fear of people and society while reporting to police or higher authority for the sexual harassment, 55% feel embarrassment, 46% of the participants thinks that the harasser can become more violent if they raised objection, 37% believe that police compliant will not help, 33% of

them feel that there is a lack of witness, 28% think the reason for not reporting harassment is parental pressure, 22% think they need not to exaggerate the situation, 16% participants feels guilty, 6% of the participants responded that there are other reason of females for not reporting the sexual harassment to the police or higher authority

Table 1: Majority responses of the participants

Sl.	Statement	Majority Response	%
1.	According to the participants which statement suitably defines the term sexual harassment?	Related to all unwelcome sexual behavior	81
2.	Most common type of sexual harassment according to the participants	Physical	45
3.	Time of the day the participants feel most afraid of sexual harassment	Night	72
4.	Most probable place of sexual harassment	Public Transport	83
5.	Participants feel the fear of sexual harassment for themselves	Yes	77
6.	That whether the female may also harass a female despite the belief that the male harasses a male	Yes	74
7.	Which gender harasses more according to the participants	Male	72
8.	Feeling comfortable to tell their parents about sexual harassment	No	58
9.	Perception of increased sexual harassment in last 10 years in India	Increased	91
10.	If the female ignores the behavior of sexual harassment whether the harasser will ultimately go away	No	75
11.	If the participants witnessed the sexual harassment	No	59
12.	Participants who have approached the police for harassment complaint	No	69
13.	Reaction of the police when the participants approached them for harassment complaint	Uncooperative	87
14.	Reason that the girl or a women don't report sexual harassment to the police or higher authorities	Fear of people and society	60
15.	Factors that can prevent sexual harassment	Calling helpline numbers like 1090	69
16.	The participants having any knowledge of legal provision regarding sexual harassment	No	81
17.	The ways by which they can save themselves while sexual harassment	Martial arts & Self-defense techniques	81
18.	Are the awareness programme organized by the Government of India beneficial	Yes	79
19.	Are the helpline no. given for women protection or for the prevention of sexual harassment such as 1090 helpful	Yes	82

There were some questions in which the responses of the participants were variedly distributed

- 45% of the participants responded that men among the age group of 19-35 were most probable harassers, and 27% of them responded that age group of 12-18 years were among the probable harassers.
- 16% of the participants responded that if they tell their parents they will blame them, 26% of them responded that parents will restrict them from outings, 35% of them responded that they feel shy to tell them about the incident of sexual harassment, 8% responded that the parents will take strict action against the harasser.
- The participants responded that the reason for sexual harassment is mainly due to community exposure to any form of Pornography (33%), provocative clothes (10%), being beautiful and attractive (9%) and others said that multiple reasons were responsible for sexual harassment.
- 35% of participants responded that after experiencing sexual harassment trust among male relatives and acquaintances is decreased, 33% responded that their ability to study and work is affected adversely due to sexual harassment, 31% of participants responded that they will become more careful in dealing with others.
- 63% participants responded that the harassers should be punished by hanging till death, 50% of them also responded that they should be beaten publicly for their actions.

Discussion and Conclusion

In the present study it was found that 81% of the participants knew what does the word sexual harassment means and were able to define it. The finding is supported by the study conducted in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2014 and then it concluded that majority of participants knew (54.1%) what sexual harassment was. (Menon, et al., 2014)^[5].

In the present study it was found that according to most of

The participants (83%) the most probable place for sexual harassment was public transport. It was also found that 33% of the participants were not able to work and study properly and also the interest in activity is decreased and adversely affected, due to the incidents of sexual harassment. It was also found that 35% of the participants feel shy about discussing the incidents of sexual harassment with their parents as well as 26% of them felt that the parents will restrict them to go outside if they hear of any incident of sexual harassment. These findings were supported by a study conducted in South India in 2007 by Fiona Leach and Shashikala Sitaram on a title to assess the sexual harassment and abuse of adolescent school girls. (Leach, etal, 2007)^[6].

Implication and future recommendation

Sexual harassment is a common phenomenon and majority of the women are affected by this, but due to social conservation they fail to report it. There is a need in the society to be sensitized about this problem to identify the early signs of harassment & take preventive steps. Gender sensitization & sex education should be included in curriculum. The findings of this study can help in designing modules for prevention of gender sensitization and make the society gender sensitive.

Limitation

No teaching programme cum discussion could be done with the participants regarding sexual harassment and its prevention strategies due to lack of time.

The data gathered from the study shows that definition of sexual harassment can differ according to individual's perception. To understand how people perceive and define sexual harassment is crucial for explaining and understanding how they react to sexual harassment and why they often do not stand up against sexual harassment. Therefore there is need for creating awareness about how to recognize harassment & anticipate danger in time so as to plan for avoidance & protection strategies.

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