

Prevalence of eve teasing and its effects on school going adolescent girls of eastern Nepal

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Abstract

Background: Eve-teasing is a pervasive social ill and a complicated issue. Teenage girls are the primary targets of eve-teasing. All kinds of women experience eve-teasing through whistling, catcalling, touching or groping, flashing, blowing kisses, stalking, sexual posturing, or unauthorized photographing.

Objectives: To assess the prevalence of eve teasing and its effects among adolescent girls.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted from October 9 to November 16, 2022, among the adolescent girls of Deumai Municipality Ilam. Ethical approval was obtained from the institutional review committee of Kathmandu Medical College (Ref.07102022/44). A nonprobability purposive sampling method was used to describe variables of interest. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, median, and standard deviation), and inferential statistics (chi-square) was used to determine the association between independent variables and the prevalence of eve-teasing. Data was coded and placed into the SPSS program. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, median, and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (chi-square) to determine the association between independent variables and the prevalence of eve-teasing.

Results: The study findings concluded that 327 (93.4%) of students had experienced eve teasing. A significant association was found between the prevalence of eve-teasing and age.

Conclusion: Prevalence of eve teasing was higher among the adolescents leading to several effects like, low self-esteem, anxiety and fear and activity of daily living.

Key words: Adolescent; Eve teasing; Prevalence

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INTRODUCTION

Gender discrimination is a significant issue both in Indian society and around the world. Discrimination begins in adolescence and affects how active women are in politics, culture, and society.¹ Eve-teasing compels parents to marry their daughters off young. They worry about losing their social standing. They wish to flee the issue rather than protest. Therefore, they decide to marry girls off young.¹

Eve-teasing is a crime that has a detrimental effect on the lives of girls and women. Every girl and woman would have experienced something similar at some time in her life. When eve-teasing goes too far, the girls and women who are targeted are routinely injured.² Eve-teasing, which includes verbal abuse, physical assault, and the use of force against a woman, refers to any immoral action or act by a male that intimidates, terrifies, shames, or embarrasses women.²

The phrase “eve-teasing” is used in South Asia to describe a common kind of sexual harassment that typically occurs in public places. A few examples include making passes, obscene gestures, whistling, stalking, looking, pinching, fondling, and rubbing up against women.^{2,3} This study was conducted to assess the prevalence of eve teasing and its effect on adolescent girls.

METHODOLOGY

A cross-sectional study design was conducted among the age group of 10-19-year-old adolescent girls from classes 9 and 10 at Suryodaya Shiksha Sadan Secondary School and Shree Bhanubhakta Higher Secondary School located in Deumai Municipality, Ilam. A total of 351 respondents were selected for the study using purposive sampling technique. Ethical clearance was taken from the Institutional Review Committee of Kathmandu Medical College (Ref.07102022/44). Data was collected from October 9 to November 16, 2022. Self-administered technique was used for data collection using structured questionnaire. Permission was taken from school authorities, and participants. Pretesting of the questionnaire was done among 35 (10%) of the calculated sample size and Crohn's Bach Alpha was calculated after pretesting the instrument and the value was 0.83 indicating high internal consistency. The data were entered and analyzed with IBM SPSS version 20.

RESULTS

The respondents' socio-demographic characteristics show that the participants' mean age was 16.71 ± 1.546 . The majority of respondents belong to age group 15-19 which was 288 (82.1%). Half of the respondents were from class ten which was 185 (52.7%), and 170 (51.5%) of the respondents were from Janajati. More than half 210 (59.8%) of the respondents belong to the nuclear family. Respondent's fathers had relatively higher education in comparison with respondent's mothers i.e. 140 (39.9%). Almost two-third i.e., 211 (60.1%) of the respondents' fathers were farmers and 154 (43.9%) of the mothers were homemakers.

Among 351 respondents, The prevalence rate of eve teasing was 327 (93.1%). Among them, 210 (59.8%) experienced the verbal form (being whistled at) of eve teasing, similarly, 121 (34.5%) experienced non-verbal (unwanted staring) cues. The physical form (target of

deliberate push) of eve-teasing was 110 (31.3%), and the place of eve-teasing (while walking on the street) was 221 (63%). The girls who have faced eve teasing had several consequences as the effect after being victimized. Here, 130 (37%) felt ashamed and 126 (35.9%) of respondents felt afraid of the result of eve-teasing. In addition, 96 (27.4%) of respondents had changed their usual way of doing daily activities after being eve-teased.

There is a significant association between age and the prevalence of eve-teasing among adolescent girls.

Table 1: Socio-demographic information of the respondents

Variables	n(%)
Age groups	
<15	27 (7.7)
≥15	324 (92.3)
Mean 16.71 ± 1.546	
Grade	
Nine	166 (47.3)
Ten	185 (52.7)
Ethnicity	
Brahmin	122 (34.8)
Janajati	181 (51.5)
Chhetri	48 (13.7)
Type of family	
Nuclear	210 (59.8)
Joint	141 (40.2)
Level of education of Father	
Illiterate	13
Basic	171 (48.7)
Secondary	140 (39.9)
Higher Education	27 (7.7)
Level of education of Mother	
Illiterate	28 (8)
Basic	180 (51.2)
Secondary	123 (35)
Higher Education	20 (5.7)
Occupation of Father	
Agriculture	211 (60)
Service	108 (31)
Foreign employment	32 (9)
Agriculture	138 (39.3)
Service	54 (15.4)
Homemaker	154 (43.9)
Foreign employment	5 (1.4)

Table 2: Prevalence of eve-teasing n=351

Variables	n (%)
Experienced eve-teasing	321 (93.1)
Repeatedly eve teased	93 (26.4)
Problem of eve teasing in the community	73 (20.7)
Type of eve-teasing (n=327)	
Verbal	
Been whistled at	210 (64.2)
Received vulgar comments	154 (47)
Target of threats or intimidation	23 (7.03)
Non-verbal	
Received unwanted staring	121 (37)
Physical	
Target of deliberate push	110 (33.6)
Victim of unwanted touch	32 (9.7)
Places	
While walking on the street	221 (67.5)
Classroom	174 (53.2)
While waiting for bus	89 (27.2)

Table 3: Effects of eve teasing n= 327

Effects	n (%)
Low self esteem	
Felt ashamed	130 (39.7)
Felt like crying	104 (31.8)
Felt humiliated	96 (29.3)
Felt like isolating	92 (28.1)
Felt insecure	43 (13.1)
Lost faith in family and society	26 (7.9)
Anxiety and fear	
Felt afraid	126 (32.5)
Developed the feeling of worry or tension	110 (33.6)
Flashback of incident	98 (29.9)
Effects on activity of daily living	
Changed the usual way	96 (29.3)
Thought of dropping out school	11(3.3)
Ever asked you to get married	3(0.9)

DISCUSSION

The study was conducted to assess prevalence of eve teasing among adolescent girls aged 10-19 which was revealed to be 327 (93.16%). This finding is in line with the studies conducted in Bangladesh, Bangalore, Punjab, and Kashmir.^{4,7,10,12} This finding is also similar with the study results from Maharashtra India where 100%, have experienced eve teasing. Other studies conducted in Kashmir, India, and Bangladesh also showed that the prevalence of eve teasing to be 90% and 91.3% respectively.^{1,4} However, Result of Punjab University,

Table 4: Association between independent variables and prevalence of eve teasing

Variables	Eve teasing		p-value
	Yes (n)	No(n)	
Age			
<15	54	9	0.01*†
≥15	273	15	
Grade			
Nine	153	13	0.48‡
Ten	174	11	

*Significant association, †Fisher's Exact Test

‡Chi- Squared Test

India (72.5%), Panjab university campus, India (45.45%), Jodhpur and Jaipur India (40.6%) contradicts the findings of the present study.^{2,8,10} Finding of another study from rural Indian context also differs from the finding of this study with a prevalence of eve teasing 37.1%.¹¹ In this study verbal eve teasing in the form of whistling was the most common one i.e. 210 (59.8%) but a study result from Maharashtra India revealed it to be only 46%. Similarly, the findings of studies from, Jaipur and Jodhpur, India (45%), Punjab, India (40.5%) and rural Indian context was (40%) respectively.^{1,2,8,11} The findings of this study showed that staring in non-verbal form was experienced by one-third of the population 121 (34.5%) which is in line with the studies done in Punjab and rural Indian context with 38% and 38.2% respectively. However, the study was in contrast with the study done in India where 55% experienced non-verbal forms of eve teasing.^{2,8,10} The target of deliberate push was 110 (31.3%) which is in contrast with the study done in India i.e., 23.6%.¹⁰ The most common place where the eve teasing occurred was while walking on street 221 (63%), a study from India revealed it to be only 50%.¹ More than one third 130 (37%) of the respondents felt ashamed of as an effect of eve teasing and this is similar with the study result from Indian context (36.1%).^{8,10} Thought of dropping out of school as an effect was found to be 11 (3.1%) which is quite low in comparison with the result of the study done in India which is 53.3%.¹

CONCLUSION

The finding of the study shows a higher prevalence of eve-teasing. Eve teasing is a common problem faced by most girls in our society leading to feeling of ashamed off, crying, humiliated, afraid of and insecure.

Conflict of interest: none

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