

# Harassment of Female Students of Secondary Schools in Kashmir: A Study of District Shopian and Srinagar

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## Abstract

*The study was conducted on the harassment of female secondary students. The sample of 80 female students from secondary schools from district Srinagar and district Shopian (40 from each district) were selected using random sampling. The investigator used a self-constructed questionnaire of 30 items to collect data from the subjects. The data collected was analysed through percentage statistics. During this study, it was found that students were not familiar with any anti-harassment policy of the government. Students even did not share problems of harassment with their family members, friends, or teachers. There was not any group or harassment cell in various institutions. Most of the female pupils revealed that there was not any counselor in their school. Students who wish for self-defense classes for females must be part of the school curriculum. The majority of female students believed there is a need to inform the female students about the various types of policies and agencies with whom they can register their grievances.*

**Key Words:** Harassment; Secondary School; Female Students, Kashmir,

## Introduction

Since the women of the 21<sup>st</sup> century have started moving out of their homes for education and work, they are reportedly facing other harassment and exploitation (Follingstad et al., 1990). Most parents feel insecure towards their female children as instances of abduction, rape, sexual harassment, and molestation of females diminish the enthusiasm of parents and girl students to pursue their education (Saravanan, 2010). Various studies reveal that female students are more vulnerable to harassment than men, especially in India (John, 2020; Leach & Sitaram, 2007). However, there is no clear statistical data on the number of females who have faced harassment of any form, primarily because of the low reporting of such cases. Harassment of female students is a matter of concern. The social, emotional, and psychological effects of harassment need considerable attention from researchers. In Kashmir, females face several issues related to harassment (Akhtar, 2013), although various studies have been conducted on this serious issue.

For the same reason, we found from the existing literature that it is suitable to work on the harassment of female students in secondary schools. So that their problem can be identified and highlighted for the existence and persistence of a healthy society (Taheri, 2015). The comparative study seeks to identify the problems and challenges rural and urban female students face. The study was conducted in district Srinagar and district Shopian. Researchers found harassment is a bigger issue that directly impacts the victim's mindset and health; thus, research in this direction is of prime importance. Harassment in educational institutions is an urgent need to be transparently debated in educational institutions. There is a pressing need for staff and student awareness. Everyone must know what to do during harassment, and a strong system rather than band-aid compliance procedures must be implemented. Wetzal and Brown (2000) found that sexual harassment in educational settings refers to unwanted sexual approaches or propositions intended to undermine academic achievement or create a threatening and unpleasant learning environment for the victims. Bezabeh (2016) also disclosed that female students chose alternative coping mechanisms to deal with sexual harassment. Very few female students were successful in reporting sexual harassment situations to the gender office or the police. Most female students used indirect tactics to cope with sexual harassment, including remaining silent, normalising the occurrence, leaving the school, taking re-exams, confronting the offenders, switching to different departments, and agreeing to the offenders' sexual activities (Thomas, 2015). In addition, interviews with female students reveal that resistance to reporting sexual harassment among female students stems from a variety of factors, including a lack of trust in institutional structures, fear of retaliation and the perception of making false accusations, a lack of concrete evidence, and ignorance.

## Objectives of the study

1. To study harassment of female students in secondary schools of district Srinagar and district Shopian.
2. To suggest measures to prevent, control, and minimize the incidence of harassment of female students in secondary schools of district Srinagar and district Shopian.

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**Research Questions**

1. Is there any harassment of female students in secondary schools of district Srinagar and district Shopian?
2. What shall be the measures to prevent, control, and minimize the incidence of harassment of female students in secondary schools in two districts?

**Research Design**

**Sample:**

A sample of 80 female students from secondary schools in district Srinagar and district Shopian, 40 from district Srinagar and 40 from district Shopian, were selected using a random sampling technique.

**Table 1.1: Sample Size**

DISTRICT	NUMBER OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS
Srinagar	40
Shopian	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>

**Tool Used:**

A self-constructed questionnaire consisting of 30 items. This questionnaire was developed after examining the relevant literature through books and the internet related to the harassment of female students in secondary schools.

**Statistical Analysis:**

The analysis is presented in the following tables.

**Table 1.2: Showing percentage of female students in secondary schools of district Srinagar and Shopian who think harassment is a matter of concern. (N=40 each)**

S. No.	District	Always		Sometimes		Never	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Srinagar	39	97.5%	01	2.5%	0	0%
2	Shopian	36	90%	04	10%	0	0%

Table 1.2 shows that 97.5% of female students in secondary schools from district Srinagar and 90% from district Shopian think harassment is a matter of concern. The experiences in school have a major effect on female students' self-image, self-esteem, and overall development later in life. It is, therefore, of great concern because it is often difficult for victims to speak out against their harassers.

**Table 1.3: Showing the percentage of female students in secondary schools of district Srinagar and Shopian who feel depressed or lonely at school (N=40 each)**

S. No	District	Always		Sometimes		Never	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Srinagar	0	0%	17	42.5%	23	57.5%
2	Shopian	01	2.5%	14	20%	25	62.5%

Table 1.3 shows that 57.5% of female secondary school students from district Srinagar while 60% from district Shopian do not feel depressed or lonely at school, which indicates that students feel happy and safe at school.

**Table 1.4: Showing the percentage of female students in secondary schools of district Srinagar and Shopian who face harassment like molestation while traveling to school (N=40 each)**

S. No	District	Always		Sometimes		Never	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Srinagar	01	2.5	08	20%	31	77.5%
2	Shopian	0	0.0	19	47.5%	21	52.5%

Table 1.4 shows that 20% of female secondary school students from district Srinagar and 47.5% from district Shopian face harassment like molestation sometimes while traveling to school.

**Table 1.5: Showing the percentage of female students of district Srinagar and Shopian who feel safe inside their educational institution in co-education (N=40 each)**

S. No	District	Always		Sometimes		Never	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Srinagar	31	77.5%	05	12.5%	04	10%
2	Shopian	21	52.5%	05	12.5%	14	35%

Table 1.5 shows that 77.5% of female secondary students from district Srinagar and 52.5% of female secondary students from district Shopian feel safe inside their educational institution in co-education.

**Table 1.6: Showing the percentage of female students of district Srinagar and Shopian who are being bullied by their classmates, especially by boys (N=40 each)**

S. No	District	Always		Sometimes		Never	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Srinagar	01	2.5%	01	2.5%	38	95%
2	Shopian	0	0%	06	15%	34	85%

Table 1.6 shows that 95% female students in secondary schools of district Srinagar while 85% female students in district Shopian are not being bullied by their classmates, especially boys.

**Table 1.7: Showing the percentage of female students of district Srinagar and Shopian who are facing incidents of harassment eve-teasing in their school (N=40 each)**

S. No	District	Always		Sometimes		Never	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Srinagar	0	0%	05	12.5%	35	87.5%
2	Shopian	02	5%	14	35%	24	60%

Table 1.7 shows that 87.5% female students in the secondary schools of district Srinagar while as 60% female students from district Shopian in secondary school are not facing harassment eve-teasing in their school. However, 12.5% from Srinagar and 35% from Shopian face eve-teasing sometimes.

**Table 1.8: Showing the percentage of female students of district Srinagar and Shopian who feel male students treat them especially because of being a girl (N=40 each)**

S. No	District	Always		Sometimes		Never	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Srinagar	0	0%	05	12.5%	35	87.5%
2	Shopian	03	7.5%	08	20%	29	72.5%

Table 1.8 shows that 87.5% female students in secondary schools of district Srinagar while 72.5% female students in secondary school of district Shopian revealed that male students do not treat them specially because of being a girl.

**Table 1.9: Showing the percentage of female students of district Srinagar and Shopian who feel that the remark of male teachers made them feel uncomfortable (N=40 each)**

S. No	District	Always		Sometimes		Never	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Srinagar	0	0%	3	7.5%	37	92.5%
2	Shopian	0	0%	09	22.5%	31	77.5%

Table 1.9 shows that 92.5% female students in secondary schools of district Srinagar while 77.5% female students in secondary schools of district Shopian do not face the remark of male teachers, making them uncomfortable.

**Table 1.10: Showing the percentage of female students of district Srinagar and Shopian who have to face undesirable remarks at school by their teachers. (N=40 each)**

S.No	District	Always		Sometimes		Never	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Srinagar	0	0%	01	2.5%	39	97.5%
2	Shopian	03	7.5%	14	35%	23	57.5%

Table 1.10 shows that 97.5 % female students from district Srinagar in secondary Srinagar while 57.5% female students in secondary schools of district Shopian do not have to face undesirable remarks at school by their teachers.

**The Table 1.11: Showing the percentage of female students of district Srinagar and Shopian who face obscene gestures at school, especially through boys. (N=40 each)**

S. No.	District	Always		Sometimes		Never	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Srinagar	0	0%	07	17.5%	33	82.5%
2	Shopian	0	0%	15	37.5%	25	62.5%

Table 1.11 shows that 82.5% of female students from district female students in district Srinagar, while 62.5% female students in secondary schools of district Shopian do not face obscene gestures at school, especially through boys.

**Table1.12: Showing the percentage of female students of district Srinagar and Shopian where male teachers make any gestures of sexual nature at their school. (N=40 each)**

S.No	District	Always		Sometimes		Never	
		N	%	N	%	N	%

1	Srinagar	0	0%	0	0%	40	100%
2	Shopian	0	0%	06	15%	34	85%

Table 1.12 shows that 100% female students in secondary schools of district Srinagar while as 85% of female students in secondary schools of district Shopian do not face any gestures of sexual nature at their school by male teachers.

**Table 1.13: Showing the percentage of female students of district Srinagar and Shopian who feel there should be separate schools for boys and girls. (N=40 each)**

S. No	District	Always		Sometimes		Never	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Srinagar	19	47.25%	15	26.25%	06	15%
2	Shopian	18	45%	06	15%	16	40%

Table 1.13 shows that 47.25% of female students in secondary schools of district Srinagar while as 45% female students in secondary schools of district Shopian, feel there should be separate schools for boys and girls.

**Table 1.14: Showing the percentage of female students of district Srinagar and Shopian who share the problem of harassment with their family members, friends, or with teachers. (N=40 each)**

S. No.	District	Always		Sometimes		Never	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Srinagar	06	15%	19	47.5%	15	7.5%
2	Shopian	05	12.5%	13	32.5%	22	55%

Table 1.14 shows that 7.5% female students in secondary schools of district Srinagar while as 55% female students in secondary schools of district Shopian do not share the problem of harassment with their family members, friends, or teachers.

**Table 1.15 Shows the percentage of female students of district Srinagar and Shopian who witness harassment inside their school. (N=40 each)**

S. No	District	Always		Sometimes		Never	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Srinagar	01	2.5%	03	7.5%	36	90%
2	Shopian	05	12.5%	20	50%	15	37.5%

Table 1.15 shows that 90% female students in secondary schools of district Srinagar while 37.5% female students in district Shopian do not witness harassment inside their school.

**Table 1.16: Showing the percentage of female students of district Srinagar and Shopian who are familiar with any of the anti-harassment policies of the government which are functional in their school (N=40 each)**

S. No	District	Always		Sometimes		Never	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Srinagar	01	2.5%	09	22.5%	30	75%
2	Shopian	03	7.5%	0	0%	37	92.5%

Table 1.16 shows that 75% of female students in secondary schools in district Srinagar while 92.5% female students in secondary schools of district Shopian are not familiar with any of the anti-harassment policies of the government which are functional in their school.

**Table 1.17: Showing the percentage of female students of district Srinagar and Shopian where schools have any group or harassment cell which considers such issues. (N=40 each)**

S. No	District	Always		Sometimes		Never	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Srinagar	17	42.5%	04	10%	19	47.5%
2	Shopian	06	15%	07	17.5%	27	67.5%

Table 1.17 shows that 47.5% of female students in secondary schools of district Srinagar while 67.5% female students in secondary schools of district Shopian have no group or harassment cell, which considers such issues.

**Table 1.18: Showing percentage of female students of district Srinagar and Shopian where there are any awareness programs in their school about harassment through magazines, weekly pamphlets, and lectures. (N=40 each)**

S. No	District	Always		Sometimes		Never	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Srinagar	11	27.5%	16	40%	13	32.5%
2	Shopian	02	5%	11	27.5%	27	67.5%

Table 1.18 shows that 32.5% female students in secondary schools of district Srinagar while 67.5% female students in secondary schools of district Shopian do not have any awareness programs about harassment through magazines, weekly pamphlets, or lectures.

**Table 1.19: Showing district-wise percentage of female students of district Srinagar and Shopian where the institution has any committee or group to register complaints related to harassment. (N=40 each)**

S. No	District	Always		Sometimes		Never	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Srinagar	17	42.5%	07	17.5%	16	40%
2	Shopian	01	2.5%	02	5%	37	92.5%

Table 1.19 shows that 40% female students in secondary schools of district Srinagar while 92.5% female students in secondary schools of district Shopian revealed that there is no committee or group to register complaints related to harassment in their institution.

**Table 1.20: Showing the percentage of female students of district Srinagar and Shopian facing any unusual comment by a male student either privately or publicly. (N=40 each)**

S. No	District	Always		Sometimes		Never	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Srinagar	0	0%	07	17.5%	33	82.5%
2	Shopian	0	0%	19	47.5%	21	52.5%

Table 1.20 shows that 82.5% female students in secondary schools of district Srinagar while as 52.5% female students in secondary schools of district Shopian never face any unusual comment by a male student either privately or publicly.

**Table 1.21: Showing the percentage of female students of district Srinagar and Shopian, where schools have separate toilets for girls. (N=40 each)**

S. No	District	Always		Sometimes		Never	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Srinagar	40	100%	0	0%	0	0%
2	Shopian	36	90%	0	0%	04	10%

Table 1.21 shows that 100% female students in secondary schools of district Srinagar while 90% female students in secondary schools of district Shopian female students have separate toilets for girls.

**Table 1.22: Showing the percentage of female students of district Srinagar and Shopian who hesitate to share the incidents of harassment with their parents/teachers/adults. (N=40 each)**

S. No	District	Always		Sometimes		Never	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Srinagar	14	35%	19	47.5%	07	17.5%
2	Shopian	24	60%	13	32.5%	03	7.5%

Table 1.22 shows that 35% female students in secondary schools of district Srinagar while as 60% female students in secondary schools of district Shopian, hesitate to share the incidents of harassment with their parents/teachers/adults.

**Table 1.23: Showing the percentage of female students of district Srinagar and Shopian where schools have a proper place to sit during free time or lunchtime. (N=40 each)**

S. No	District	Always		Sometimes		Never	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Srinagar	32	80%	06	15%	02	5%
2	Shopian	27	67.5%	03	7.5%	10	25%

Table 1.23 shows that 80% female students in secondary schools of district Srinagar while 67.5% female students in secondary schools of district Shopian revealed that their institution has a proper place to sit during free time or lunchtime.

**Table 1.24: Showing the percentage of female students of district Srinagar and Shopian who think there is a need to inform the female students about the various types of policies and agencies with whom they can register their grievances (N=40 each)**

S. No	District	Always		Sometimes		Never	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Srinagar	40	100%	0	0%	0	0%

2	Shopian	39	97.5%	01	2.5%	0	0%
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Table 1.24 shows that 100% female students in secondary schools of district Srinagar while 97.5% female students in secondary schools of district Shopian think there is always a need to inform the female students about the various types of policies and agencies with whom they can register their grievances.

**Table 1.25: Showing the percentage of female students in district Srinagar and Shopian who think self-defense classes for female students should be part of the curriculum (N=40 each)**

S. No	District	Always		Sometimes		Never	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Srinagar	38	95%	02	1%	0	0%
2	Shopian	39	37.5%	01	2.5%	0	0%

Table 1.25 shows that 95 % of female students in secondary schools of district Srinagar while 37.5% of female students in secondary schools of district Shopian think that self-defense classes for female students should always be part of the curriculum.

**Table 1.26: Showing the percentage of female students of district Srinagar and Shopian having a counselor in their school. (N=40 each)**

S. No	District	Always		Sometimes		Never	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Srinagar	28	70%	0	0%	12	30%
2	Shopian	15	37.5%	06	15%	19	47.5%

Table 1.26 shows that 70% female students in secondary schools of district Srinagar while 37.5% female students in secondary schools of district Shopian do not have any counselor.

**Table 1.27: Showing percentage of female students of district Srinagar and Shopian who have ever reported any issue related to harassment to any teacher/parent/counselor. (N=40 each)**

S. No	District	Always		Sometimes		Never	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Srinagar	01	2.5%	12	30%	27	67.5%
2	Shopian	0	0%	04	10%	36	90%

Table 1.27 shows that 67.5% female students in secondary schools of district Srinagar while 90% female students in secondary schools of district Shopian do not have ever reported any issue related to harassment to any teacher/parent/counselor. This study was conducted on secondary school female students of district Srinagar and district Shopian. During this study, it has been found that students are unaware of harassment and its various forms, but they think that it is a matter of concern; although many students do not feel lonely or depressed at school, few students sometimes do feel depressed inside their educational institution.

**Discussion**

During this study, it was found that students are not familiar with any anti-harassment policy of the government. Students do not share problems of harassment with their family members, friends, nor with teachers (35% from Srinagar and 60% from Shopian hesitate to share the incidents of harassment with their parents/teachers/adults. It means a large no from Srinagar share the harassment with family). There is not any group or harassment cell in various institutions (Akhtar, 2013). There are not any awareness programs in these schools about harassment nor through magazines, weekly pamphlets or even lectures (Thomas, 2015). These institutions do not have any committee or group where female students can register complaints related to harassment. Students hesitate to share incidents of harassment with their parents, teachers, or with adults. The majority of the female students revealed that there is not any counselor in their schools. Students who wish for self-defense classes for females must be part of the school curriculum (Leach & Sitaram, 2007). Most female students believe there is a need to inform female students about the various types of policies and agencies with whom they can register their grievances. Training programs against sexual harassment should emphasize altering behavior rather than altering attitudes. Programs should emphasize making behavioral standards explicit and outlining the consequences of not meeting them. Surprisingly, the topic of harassment at educational institutions is not as hotly contested as one might expect (Akhtar, 2013). There is no awareness of harassment among students, which the second investigator has found shocking. It is crucial to understand that it is the responsibility of the institutions to maintain the safety and respect of female students in the classrooms (Leach & Sitaram, 2007). Above all, it is important to deliberately establish a space where female students will feel acceptable and comfortable rather than on the receiving end of offensive remarks or other indirect types of harassment.

In order to protect female secondary school students from such crimes, it is crucial to implement several programs that will enable them to defend themselves against sexual harassment in secondary schools or anywhere else by a familiar or

unfamiliar person. To do this, it is important to include human rights in the curriculum, raise awareness of these issues among the general public, and most importantly, impart lessons of compassion, equality, and humanity.

#### **Conclusion:**

This study has found that students are not familiar with any anti-harassment policy of the government. Students even did not share problems of harassment with their family members, friends, nor with teachers. There were not any groups or harassment cells in various institutions. There are not any awareness programs in these schools about harassment nor through magazines, weekly pamphlets or even through lectures. These institutions do not have any committee or group where female students can register complaints related to harassment. Students are expected never to experience harassment, but we need to give them the knowledge and skills to minimize their risk of facing this issue. There is a need to sensitize society, and mass awareness programs should be carried out through various media.

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