A STUDY ON THE OPINIONS REGARDING EFFECTIVE MECHANISMS TO AVOID STREET HARASSMENT

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ABSTRACT

The state of Kerala, India, often cited as a model of development, has recently, seen a multitude of sex scandals. The tales of abuse and money power reveal a disturbing truth in state of Kerala. It exposes the paradox of Kerala. On one hand there statistics that gamer praise-high literacy, high education, high female sex ratio, high life expectancy, better health care, better living condition and on the other hand, the questionable quality of life of a women in Kerala subject to a misogynistic society ,where women are not safe in outdoors. The land that figures in the list of fifty must see places in a life time by National Geographic Traveler are one of the most unsafe places for women to travel. It is time we admit 100% literacy and high education do not change the mindset. What we need is a greater political will and commitment to ensure that ‘Gods Own Country’ does not become a living hell for its women to travel. This study mainly aims to find out the appropriate mechanisms to avoid street harassment.

This study is based on four hypotheses:-

- Enforcement of trained policewomen by government is an effective measure to tackle street harassment.
- Facilitating adequate street lights reduce frequency of street harassment after sundown
- Collective campaign against street harassment put an end to street harassment
- Government approved taxi services ensure safety of women from street harassment to an extent

For conducting this study I took a sample size of hundred each from working women and students from Kollam District. Secondary sources are magazines, journals, newspapers, websites etc. All secondary sources clearly show that incidents of street harassment are substantially high in Kerala. Chi-Square method is used to analyze data.
Introduction to the study

Sex is a taboo and to complicate it further moral policing is gaining acceptance in the society. Over the past few years, the issue of women’s safety has become a prime focus of public attention and concern in Kerala. Street harassment of Kerala has been a major problem with increased number of women going out for work.

Relevance of the study

Street harassment is a common phenomenon in every street which includes both villages and cities. The current mechanisms in the state are not sufficient to reduce street harassment. What is required, at the same time are appropriate mechanisms to avoid street harassment. Street harassment incidents fall into the category of the “merely annoying”. Women need to reclaim the streets.

Scope of the study

Street harassment is an issue that we cannot, and should not, remain silent about. It is an issue that demands change. Street harassment is a systematic problem and prevention must also be with systematic mechanisms. As a culture we understand that street harassment is wrong. We just don’t like to think of it as a mainstream. Unfortunately it is a mainstream problem. Adding powerful, effective mechanisms mentioned in the study will be useful to avoid the frequency of occurring street harassment

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Chi- square test -1

Enforcement of trained police women by government is an effective measure to tackle street harassment

Null Hypothesis (H₀): Enforcement of trained police women is an ineffective measure to tackle street harassment

Alternate Hypothesis (H₁): Enforcement of trained police women is an ineffective measure to tackle street harassment
**Percentage of opinions of respondents**

**Expected Frequency** = \( \text{Row Total} \times \text{Column Total} \)

**Total no. of observations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Working women</th>
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<th>Students</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>O</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>17</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>30</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Calculated value of chi-square

\[
\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}
\]

= 11.3409

Degrees of freedom = \((r-1)(c-1)\) = (5-1)(2-1) = 4

Table value of \(X^2\) = 9.488 (at 5% level of Significance)
Inference

Since calculated value is higher than table value, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus enforcement of trained policewomen by the government is an effective measure to avoid street harassment.

Chi-square test 2

Facilitating adequate street lights reduce street harassment after sundown.

Null Hypothesis ($H_0$): Facilitating adequate street lights do not reduce street harassment after sundown

Alternate Hypothesis ($H_1$): Facilitating adequate street lights reduce street harassment after sundown.

Percentage of opinions of respondents

Expected Frequency

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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>24</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>36</td>
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</table>
Calculated value of chi-square

\[ \chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E} \]

\[ = 17.898 \]

Degrees of freedom

\[ = (r-1)(c-1) \]

\[ = (5-1)(2-1) = 4 \]

Table value of \( X^2 \)

\[ = 9.488 \text{(at 5% level of Significance)} \]

**Inference**

As the calculated value is higher than table value, null hypothesis is rejected. Hence facilitating street lights can reduce the frequency of street harassment after sundown.

**Chi-square test - 3**

**Collective Campaign against street criminals can put an end to street harassment**

**Null Hypothesis (H₀):** Collective campaign against street criminals can put an end to street harassment.

**Alternate Hypothesis (H₁):** Collective campaign against street criminals cannot put an end to street harassment.

![Percentage of opinions of respondents](chart.png)
Expected Frequency

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<td>26</td>
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Calculated value of chi-square

\[ \chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E} \]

\[ = 4.137 \]

Degrees of freedom

\[ = (r-1)(c-1) \]

\[ = (5-1)(2-1) = 4 \]

Table value of \( X^2 \)

\[ = 9.488 \text{ (at 5% level of Significance)} \]

Inference

As the calculated value is less than table value, null hypothesis is rejected. Thus collective campaign against street criminals can put an end to street harassment.

Chi – square test -4

**Government approved taxi services do not ensure safety of women from street harassment to an extent.**

**Null Hypothesis \( H_0 \): Government approved taxi services do not ensure safety of women from street harassment to an extent.**

**Alternate Hypothesis \( H_1 \): Government approved taxi services ensure safety of women from street harassment to an extent.**
Percentage of opinions of respondents

Expected Frequency

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</table>

Calculated value of chi-square

\[ \chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E} \]

= 10.698

Degrees of freedom

= (r-1)(c-1)

= (5-1)(2-1) = 4

Table value of \( \chi^2 \)

= 9.488 (at 5% level of significance)

Inference

Here, calculated value is higher than table value. So null hypothesis is rejected that is government approved taxi services ensure safety of women from street harassment to an extent.
Conclusion

To avoid street harassment, more gender sensitivisation and human rights sensitivisation programmes are needed. It is not certain to what extent they have actually change the situation with mechanisms like trained police women, street lights, govt. approved taxis. Collective campaign is not effective in avoiding street harassment. It is women’s right to be safe and feel comfortable in public places.

References


www.stop street harassment

www.feminists india

www.feminists Kerala