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**Research Article**

# Psychological and Social Impact of Street Harassment on Women in Kashmir

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**ABSTRACT**

The study explores the prevalence of street harassment and its socio-psychological implications on women in Kashmir. Street Harassment is one of the leading gender based violence with women are facing today in Kashmir. Victims of Street Harassment suffer as a result of socio-psychological effects of Harassment. Depression, disorder and uncomfortable situation are the results of Street Harassment and depression is the most common psychological disorder and it inflicts women worldwide. The present study was conducted to identify the social impact of street harassment on women and to study the emotional and behavioral reactions of street harassment on women in Kashmir As per census 2011, the total population of women in all districts of Kashmir rural and urban in the age group of 12-35 years comprised 1430323. The sample size thus obtained was 1039 from all districts of Kashmir. Sample was derived from such population through stratified sampling technique. Out of such sample 706 was obtained from rural areas and 333 was obtained from urban areas. Moreover the sample comprised 368 in the age group of 12-18 years, 317 in the age group of 19-25 years and 354 in the age group of 26-35 years. Emotional responses to harassment are relatively consistent among different age groups, with no notable trends between high and average reactions. However, rural women report greater emotional distress than their urban counterparts. Data indicates that women who do not engage in cash-earning work experience more emotional distress: Educational status plays a crucial role in shaping emotional responses. Behavioural reactions are similarly varied, with younger and unmarried women exhibiting higher levels of response compared to married women. Overall, the findings underscore the pervasive nature of street harassment and its profound psychosocial impact on women in Kashmir.

**Keywords:** Psychological, Social, Street Harassment, Women, Kashmir

## Introduction:

Street harassment is a type of abuse committed by strangers, usually men, towards women. This includes both words and actions and it happens in public and even semi public areas. Such misconduct occurs regardless of an individual's ethnicity, class, age, or social standing (Lord, 2009). Women, in particular, are often victims of these forms of harassment and it has been observed that their productivity at work, emotional health, and family relations suffers immensely because of it (Celik, 2007 and Pryor, 1995). This violence directed towards a particular person may cause severe forms of emotional trauma and psychological suffering (Ekore, 2012). It is a collection of actions that are perceived as offensive and degrading towards women.

In contemporary society, 'Street Harassment' is not simply a form of public harassment, it constitutes as an all-encompassing danger to women that can lead them to feel anxious, embarrassed, disgusted, fearful, and humiliated (Dhillon and Bakaya 2014) . Harassment of women in the streets is viewed as a form of sociocultural violence that is systematically perpetuated, tolerated, and advanced in the name of culture and serves to justify aggression by casting the sheer existence of women in public domains as incitement to violence (Baxi, 2001). The manners in which street harassment manifests differ profoundly between cultures and regions. In some cultures, it may take the form of brutal overt aggression, while in others, it may exist in more concealed ways (World Health Organization, 2019). Nevertheless, the outcomes of these different approaches are alarmingly similar: the victims constantly feel anxious and frightened, and their sense of

security in public diminishes (Buchanan et al., 2019). The weakening of such security can trigger new forms of serious illness, or a consequence of trauma such as depression or post traumatic stress disorder (McLaughlin et al., 2017). In addition, street harassment affects some people's mobility.

A number of people might feel that in order to mitigate the chances of harassment being encountered, they need to modify their daily routines—for example, taking longer routes or even remaining within closed doors (Catalano, 2020). These restrictions can present significant challenges to the attainment of education, employment, and social participation, thus deepening the existing gaps and retarding the further development of an individual. While tackling street harassment, it is important to consider its social consequences. This issue also needs working along with the education and awareness but at the same time engaging the effort to build the system which is on the foundation to these actions to eliminate them. These efforts towards encouraging healthy public spaces and protecting everyone's rights aim at breaking the chains that bind to street harassment and strive towards a world where people move without fear (Kearl, 2010).

## Review of Literature:

Christensen and Delgreco (2020) performed a study on the impacts of street harassment on anxiety, depression and the sleep quality of college women. This research found that street harassment is positively associated with anxiety and depression experienced as well as negatively associated with sleeping quality. Mediation analysis showed that both anxiety and depression mediated the relationship between street level harassment and sleep quality. College women's experiences of street harassment when developing programs designed to alleviate anxiety and depression and increase sleep.

Akram et al. (2020) studied street harassment and the resulting depression, anxiety, and stress in school going girls of district Kalat, Balochistan. The findings show that street harassment is predominant among the majority of the respondents. Normless masculinity, media socialization, gendered education, and a general lack of social control are the causes for street harassment. Harassment decreases women's confidence and self –respect. Women become overly concerned with their appearance and less of a person when an attack to their honour is made. On the other side the government and media need to act on the target of street harassment and negatively impacted women and have measures put in place against street harassment.

Yasmin and Jabeen (2017) studied the psychological impacts and coping strategies of workplace harassment in public and private sector offices in Lahore, Pakistan.

As stated in the survey, workplace harassment is common in the private sector as compared with the public sector. Selected women who were harassed in the private sector reported that they were very sad and anxious, but in the public sector, the feeling is very mild. Harassment tends to be ignored, avoided, or left unreported. Because of this, workplace harassment has been identified as a major concern in the city of Lahore which the government needs to solve if the aim is to protect women from violence in the workplace.

Olubunmi (2019) reported on the psychosocial correlates of street sexual harassment of female undergraduates in Ekiti state. The findings indicated that there were essential primary effects of self-esteem and also important interaction effect of extraversion with self-esteem on sexual harassment. Place of abode has significant influence on whether there will be sexual harassment or not, just like the type of family. Those living with guardians reported the highest of harassment while those living with both parents recorded the lowest level.

Choudhury (2020) focused on understanding the impact of self-esteem and mental health on Woman's Life Stress. The study noted that women are forced to dwell in pain. It studies the reasons underlying life stress, self-esteem and mental health of women so as to devise a remedy to this social malady.

Gyawali (2020) studied the impact of street and/or sexual harassment on the mental health of adolescent school girls in Lalitpur and Rupandehi districts. In this case study, most of the respondents opined that they experienced more fear and emotional depression rather than irritation as the overpowering response to the sexual harassment perpetrated by teaching staff. The data showed that 81%, 86%, and 77%of adolescent female students reported feeling depression, fear, and annoyance, respectively, because of the sexual harassment by the school teachers and staff and the interrelationship between the various degrees of mental health impact and its magnitude on the subjects were statistically dependent at 0.001 level.

In their study, Betts et al., 2021 analyzed experiences of street harassment among adolescent girls. This investigation made it clear that after street harassment incidents, teenagers reported experiencing very low positive emotions like 'happy', 'glad' and 'proud'. After incidents of street harassment, both females and males described feeling negative emotions like, "frightened", "disgusted", and "ashamed," but the strength of negative emotions was, by far, more intense in females.

## Objectives:

The present study is based on the following objectives:

1.To identify the social impact of street harassment on women in Kashmir.

2. To study the emotional and behavioral reactions of street harassment on women in Kashmir.

## Materials and Methods:

The present study is conducted in Kashmir division of the Jammu and Kashmir (UT). As per census 2011, the total population of women in all districts of Kashmir rural and urban in the age group of 12-35 years comprises 1430323. The sample size thus obtained is 1039 from all districts of Kashmir. Sample was derived from population through stratified sampling technique. Out of such sample 706 shall be obtained from rural areas and 333 were obtained from urban areas. Moreover the sample comprised 368 in the age group of 12-18 years, 317 in the age group of 19-25 years and 354 women in the age group of 26-35 years. The data was collected using self- structured tools as well as readymade scales. Rating scale of Anxiety, Depression and Stress at the time of Street Harassment was also considered under the study. Rating scales was to find out emotions and behavior of women at the time of street harassment. The scale devised by Akram (2021) was used to study levels of anxiety, stress and depression faced by women at the time of street harassment. Primary data was collected in the urban and rural areas of Kashmir region. The interview was conducted individually asking subjects about psychological and social impact of street harassment on women and its legal awareness. Secondary data was collected from various books, journals, newspapers, magazines and other relevant sources.

## Results and Discussion:

### Unpleasant Emotional reactions of Women at the time of Street Harassment.

Unpleasant emotions such an anxiety, fear, sadness and confusion, whilst undesirable, can provide powerful insights into our personal insecurities and if studied, can provide strong anenues for personal growth. Table 4.1 presents the unpleasant emotional reactions of women at the time of street harassment, categorized by age, marital status, dwelling, working status, and educational status. Each category is further broken down into high, average, and low emotional reactions, along with the frequency (f) and percentage (per cent) of women reporting these reactions. Among women aged 12 to 18 years, in table 4.1, 63 (38.2per cent) reported high emotional reactions, while 241 (35.0per cent) indicated average emotional reactions, and 64 (34.6per cent) experienced low emotional reactions. This suggests a relatively balanced distribution of emotional responses within this age group. In the 19 to 25 years category, 49 (29.7per cent) reported high emotional reactions, 209 (30.3per cent) reported average reactions, and 59 (31.9per cent) indicated low emotional reactions. Similar to the previous group, emotional responses are evenly distributed, showing no significant trend. For women aged 26 to 35 years, 53 (32.1per cent) reported high emotional reactions, while 239 (34.7per cent) indicated average emotional reactions, and 62 (33.5per cent) experienced low emotional reactions. Again, the emotional responses are fairly evenly spread, reflecting a lack of strong emotional trends in this age group. The chi-square analysis for age yielded a value of 0.865 with 4 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.929, indicating no significant association between age and emotional reactions to street harassment.

Among married women, in table 4.1, 68 (41.2per cent) reported high emotional reactions, while 263 (38.2per cent) reported average reactions, and 83 (44.9per cent) indicated low emotional reactions. The majority of reactions are distributed evenly across high and average responses, with low responses slightly leading. For unmarried women, 97 (58.8per cent) reported high emotional reactions, 426 (61.8per cent) reported average reactions, and 102 (55.1per cent) indicated low emotional reactions. There is a trend showing higher emotional reactions in this group, yet the percentages remain relatively balanced. The chi-square value for marital status was 2.879 with 2 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.237, indicating no significant association between marital status and emotional reactions.

Women living in urban areas in table 4.1, reported high emotional reactions at 50 (30.3per cent), with 234 (34.0per cent) indicating average reactions and 49 (26.5per cent) reporting low reactions. The emotional reactions are somewhat lower in urban settings compared to the average group. In rural areas, 115 (69.7per cent) reported high emotional reactions, while 455 (66.0per cent) indicated average reactions, and 136 (73.5per cent) reported low reactions. The majority of emotional responses in rural areas skew towards high reactions, highlighting potential environmental factors influencing emotional responses. The chi-square analysis for dwelling yielded a value of 4.018 with 2 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.134, suggesting no significant association between dwelling type and emotional reactions.

Among those in table 4.1, who earn cash for work, 22 (13.3per cent) reported high emotional reactions, 100 (14.5per cent) indicated average reactions, and 31 (16.8per cent) reported low reactions. The emotional responses in this group are quite low overall. In contrast, those who do not earn cash for work reported high emotional reactions at 143 (86.7per cent), average reactions at 589 (85.5per cent), and low reactions at 154 (83.2per cent). This indicates that the majority of emotional reactions lean toward high, particularly among those not earning cash. The chi-square analysis for working status showed a value of 0.887 with 2 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.642, indicating no significant association between working status and emotional reactions.

Among literate women, 123 (74.5per cent) table 4.1, reported high emotional reactions, while 499 (72.4per cent) indicated average reactions, and 161 (87.0per cent) reported low reactions. This distribution suggests that emotional responses are mostly on the high side among literate women. For illiterate women, 42

(25.5per cent) reported high emotional reactions, 190 (27.6per cent) indicated average reactions, and 24 (13.0per cent) reported low reactions. This shows a lower frequency of high emotional reactions among illiterate women compared to their literate counterparts. The chi-square analysis for educational status produced a value of 16.820 with 2 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.000, indicating a significant association between educational status and unpleasant emotional reactions to street harassment. **(**Raghavan & Prasad 2023) reported that 68per cent of women experienced fear and anger during incidents of street harassment in urban settings in India. Koss (1993) found that emotional responses such as fear, anger, and humiliation were common among women experiencing harassment.

### Behavioral Reactions of Women at the Time of Street Harassment

Street harassment refers to a range of harassing behaviors that occur on the street or in other public places including catcalling, sexually explicit comments, unwanted touching, and other unwanted attention and behavior. Table 4.2 In the age group of **12-18 years**, in table 4.2, 34.8per cent (f=69) of women reported a high level of behavioral reaction, while 36.0per cent (f=257) indicated an average response. A lower percentage of 32.8per cent (f=42) showed a low level of reaction. For the **19-25 years** age group, the high behavioral reaction was reported by 35.9per cent (f=71) of women. In contrast, 28.9per cent (f=206) exhibited an average response, and 31.2per cent (f=40) reported a low reaction level. Among women aged **26-35 years**, 29.3per cent (f=58) experienced a high level of reaction, while 35.1per cent (f=250) reported average behavioral responses. The percentage of those showing a low reaction was 35.9per cent (f=46). The chi-square analysis for the age groups yielded $\chi^2 = 4.497$, with 4 degrees of freedom (df), and a p-value of .343, indicating no significant difference among the age groups.

When considering marital status, in table 4.2, 36.4per cent (f=72) of married women reported a high level of behavioral reaction, while 40.7per cent (f=290) indicated an average response. A total of 40.6per cent (f=52) showed a low level of reaction. For unmarried women, 63.6per cent (f=126) experienced a high level of behavioral response, with 59.3per cent (f=423) reporting an average reaction. The low reaction percentage stood at 59.4per cent (f=76). The chi-square analysis for marital status yielded $\chi^2 = 1.238$, df = 2, with a p-value of .539, showing no significant difference between married and unmarried women.

Examining the responses based on dwelling, in table 4.2, 36.9per cent (f=73) of urban women indicated a high level of behavioral reaction, while 31.0per cent (f=221) reported an average response. A lower percentage of 30.5per cent (f=39) showed a low level of reaction. In rural areas, 63.1per cent (f=125) experienced a high level of behavioral reaction, with 69.0per cent (f=492) reporting an average response. The low reaction percentage was 69.5per cent (f=89). The chi-square analysis for dwelling yielded $\chi^2 = 2.622$, df = 2, and a p-value of .270, indicating no significant differences based on dwelling status.

Looking at working status, in table 4.2, among women who earned cash for work, 16.7per cent (f=33) reported a high level of behavioral reaction, while 13.0per cent (f=93) indicated an average response. A higher percentage of 21.1per cent (f=27) showed a low level of reaction. In contrast, for women who do not earn cash for work, 83.3per cent (f=165) reported a high level of behavioral response, while 87.0per cent (f=620) indicated an average reaction. The low reaction percentage was 78.9per cent (f=101). The chi-square analysis for working status showed a significant difference, with $\chi^2 = 6.334$, df = 2, and a p-value of .042***.**

In terms of educational status, in table 4.2, 76.8per cent (f=152) of literate women reported a high level of behavioral reaction, while 76.0per cent (f=542) indicated an average response. A lower percentage of 69.5per cent (f=89) showed a low level of reaction. Conversely, among illiterate women, 23.2per cent (f=46) experienced a high level of behavioral reaction, while 24.0per cent (f=171) reported an average response. The low reaction percentage stood at 30.5per cent (f=39). The chi-square analysis for educational status yielded $\chi^2 = 2.719$, df = 2, with a p-value of .257, indicating no significant differences based on educational attainment. Kumar & Desai (2020) found that a majority of women (72per cent) reported avoidance behaviors, such as changing routes or limiting outdoor activities, in response to street harassment in India. Warr (2000) noted that victims of street harassment often engage in self-protective behaviors, reflecting a significant alteration in their daily routines

### Stress Due to Street Harassment

Harassment in the workplace has become all too common in today`s society. Acts of uncivil behavior and bullying create stressful and difficult working environments. Individuals or groups are targeted without legitimate cause, thus creating feelings of stress, fear, anger and anxiety that can affect mental health. Table 4.3 In the age group of 12-18 years, stress levels due to street harassment were categorized as follows: 36.1per cent (f=60) reported experiencing high stress, while 35.3per cent (f=246) indicated average stress levels. Additionally, 35.2per cent (f=62) reported low stress. The chi-square analysis for this age group showed no significant differences, with $\chi^2=4.282$, df=4, p=.369. Among individuals aged 19-25 years, the responses regarding stress levels due to street harassment revealed that 25.3per cent (f=42) experienced high stress, while 32.3per cent (f=225) indicated average stress levels. A total of 28.4per cent (f=50) reported low stress. The chi-square analysis for this age group also indicated no significant differences, with $\chi^2=4.282$, df=4, p=.369. For individuals in the 26-35 years age group, the responses showed that 38.6per cent (f=64) experienced high stress, while 32.4per cent (f=226) reported average stress levels. Additionally, 36.4per cent (f=64) indicated low stress levels. The chi-square analysis for this age group revealed no significant

differences, with $\chi^2$=4.282, df=4, p=.369.
Examining the responses based on marital status, in table 4.3, married individuals displayed distinct patterns in stress levels due to street harassment. A total of 36.7per cent (f=61) reported experiencing high stress, while 40.6per cent (f=283) indicated average stress levels. Additionally, 39.8per cent (f=70) noted low stress levels. In contrast, unmarried individuals showed a different pattern, with 63.3per cent (f=105) reporting high stress, while 59.4per cent (f=414) indicated average stress levels. A total of 60.2per cent (f=106) reported low stress. The chi-square analysis for marital status revealed no significant difference, with $\chi^2$=.832, df=2, p=.660.
When examining responses by dwelling, in table 4.3, urban residents reported that 36.7per cent (f=61) experienced high stress due to street harassment, while 31.1per cent (f=217) indicated average stress levels. A total of 31.2per cent (f=55) reported low stress. Conversely, rural residents exhibited a higher tendency towards high stress, with 63.3per cent (f=105) stating they experienced high stress, while 68.9per cent (f=480) indicated average stress levels. A total of 68.8per cent (f=121) reported low stress. The chi-square analysis for dwelling showed no significant difference, with $\chi^2$=2.002, df=2, p=.367.
Regarding working status, in table 4.3, individuals earning cash reported that 16.9per cent (f=28) experienced high stress, while 13.2per cent (f=92) indicated average stress levels. A total of 18.8per cent (f=33) reported low stress. In contrast, those who do not earn cash exhibited a higher tendency towards experiencing stress, with 83.1per cent (f=138) stating they experienced high stress, while 86.8per cent (f=605) indicated average stress levels. A total of 81.2per cent (f=143) reported low stress. The chi-square analysis for working status revealed no significant difference, with $\chi^2$=4.169, df=2, p=.124.
Lastly, when examining educational status, in table 4.3, literate individuals reported that 76.5per cent (f=127) experienced high stress, while 76.6per cent (f=534) indicated average stress levels. A total of 69.3per cent (f=122) reported low stress. In contrast, illiterate individuals exhibited lower frequencies, with 23.5per cent (f=39) stating they experienced high stress, while 23.4per cent (f=163) indicated average stress levels. A total of 30.7per cent (f=54) reported low stress. The chi-square analysis for educational status revealed no significant differences, with $\chi^2$=4.168, df=2, p=.124. Chaudhary (2024) found that 75per cent of women reported high levels of stress due to experiences of street harassment, impacting their mental health. Patel & Desai (2023) indicated that stress resulting from harassment can lead to significant anxiety and depression among victims.

### Anxiety due to Street Harassment

Anxiety due to street harassment is a heightened sense of anxiety "on edge" that can be caused by the cumulative effect of repeated street harassment. Street harassment can be a form of objectification, where a person's body, sexuality and gender identity are treated as separate from their whole self. This can lead to a constant sense of anxiety, fear for safety and self-consciousness about one's body. Table 4.4 The data related to age and anxiety due to street harassment is divided into three age groups: 12-18 years, 19-25 years, and 26-35 years. For the age group 12-18 years, 35.0 per cent (f=49) reported high anxiety, 35.4 per cent (f=257) had average anxiety levels, and 35.8 per cent (f=62) reported low anxiety due to street harassment. This shows a fairly even distribution of anxiety levels among this age group. In the 19-25 years age group, 25.0 per cent (f=35) experienced high anxiety, while 30.9 per cent (f=224) had average anxiety, and 33.5 per cent (f=58) reported low anxiety. There is a slight shift toward average and low anxiety compared to the younger age group. For the 26-35 years group, 40.0 per cent (f=56) reported high anxiety, 33.7 per cent (f=245) had average anxiety, and 30.6 per cent (f=53) reported low anxiety. This indicates that older individuals in this group tend to experience higher anxiety levels compared to younger age groups. The chi-square analysis for age showed $\chi^2$=4.019 with df=4 and p=.403, indicating no statistically significant relationship between age and anxiety levels.
When examining the impact of marital status on anxiety in table 4.4, due to street harassment, 37.9 per cent (f=53) of married individuals reported high anxiety, 40.2 per cent (f=292) had average anxiety, and 39.9 per cent (f=69) experienced low anxiety. These figures indicate a fairly balanced distribution of anxiety levels among married individuals. On the other hand, 62.1 per cent (f=87) of unmarried individuals reported high anxiety, while 59.8 per cent (f=434) had average anxiety, and 60.1 per cent (f=104) reported low anxiety. Unmarried individuals showed higher rates of anxiety across all categories, but the differences are not drastic. The chi-square analysis for marital status revealed $\chi^2$=.274 with df=2 and p=.872, showing no significant association between marital status and anxiety levels.
The analysis based on dwelling location in table 4.4, reveals that 38.6 per cent (f=54) of urban residents reported high anxiety, 32.1 per cent (f=233) experienced average anxiety, and 26.6 per cent (f=46) had low anxiety due to street harassment. This shows that urban residents tend to experience slightly higher anxiety levels. In comparison, 61.4 per cent (f=86) of rural residents reported high anxiety, 67.9 per cent (f=493) experienced average anxiety, and 73.4 per cent (f=127) reported low anxiety. Rural residents had higher levels of anxiety overall, particularly in the average and low anxiety categories. The chi-square analysis for dwelling indicated $\chi^2$=5.103 with df=2 and p=.078, suggesting a marginal but not statistically significant association between dwelling and anxiety levels.
Looking at working status, in table 4.4, 15.0 per cent (f=21) of those who earn for cash reported high anxiety, 14.9 per cent (f=108) experienced average anxiety, and 13.9 per cent (f=24) had low anxiety. These

percentages are relatively low and close to each other across all categories. Among individuals who do not earn for cash, 85.0 per cent (f=119) reported high anxiety, 85.1 per cent (f=618) experienced average anxiety, and 86.1 per cent (f=149) had low anxiety. The percentages are quite similar, showing no strong correlation between working status and anxiety levels. The chi-square analysis revealed $\chi^2$=.122 with df=2 and p=.941, indicating no significant association between working status and anxiety due to street harassment.
Lastly, educational status in table 4.4, was examined, and it was found that 73.6 per cent (f=103) of literate individuals reported high anxiety, 76.7 per cent (f=557) had average anxiety, and 71.1 per cent (f=123) experienced low anxiety. These figures show that literate individuals predominantly fall into the average anxiety category. For illiterate individuals, 26.4 per cent (f=37) reported high anxiety, 23.3 per cent (f=169) had average anxiety, and 28.9 per cent (f=50) experienced low anxiety. Illiterate individuals tend to report lower anxiety levels compared to their literate counterparts. The chi-square analysis for educational status indicated $\chi^2$=2.658 with df=2 and p=.265, showing no significant association between educational status and anxiety levels. Raghavan & Prasad (2023) found that 70per cent of women reported experiencing anxiety following incidents of street harassment, affecting their overall well-being. Campbell et al. (2009) indicated that anxiety symptoms are prevalent among women who have faced street harassment, highlighting the long-term mental health implications.

### Depression due to Street Harassment

Depression can be a result of street harassment, which is a form of objectification that can make people unsafe and self-conscious about their bodies. Other effects of harassment include: Anxiety, Shame, Post-traumatic stress disorder (PSTD), Reduced self-esteem and self-confidence and diminished psychological well-being. Table 4.5 provides an analysis of depression levels due to street harassment across various demographic variables, including age, marital status, dwelling, working status, and educational status. The data includes frequencies (f) and percentages (per cent) for high, average, and low levels of depression, along with chi-square ($\chi^2$), degrees of freedom (df), and p-values for each variable.
For the age group 12-18 years, in table 4.5,35.1 per cent (f=61) reported high depression, 35.5 per cent (f=248) had average depression, and 35.3 per cent (f=59) reported low depression. The distribution of depression levels is quite balanced in this age group. In the 19-25 years age group, 31.0 per cent (f=54) experienced high depression, 31.1 per cent (f=217) had average depression, and 27.5 per cent (f=46) reported low depression. Depression levels are slightly lower in this age group compared to the youngest group. For the 26-35 years age group, 33.9 per cent (f=59) reported high depression, 33.4 per cent (f=233) had average depression, and 37.1 per cent (f=62) reported low depression. There is a higher proportion of low depression in this age group. The chi-square analysis for age revealed $\chi^2$=1.139 with df=4 and p=0.888, indicating no significant relationship between age and depression levels.

### Depression as per Marital Status

When analyzing depression in table 4.5, based on marital status, 38.5 per cent (f=67) of married individuals reported high depression, 41.1 per cent (f=287) had average depression, and 35.9 per cent (f=60) experienced low depression. These figures suggest that married individuals are more likely to fall into the average depression category. On the other hand, 61.5 per cent (f=107) of unmarried individuals reported high depression, 58.9 per cent (f=411) had average depression, and 64.1 per cent (f=107) reported low depression. Unmarried individuals exhibit higher depression levels across all categories. The chi-square analysis for marital status revealed $\chi^2$=1.671 with df=2 and p=0.434, indicating no significant association between marital status and depression.
The analysis based on dwelling location shows in table 4.5, that 35.1 per cent (f=61) of urban residents reported high depression, 30.8 per cent (f=215) experienced average depression, and 34.1 per cent (f=57) had low depression. Urban residents tend to experience relatively balanced levels of depression. In contrast, 64.9 per cent (f=113) of rural residents reported high depression, 69.2 per cent (f=483) experienced average depression, and 65.9 per cent (f=110) reported low depression. Rural residents exhibited higher levels of depression across all categories. The chi-square analysis for dwelling indicated $\chi^2$=1.554 with df=2 and p=0.460, suggesting no significant association between dwelling and depression levels.
Looking at depression in table 4.5, based on working status, 12.6 per cent (f=22) of those who earn for cash reported high depression, 15.3 per cent (f=107) had average depression, and 14.4 per cent (f=24) reported low depression. These percentages are relatively low across all categories. Among individuals who do not earn for cash, 87.4 per cent (f=152) reported high depression, 84.7 per cent (f=591) experienced average depression, and 85.6 per cent (f=143) reported low depression. The chi-square analysis for working status revealed $\chi^2$=0.820 with df=2 and p=0.664, indicating no significant association between working status and depression levels.
Lastly, the analysis based on educational status in table 4.5, shows that 73.6 per cent (f=128) of literate individuals reported high depression, 76.8 per cent (f=536) had average depression, and 71.3 per cent (f=119) experienced low depression. These figures indicate that literate individuals predominantly fall into the average depression category. For illiterate individuals, 26.4 per cent (f=46) reported high depression, 23.2 per cent (f=162) had average depression, and 28.7 per cent (f=48) experienced low depression. Illiterate individuals show a somewhat lower overall depression level compared to their literate counterparts. The chi-

square analysis for educational status indicated $\chi^2=2.586$ with df=2 and p=0.274, showing no significant association between educational status and depression levels. Patel & Desai (2022) found that 65per cent of women reported depressive symptoms linked to street harassment experiences, affecting their daily functioning. Fisher et al. (2010) indicated a significant relationship between street harassment and increased depressive symptoms, underscoring the emotional toll on victims.

## Summary and Conclusion:

Married women generally displayed average emotional reactions, while unmarried women reported higher emotional reactions. Most literate women reported high emotional reactions, indicating a trend favouring higher reactions in this group compared to illiterate women. Literate women reported high levels of behavioural reactions compared to their illiterate cou, who showed lower reactions. Depression, disorder and uncomfortable situation are the results of Street Harassment and depression is the most common psychological disorder and it inflicts women worldwide. Among women who earn cash for work, most showed a low level of behavioural reaction, while those who do not earn cash displayed high behavioural responses. Women who experience street harassment are more likely to experience stress, anxiety, and depression. Behavioural reactions are similarly varied, with younger and unmarried women exhibiting higher levels of response compared to married women. Overall, the findings underscore the pervasive nature of street harassment and its profound psychosocial impact on women in Kashmir. The majority of participants aged 12-18 years exhibited low awareness of laws related to street harassment. They may also develop posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms and internalize negative comments about their bodies. This study advocates for avenues to unlearn and deconstruct heteropatriarchal norms manifested in public spaces that are physically and psychologically detrimental to women.

**Table 4.1 Unpleasant Emotional Reactions of Women at the Time of Street Harassment**

| Variables related to harassee | | High | | Average | | Low | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| **Age** | 12-18 years | 63 | 38.2 | 241 | 35.0 | 64 | 34.6 |
| | 19-25 years | 49 | 29.7 | 209 | 30.3 | 59 | 31.9 |
| | 26-35 years | 53 | 32.1 | 239 | 34.7 | 62 | 33.5 |
| **χ2=.865,df=4,p=.929** | | | | | | | |
| **Marital Status** | Married | 68 | 41.2 | 263 | 38.2 | 83 | 44.9 |
| | Unmarried | 97 | 58.8 | 426 | 61.8 | 102 | 55.1 |
| **χ2=2.879,df=2,p=.237** | | | | | | | |
| **Dwelling** | Urban | 50 | 30.3 | 234 | 34.0 | 49 | 26.5 |
| | Rural | 115 | 69.7 | 455 | 66.0 | 136 | 73.5 |
| **χ2=4.018,df=2,p=.134** | | | | | | | |
| **Working Status** | Earn cash for work | 22 | 13.3 | 100 | 14.5 | 31 | 16.8 |
| | Do not earn cash for work | 143 | 86.7 | 589 | 85.5 | 154 | 83.2 |
| **χ2=.887,df=2,p=.642** | | | | | | | |
| **Educational Status** | Literate | 123 | 74.5 | 499 | 72.4 | 161 | 87.0 |
| | Illiterate | 42 | 25.5 | 190 | 27.6 | 24 | 13.0 |
| **χ2=16.820,df=2,p=.000*** | | | | | | | |

*Based on field survey*
*n=1039*
*Column percentage*

**Table 4.2 Behavioral Reactions of Women at the Time of Street Harassment**

| Variable | | High | | Average | | Low | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| Age | 12-18 years | 69 | 34.8 | 257 | 36.0 | 42 | 32.8 |
| | 19-25 years | 71 | 35.9 | 206 | 28.9 | 40 | 31.2 |
| | 26-35 years | 58 | 29.3 | 250 | 35.1 | 46 | 35.9 |
| **χ2=4.497,df=4,p=.343** | | | | | | | |
| Marital Status | Married | 72 | 36.4 | 290 | 40.7 | 52 | 40.6 |
| | Unmarried | 126 | 63.6 | 423 | 59.3 | 76 | 59.4 |
| **χ2=1.238,df=2,p=.539** | | | | | | | |
| Dwelling | Urban | 73 | 36.9 | 221 | 31.0 | 39 | 30.5 |
| | Rural | 125 | 63.1 | 492 | 69.0 | 89 | 69.5 |
| **χ2=2.622,df=2,p=.270** | | | | | | | |
| Working Status | Earn cash for work | 33 | 16.7 | 93 | 13.0 | 27 | 21.1 |
| | Do not earn cash for work | 165 | 83.3 | 620 | 87.0 | 101 | 78.9 |
| **χ2 =6.334,df=2,p=.042*** | | | | | | | |
| Educational Status | Literate | 152 | 76.8 | 542 | 76.0 | 89 | 69.5 |
| | Illiterate | 46 | 23.2 | 171 | 24.0 | 39 | 30.5 |
| **χ2=2.719,df=2,p=.257** | | | | | | | |

*Based on field survey*
*n=1039*
*Column percentage*

**Table 4.3 Stress due to Street Harassment**

| Variables | | High | | Average | | Low | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| Age | 12-18 Years | 60 | 36.1 | 246 | 35.3 | 62 | 35.2 |
| | 19-25 years | 42 | 25.3 | 225 | 32.3 | 50 | 28.4 |
| | 26-35 Years | 64 | 38.6 | 226 | 32.4 | 64 | 36.4 |
| **χ2=4.282,df=4,p=.369** | | | | | | | |
| Marital Status | Married | 61 | 36.7 | 283 | 40.6 | 70 | 39.8 |
| | Unmarried | 105 | 63.3 | 414 | 59.4 | 106 | 60.2 |
| **χ2=.832,df=2,p=.660** | | | | | | | |
| Dwelling | Urban | 61 | 36.7 | 217 | 31.1 | 55 | 31.2 |
| | Rural | 105 | 63.3 | 480 | 68.9 | 121 | 68.8 |
| **χ2=2.002,df=2,p=.367** | | | | | | | |
| Working status | Earn for Cash | 28 | 16.9 | 92 | 13.2 | 33 | 18.8 |
| | Do not Earn for Cash | 138 | 83.1 | 605 | 86.8 | 143 | 81.2 |
| **χ2=4.169,df=2,p=.124** | | | | | | | |
| Educational Status | Literate | 127 | 76.5 | 534 | 76.6 | 122 | 69.3 |
| | Illiterate | 39 | 23.5 | 163 | 23.4 | 54 | 30.7 |
| **χ2=4.168,df=2,p=.124** | | | | | | | |

*Based on field Survey*
*n=1039*
*Column percentage*

**Table 4.4 Anxiety due to Street Harassment**

| Variables | | High | | Average | | Low | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| **Age** | 12-18 Years | 49 | 35.0 | 257 | 35.4 | 62 | 35.8 |
| | 19-25 years | 35 | 25.0 | 224 | 30.9 | 58 | 33.5 |
| | 26-35 Years | 56 | 40.0 | 245 | 33.7 | 53 | 30.6 |
| **χ2=4.019,df=4,p=.403** | | | | | | | |
| **Marital Status** | Married | 53 | 37.9 | 292 | 40.2 | 69 | 39.9 |
| | Unmarried | 87 | 62.1 | 434 | 59.8 | 104 | 60.1 |
| **χ2=.274,df=2,p=.872** | | | | | | | |
| **Dwelling** | Urban | 54 | 38.6 | 233 | 32.1 | 46 | 26.6 |
| | Rural | 86 | 61.4 | 493 | 67.9 | 127 | 73.4 |
| **χ2=5.103,df=2,p=.078** | | | | | | | |
| **Working status** | Earn for Cash | 21 | 15.0 | 108 | 14.9 | 24 | 13.9 |
| | Do not Earn for Cash | 119 | 85.0 | 618 | 85.1 | 149 | 86.1 |
| **χ2=.122,df=2,p=.941** | | | | | | | |
| **Educational Status** | Literate | 103 | 73.6 | 557 | 76.7 | 123 | 71.1 |
| | Illiterate | 37 | 26.4 | 169 | 23.3 | 50 | 28.9 |
| **χ2=2.658,df=2,p=.265** | | | | | | | |

*Based on field Survey*
*n=1039*
*Column percentage*

**Table 4.5 Depression due to Street Harassment**

| Variables | | High | | Average | | Low | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | f | % | f | % | f | % |
| **Age** | 12-18 Years | 61 | 35.1 | 248 | 35.5 | 59 | 35.3 |
| | 19-25 years | 54 | 31.0 | 217 | 31.1 | 46 | 27.5 |
| | 26-35 Years | 59 | 33.9 | 233 | 33.4 | 62 | 37.1 |
| **χ2=1.139,df=4,p=.888** | | | | | | | |
| **Marital** | Married | 67 | 38.5 | 287 | 41.1 | 60 | 35.9 |
| | Unmarried | 107 | 61.5 | 411 | 58.9 | 107 | 64.1 |
| **χ2=1.671,df=2,p=.434** | | | | | | | |
| **Dwelling** | Urban | 61 | 35.1 | 215 | 30.8 | 57 | 34.1 |
| | Rural | 113 | 64.9 | 483 | 69.2 | 110 | 65.9 |
| **χ2=1.554,df=2,p=.460** | | | | | | | |
| **working status** | Earn for Cash | 22 | 12.6 | 107 | 15.3 | 24 | 14.4 |
| | Do not Earn for Cash | 152 | 87.4 | 591 | 84.7 | 143 | 85.6 |
| **χ2=.820,df=2,p=.664** | | | | | | | |
| **Educational Status** | Literate | 128 | 73.6 | 536 | 76.8 | 119 | 71.3 |
| | Illiterate | 46 | 26.4 | 162 | 23.2 | 48 | 28.7 |
| **χ2=2.586,df=2,p=.274** | | | | | | | |

*Based on field Survey*
*n=1039*
*Column percentage*

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