

‘Public Transport as a space for women and Sexual Harassment’ in the context of Dhaka City.

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Abstract

Women experience various oppressive communicative behaviors in different spaces. Public transport is a crowded place where women and men share the same environment. Despite sharing the same space, women's experiences differ from those of men. The purpose of this study is to explore how women feel about the oppressive communicative behaviors they encounter in this environment and how they perceive this space compared to other public spaces. The study has been conducted in two phases. In the first phase, 25 female students of the University of Dhaka were interviewed and in the second phase, 50 female students were surveyed, and the qualitative approach has been used for analysis. This is a psychoanalytical research. The collected data has been interpreted in light of gender, space, women's fear tendencies, and power dynamics. Based on women's experiences, the study examined some concepts such as 'perceptions of safety, seating patterns, experiences of sexual harassment and trauma, thoughts on clothing, and a comparative perspective of public transport with other public spaces.' The research revealed the types of communicative behaviors women encounter from their surroundings in public transport, their reactions when subjected to harassment, how it impacts their daily activities, their perception of public transport's safety or lack thereof, and the changes it brings to their future travel behavior. Overall, the study provides a detailed picture of how favorable or unfavorable public transport is for women as a space. Additionally, it sheds light on the types of harassment women face, their psychological conditions and the strategies they employ to avoid sexual harassment. Finally, various recommendations have been made to prevent sexual harassment on public transport and achieve sustainable solutions.