



Dissemination Workshop

24 January 2003

NIMHANS Small Grants
Programme
for Research on
Sexuality and Sexual Behaviour

Dissemination Workshop
24 January 2003

Department of Health Education
National Institute of Mental Health & Neuro Science

Contents

<i>Concerns Of In-School Youth In Rural South Karnataka: An Exploratory Analysis Of Reproductive Health Knowledge, Boy-Girl Relationships And Related Issues</i>	1
Belaku Trust	
<i>An Exploration of the Sexuality and Sexual Behaviour of the Girl Child on the Street.</i>	16
Ancy Mathew, Ilse Willekens Navajeevana	
<i>Young Men's Peer Groups: Gender, Violence and Sexual Behaviour</i>	32
Akhila Vasan Foundation for Research on Health Systems, Bangalore	

Acknowledgements

On behalf of the NIMHNS Small Grants Programme for Research on Sexuality and Sexual Behaviour. I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to -

The past Directors of NIMHANS, Dr. S.M. Channabasavanna and Dr. M. Gourie-Devi, and the current Director, Dr. D. Nagaraj, for their encouragement and direction

Registrar and NIMHANS administration for facilitating the programme in innumerable ways

The Ford Foundation for their foresight in addressing this important issue and giving a generous grant and a free hand in carrying this programme forward

The members of the steering committee:

Prof. Pretti Peltó who has been with the programme since its conception and has guided it every step of the way,

Prof. Mohan K. Isaac, who with his insights and larger vision has helped navigate the programme through administrative and research shoals,

Dr. Bela Ganatra, gave us the impetus to start systematic training qualitative research methods

Dr. Shekhar Sheshadri, who gave us impetus and direction for conducting research with minority and marginalised communities,

All project holders and their team members who pioneered research in this sensitive area under difficult circumstances

The Staff of the Programme:

Gloria who keeps us together and takes on many tasks in addition to administration, Manjiri Maselekar, who enthusiastically and unstintingly provides support to project teams, helps plan interventions, and becomes of the project research team,

Akhila Vasan, who gives valuable inputs for analysing and writing up data,

Manjunath, who gives able administrative assistance, and Pushpinder Pelia Lubana who provided direction in the difficult initial stages

The staff of the Department of Health Education who go out of their way to help

Jayashree Ramakrishna

Foreward

The NIMHANS Small Grants Programme for Research on Sexuality and Sexual Behaviour aims to promote transdisciplinary, sensitive, context-based, rigorous research in the area of sexuality and sexual behaviour, which addresses priority concerns and has relevance for developing strategies for interventions. In this endeavour the Programme, with grants from the Ford Foundation, has funded ten research projects, six of these focus on concerns of young people, three projects are among out-of-school youth and three are among in-school youth. All these projects centre on similar issues in different contexts. Highlights of the findings from three studies supported by the Programme are presented here.

The first project funded by the Programme to BOSCO explored street boy's perceptions of sexuality and sexual behaviour. This study revealed a high level of sexual activity and the vulnerability of street boys to a constellation of risks, and the need to consider the positive pleasure aspect, as well as the general context of street boys lives in developing comprehensive interventions to address these risks. Towards the end of this study it appeared that some boys were involved in sexwork but no details were forthcoming. This led JAGRUTHI to take up a study of boys in prostitution. Although street boys and boys in prostitution are both on the streets the boys in prostitution are better educated, lower or middle class and many had a feminine, *kothi* identity. Even though these boys were better educated they had less access to information and seemed less able to "protect" themselves.

These two studies on boys seemed incomplete without information on street girls, and NAVAJEEVANA developed a project - An exploration of the sexuality and sexual behaviour of the girl child on the street. This study again points to the high level of sexual activity and early initiation, and this is linked to lack of familial and social support. Desire and urge are overriding themes. Nearly half the girls are involved in sex for money and have multiple partners. Being involved with sex work is positively linked with higher age, inability to read and write, living apart from family, and using substances, especially alcohol. Street girls are less aware of measures to take to protect themselves from reproductive tract infections and sexually transmitted infections than street boys. Most girls aspire to marry and they feel that being sexually active reduces their chances of finding a partner; hence many relationships are carried out in secrecy. Violence and sexual abuse is common, and is a part of their daily and family life. All the three studies highlight the importance of pleasure and the need to include this aspect in the "risk" discourse.

SANGATH, Goa initiated the studies of in-school youth when they took up a project to examine the reproductive health needs in context of over all concerns of high school students in rural and urban Goa. The students reported much stress especially in relation to academic performance and concern for the future, and had many questions regarding attractions to and relationships with the opposite sex. Both boys and girls had experiences of sexual abuse ranging from touch without permission (17%) to forced sex (7%), and this was associated with greater physical and mental ill health and substance use.

The BELAKU study of 8th -10th class students in Kanakapura followed the same pattern of examining comprehensive needs of students. The results show a striking difference between the genders and urban and rural students. The girls worry that they will be taken out of school, boys have the pressure to study well and boys feel they have to take "care" of their families. The general health questionnaire (GHQ) showed that students had many anxieties and mental health concerns. This was positively correlated to being rural and of lower socio-economic background, and to attending a large boys school that was undergoing many problems. Girls' reproductive health knowledge, especially about contraceptives, was lower than boys. They found maturation, especially menstruation, traumatic as it signalled the end of childhood and freedom. Girls, rural and poor students faced more restrictions. Communication and relationship with the opposite sex was fraught with anxiety and tension, teasing ranging from the natural and enjoyable to downright harassment and abuse marked boy-girl communication. In the event that relationship progressed to the sexual level and the girl became pregnant, marriage, abortion or suicide were seen as the only viable options.

The Belaku study in a way leads to the Foundation for Research in Health Systems (FRHS) project- Understanding young men's friendship and peer group relations, which examines first year students' sexual behaviour in relation to their group membership and friendships. This study grew out of an earlier FRHS study that pointed to a strong link between peer group influence and sexual behaviour. This study shows that group membership seems to mediate in several domains of students' lives. It is linked to their academic performance and aspiration, their relationship with girls and other women, and with each other. The relationship between group members and outsiders are characterized by the exercise of power, domination and subordination and violence. Boys behave in a friendly and protective manner with "their girls," but "other" girls are fair game. Quarter of the boys had multiple relationships, some with sex workers and aunties and "special" girl friends.

All these research projects faced the challenge of gathering sensitive, 'hidden' information. Experience of the researchers underscore the need for developing rapport and involving the youngsters in the research process, developing and testing interactive data collection methods, and the need to triangulate to obtain valid and reliable data. As the research was conducted by field staff in organization working young people, the field staff developed research skills, better understood the dimensions of the issues that they are addressing, helped them to overcome their own inhibition about dealing with sexuality and sexual behaviour. Most importantly the institutions had ownership of the data gathered, the data informed their current programmes and development of further responses.

The Navajeevana, Belaku and FRHS studies underline the necessity for understanding structural and contextual factors that influence young peoples perceptions of sexuality and sexual behaviours. Both in-school and out-of-school youth do not have accurate and usable information on reproductive and sexual health. Their values, expectations and communication styles are shaped by larger societal norms that foster secrecy and shame and the mass media that depicts conflicting images of modern romance, conformation to traditional norms, and violence. The difficulties of growing up are accentuated by lack of correct and relevant information, lack of dialogue with adults to clarify issues, and the overall need to keep their developing awareness of their sexuality under wraps. These studies point to the need for broadening the discourse on sexuality and sexual behaviour from a discourse of 'risk' to include desire, pleasure, and comfort. And, most of all, these research studies indicate that it is essential to address issues

related to sexuality and sexual behaviour in terms of the larger the social, economic and political environment as well as the situational context of the life of young people.

Bangalore
22 January 2003

Jayashree Ramakrishna, Ph.D, MPH
Coordinator
NIMHANS Small Grants Programme
for Research on Sexuality and Sexual
Behaviour

**Concerns of in-school youth in rural south
Karnataka – An exploratory analysis of
reproductive health knowledge, boy-girl
relationships and related issues**

Belaku Trust

(draft – please do not cite)

Belaku Trust
697, 15th Cross Road
J. P. Nagar, Phase II
Bangalore 560 078
Email: belaku@vsnl.com

(draft – please do not cite)

Concerns of in-school youth in rural south Karnataka – An exploratory analysis of reproductive health knowledge, boy-girl relationships and related issues

Belaku Trust, Bangalore email: belaku@vsnl.com

I. Background

Adolescence is socially and culturally recognised in some communities as a time when important transformations take place in an individual. The practices of rituals associated with this period are not uncommon. As a developmentally formative period in an individual's life, this phase assumes significance in determining an individual's personality and attitudes. Youth are both physically and mentally vulnerable, and hence their perceptions, attitudes and behaviours are influenced by varied factors. Important aspects of this transition include the conscious realisations of self-image, sexuality and the development of social attitudes. This translates into attitudes and behaviour with important social and health implications. During this time, the provision of appropriate input and care both in terms of mental and physical well-being could alter not only health outcomes, but an individual's life course as well.

In India, it is only in recent years that the importance of adolescent health is being recognised. Health services historically have focused on family planning methods for adult married women. In terms of policy rhetoric, youth, over one-fifth of India's population, are recognised as a group who need appropriate care. However, there is little data on which to build programmes to address adolescent needs, as they vary with geographical location, cultural context, gender, caste, urbanisation levels and other socio-economic processes. Thus, localised studies play an important role in developing a framework for local programmes.

II. Study Objectives - The objective this project is to understand attitudes and perceptions of sex, boy-girl relationships and general needs of adolescents among school-going youth in the township of Kanakapura. Specific objectives include:

1. What are the general needs of the adolescents in the study as perceived by them?
2. What are the existing perceptions and attitudes of issues relating to reproductive health? What variations exist and how are they associated with differences in background characteristics of the students?
3. What types of sexual behaviour do the adolescents perceive as permissible, pleasurable, adventurous and risky for themselves and their peers? What consequences are associated with these perceptions? What are the characteristics of adolescents who engage in certain behaviours or hold particular attitudes that may be detrimental to health and well-being?
4. What are the stages in the relationships that adolescents establish amongst themselves which could lead to sexual activity? What are the systems of communication used to establish such relationships?
5. What are the existing sources of information for these groups of young people?
6. Do they seek assistance for their problems? Whom do they approach for advice and/or treatment/care?

7. Document language and expressions used when discussing reproductive health and related social behaviour, which can be used when developing interventions.

III. Study Design and Methodology

The project was carried out in Kanakapura town, the taluk head quarters located about 60 kms from Bangalore. The town is equipped with health institutions such as a government hospital, Christian mission hospitals, private nursing homes, and educational facilities with one government college, five government high schools and several other private schools. Though the surrounding villages have primary and middle schools, boys and girls from these villages have to go to the high school in Kanakapura for higher study and hence there is a mixture of rural and urban, caste and economic background of students in these schools.

The study was done involving students from four high schools:

1. Government Girls High School (GGHS)- low fees
2. Municipal High School (MHS) - co-educational, run by town municipality, moderate fees
3. Rural Multipurpose High School (RMPHS) – government aided private school boys only, higher fees, (lower fees for SC/STs)
4. Rural Girls High School (RGHS) – government aided private girls high school, higher fees

Qualitative phase - started with general group discussions from schools 1,2 and 3 above. From this, a purposive sample of 60 students was chosen, with 2 stratification measures, sex and residence (urban-rural). Thus, the sample comprises 15 rural girls, 15 urban girls, 15 rural boys and 15 urban boys..

Quantitative phase - two-stage cluster design. The first stage was selection of 4 out of 7 existing high schools to capture a range of fee structures and urban-rural student body. The second stage was selection of all 9th and 10th standard students within each high school, except for RGHS, a large school in which 2 of the 5 sections in each standard was chosen.

Methods

Key informant interviews
Focus Group Discussions and Freelists
Social mapping
Body mapping
Pilesorts
In-depth interviews with re-visits

A one-time questionnaire, designed after completion of the qualitative phase, was administered to a sample of 1566 students. Analysis is being carried out using statistical software (SPSS) and software for qualitative data (Anthropac and Atlas Ti).

IV. Themes and Main Findings

A. Background characteristics of students (Survey sample (n=1566))

Sex - 40% female, 60% male

Urban – Rural - More of the female students are urban (63%) compared to male (55%).

School- RMPHS – 40.1%
MHS – 24.9%

GGHS – 19.0%
RGHS – 16.0%

Caste

This sample of students has the following caste profile:

SC/ST 20.0%
OBC 31.2%
Vokkaliga 37.6%
Muslim 8.4%
Forward caste 1.9%
Missing data 1.0%

Possessions

A simple additive scale of household possessions was created, and this linear scale was further modified into a categorical variable of low, medium and high. This is being used as a simple economic status variable at this stage. Further analysis will combine this variable with occupation and education to develop a SES variable.

Low – 32.7%
Medium – 38.2%
High – 29.1%

RMPHS and RGHS clearly have higher proportions of relatively well-to-do students compared to GGHS and MHS. GGHS has the highest proportion of poor students.

Possessions score category	RMPHS %	MHS	RGHS	GGHS
Low	19.9	53.1	9.4	60.6
Medium	42.5	32.6	38.4	35.9
High	37.6	14.4	52.2	3.6

P < .001

Crosstabulations - Background variables

Possessions and sex of student - higher percentage of boys come from poor families
Possessions and urban-rural - higher percentage of rural students are poor compared to the urban students.

Possessions and Caste - SC/ST are the poorest group, followed by the Vokkaligas, OBC and finally the Muslim students.

Possessions score category	female	male
Low	28.6	59.1
Medium	41.6	30.4
High	29.9	10.5

P<.001

Possessions score category	Rural	Urban
Low	45.7	28.6
Medium	38.7	41.6
High	15.5	29.9

P<.001

Possessions score	SC/ST	OBC +	Vokkaliga	Muslim
-------------------	-------	-------	-----------	--------

category		Forward		
Low	61.0	20.5	34.3	8.4
Medium	28.8	43.1	38.7	38.2
High	10.2	36.4	27.0	53.4

P<.001

B. Love, stages of love, consequences of love

"Nowadays, boy and girl fall in love by just walking along together; if they talk once, the love starts." [urban girl]

Boys and girls describe similar sequences in stages of love, how it begins and progresses.

Teasing/ early stages of attraction



Mutual attraction/love- love letters, meetings (importance of friends)



Desire to marry, sometimes physical intimacy – (uncontrollable desire, no protection, sometimes coercive)



Pregnancy, and/or abortion, forced marriage, attempted suicide, suicide

Free lists and in-depth interview data show the following:

- boy-girl friendship changing to love is usually initiated and supported by friends, and teasing is central aspect of the early communication.
- boys expect their life partners to be an ideal girl who wears saree, bindi, flowers, etc., is very good-looking and family-oriented (towards the boy's family) (*Sarvaguna sampanne*). These expectations are influenced strongly by the media, as many boys mentioned film heroines and models as their ideal.
- girls want their life partners not to smoke, drink or have extra marital affairs and fend for the family.
- common mention of suicide. The students spoke of a number of situations in which one might resort to suicide: failure in love, unwed pregnancies, severe teasing, poor results.

Boys

Urban boys tend to speak more pragmatically than rural boys

"Boys will have the capacity to think, have the eligibility to love after they are sixteen to seventeen years old. They will know how to lead their lives." [urban boy].

"If we love at this age, our studies will be affected. We will break our heads until we become mad. We should love when we grow older". [urban boy]

"Even if they love, nobody gets married to each other nowadays. They love in order to fulfil their present [physical] desires, not to meet the desire of the mind." [urban boy]

Meeting places with girls are restricted to parks, movies and picnics for urban boys. Within these locations, physical relationships are possible. They report that controlling desire is difficult.

"By nature, boys cannot control [desire]. But if the girl has restraint she can somehow control the boy. What boys can't control is the "romance" and "emotion" that come in their bodies." [urban boy]

Both urban and rural boys describe the following outcomes:

- marriage if agreed to and arranged by the parents
- registered marriage without the parents consent
- suicide by the girl if the boy doesn't agree to elope and marry the girl

Girls

Urban girls report the following

- love relationships more common in co-educational schools
- society's assumptions that opposite sex friendships cannot be platonic cause these friendships to become romantic.
- boys and girls don't experience the same consequences
- love relationships should be restricted to kissing and hugging

"When boys and girls go to the same school, they have to be together, talk to each other. But people consider those things wrongly." [urban girl]

"We girls have to be correct. If boys do wrong things, it will not be considered as wrong. But if girls do wrong things, then it is wrong".. A boy can marry a girl even after have committed things [premarital sex] with another girl. But it is not so with girls." [urban girl]

Rural girl say that boys and girls get a chance to fall in love in the bus, in the village, and describe more opportunities for meeting the opposite sex. They also say love relationships before marriage should be restricted to hugging and kissing. Many case studies are reported relating to love, premarital sex, pregnancy and abortion; this may indicate that premarital sexual relationships are more frequently observed in rural areas than in urban areas.

Both urban and rural girls report a range of outcomes in love relationships, similar in nature to boys. The relationship is sometimes accepted by parents and leads to marriage. If it is not accepted, many problems are reported. Suicide and attempted suicide (especially by the girl) are mentioned by many of the students as an outcome of love relationships that are rejected by the family. The boy may face violence by the girl's family. Rural girls talk about this kind of violence and harassment towards the boy more than urban girls.

c. Teasing

Teasing is a natural and common aspect of adolescence. It is a socially acceptable mode of communication in a context where boy-girl interaction is discouraged. Teasing may be healthy, casual, harmful or abusive. It is a significant part of adolescent communication. Various kinds of teasing and different attitudes have been discussed during the study (in-depth interviews, free lists, and survey):

Does anyone tease you	Female		Male	
	rural	urban	rural	urban
Yes	50.6%	48.2%	57.9%	57.8%

- 54.3% of the survey sample report being teased

- higher percentage of boys report teasing compared to girls, mostly same-sex teasing
- urban-rural differences are not statistically significant among either males or females
- teasing is one of the easiest ways to approach girls. Opposite-sex teasing predominately consists of boys teasing girls. Girls do tease boys, but it tends to be amongst themselves rather than publicly done.
- teasing is a significant part of love stages (initial communication with a girl).
- girls acceptance that boys teasing girls is common and unavoidable, a 'rite of passage'. Most of the girls say that teasing is best ignored. Some express that showing reactions to teasing will only aggravate the teasing and lead to harassment. Few differences exist between urban and rural girls in terms of their attitude to teasing.

"Teasing is in their [boys] blood." [urban girl]

"It is better if we don't notice the teasing. They will purposely do more if they see us noticing them." [urban girl]

- Teasing that praises a girl or appreciates her beauty is accepted by girls.
- 'Line hodiodyhu' is a common and well-known term for boys teasing girls.
- Sometimes teasing is threatening and can in extreme cases lead to fatal consequences (suicide by the girl), due to lack of support and understanding from parents and elders.

"If you [the girl] are correct, then they [boys] will also be correct". [parent]

Teasing locations

The highest proportion of teasing is reported at home.

Place	percent
Home	42.9%
Village	17.6%
Bus	14.6%
Road	30.7%
School	67.9%
Other	4.6%

Teased by	(Percent)		Type of teasing (Percent)		
	GIRLS	BOYS		GIRLS	BOYS
Classmates	55.0	79.6	Whistling	20.2	25.9
Seniors	14.7	19.7	Winking	8.1	14.0
College students	26.1	18.9	Passing remarks	12.7	47.1
Acquaintances	23.1	23.0	Singing	45.6	29.2
Mama	30.0	15.4	Following	20.2	16.0
Bhava	14.3	8.5	Staring	25.7	20.0
Boys near house	21.5	43.0	Dashing	7.2	27.8
			Pulling hair	12.1	21.3
			Falling over in house	7.8	15.8
			Touching	4.2	19.1
			Pinching	6.8	28.1
			Squeezing	1.3	14.9
			Innuendo	22.1	36.4

d. General Health Scale (GHQ)

Anxiety is currently viewed as a 'normal' aspect of adolescence in westernised paradigms of growth and development. Although we did not explore how 'normative' anxiety is viewed from within the cultural context, the data reveal that many youth have concerns and worries. We posed a series of questions in the survey as a kind anxiety measure, although not diagnostic in nature. Interestingly, boys tended to answer these questions compared to girls. MHS, RMPHS and RGHS had similar proportions of kids who ticked a response. GGHS has a very high proportion of girls who did not respond for each of these items.

Without filtering out those who did not respond, RMPHS and MHS tend to have the highest proportion of kids who said 'sometimes' or 'often' to these items, followed by GGHS and lastly by RGHS.

Selecting only those who answered, for some of the items GGHS reports the highest percentages of students who answered 'sometimes' or 'often'.

Item	School			
	RMPHS	MHS	RGHS	GGHS
Worried sometimes	72.9	64.9	45.7	81.2
Often	11.9	10.2	9.6	18.0
Difficulty concentrating sometimes	67.7	72.8	53.6	89.7
Often	11.7	10.5	6.8	9.5
Feel sad sometimes	73.2	76.1	52.6	81.2
Often	11.5	11.0	11.8	18.8
Bejaar sometimes	73.5	78.5	56.9	83.7
Often	15.4	13.8	11.9	16.3
Loss of confidence sometimes	70.4	70.1	47.0	89.7
Often	8.7	12.0	6.8	10.3
Loss of appetite sometimes	72.9	77.7	55.2	84.0
Often	10.8	14.1	6.2	16.0
Difficulty sleeping sometimes	71.2	75.6	41.7	91.0
Often	9.9	12.9	6.7	9.0
Thought of ending life sometimes	61.9	60.3	36.9	91.0
Often	7.3	8.7	10.7	8.0
Anxiety score none	29.1	27.9	46.5	80.5
Low	22.5	27.2	26.6	0.4
Medium	34.7	32.1	16.5	13.5
High	13.7	12.8	10.4	5.6

Item	Sex	
	Female	Male
Anxiety score none	60.0	27.3
Low	14.1	25.4
Medium	16.8	34.1
High	9.1	13.2

Regression results show that school has the strongest effect, with students of schools other than RMPHS, being less likely to have reported medium or high anxiety. Urban students and more well-to-do students also have a lower likelihood of reporting anxiety compared to rural and poor students; and all other groups are less likely to report anxiety compared to SC/ST students.

e. Problems

Girls

Opportunities, studies

- rural girls have less opportunities and more problems compared to urban girls.
- Financial problem appears to be rather common. Rural girls especially state that it is a reason for discontinuation of studies, especially among rural girls.

"We come to school to learn and gain knowledge. In that I don't understand Hindi and Math's. I want to do them well. While coming to school they ask me to wash vessels, sweep the house. By doing all these things I get late to school. My teacher beats me for coming late to school. At home, they scold me not to go to school. But I come to school by walk. Since my father has no job we have lot of problems. Every morning we have problems.. At home we don't have onion, oil, garlic, potato, vegetables and hence we have problem. But I eat and come whenever is there at home. We have poverty at home. And my mother asks me to go to house work. But I don't go." [rural girl]

Love relationships

Love relationships also seem to affect girls education. It is one of the reasons that girls discontinue school. Rural girls report that in their village, if one girl is discovered to be involved in a romantic relationship, many of the girls in the village will be forced by their parents to stop attending school.

"When the village people see boys teasing us they tell about it to our parents. But our parents scold and beat us and take us off from school. If our teachers see us talking to a boy of our age they take it wrongly and frighten us saying they would give the TC and send off from the school. Few (known) people complain to our parents that 'we stand talking to boys on roads, we laugh while coming on roads' and get us scolded" [rural girl]

Marriage

Early marriage, prior to finishing school, is observed more among rural girls compared to urban.

"I want to study and get a job, but my parents want me to get married. I get scolded for not agreeing for the marriage". [rural girl]

Work

Work is another problem faced by girls. They express that they work more than their capacity. Work stress has other negative consequences such as limiting access to school. Work also means that there is less time for eating, especially breakfast. For many girls, two meals a day are the norm. This might also be connected to poor concentration and lower performance in school as reported by the girls.

"They don't allow me to study. Always ask me to work. Everyday I finish cooking before I leave the house. I eat once in the morning and in the evening after school." [rural girl]

Family attitudes/gender differences

- Pressure to stop school: 15.2% of the girls and 4.1% of the boys said that they are told to stop going to school.
- nearly 25% of boys and girls reported the father as this person, the category with the highest proportion.
- Around 44% of both boys and girls report low marks as the reason they are asked to stop school.
- 47% of boys and 30% of girls are told to stop because of high work load at home.
- 15% of the girls and 5% of the boys are threatened with marriage
- 50% of the boys vs 33% of the girls are told there is no money to pay for fees
- 17% of the girls and 8% of the boys are told that travel is difficult

Boys

Many of the problems reported by boys can be categorised as financial, resulting in the need to work and earn some wages or labour contribution by way of working in the family fields or business.

"I don't get much support regarding books, fee etc. because of financial problem. In order to overcome it my parents ask us to do cloth business [family business] by going to other villages on Sundays." [urban boy]

Boys also report social problems commonly, such as quarrels and fights with friends, often in groups. They tend to sort out such problems themselves.

"Problems that come along with growing up, I feel not necessary to discuss with parents" [urban boy]

"Outside problems like fight and quarrel among friends, we friends sort it out." [urban boys]

f. Activities and Restriction

Activities

It is important to understand the kinds of activity kids engage in during their free time. In particular, we are interested in girls' reports of their perceptions. It seems likely that rural youth have less time for activities outside of school and domestic activities and indeed the quantitative data bear this out.

Activity	Rural female	Urban female
Playing with friends		↑↑
Talking to friends		↑
Shopping for fun		↑
Going to field	↑↑	
Roaming	↑	
Talking to boys	↑	
Watching TV	~32%	
Reading books	~70%	
Going to friend's place	~ 10% (daily)	
Picnics	~ 9% (sometimes)	
Going to movies	~16% (sometimes)	

Restriction

Parental restriction of activities is common. The primary reason for parents' restriction of activities is to prevent interaction with the opposite sex, especially such that could lead to love relationships.

A restriction scale was created and then categorised into 3 groups - none or low, medium, high and crosstabulated with different background variables. Findings (all significant at the 1% level) include:

- GGHS girls (poorer, rural girls) report the highest levels of restriction, but RGHS girls report the lowest levels of restriction
- Rural students report higher levels of restriction of particular activities than urban.
- Poorer students report higher restriction than more well-to-do students.

g. Reproductive health knowledge

Sources of information about RH

Source	Female	Male	Rural	Urban
Father	2.9	9.4	8.8	5.3
Mother	42.1	7.8	23.6	19.9
Elder brother	2.2	9.1	8.7	4.7
Elder sister	24.2	4.8	13.6	11.8
Brother in-law	0.3	6.3	4.9	3.2
Other relatives	5.9	16.3	16.8	8.8
School teacher	14.4	19.8	23.0	14.5
Sex book	2.6	15.1	11.7	8.9
Sex film	0.8	11.8	7.9	7.0
AXN channel	3.0	17.6	9.0	13.8
TV	30.6	45.6	45.4	35.4
Friends	21.6	59.0	49.2	40.4
Neighbour	7.7	14.4	15.4	9.0
Poster	6.9	12.1	10.1	10.0
Science programme	14.9	26.7	17.7	25.1

Menstruation and pregnancy

From the qualitative data, we expected reproductive health knowledge to be on the low side for the majority of the sample. Only 26.6% of the sample reported correct methods of pregnancy prevention. Generally, boys seem to know more about pregnancy and its prevention more than girls do (around 35% compared to around 15%) and there is little urban-rural difference.

Girls

When girls first get their period, they are traditionally not supposed to inform their mothers, but rather other elder females.

When I matured I told my neighbours. They asked me not to come out and to have bath. They also said that if I roam around and a bird 'garuda' touches me, I would not have a baby after my wedding. So they told me to stay inside. But not to tell my mother first. [urban girl].

The connection between menstruation and pregnancy is known, but most girls do not understand how. Reproductive physiology knowledge is poor.

If she does not get her periods after a month of coming into contact with a boy, then they

say she is pregnant. They say her periods stops after she gets pregnant for nine months. Till one year after the delivery she will not have her periods. This, my aunty told me. [rural girl]

Many girls did not know of menstruation before it happened, although some said they knew through an older sister.

I had not known any thing about it. If I talked about such things my mother scolded me. She used to scold me as to why I wanted to know about such things and took me home. So I never asked anybody. When I got it, I felt frightened. [urban girl]

I came to know when my elder sister matured. And I have talked about this with my father's elder brother's daughters and younger brothers' daughters. When one girl among us matured we did not inform men and kept it as a secret. If we inform them they will make a big thing about it and we did not want all these things. [urban girl]

Boys

Boys are better informed about physiology, menstruation and pregnancy and subsequent physiological changes.

"When the girl becomes big (mature) her breasts become big, she gets her regular monthly periods. Red blood comes out when she urinates, her voice and her facial looks change. We come to know that she is ready for pregnancy when she becomes 'big' (To menstruate). If she has not become 'big', she is not prepared for pregnancy. (She can't become pregnant) The girl becomes pregnant when she unites sexually with the boy, that is the sperms (veeryanu) enters the uterus of the girl unites with eggs and the zygote is developed (bruna)." [rural boy]

Boys report that desires develop in girls after they menstruate and hence tend to get attracted to opposite sex.

She will get a sort of different nature (swabhawa). I mean, she will have desires, to love. Girls will also have desires about the kind of person they want to love." [urban boy]

Boys say that girls are restricted more at home after menstruation.

"They ask her to stay at home and ask her not to roam around much when once she matures, because men may cast their eyes on her and like that may develop love for her and may both fall in love with each other. That is why they ask her not to go out. Her desires increase she grows up. When she has a strong desire, she makes men also to have strong desire. When both their desires increase, they have sexual contact." [rural boy]

Abortion (girls)

Girls knowledge of abortion and how and where it is performed, is low in both the qualitative and quantitative data. Urban girls report that abortions are also done in villages at a lesser cost.

"I don 't know much about 'abortion'. It means 'cleaning the stomach.' They remove the growing baby inside the stomach. I don 't know properly but I have heard about abortion. They go to 'shops' (clinics) for abortions. Nobody gets

abortion done in the village; they all come to the city for it. Nobody in the village does such things." [rural girl]

"They do abortions in villages when they get pregnant. They say it is better in villages. They finish it fast. But in cities they charge Rs.2000/- to 3000/-. I do not know who does this." [urban girl]

Abortion (boys)

Urban and rural boys tend to have more knowledge about contraception. However, if a girl becomes pregnant in spite of contraception, then abortion is an option. If a girl gets pregnant, the boy will enlist the help of his friends to get an abortion for the girl.

"To prevent pregnancy before marriage men should use "Nirodh" and women "Mala-D" (urban boy)

" They tell their close friends and go to a doctor they knew. So girls tell about their pregnancy to the boy. Then the boy's friends tell him that he made a mistake and that he should get married to her or they go to the abortion hospital".. [urban boy]

Boys report that people go to private hospitals to get abortions done rather going to government hospitals since it may create problems. They also talk about the availability of traditional medicines.

"Abortion means removing the baby when it is very small. There are private hospitals in Kanakapura to do this. If they go to government hospital, they question them and ask them how this happened. So they go to private hospital even though it means more expenditure.. They go to a nursing home in Kanakapura; I don't know its name. They also give Nati medicine (green medicine), again, I don't know where they give it. But I have heard they give kashaayam of some greens and barks of tree daily in the morning for few days and get abortion done." (rural boy)

h. Behaviour

With regard to interaction with the opposite sex, a higher proportion of rural girls engage in many of the activities compared to urban.

Item	Female		Male	
	Rural	Urban	Rural	Urban
Activities with the opp. sex				
Time with classmates	6.1	3.3	7.3	7.2
Friendship	31.6	22.6	51.3	49.9
Go to movies	13.0	8.1	59.5	52.6
Interested in a boy/girl	7.8	5.6	36.2	31.1
Talk to boy/girl alone	72.2	77.3	83.8	87.5
Write letters	38.9	45.5	33.1	40.6
Give gifts	61.1	54.5	58.4	65.6
Go to hotel/bakery	5.6	22.7	28.6	30.6
Go to movies	5.6	4.5	23.4	15.6
Hold hands	38.9	18.2	53.9	46.9
Kiss	11.1	10.0	32.5	29.4

Rural girls may have more opportunities of having love relationships and pre-marital sexual relationships Due to what appears to be greater physical mobility, rural girls

have more access to meet boys in fields, gardens, near the rivers or come to towns or cities.

Summary

Preliminary results reveal strongly patterned progressions of love/ stages of love. Teasing is a central part of this, and is thus sometimes welcome and other times more harmful. A high percentage of boys report teasing in the questionnaire, but interestingly do not talk about it in the interviews. Girls report teasing in both the questionnaire and interviews and describe the types of teasing and where it occurs.

A major concern is the lack of support reported by the students. Most say that there is no adult to whom they can share or report any type of problem – relating to studies, health, love, teasing, or abuse. This might logically be linked to the anxiety-related symptoms reported, such as loss of sleep and appetite. In the questionnaire, alarmingly high proportions of students reported that they have contemplated suicide. In the interviews, students report that suicide is an acceptable last resort for a number of situations.

Reproductive health knowledge levels are low, overall, although boys and higher economic level students have relatively more accurate knowledge. Much of the knowledge and beliefs comes from popular media and peers. Understanding of menstruation, pregnancy, contraception, abortion, AIDS and other STIs, is surrounded by attitudes and beliefs that reinforce popular myths and gender discrimination. Interestingly, urban-rural differences in knowledge are not uniform and in some areas, rural youth have higher knowledge levels perhaps due to greater exposure to certain types of media (e.g. radio, posters).

In the survey, there were few direct questions on behaviour as we felt questions pertaining to sex would be grossly under-reported. Thus, the questions on behaviour relate to non-sexual contact with the opposite sex. Rural girls describe and report more contact with the opposite sex because of their greater physical mobility. We will further explore the interaction of gender and urban-rural differences, particularly among girls.

Students are very eager for adequate and clear knowledge. We have recently finished a small pilot intervention study to test the feasibility and effectiveness of health education training within schools, and early results are promising. Ideally, such training should be part of comprehensive life skills training.

Further analysis will look at so-called “positive deviance” in terms of knowledge, and develop predictive models for attitudes and behaviours that take into account aspects in addition to background characteristics. A more thorough integration of qualitative and quantitative data will also be done. Finally, specific implications for adolescent programmes will be discussed, realising that greater well-being during youth increases the possibility of well-being into adulthood.

(Belaku Trust has been engaged in health research in villages in Kanakapura taluk for the past six years. Our work has mostly been in women’s health (maternal morbidity and care-seeking; and women’s health and empowerment training), as well as child health (the relationship of infant feeding practices, care and family background on child nutritional status; and nutrition education to families).

An Exploration of the Sexuality and Sexual Behaviour of the Girl Child on the Street

Ancy Mathew & Ilse Willekens

Navajeevana

(draft – please do not cite)

Navajeevana
257, Chamrajpet, 1st Main Road
Bangalore 560 0018
navajeevana1@satyam.net.in

An Exploration of the Sexuality and Sexual Behaviour of the Girl Child on the Street.

Ancy Mathew, Ilse Willekens, Navajeevana

(draft- do not cite without permission)

Introduction

Navajeevana has been working with street girls the last 7 years and is run by The Salesian Sisters At Navajeevana, girls who had been with us for several years would take a long time-sharing their real stories. As they grew older we found something lacking in our approach and interventions. We recognised our inadequacy in the area of sexuality. That it was a topic that was very much alive in the girls' lives, but we couldn't get deeper into, because we didn't know how to talk about it. We didn't know what they were experiencing. We didn't know where to start. Everything seemed connected with sexuality.

We, therefore, wanted to explore the girls' knowledge and perception of sexuality and understand the dynamics between the risk factors, the sexual behaviour and coping-mechanisms of a girl child on the street. The goal was to build up Navajeevana's competence to accompany the girl child in her growth. To develop intervention strategies according to individual needs that would mitigate sexual exploitation and prevent risk behaviour.

Objectives

To understand the sexuality of a girl child on the street; to develop and strengthen strategies for her empowerment.

1. To explore street girls' perceptions of sexuality, knowledge and attitude regarding sex and their sexual behaviour.
2. To understand the factors that lead to the sexual vulnerability of a girl child on the street.
3. To understand the dynamics between the risk factors, the sexual behaviour and coping-mechanism of a girl child on the street.
4. To understand the impact of sexual abuse on a growing girl child.

Methodology

Selection of sample

The sampling method we adopted for this study is purposive-sampling because we could select the respondents who represented all the characteristics and qualities of the intended study population (the girl child on the street). We brought in variables with respect to occupations, types of habitat, age and area.

We collected data from a total of 100 girls; we used different methods with different girls.

Data collection

We have used both qualitative and quantitative methods simultaneously to collect information.

Qualitative data is important for us, because we are interested in interventions.

Free listing

We asked 20 girls to list all the terms, thoughts, fears and concerns with regard to sex

The girls didn't just give us lists, but started narrating long stories. That's why we decided to go ahead with in-depth interviews right away.

In-Depth interviews

50 in-depth interviews were conducted to get a complete and detailed understanding of girls' knowledge and perception of sexuality and their sexual behaviour.

We had separate interviews on sexuality, to list positive and negative relationships, feelings, physical pleasures, urges, likes and dislikes towards partners, protection, support, threats and use of contraceptives etc.,

Mapping:

We did 2 different maps: physical and social maps with 20 girls

Physical mapping. Depicts routine daily life. It gives an account of the events from the time they wake up until they go to sleep. These drawings enabled us to understand their area of occupation, places of living, territory, food, recreation, toilet and hygiene, sleeping arrangements etc.,

Social mapping The girls drew people with whom they have daily interaction, people they know and have important roles in their lives, placing themselves at the centre. The distances, which they maintained in the drawing, express the relationship they have with each other. And an attempt was made to look at networks.

Pile sorting

20 girls sorted cards and made them into groups according to their understanding of sex and explained their choices.

Rating

We prepared 27 cards with pictures to rate pleasure and risk. A 3-point scale of very pleasurable, pleasurable and not pleasurable and similarly, for risk. 20 girls participated.

Group Discussion

We conducted 21 group discussions to get a clearer understanding of topics that came up during the interviews. Various themes were: The differences between rape, force and 'spoiling'; marriage, violence; prostitution and sex for money; what makes girls like them so vulnerable and movies.

Key informants

Among these were pimps, sex workers, social workers, counsellors, doctors, pharmacists,

HIV/AIDS questionnaire

In the interviews, we found, that girls knew very little about HIV/AIDS, we passed a questionnaire to 20 girls, to find out what exactly they knew, so that we could adapt our interventions

Face sheet:

After data collection, we filled up a face sheet with information about each girl, for quantitative analysis

Description of area and population

We have included girls of 4 areas: the Market, Bus Stand, Slum and Shelter

Market

The market is a major shopping place, not just for Bangaloreans, but also for people from outside. Vast crowds throng this overpopulated area. Footpath vendors are prohibited from sitting in front of shops or to sell things in the complex but use any vacant or available space.

Bus Stand

The bus stand is a busy area with business people, travel agencies running inter-state services, footpath vendors, street children and families living on the street. There are some huts made of plastic sheets behind this bus stand.

Slum

This is a small and congested slum consisting of a few huts situated near the wholesale shops and the Market. These huts are very small and there is only a narrow and difficult passage.

Shelter

Navajeevana conducts street education and has two homes where children without support get shelter, food, clothes, training, and care

Description of the population

Most of the girls are Bangalore born but Tamil speaking. All of them speak Tamil and Kannada. The smallest group is between 5 & 9 while the largest, between 13 & 16 years.

Education

Only a quarter of the sample can read & write. At the shelter, about half are able to read and write

At the beginning of the scholastic year, children are enrolled in the nearby corporation school. Many of them drop out due to various reasons. When some girls mature, parents stop them from schooling fearing they will fall in love. Often the classroom atmosphere is not attractive for these children who pick up quarrels, leave the school and choose to live a free life on the streets. Parents expect their children to find their own livelihood.

Occupation / income

Girls work in an unorganised set up which means irregularity of work and improper payment. Those from the Market are involved in vending and tying flowers while the girls from the bus stand work as domestic servants, cobblers, tie flowers and sweep shops. Girls from the slum work in wedding halls, at domestic work, bottle washing, making agarbathis and rag picking. During festivals they earn an additional income by vending more flowers, fruit, *billapathre*, mango leaves and *tulasi* etc

Very few parents are financially supportive; sometimes other family members look after them. Some only get support when they pay for it. Some mothers force their daughters to work, often their own work, when they don't feel like working. Most of the money goes towards alcohol consumption of the parents; some parents keep all the money that their children make and don't question by what means they earn it.

"...I went to my work place. They told me the owner was away and would give me money when he returned. I came back to my mother told her the owner was away and would get the money for her when he returned. My mother scolded me to leave home, go and sleep with him, collect the money he would give and then give it to her".

Amounts that children earn for the same work vary widely. Some work much more than others and some are able to acquire better and more consistent work than others. Most earned fewer than fifty rupees while the smallest percentage earned between 50 and 100.

Half have more than one job, depending on the season. It is hard to get a clear idea of the expenses that children have. Some of their expenses seem to be alcohol for their parents, food, loan repayments, bribes, bathing & using toilets.

Substance abuse

Half of the girls use substances regularly. Most of them (42 girls) use *gutka*; some of them are addicted and would rather miss rice than *panparag*. Most of them were influenced by their friends and a few by their mothers. Others use alcohol, solution and snuff.

Alcohol use is a big problem among their parents and consequently quarrels are picked up even for small matters. Very often children are sent to fetch the liquor (*sara*) from the shop.

Sleeping pattern

Half of the girls sleep with their family, often in a public place. Some with their relatives, friends or alone.

Girls who sleep in public places say they are often touched and forced into sex. Even if they sleep with their parents there is no protection and safety.

Girls in the slum and bus stand live in huts. These huts do not contain sufficient space to accommodate all the members of the family.

The cobbler families in the bus stand who do not have a hut, sleep in front of shops or cycle stands at night.

Health & hygiene:

Most of the girls approach medical stores or turn to country medicines that are available. They have very negative feelings towards the govt. hospitals. A 15-year-old girl says, *"I am frightened of government hospitals, if I have money I go to a medical store and buy tablets and eat. If I do not have money I do not do anything"*.

They believe people will never come back alive once they go there. Secondly they mentioned the bribes that they need to pay at these hospitals.

Facilities like bath and toilets are available on payment. Since a regular bath is a costly affair they bathe once in fifteen days or a month. Girls never wash their clothes until they get or purchase another one.

Menstruation:

Girls are eager to mature; they look forward to the rituals involved like calling relatives, getting new clothes/ornaments, being decorated with flowers

"They constructed a small hut and made me sit inside that, afterwards my mama (mother's younger brother) gave me saree to wear. They gave me sweets and fruits also."

Menstrual health is an issue great concern. They use any cloth they find. Some of them do not use anything. They don't have a place to dry their clothes or change frequently. They keep the blood stained clothes on for days. All these lead to infections and other health problems.

Reproductive Tract Infections

21 girls talked about RTIs. Since they don't know the names, they describe the symptoms: itching, burning sensation, wounds, discharge and pain. They complain of pain during intercourse. For treatment, they mostly go to a medical store & buy cream, go to a hospital, use home remedies like hot/ salt water & coconut oil or don't take treatment at all.

Pregnancy and abortion

12 of the girls conceived, of which half of them had abortions because of pressures from family and community. Several others considered the option, but were too late, the pregnancy was too advanced. A few of them said that they took country medicines. Only a few girls have approached the hospital for abortions. Most of the others delivered at hospitals, one in a bathroom.

Contraceptives

Contraceptives are rarely used. A few girls who belong to a gang mentioned that their leader (*Owneramma*) takes care of them by distributing contraceptives to avoid pregnancies. But that doesn't mean they always use them because when men object they have the choice: condoms or money - they choose the latter.

44 (45.36%) girls say they have heard of Nirodh (condoms). A quarter of them have used it. Some say they know about it but don't think of it when they go for sex, or think it is for prostitutes only.

"Those who stand by the side of road (sex workers) will only use it. Our boys are not like them".

HIV/AIDS

A majority of the girls (68 of them) have heard of HIV/AIDS through media, friends, people in general and from family. They know how it gets transmitted and that it's a deadly disease.

Some have misconceptions about who can get it. Most of them know that informed people, who stick to one partner, can prevent it.

"If the urge comes then I don't think of AIDS. We too have desires. Anyway one must die some day," says a girl who is HIV positive.

Sexuality

When we started the analysis with information from 92 girls, we found out that the frequency of penetrative sex is very high. 72.8 % = 67 girls reported having penetrative sex, with mostly multiple partners.

Of 37 girls who are below 12, 25 (67.5 %) had penetrative sex. and more than half with multiple partners. Of 55 girls who are above 13 years, 42 (76.3 %) had penetrative sex and more than two-thirds with multiple partners.

Only 13 (14.1 %) girls reported non-penetrative sex.

12 girls (13 %) said they were not sexually active.

We divided the girls into different categories on the basis of sex and money, which turned out to be a very difficult task, since money plays different roles for the girls: some were forced into sex and got money, food, snacks etc., others were offered money without asking for it while some others asked for money but were not given. Some were not forced into sex but did it just the same for money, some were just given money. Others were promised marriage so no money was given.

Knowing the limitations, we decided on the following categories: none, partner, sex for money and prostitution.

Who are these girls?

None girls who don't have partners

These are 10 girls, mostly between 13 and 16 years old. Half of them are mature. Their mother tongue is mostly Tamil, and they are born in Bangalore. Half of them stay in the bus stand. 2 out of 10 can read and write. 3 use substances.

Some girls say they don't have sex and attribute it to their family, who would 'kill them' Others decided they wanted to have sex after marriage or were approached but managed to get out of it.

It is remarkable that some of these girls live in the same conditions as girls of the other categories, no support, no shelter, but yet say they manage to protect themselves.

Partner these are 43 girls. 17 are below 12 years, 16 are between 13 and 16 years old. 26 (60.4 %) have matured. Their mother tongue is mostly Tamil and they are born in Bangalore. They are more or less equally divided over the different areas. 11(25 %) can read and write. 15 use substances (mostly *gutka*)

This is a category with a lot of variations within. The majority 29 (67.4 %) girls, have penetrative relationships with 1 or multiple partners, wanted and unwanted, with lovers, *mamas*, unknown boys or men. They are sometimes given money.

12(27.9 %) girls have relationships but don't have sex, they want to have it only after marriage. 2 (4.6 %) girls have boyfriends, but just talk to them

Sex for money girls who have sex because they know they will get something out of it (cash or kind) in addition to sex for pleasure.

These are 30 girls. 17 of them were below 12 (56 %), only 1/3 of them are matured. They mostly speak Tamil and are born in Bangalore. They are equally divided over the market, bus stand and shelter. Only few are in the bus stand. 7 can read and write and 22 (73.3 %) use substances (mostly *gutka*).

They made a distinction between themselves and those whom they call prostitutes because they do it 'without clothes', 'ask for money', 'dress up and stand on the roadsides'.

Often girls are not very clear themselves, they say they do *poothi* work (prostitution) in one part of the interview and elsewhere, that they are not at all like prostitutes, One girl says prostitutes sit in cinemas. Another girl, who doesn't call herself a prostitute talks about the same thing but says she is being forced

Why they have sex for money:

- she was given money
- told by a friend not to do it for free

- • good money = good life = biriyani every day
- • to have money, food, clothes & be happy
- • It gives her money & enjoyment
- • ran away from home
- • it earns more than any other job
- • uses the money to look after herself & her family
- • if she has money, she gets to stay in peoples' houses and her family treats her well.

Having started sex for money, it is very difficult to come out:

- • I'll come out when I get married
- • I can't, will face problems for money & food
- • They'll come after us, get us killed
- • My reputation is ruined anyway. Society won't accept me
- • Happiness, food, clothes, whatever I need.
- • Urge

Prostitution girls who call themselves prostitutes.

Even the girls who call themselves that consider being labelled a prostitute very painful.

These 9 girls were older, 3 were between 13 and 16 years old, and 6 were 17 plus. 8 had matured.

Most speak Kannada and some, Tamil. Five of them were born in Bangalore. They are mostly from the market and bus stand. There were none from the slum and 2 from the shelter. None can read and write and all of them use substances. (mostly alcohol).

Girls in prostitution are older, half come from outside the city, came with their boyfriends, or ran away from home and ended up in prostitution because they didn't see a way out for themselves

Amounts they get for prostitution vary, depending on age, being part of gang, but mostly over 100 rs a day. Six of them said that they belong to a group of sex workers, which is well organized, with a madam (which they call *owneramma*) and pimps.

The positive part is that you have protection, in several ways:

- from the police: the bribes they have to pay are lower, and when they are arrested, the leader, who often knows the police well, can get them out.
- from clients: pimps will go after them if they don't pay
- sleeping place: place to entertain men & to sleep, are provided by the owner-amma
- medical help: both in terms of anti-conception & common illnesses.
- Three girls said they were part of a group of girls who did sex for money.

The negative part about being in a group is that it is very difficult to leave it; because they threaten to hurt you. Other activities of gangs: Trafficking and buying little girls, to raise them to become part of the gang.

Support

Generally, when girls talk about support, they talk about food, money & clothes. A person is supportive when he/she satisfies one or more of these needs. Emotional needs are seldom mentioned or met.

Family

Most of the girls say the reason for them having sex for money is the lack of support from their parents. These girls have the least support. Half of them sleep in open spaces, not with their family. This category has the highest number of alcoholic or dead parents.

"...If my parents start showing common sense, I will stop this, but now I have to look after them".

Half of them live with one or both parents. The other half with a relative, friend or someone who is not related but who looks after them for some time, mostly in return for work or money.

Fathers are absent in most of the girls' lives. They die at an early age, often as a result of alcoholism. If they are alive, they are mostly alcoholics & no support at all to the family.

Nearly a quarter of the mothers are dead, some are absent, and half don't give support.

20 % of the girls have run away from home, as a result

Reasons for not staying with the parents:

- one or both are dead (diseases, alcohol, suicide, murder)
- alcoholics
- mother is a prostitute
- trouble with stepparent
- physical abuse
- ran away with lover
- no support
- forced to work

The 50% who stay with the parents often don't sleep with them and if they do, support is not guaranteed

"...When my mother was alive, my brother & me had to sleep outside the house, because men would come to the house. They would cover themselves with a blanket & do bad things. One day when it was raining, I went inside, my mother gave me plastic & told me to stay out". says a nine year old

Several mothers didn't react when the girl asked for help during or after an assault. The mothers' reactions included: scolding because she woke her up; no reaction at all; dismissed as a joke. Sometimes their mothers themselves force them into sex for money. Directly, where the mother gets her clients and even takes the money, or indirectly, where the mother tells her: *"do whatever you have to, but bring me so much money by the end of the day, or get out"*, knowing very well that the only way she can get this amount is through sex.

When we asked in a group discussion what makes them so vulnerable, compared to "house girls", this is what they say:

"...For home children their nature is good, parents and relatives use common sense, give good advice, show the right way, and be supportive. For whatever they want there is someone in the family to provide, they are having all facilities and they know what is good and what is bad. But street girls don't have parents, relatives or educators. They can cheat them easily. If the street girls can get whatever they want then they will do whatever they're told. For street children money is very important for food, snacks and clothes - that's why they will cheat us easily". Says a girl in the shelter

Brothers are mostly considered more painful than helpful. Most girls have bad experiences with brothers, when they are around. The experiences vary from not contributing to the family, being addicted, domineering, scolding, beating (a lot of it), to forcing sex with them. Some are dead or in jail. As with their fathers, nothing much is expected from them.

Sisters are more liked, especially when they are younger. They look after them as their own children. Elder sisters give support when they fall ill.

Friends

Friends play an important role in each one's life. Most of them say that they can confide their personal matters and receive support from their friends. Some girls sleep in friends' houses, and can stay there as long as they pay.

Friends also teach them about sex.

Community

One of the biggest concerns of children, who have sex, is not to be seen. Boys use this fear as a threat to have sex with them; they say they'll tell their lovers or that no one would marry them.

The role of the community is very important in this complicated web of mixed messages- sex with multiple partners is tolerated, as long as it is secret.

Several girls gave examples of social control, the way people talked had an adverse effect, and so they actually started having sex because people were talking anyway

Initiation

Sexual activity among street girls begins very early, 55.7 % were under the age of 12, 37% under 9. And contrary to what we believed, they are mostly NOT forced: 75% liked their first sexual experience 29% were forced; some were forced, but liked it anyway.

Among the categories, girls who have sex for money are the youngest, 18 (72 %) are under 12, these also enjoyed it the most

Most girls have sex for the first time with someone they know: boyfriends (43 %) or *mamas* (25 %) (Mother's brother or nephew & very common in S Indian society), others with a random boy from the neighbourhood, who they've seen a few times before. Mostly out of their own free will, often forced, blackmailed. The men mostly took the initiative. Most times, the girls are approached; they don't go looking for it. Some girls initially resist these 'advances' but then give in later. The girls were reluctant, scared, felt a little pain, but also liked it & wanted more.

65% have multiple partners, but mostly call only a few of them their boyfriends/ lovers. They hope to marry them. Some run away with their lovers, but are left all the time.

Many want to marry their mamas, or other relatives. This is often committed by their parents, at a very young age & gives these boys "a free ticket", no questions are asked, because anyway they have "marriage-relation"

There are also several examples of sex within the family – with elder brothers, brothers-in-law, and fathers...

Violence

Girls witness a lot of violence. They are witness to parents being killed by each other, or by others, friends being killed, poisoned, their babies being drowned, suicides and rapes.

They say violence is often alcohol induced.

41 % girls have been forced into sex at least once. Most of them are from the sex for money category. They also experience the most violence.

Among them, 8 were gang raped, 2 of them by lovers & their friends.

Many girls know of girls being raped & killed. Boys also use these things to threaten them & force them into sex. People & the police are scared of these boys/men; the girl gets no protection at all.

People also blackmail them: *"If you don't love me I will die"*.

Another form of blackmail, which is very commonly used by boys, is the promise of marriage, to convince the girl to have sex. Lured by these promises, girls get into affairs, which lead to sexual encounters & sometimes elopement.

All these are very confusing for the girls, since the perpetrators are often boys they know, like, and love

The general feeling is that you, as a girl should try to take as much violence as you can bear. If it becomes too much, if you really can't take it anymore, Even if you have tried to make him feel good, cooked for him, stayed with your neighbours until he cooled down, you could either leave him or commit suicide.

Suicide seems to be considered as an option to solve problems, to cope with violence.

Some say they would do it if they were raped, got pregnant, things that are not accepted by society. It would anyway make their lives miserable.

Only 4 girls say they actually tried it, even though many more do match the above criteria.

Marriage

Even though they have hardly seen good examples, for most girls marriage is their most important future plan.

Why marriage is important:

- *"We can escape from this prostitute work, our life may change & our name also"*
- *"Boys can live alone, girls can't"*
- *"If I have a thali around my neck, they'll think she's someone's wife & not do anything."*
- *"It is respectable if we have a husband with us when we go to our village"*
- *"How many days will our parents look after us"?*
- *"Secured life, afterwards boys won't touch you"*

Their attitude towards marriage:

- *"If he drinks also it is no problem, as long as he doesn't leave me"*
- *"It is respectable, however big the problems you face"*
- *"Only prostitutes don't wear thalis"*

"My child needs a father"

Most girls who are (or have been married) have had negative experiences. Several had a few failed marriages, but they continue to feel marriage is important, for the same reasons as mentioned above

Many girls say that boys promise to marry them, have sex & leave them

Many boys (& probably society) have double standards

"...she slept with me, she might have slept with others too" is a reason one lover gives, not to marry his girlfriend

This is how most of the girls see boys' expectations: *"We should not roam around being dressed up. Other boys shouldn't touch us and we shouldn't talk and laugh with boys. Whatever boys may do it's all right but we should obey them and do whatever they ask us to do. If he says "go" we must obey him and are supposed to go, if he says, "come" we are supposed to go with him, if he say "sleep" we are supposed to sleep with him"*.

Even though they are sexually very active, and don't use contraceptives, only 12 say they have conceived.

Most of them want to have 2 children, one boy and one girl. But they don't expect much of the boy. He will drink; make the life of girls miserable. The girl will look after them

Urge

The general feeling, for the three different categories is that urge is a need that has to be satisfied, just like hunger.

It is something you can't control. One girl calls it 'body hunger'; one calls it 'thirst'.

Some say they get very angry, get body pain, and can't concentrate, if their need can't be satisfied.

Most of them go in search of one of their boyfriends or previous sexual partners. If they can't find them, some take whoever they can get, few stand on the roadside, sleep in prostitutes' houses others have sex with their girlfriends but very few reported masturbating.

Small girls seem to be able to handle it better. They just sit, go and play, sleep. Several girls mention that it becomes uncontrollable, after maturity.

Triggers are most often media: film & TV – love scenes & memories of past experiences

At Navajeevana, girls try to forget it, have sex with others or make plans to run away.

Urge is an important reason for them (together with money) to have sex for money or do prostitution. It is also an important reason why they can't leave this 'job'.

Conclusion

Street girls are initiated at a very young age, mostly by someone they know, and they mostly like the initiation.

Parents are generally expected to take care of their children. Here it is the other way around. Many of these children have to provide for their families.

Girls who do sex for money are the most at risk. They are very young. Were initiated at an early age. They have less support, earn less even though they

have multiple jobs. The ones who got pregnant had abortions. They don't consider themselves prostitutes, but practically act the same. They feel they are less at risk of getting AIDS. They experience more force and violence. Have very painful initiations. But they also enjoy it the most.

Having sex is not such a big thing for them, not a big step or decision. A normal way of life - you eat, sleep, and have sex. They live a life that is unusual for most of us, where they have a different morality. The environment they live is conducive to this kind of life.

On the other hand, this society tries very hard to conform with 'normal societal values'. They aspire to conform, but cannot. The whole community is involved in this type of struggle to keep up with the norms of the ideal society, to cover up their own values. This leads to very confused messages to the children living in it.

"...We don't know it's wrong, we did it for money. Now many people are doing like this & with that money, they are taking care of their children & they are leading a life".

We saw her as a victim, but now the data shows that sexuality is experienced more affirmatively, than we expected; that she often liked it, even though it was sometimes forced; that she sees these relationships as beneficial, both in terms of physical attention, as well as material: money, food and clothes.

A problem is abuse of power. Girls are often forced, threatened/ manipulated. When 2 kids of the same age decide to experiment, it's more acceptable than when an adult manipulates her into it - though she might like it.

What about a 10 year old who has sex that she considers non-threatening, not painful, not forced, in a stimulating environment, with an adult?

Generally, most of the girls seem to be able to remain positive - positive feelings towards sex, men and themselves. They seem to manage quite well, considering all they went through.

How do we make a girl aware of her right to protection, without traumatising her?

Urge is an important reason why it is difficult to stop having sex for money or do prostitution.

Ambiguity: their experiences are very complex, their feelings often unclear.

"I liked it but I was scared."

"He raped me but I liked it."

"He poured acid in my vagina - he loves me."

"I am scared of him but love him"

Double standards for men & women, which are often, clearly articulated for e.g., when talking about confidentiality, they say that this is no problem for boys, only for girls

A woman gets caught either way, if she has sex; she is called a prostitute & her chances of getting married decrease. When she doesn't want to have sex, she gets manipulated, threatened & forced into it.

Recommendations

- Try to listen to children, without being judgemental.
- Be sensitive to the fact that girls who have sex for money don't want to be called prostitutes
- Address the issue of urge, when working with girls in sex work and HIV/AIDS awareness.
- Initiate discourse on appropriate age and context of sexual initiation.
- When promoting child rights, sex education, make sure you don't make sexuality problematic in trying to protect the child.
- Health education is very important; girls have a lot of misconceptions. Network with government and NGOs to improve their knowledge of health and make health services accessible.

Interventions

Staff training

Staff training was very important, to make us feel comfortable with our own sexuality, to find a language to talk about sexuality, to create an open mind, to come to know that sex is not bad, to learn about different practices, to learn to be non-judgmental so that children would open up to us.

We saw also that as we got more comfortable, the children were giving us more detailed information. They were ready, and even waiting to talk. But we were not ready to listen.

This is one of the main accomplishments of the research. Now the girls trust us and talk freely about their most intimate problems and feelings.

Workbook

Activity book for Treatment Strategies for Abused Children, from Victim to Survivor; Cheryl L. Karp & Trice L. Butler was used with 10 girls. The book uses narratives & art as a tool to deal with self, feelings, boundaries, trauma, and becoming future oriented. We had 3 sessions with each girl.

It made them look at their positive, as well as negative sides. Made them think about how they see themselves, what they would like to change, what their boundaries are, the fact that you can set boundaries for yourself and others and how to guard them. How feelings are easier to handle when shared with a safe person, in a safe environment.

To do away with guilt feelings, and to make plans for the future, how to deal with different, disturbing situations and feelings.

A workbook like this is very intense. It needs very close contact with the girl and constant follow up, to help her evaluate situations that made her feel sad, angry, happy, confused, to listen to her when she has tried out different ways of coping and to encourage her to deal with them in a healthy way.

Arts therapies

We explored different types of arts therapies like art, dance and drama, as intervention strategies

The staff was trained in these techniques by specialists and all the therapies were used with groups of children of different localities and different ages. The children were given the option of participating. Evaluation was done through a group discussion at the end of each session.

We know that, to become more effective, we will need constant training of the staff. We'll also have to compare the effectiveness of the different methods. We want to keep using arts therapies as a tool to offer the girls an alternative form of communication to express the feelings, when words are inadequate or unavailable through drama, art, and dance.

The children enjoyed all of it

We hope to create a space in Navajeevana, where the girls can be on their own, use material, which they feel, helps them express their feelings in a constructive way.

Dance and movement

Dance is very good to release a lot of physical energy. It also diverts the mind. We are using it more as a preventive method at the moment. As we get more training we can probably start using it in a more therapeutic way.

Art

Since this was the first contact for most of us, to work freely with different materials, it took a lot of getting used to. Because of this, we stuck to the activities we had experienced ourselves. We were amazed to see how creative the children were and what they managed to make, even though they had never touched these materials before.

Drama

Even though we had just an initiation into playback theatre, we found it a very powerful tool, since it is direct. It can give immediate introspection in the feeling & the consequences of it. It can create alternatives, which come from the girls themselves or from others. It creates a dialogue, which makes starting a discussion much easier. It creates an open atmosphere where sharing is encouraged.

Life skills

We had staff training on a few main themes: self esteem communication, assertiveness, stress handling, decision-making, leadership, time management, boundaries, and feelings

This again was a starting point, for the staff, to comprehend the different life skills.

We experienced these sessions as very positive, because we had the feeling we were really teaching them something and the children had the feeling they were really learning something.

But ideally, it shouldn't be alienated; life skills are a part of daily life.

We thank

Dr Shekhar Seshadri for his guidance, for constantly reminding us about the purpose of our study;

Dr Jayashree for her patience with people who had no idea about how to start the research in the first place.

Dr. Peltó for his long distance guidance.

Manjiri, Akhila, and the rest of the team for very valuable help.

Tamara Leeuwerik for her analytical assistance.

Sr. Anna Chacko who first pushed us to it

Sr. Bridget Kavalam, the directress of Navajeevana

Mamatha, the transcriber.

Jhansi, Vimala, Viji, Ruth, Kavitha, the street educators, who worked really very hard and did an excellent job.

Finally, and most importantly, all the girls who trusted us and shared with us their stories.



Young Men's Peer Groups: Gender, Violence and Sexual Behaviour

Akhila Vasan

Foundation for Research in Health Systems

(draft – please do not cite)

Foundation for Research in Health Systems
No. 356, 1st – E Cross
6th Block, IInd Phase, Banashankari IIIrd stage
Bangalore 560 085
Email: frhs@vsnl.com

Understanding Young Men's Peer Groups and Friendship Relations

Akhila Vasan

Foundation for Research in Health Systems

Rationale for the study

The need for the present research study arose out of an earlier study that explored concepts of sexuality and sexual behavior among young men and women in the age group of 17 -24 years. This study was carried out by Foundation for Research in Health Systems in three sites- Bangalore, a large city in Karnataka; Nagar, a small town in Maharashtra; and Ahmedabad, a medium sized city in Gujarat.

In this research we found that young men's construction of sexuality and their understanding of sexual behaviors were heavily mediated by influence of peers in which all- male group activity played an extremely important role. It also identified groups as initiators of certain other behaviors like alcohol use, teasing and coerced sex. This study stressed the need to understand the organization/ composition of peer groups and the processes that mediate to influence young men's concepts of sexuality and sexual practices. This was critical not only for preventing sexual risk but also for preventing gender -related violence, exposure to pornography, alcohol use and other such group initiated behaviors.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the present study is to explore and understand:

- The nature and composition of young men's peer groups
- The interactions within and among groups and the dynamics therein
- Group mediation of young men's understanding of sexuality, gender identity and their collective influence on sexual practices, interaction with girls particularly gender- related violence.

Sample of the study

The sample of young men for the study came from four locations in the city- two colleges and the two associated hostels. Both colleges were co- educational such that it offered an opportunity to observe interaction between boys and girls. Both had a sizable proportion of students from rural areas - both commuting everyday and staying in hostels. This not only ensured that we got a sample of students from the hostel but also ensured that the colleges selected were less "cosmopolitan" and more rooted in "local culture" in terms of their student profile. The sample for the study was further restricted to BCom stream so that differences due to stream of study can be kept to a minimum. And the focus was only on 1st and 2nd year students so as to keep the age- range to a minimum.

Of the two colleges one was a government college had its own hostel for SC/ ST students. The other was a private college and had no hostel. But the out of Bangalore students were staying in charitable and community hostels. We selected one of the charitable hostels for a sample of hostel students from this college.

Description of the sites of the study

The two colleges and associated hostels were broadly similar in that they were all "non-cosmopolitan" and attracted a sizable proportion of students from out of Bangalore some of whom were daily commuters while others were staying in hostels. Neither college was known for academic excellence. But there were certain critical differences in terms of the facilities they offered, the discipline enforced and opportunities for extra- curricular development.

While the government college had better facilities like a large play ground, well-equipped sports room, a computer lab and well- maintained campus, the private college was rather run- down and had neither a sports ground nor was its sports room well-equipped. In terms of discipline too, the government college was better in that it kept track of student attendance and conducted periodic tests both of which was lacking in the private college. While the government had its students participating in many inter-college activities both in sports and cultural events, the private college did not even have a college team for any sport. The interaction between students and teachers in the government was much closer and positive as compared to the private hostel.

In contrast to the students in the government hostel, all those in the private hostel were non- SC/ ST and many of them were pursuing professional courses like medicine, engineering and law. The government and private hostels were a contrast in terms of facilities as well. The government hostel seemed much more comfortable with cots/ mattresses, attached bathrooms, coils for hot water and TV with cable connection. In the private hostel the students had to bring their own mattresses and even cutlery and had neither TV nor even a radio. They also were responsible for much of maintenance activities, including cleaning toilet and bathroom. The environment in the government hostel was fraught with a lot of politics and rivalry and many respondents complained of not having the "right atmosphere" to study. In the private hostel, students did not flout hostel rules nor were they hostile with each other. In fact they were proud of their hostel and its tradition and said they were "fortunate to have such a good atmosphere to study".

Methods of data collection

Before beginning data collection, investigators met principals / wardens of the colleges / hostels with formal letters requesting permission to conduct the study. They explained the rationale and objectives of the study as also the criteria for selecting their colleges / hostels. College and hostel managements were quite supportive to the idea. However, the private hostel insisted that the investigators' photos be attached to the permission letter.

Data was collected using three tools:

- Key Informant interviews
- Mapping

- In-depth interviews

The whole process of data collection took ten months including a gap of three- month summer vacation. During this period investigators also conducted awareness sessions in college and prepared a hand- out answering some of their queries on personal problems and distributed it among students.

Investigators explained the study to all participants and stressed on the following issues:

- ❖ Participation is entirely voluntary
- ❖ They will need to share information about peer groups and their activities
- ❖ They can drop -out of the study anytime they choose
- ❖ Those who want to enroll have the option of giving their consent either verbally or in writing.
- ❖ (For the key informants) They would have to meet with the investigator about six times during the course of the study.

Key informant interviews

Data collection began with the process of enrolling key informants for the study. A total of 19 key informants were enrolled from the four locations. Three sessions with the key informants were structured and about an hour long each. In these structured sessions KI listed different groups on campus/ hostel, described inter- group relationships and interaction and described their own group's structure and activities. They used three concentric circles to describe their group's structure, activities and interaction. They placed different members of the group in these three circles based on how close or distant they were to the group. In the innermost circle were those who formed the core of the group and with each expanding circle the members became distant.

There were many unstructured interactions with the KI to obtain an update on various events in campus/ hostel and to clarify missing information. Even though the level of involvement varied, KI provided continuity to the study, helped to build rapport with the groups and helped to capture much of the campus/hostel dynamics.

Mapping sessions

Mappings were done with 18 of the 19 groups that the KIs helped to identify. Of these 10 groups required more than one session and ranged from one to four. Each session lasted on an average about an hour and a half. At the beginning of each mapping session, the investigators gave the group a cue to begin the exercise:

"Begin from the time at least some of you meet first in the morning and start by identifying the different locations you visit and the different activities you do...."

With the help of this cue boys would begin the mapping exercise. One person took the initiative to draw locations on paper while the others gave descriptions. Mapping sessions provided a good opportunity to observe group interaction and helped to establish rapport with the group as a whole and was an opportunity to observe group interaction to get a sense of who was dominant and influential in the group and who was not. These observations were later validated and clarified with the KI and other members of the group.

In- depth interviews

Because one of the study objectives was to link individual behavior to group orientation, it was decided to select respondents from each group based on their position in the group structure. Investigators selected one respondent randomly from each of the three levels in the group structure. This way there were three respondents from each group. They interviewed a total of 60 respondents who belonged to 19 groups. While there were shortfalls from some groups in both colleges, the numbers were in excess in the two hostels.

In-depth interviews explored respondents' peer network, the types of groups they belong to, their activities with these different groups and their relative closeness to different members in their peer network. Against this backdrop of peer network, we probed their participation in certain activities that were reported in the mapping sessions. Each interview took two to four sessions. And each session lasted one and a half hours.

Types of groups

We recognized three broad types of groups among the 18 groups with whom we had done mapping exercises:

- ❖ All male violent group
- ❖ All male studious group
- ❖ Mixed gender group

These three types of groups were different in terms of their image on campus, their participation in campus activities like sports and cultural events, interaction with teachers and class behavior, interaction among the members in the group, their own group's activities and their interaction with girls.

All- male violent / tarle group

There were a total of eight groups that belonged to this category from three of the four locations. The private hostel did not have any group that belonged to this category. The total number of members in these groups ranged from seven to 15. Urban boys dominated five of the eight groups in this category. The groups in this category were known by various names such as *tarlegalu*, *teasers*, *bad boys* and *rowdies* both among students and teachers. Five of these groups were particularly known for beating up people or getting into trouble with other groups both on campus and outside.

A member from one of the groups in this category had been suspended for hitting a teacher. Describing how they deal with insults, member from another group in this category said,

If somebody insults any one of us we do not see anything. We just go and bash him up. We have had two – three big hodadatas (fights). So people do not come to our tante (do not meddle with us).

The other three were not involved in fights, but were known on campus for teasing not only students but also teachers. Hence the term, *tarlegalu*, which means trouble-

makers. Two of these groups had good relations with the violent group. Describing what they do in class, a member from one of these groups said,

She (the teacher) is always talking about equal rights for women. So we say that with 33% reservation they have taken over our pants and if they get 50% then they will get ours (penis) and we have to make do with theirs. Then everyone laughs and she has no answer.

Not surprisingly their relationship with teachers was mostly negative. They typically roamed around in the corridors or spent most of the time on campus in the sports room.

But most of these groups were active in sports like cricket, basketball and volleyball. But participation in cultural activities was not as high as that for sports. In terms of academic performance, three-fourths of the respondents from this category reported having failed the most recent examination. More than three-fourths reported drinking alcohol and around 60% of them reported smoking.

Most girls feared these groups because they were known to tease rather crudely making vulgar comments. For example, when girls refused to go for a picnic a member from one of these groups is supposed to have said,

Don't worry, we have not planned any rape scene. You can come with us.

But girls nevertheless tried to maintain civil relations because they could not afford to be in their bad books. And boys from these groups quite enjoyed such "respect" that they got from the girls and boys.

Interaction within 7 of the 8 groups in this category was quite hierarchical in that members looked up to the leader to decide on where to go and what to do. In fact when invited for the mapping session, the "leader" was very patronizing:

They are all our boys. You talk to them. They have all the information. X knows everything about our group.

There were a few core members in these groups who controlled a lot of the other's behavior, be it attending class, interacting with girls or anything else that they thought was not appropriate. One respondent reported that his friends in the group *did kindal* (made fun of him) after he broke up with his girlfriend:

They used to say, "What is the use of being a man. You cannot even patayiso (hook) one girl". I used to feel very hurt.

Another hostel respondent in reported how he and a few "soft fellows" in the group faced harassment from these friends:

When anyone from our family comes to meet us in the hostel, they stick naked poses in our rooms or throw cigarette/ beedi stubs on the floor or kept empty drinks bottle in the room, just to get us into trouble. They did that once when my father came. I had a tough time convincing him.

Many of these groups also seemed unscrupulous when it came to sharing money when they went out to drink or for movies. Five of the 8 groups reported that they "put blade" (made one person pay for everyone's expense) to a few members in the group.

They use me for their purpose. If they want to watch sex movies in my house or they want to drink, then they call me so that I pay for it. Otherwise they go on their own.

Two of them said that they do *roll call*. *Roll call* was a term used when boys extorted money from juniors or *gandhis* for their expenses. It could be for cigarettes, snacks or even alcohol.

X and Y do roll call for their expenses. They ask the juniors or soft boys and they cannot say no.

Thus we see that the groups in this category were involved in fights in and outside campus targeting both students and teachers. They actively participated in sports activities but not so in cultural events on campus. Interaction within these groups was dominated by a few core members who controlled the behaviors of others. And their relationship with girls was largely negative typically characterized by crude teasing.

All male studios and sports group

All male studios and sports group: Seven groups from three locations (there was no representation from the government hostel in this category) belonged to this category. The size of the groups ranged from five to 13 members. Of the total seven, four groups had an even mix of urban, hostel and commuting boys. One had only urban boys while the other two had only hostel boys.

These groups were known on campus to be "studious" and were popular among teachers and had good rapport with the sports instructor. More than 80% of the boys in these groups reported playing some game or the other. One of them was known as NCC group because nearly all the members were part of the National Cadet Corps (NCC). Only 30% of them reported participating in cultural events on campus. A few reported having "stage fear". The other major reason could be because these groups had much fewer non-urban boys as compared to the other two types. And some non-urban boys reported being frequently targeted by the urban boys when they participated in any cultural event. As one hostel boy reported,

They all prefer western dance and songs. And if we put up something, they pass comments and laugh. So why should we invite insult? That is why we don't do anything.

They were mostly regular to class and most of them were quiet. When they were bored, they did not pay attention but did not disturb the class.

We pay attention in problematic classes like Accounts and Costing, Management Accounting and Income Tax. We murmur among ourselves in theoretical classes. We don't disturb the class even though we are not interested.

Consequently their relationship with teachers was good.

I am regular to all the classes. Rarely, I bunk. As I am regular, studious and don't disturb the class, I have good personal relationship with lecturers.

Only 6% of those in these groups had failed. Many of them had also got a first class. Most of the boys from these groups had no interaction with girls.

There are no girls in our group. But we just talk to girls in our class. We don't go out with them or anything. Whatever it is it is only hi- bye level.

Those who interacted with girls were often selective about the girls they interacted with.

I talk only to _____ and two of her friends. We sit in the campus and chat. I go with them to 4th block. We also went to lagaan together. I had bought tickets for everyone then. We also go for a round to X bazaar.

There were no influential members in these groups and they as a unit also seemed to be rather amorphous and not as cohesive. For instance, they did not wait for each other to go to class, nor did they decide to bunk classes together. Out of seven groups, only two reported having ever gone on a picnic together while the others said that their out of campus activities were restricted to watching movies.

Mixed gender group

There were only three groups in this category and all of them were in the government college campus. All of them were urban dominated and had no hostel boys among them. Their sizes ranged from 7 to 17 and the number of girls ranged from 3 to 6. The three mixed groups in this category had many similarities in that none of them had poor academic performance, had a similar attitude to girls and enjoyed a positive image among them. All three groups were regular to class and were all noisy. Yet their relationship with teachers was positive.

But they differed in the kind of image they had on campus among students. One of the mixed -gender groups was known as the "all- rounder" group. The key informants said that most of the boys in this group were good in nearly all activities- in sports, cultural events, organized various events in college like the rajyotsava (State formation) day, college day and others. At the same time, they were not "gandhis" for they also smoked, drank and "did not spare anyone who meddled with them". In that sense this group was what the key informants described as the "ideal" type of group. They had a positive image among girls and teachers at the same time did not shy away from doing the more rebellious manly things like smoking, drinking and engaging in violent activities. In that sense from the key informants' perspective this group seemed to have straddled both these kinds of roles well.

The second mixed gender group was called *choolist*. The word *chool* in Kannada is associated with something that is "addictive" in nature. Because the boys in this group were seen to be "sticking to girls" all the time, as one KI put it, the group was called *choolist* group. That is, the boys were seen to have *chool* for girls and vice versa. And they were frequently teased on campus so much so that they avoided certain places in and outside campus like café because it was the regular hang- out of groups that teased them. This group was not particularly active in sports or cultural events on campus except for one who was in NCC.

The third mixed group was called *five- star* group because there were five girls in the group. The interaction between boys and girls differed from the *choolist* group in that their interaction did not extend beyond the campus. Even within the campus, there were certain areas that were out of bounds for the girls.

We sit together in the classroom, bench kallu (stone bench), near the throwball court and in front of the college entrance. Girls don't sit with us on the stage and they don't come with us to the sports room.

As a result and unlike the *choolist* group, they were not targets for teasing. In fact they had good relations with one violent group and they got together with them to tease girls and other boys. So this group represented something that was in- between *all- rounders* on one hand and *choolist* on the other.

Group's activities

The groups' activities themselves were broadly categorized into four categories:

- Interaction with girls
- Violence/ discipline –related activities
- Sex- related activities
- Activities outside campus

And we decided to examine themes corresponding to the first three categories of activities in greater detail.

Theme 1: Interaction with girls

One of the most important themes to emerge from the data was the nature of respondents' interaction with girls. Respondents across the three types of groups shared similar attitudes about girls but differed in their level of interest in girls and the way they overtly interacted with them but.

Attitude to girls: Conceptual dichotomies

Much of respondents' general interaction with girls including teasing was largely guided by whether the girl was from their class or other class; was from their college or other college; was a "city" girl or not; wore western clothes or Indian clothes. And these conceptual dichotomies, riddled with stereotyped notions of how a girl should be, decided who "deserved" good treatment and who did not.

X behaves like a lover with me and so I am like a lover to her. Y behaves like a dagar (sex worker) but I don't treat her badly. But I know what her level is. Our behavior depends on how the girls behave.

Respondents believed that girls in their college were "decent" as compared to girls from other colleges with whom they had contact. While girls in their college were not "*dodda figures*" (good- looking girls), they were their "well- wishers" and "advisors" who took a lot of "personal care" about them.

With girls in college, we chat on campus and go out to movies, parks, exhibitions and trips. I have gone to their homes. Before exams, we sit together to do group study on campus. X, Y and Z know everything about me. They advise me a lot on all these things.

But the other college girls were *chal- chal* (of loose morals) because they had a lot of *chool* and allowed physical touch. They were fit only for *timepass* and not someone one would want to marry.

These girls liked the fact that I came by bike. Whenever they sit on the bike they hug me. They are really chal-chal girls. If I get married to such girls, I am done. They are fit only for timepass.

Similarly respondents also had strong stereotypes notions about "city girls" that they looked only for money and cared little about everything else. Also they were bold and "cunning".

Here the girls have a criminal brain- chatrigalu (cunning). We are dadda nanna makkalu (stupid fellows). At the first instance I would say I am in the hostel. And the girls would not even sniff at me. They would not even say kya re (pay any attention) to me.

Respondent, Hostel violent group

Similarly they held that rural girls were "innocent" and one easily "impress" them by merely talking in English.

We try to attract attention of any new girl. To impress a rural girl, we talk in English. Or we talk about study matters very seriously to impress that we are intelligent.

Respondent, mixed group, urban

A respondent from a studios group felt he did not have many female friends not only because he was shy but also because he was not willing to spend money on them:

I don't have any female friends because I am shy. But, one more thing, these girls need a lot of money. I am not ready to spend money on them.

Respondent, Studios group

Teasing: Dominant mode of interaction with girls

While respondents from mixed and violent group spent a lot of time and effort in making friends with girls, those from studios groups were quite distinct by their much -subdued interest in girls.

There are no girls in our group. But we just talk to girls in our class. We don't go out with them or anything. Whatever it is it is only hi- bye level.

There are only a few girls in our class. I interact with all of them. But X is the one, who is somewhat close. Even with X, I discuss topics related to subject matters and we exchange our notes.

But respondents from both mixed and violent groups were unrelenting in their efforts in attracting girls' attention, be it in bus stops, in the bus, on campus and elsewhere.

We have bets to touch and talk to any beautiful figures (girls). If a girl is walking past, we suddenly go and say 'hi, shalini' and touch her on the shoulder and when the girl turns around we say 'sorry' and run away. Some girls abuse us calling us loafers. But we laugh at them loudly. They then just decide to keep away from us.

Whatever their level of interest in girls, a favorite entertainment for respondents from all groups was to stare at girls and pass comments about them.

Verbal teasing

Staring and passing comments on girls and boys was a major form of entertainment. Making fun of girls and boys and its timing was an art and respondents were very appreciative of those who had the gift of the gab:

X is a punter (expert) in teasing. He has got that art. He can immediately think of something to say. We really enjoy when he is with us on the stage.

Comments could be about their physical appearances particularly breasts and buttocks, about the way they dressed, the way they walked and so on. Respondents from violent groups reported being "rough" and their comments could be quite crude and ugly. And if the girl retorted or was "rash", then it could be even worse:

In the bus if a girl is very rash with us, then we tell her, "God knows which man is going to manage you. I only tried to talk. I don't know what you would have done if I had asked for it (sex)".

Once one girl got angry with X and abused him. Even after we apologized and requested her to keep quiet, she did not. We are waiting to wait to decrease her tika –ganchali (mildly put, "her arrogance"). We have not found her yet.

Respondents from the mixed group used some discretion in how they teased depending on whether the girls were "good figures" or "scrap figures". If they were "good figures", they pursued them to try and make friends with them. Or they praised their looks by saying, "She looks like Madhuri". For "scrap figures", they only passed comments on their looks and did not bother to pursue further.

Respondents from the studious groups passed comments only among themselves and ensured that the girls did not hear what they said. And usually it was something quite innocuous and even when the girls retorted they seemed to only laugh it off:

One day we saw three girls walking ahead of us and we said, "How much was the beauty parlor bill?" And the girls turned around and retorted, "Why will you reimburse me? I will take you also if you want". We just laughed and came away.

Physical teasing

Apart from verbal teasing, respondents from violent and mixed groups reported "testing girls" by falling on them in buses and touching them on some pretext or the other. Crowded buses were what most respondents reported looking forward to:

We stand in front near the girls. If there is a lot of rush, then we wait for the driver to put brake and we push around and rub against the girls. We put out hand to their buttocks, breasts and waist.

Respondents reported that there were some girls with chool who deliberately stood at the back of the bus. And these activities helped them to "test" and identify such girls:

Some girls with chool deliberately come and stand at the back near the fourth seat. We also stand next to them and test them to see how they are. Suppose she is OK, then we start tana na na....'

Most respondents reported teasing only with their friends not only because it was safer but also because it was much more "enjoyment".

I don't tease when I am alone because if they retaliate there will be no one to support me.

We tease only for our enjoyment. I don't tease when I'm alone because I can't enjoy.

While not everybody took an active part in actually teasing girls, most others "took maja out of it". There were some who "gave ideas" which others executed.

I don't tease girls. I just watch and stare at girls. Among my friends X, Y and Z tease girls. I take maja out of it.

I don't tease anybody on my own, only in the group. That too, I only give others ideas and laugh at whatever they say. I don't tease directly myself.

I never tease girls on my own. When I am with X and others I support them.

There were only two respondents who expressed distress at the way their friends or "bad boys" teased girls:

X and his friends keep teasing girls. Like slum people they whistle when any good-looking figure comes by. I don't like it when they tease so cheaply. But I don't go to advise them. It is their wish. But I try to avoid them.

We don't tease girls. This is done by ketta hudugaru (bad boys). We become cheap when we do that and lose respect from girls. We only tease these girls whom we know and that too not badly.

Of these the one from a violent group felt that he had to do certain things because he had to fit in:

When I am with A, B and C we do not shout or scream. But when I am with X, I have to do it with them. They run behind girls asking for chumma or shout so loudly that the girls get scared and run away.

Who is to be teased?

Respondents from both mixed and violent groups reported teasing girls when they felt that girls were over- shooting their limits. This could be in the way they dressed, the way they walked or the way they talked. One respondent explained why they picked on this particular girl to tease:

There is this girl who comes to the same bus stop. We tease her because she is very fast. She smiles at boys for no reason. Esto jana hudgurge chamak kottu tale kedsiddale (She has ditched a number of boys and ruined them). She shakes her Tika (buttocks) and cash (breast) when she walks. She wears mod dresses like tight jeans, tight chudi to expose her items. She doesn't care what anyone says.

If girls ignored them then again it was reason enough to target them for teasing. For example, BCom boys frequently targeted BBM girls because these girls ignored them and preferred BBM boys.

We sit behind BBM girls during the program, write vulgar things on a chit of paper and put it in their hair without their knowledge. They think they are standard and do not give us any importance because we are Bcom.

Teasing BBM girls was also a way of expressing their power against the BBM boys:

We tease BBM girls and the BBM boys get angry with us. But they have no meter (guts). We ask them to just shut up and go (muchkondu hogo ley).

If the girls realized "their mistake" and "requested" then the respondents reported that they stopped teasing:

We had named one girl bonda because she was fat and shout bonda whenever she was passing by. After a week, she and her friends came and said sorry. After that, we have decreased our teasing.

Respondents from mixed group reported that they did not tease girls when girls from their own groups were present with them. In that sense girls being with boys did act as a deterrent to teasing:

During I BCom we were not teasing girls because the girls in our group were always with us. But this year we tease all the girls - juniors, seniors, lovers, classmates, other college.

At bus stop if our friends are not there then we tease girls, stare at them, comment on their dresses.

But being with girls was also burdensome because they could not do what “enjoy” the way the other boys did. In fact after the boys in the *choolist* group distanced themselves from the girls, they almost sounded relieved:

Last year, these girls were there with us most of the times. That is why we couldn't tease other girls when we went out. But this year we don't have such a problem. All of us tease girls.

Respondents from another mixed group agreed that one should not be seen as being too close to girls. They had their masculine image to protect failing which one had to face ridicule:

*I talk to all the girls. Whatever it is it is only in class and about the subject. There is no particular girl or group of girls I talk to. Boys tease those who are close to girls. They call them *hen-sanhga* or *channapatna* (to mean eunuch). If a boy is thin, then they say, “You have melted because of their heat”.*

Even when they felt closer to girls they could not afford to show it. One respondent from a mixed group who was advised by his female friends in the group to give up his violent ways said:

When they advise I feel what they say is right. But when I am with the boys, I just cannot avoid. If I do what they say, then boys will start condemning me. I can't be the way I am now. Others will start seeing me cheaply. So all this is important in college life. Once I am out of college I can avoid all these things.

The respondents in the *choolist* group reported distancing themselves from the girls because they had missed out on a lot of fun:

This year we felt that if we get stuck to these two girls, then how could we enjoy in college. So we spend less time with them.

Last year as we were always with them we missed the other friends both boys and girls. We were not involving in any activities like sports, cultural, chatting with boys, teasing girls or watching girls.

In that sense they had departed from the norms of a male student's college life- of being with other boys, teasing and watching girls.

In conclusion, what seems to emerge is that irrespective of the type of group, respondents shared a stereotyped dichotomized understanding of gender norms. Girls who dressed, talked and walked in way that did not attract attention were “decent” girls and therefore deserved good treatment. Anyone who crossed these limits would only invite trouble. On the other hand, boys who had “meter” to talk or tease girls and “patayiso” them, who knew how to “use them” were appreciated as “all- rounders”. Those who became too close to them were either “*choolist*” or “*channapatna*” and deserved only ridicule.

While respondents from all groups subscribed to these norms, only mixed and violent groups acted out them out in their interactions with girls and that seems to be the main difference.

Theme 2: Group –mediation of sex – related activities

There were a number of groups' activities that were sexual in nature. Certain activities were more indirect in that they involved reading sex books, watching sex movies, browsing sex sites on the internet, commenting on each other's genitals, showing genitals to friends and masturbating. There were other behaviors that involved actually engaging in sexual activities with various kinds of partners- sex workers, "girls", aunties and non- sex workers. In the following sections we see how the three types of groups vary by these two categories of sexual activities.

Indirect sexual activities

Respondents from all groups reported reading sex books, watching sex movies and browsing sex sites on the internet. But there was striking difference in the way the studious groups mediated these behaviors and the violent and mixed groups mediated them. While respondents from mixed and violent groups were blasé about doing it, respondents from the studious group reported being discreet because they basically felt that it was wrong.

They (sex books) affect one's studies and lose our concentration. One can get addicted to it. Then we will start thinking only about girls and tale kedisikollutteve (spoil our heads).

A respondent from a violent group described how they read sex books:

One of us reads the sex book and there are volunteers who act it out. For example, if the fellow reads out, 'they sat next to each other and removed their clothes' two other fellows actually do it. The rest of us pass comments and laugh. If somebody asks what we were doing, we say, "we were reading the Bhagvad Gita and had organized a bhajane for that".

Similarly, respondents from violent and mixed groups reported other activities like drinking, showing genitals, passing comments on the movie and about each other's genitals and masturbation while watching sex movies while none of the respondents from the studious groups reported these activities.

Respondents from mixed and violent groups reported that drinking alcohol was a "must" before they went to watch sex movies:

Before going (to watch sex movies in theater) we always drink and go. We get a lot of maja (enjoyment) after drinking. But we are not completely out (drunk) but just for zoom (equivalent of "high").

Respondent, violent group

I take my CD player to _____'s house to watch sex movies. We also carry drinks. His house is like a mini adda. We go and spend the night there watching sex movies on the CD and drinking.

Respondent, mixed group

Passing lewd comments sometimes in very crude language was something that was common to both mixed and violent groups:

While watching, we pass comments like Kuttidde kuttiddu / Kuttu kuttu (he is just hammering, go on, hammer) or we pass comments on the samaanu ('thing' for penis), "Nan maga, katte tarad saamanu itkondavne (he has a penis like that of a donkey) or say, "Avaldu idyo illo, hardu-girdu hoyteno nodro" (Hey, see if she still has it or it is torn apart).

Respondent, violent group

There were some who stripped and masturbated when they watch sex movies.

We used to hire a VCR in a friends' house when parents were not there. And boys used to feel very free to remove their underwear and walk around. They used to get yeno kushi (some happiness). Some used to automatically come out.

Respondent, violent group in hostel

Boys keep checking on each other's size. Sometimes _____, _____ or I go hit someone's samaanu (penis) with our finger to check. Then they get bugged and strip and say, "nodi kolro" (see whatever you want).

Respondent, mixed group

Respondents from violent groups used sex books and sex movies to harass particularly *Gandhis* (English equivalent of nerd) and sometimes girls. A respondent reported how he was teased because he did not like reading sex books.

Whenever they used to get a book, they used to hold it to my face deliberately and force me to see. Or read passages from the book loudly. They used to have fun at my expense.

Direct sexual activities

None of the respondents from the studious groups reported engaging in sexual activities with any kind of partner. To questions about their or their group's involvement with sex workers or others, most respondents from the studious group were unequivocal in their denial that they or anyone else in their group had been to sex workers.

I have never visited them, as I don't like it. I have never thought of doing it. None of my friends have. I don't have any idea about them.

Some other respondents admitted that they heard other boys talk about it and their own knowledge was limited to what they heard these other boys tell them.

I have heard of chittegalu (butterflies). But I don't know any details. All these activities and I are very far apart.

While respondents from studious groups were clear that they did not want to engage in sexual activities, respondents from violent and mixed groups were not as unequivocal about it. Only those few who were planning to marry their girlfriends reported wanting to wait until after marriage.

I want to be pure till my marriage. I don't want to have sex with anybody other than my girl friend who is going to be my life partner.

I want to be fresh till I get married. I am not interested in it now. There is thrill to do it after marriage.

The respondents from mixed and violent groups viewed sexual experience as increasing their status among friends. While some were successful in having some sexual experience others were not for various reasons. Some were yet to get an opportunity, a few could not afford it. Some were scared of diseases like AIDS. There were others who feared that having sex was addictive, much in the same vein as masturbation. Some respondents reported having aase (desire) to go but could not muster enough *dhirya* (courage) for the same.

No, I have never gone to a dagar (sex worker) so far. _____ has called me many times. But I am scared.

One respondent who succumbed to his friends' "force" and mustered enough *dhirya* to use such an opportunity bitterly regretted his decision:

They asked me if I wanted to try. I agreed and went in. I removed my trousers and stood in my underwear. She was sitting on the bed. She got up and took a condom and when she tried to put it on, I out aade ("got out" or "ejaculated"). I was very tense and before I could do any kelasa (literally "work" which is often used to mean sex), I had come out. She laughed and said that it happened because I was very tense.

His sense of failure and humiliation was compounded by the fear that if his friends came to know about it, they would make fun of him.

If I had gone out immediately they would have known and teased me. So I waited for 15 minutes, kayyi bitte and talked to her. I told her not to tell the others what happened. Punyakke (mercifully), she had not said anything. I then decided never to go again.

This respondent was perhaps fortunate to escape his friends' notice. But in another case the boy was not as lucky as one respondent from a mixed group described:

You know what _____ did? He went and put it between the girls' thighs and came out. Then he was bragging to us that he did this and that. When the other fellow went in the girl said, "Look what that fellow did" and showed him the mess he had made outside. After that we teased him for the rest of the trip.

Respondents who had refused their friends' offer to go with them to sex workers reported being made fun of and victimized because it was seen as a sign of "sexual weakness".

They tease me when we are watching sex movies- "You are fit only to salivate. You cannot act". In the beginning I used to feel bad. But now I don't.

*They call me but I have never gone. They say that I don't have *dhirya* and that I am a "jataka player" and fit to do it only in the bathroom.*

Further, sexual prowess was associated with engaging in a sexual act for a long time without ejaculating. So those who did not meet this criterion were also made fun of. A key informant described how they teased one of their friends who "came out" easily:

You know what X did? He went and put it between the girls' thighs and came out. Then he was bragging to us that he did this and that. When the other fellow went in, the girl said, "look what that fellow did" and showed him the mess he had made outside.

Thus both these groups viewed sexual experience as a marker of masculinity. In the study half the respondents from violent groups (14) and nearly two - thirds of them from mixed groups (6) reported engaging in sexual activities with different kinds of partners- "girls", sex workers, older married women and "lovers". Of the total 21 respondents with any sexual experience, 16 reported penetrative sexual experiences.

Transactions with sexual partners

While there was not much difference in the way the violent and mixed groups mediated sexual behaviors per se, there was variation in the way the respondents transacted with different kinds of sexual partners. From the narratives one could identify four main types of sexual partners:

- Women and girls who did sex work and available near theaters, dhabas, bus stands and discos.
- Girls who were available for sex and who had been introduced to respondents by their friends.
- Older married women
- Girlfriends or *lovers*

The difference lay in the respondents' perception of these sexual partners, extent of group mediation, violence perpetrated against each of these partners and the type of sexual activities practiced.

	Perception	Group mediation	Sexual activities	Condom use	Violence	Alcohol
Women in sex work						
Urban well- off	Good –looking, like college girls, clean. Give a lot of <i>maja</i> .	Low. Respondent reported having only one other friend with him	Only vaginal intercourse. No touching breasts or lip kiss or “doing it hard”	Both respondents reported that the sex worker insisted on condom use	Neither reported any violence or coercion with these kinds of partners.	Consumed only for <i>zoom</i> not for getting drunk.
Rural & poor	<i>Akkaidiru, public gaadi.</i> “Carry disease”. Do not give <i>maja</i> . Do it for money	High. <i>One cannot say how many will be there. Even if we take her in the middle of the night, word spreads and at least 7- 8 people are there.</i>	<i>I do it from behind, I get them to do jataka for me, put it in their mouth. I do it in different angles.</i>	Erratic. If they had carried it with them. Sex worker had not initiated it.	<i>Couple of times, the girl became unconscious because we had planned for three but others got wind of it and we could not say no.</i>	Respondents drank and got the sex worker also drunk
Brothel- based	Treat badly if you are a first timer. But will give good service if you tip them or have contacts.	Medium. About 4-5 and not more.	All forms of penetrative sex. But each has a separate price.	Condoms are available in the <i>adda</i> and the respondents reported using them.	None reported any violence with these women.	Alcohol also available at the <i>adda</i> but have to pay for it. Usually drink outside and go.

15939
R.S.100-P03

	Perception	Group mediation	Sexual activities	Condom use	Violence	Alcohol
Girls available for sex	<i>They are not sex workers. My friends' friends. They don't do it for money. Do it for school.</i>	Get to know about these girls through friends but not more than two at a time.	Vaginal sex, caressing breast, kissing	Erratic because the girls take tablets	None. The respondents were quite considerate to them.	None.
Older women	They don't have satisfaction from their husbands. Do it for school.	None. The respondents reported not sharing these experiences with friends	Lip kiss, vaginal and oral. But no anal sex.	Do not use condoms because she has got operated.	Two respondents reported coercive sex.	None
Girlfriends						
Serious	Sex only after marriage	Many had not introduced them to their friends.	Only holding hands, hugging & kissing			
Non-serious	Tried but was not successful.	In twos.	Everything except that intercourse			

While all three groups seemed to be reading and watching pornographic material, either discreetly or openly, there seemed to be a clear divide on the issue of actually engaging in sex. While the studious groups disapproved of it, the mixed and violent groups were clearly believed that sexual experience was a marker of masculinity. Further, they measured their sexual prowess by the size of one's genitals, the duration of the sexual act and the number of sexual partners. While masturbation weakened one's capacity to have sex, engaging in intercourse enhanced one's "future capacity". These notions of sexuality coupled with their perceptions of various sexual partners had serious implications for not only safer sex practices but also for violence against women, particularly those in sex work.

Theme 3: Violence for dominance

The environment in three of the four study locations was very adversarial and charged with inter- group rivalry be it with other student groups on and outside campus, with rowdy groups outside campus or with the college/ hostel management itself. Dominant groups frequently competed with each other for girls' attention, for more resources as in the case of hostel boys and for "respect" from other students on campus. Fights erupted if boys felt that they were slighted in front of girls.

X was chosen as a class representative. He began giving show in front of girls and told them all kinds of lies about us and created a bad impression among girls about us. So we caught hold of him in the college park and thrashed him.

In some cases, threats and beatings were a way of trying to dissuade boys from making girlfriends. The other reason was related to cricket or football matches. Fights frequently broke out on the sports ground. One respondent described how one of team members got angry and broke the wicket because the umpire did not give out. In case of hostel, rivalries arose because the hostel in charge was seen as being corrupt and "having bought" a group of students. The other main reason for fights was what respondents reported to be "insults". A member from a first year group described what an "insult" from a II year group led to.

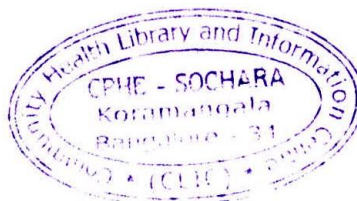
X from our group once went to play. But Y in Z's group insulted him and did not allow him to play. We went again and asked him, he called us 'sadenan makkala' (rotten fellows). We got angry and hit Y. We would have hit him more but by then the principal came and we ran away to the canteen.

Such "insults" resulted in more or less permanent enmity and groups baited each other by teasing and insulting, which led to more fights. It was difficult to define "insult". It could be something verbal, just the way one looked or the way one blew smoke out of one's cigarette. Those not aligned with any dominant group had to watch their behavior so as not to cross these limits. One such respondent reported being roughed up twice for what he believed was non-offensive behavior.

I was standing near the canteen and smoking. I was only looking at one fellow across and blowing out smoke. He took offense and came and hit me. Then SS who was there came and helped me out.

In the above narrative, KV and SS were leaders of the dominant groups who came to the respondent's support. What this perhaps illustrates is that both boys and girls had to manipulate their relations with the various dominant groups on campus and hostel so to buy one's "protection" against teasing, harassment and violence, which seemed to be the main function of these groups. For those seeking "protection", it was frequently a trade- off between "protection" that such a group provided and their individual preferences, be it academic achievements or good relations with girls. One such respondent said,

The first year I had a lot of josh to be with them because that way I had a lot of respect and others would be scared of me. The effect of being with them was seen in my results. But this year I have restricted my contact with them to the campus. But I cannot



altogether stop talking to them. They keep calling me to go with them outside but I give some excuse and escape.

Even if one did not belong to a group that could afford such protection, one had to ensure that one had good relations with such groups.

Political contact and respondents' participation in violence

One reason for such an antagonistic atmosphere in the campus could be that some respondents from the violent groups also had political contacts, which helped these groups to maintain dominance.

We can feel the influence of political leaders in the college also. There is an old student called X who has a lot of political support and he backs Y which is why he has so much meter (could mean leverage or power or guts).

Of the total 16 respondents who reported engaging in physical violence, 14 reported having political contacts while of the 44 who did not report engaging in violence only nine reported political contacts. Respondents' narratives indicate that political leaders frequently used young men in campuses and hostels to mobilize large groups of them to engage in either violent activities or to add numbers in political rallies:

When I was in the hostel, they used to come and take a large gang of boys and we used to go and give awaaz or beat up people. But we would never know what the problem was, who we were beating up or why we were doing that. Our job was only to follow what they said. Gumpalli jai jai annodu (be part of the group).

Apart from engaging in violent activities some respondents also reported campaigning for certain candidates during elections:

During the last MLA election A, B and I had gone with C to canvas for a contestant. We arranged for autos (for publicity), distributed pamphlets, tied banners and gave proxy votes. In return we got good food, drinks and money.

One respondent was on the regular rolls of a local corporator and led a "gang" of local young men for what he called "dealings" which in this case was a form of extortion. He reported collecting money from illegal petty shop owners and pavement vendors:

We can make compru or go and beat up somebody. The dealings may be between petty shop owners on footpath. Sometimes there is a fight for footpath space. And we get them into a compru and ask them to pay. But whatever happens we must report to X, our boss.

These contacts with local politicians emboldened them to engage not only in violence:

We help them in getting forgery votes. In return we get money, food, drinks, and political support. Later if we are involved in any kireek (a situation usually involving violence), we can get their help.

Without political support, those engaging in violence were very vulnerable as one respondent found out:

He was involved in some galate with fellows from X (an area in the city) and they are asking him 5000 rupees to become compru. But he has not yet paid. That is why he is on the run. If he does not pay up they will come in search of him.

This respondent approached some of his friends' friends who had political contacts and through their intervention, he was able to effect a *compru* (shortened version of the English "compromise") for only Rs.1000. If the respondents used political support for freebies and pull strings in times of trouble, the political leaders also needed the respondents' muscle power to manage their affairs:

The councilor has a finance network. He gives and collects loan on a daily basis. And he needs people like me to go and collect money.

Respondents who did not engage in violence also had political contacts. They reported worked for them during elections but not for beating up people. But they viewed these contacts as a useful investment for long- term benefits and were not so keen on the immediate rewards of food, money and liquor.

Summary

The environment in two colleges and a hostel was confrontationist and fraught with inter- group rivalry where various groups frequently clashed physically and baited each other verbally for dominance and power.

Among the three types of groups, the ones that seemed to be at the fore- front of this struggle for dominance were the mixed and violent groups. The studious groups expressed neither interest nor inclination to be part of this struggle.

And one's success in this struggle seemed to be determined essentially by the extent to which they could act out their notion of being "masculine". There were many dimensions to their notion of masculinity. One of them was negotiating their interaction with girls. They had to aggressively try and make friends with girls because girls were a status symbol. And this is where the violent groups lost out to the mixed groups because the latter had been able to build a positive image among the girls. And this was a one irritant, which led these two types of groups to clash. While having a positive image among girls was important one could not afford to align one's group with the girls. One's primary allegiance was to one's male peers. Else the groups risked being ridiculed as *channapatna* or *choolist*. They also had to demonstrate their art of baiting girls because that also required *meter* (guts). The other dimension of masculinity was their sexual experience and prowess. Reading sex books, watching sex movies and sex sites was passé and one had to progress to more "manly" pursuits of engaging in sexual activities with multiple partners. Added to this, if groups could actually engage in physical violence and bring in outside political influence, then their dominance seemed complete.