

Research Article

Awareness on Sexual Abuse among Adolescents in Baglung District of Nepal

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Abstract

Sexual abuse is a pervasive public health problem that affects all directly or indirectly causing many short- and long-term struggles for victims, families, communities and the whole social system. Although sexual abuse is growing as a major problem in community, especially among the adolescents the trend and facts have not been explored adequately. Therefore, a descriptive study entitled "Awareness on Sexual Abuse among Adolescents" was carried out among 114 students of grade 9 and 10 in Tribhuvan Secondary School at Baglung Municipality. Census method was adopted and self-administered structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Data was analyzed using SPSS Version 16. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. The findings revealed, almost 51 percent had low level of awareness on sexual abuse, and prevalence rate of sexual abuse was 18.4 percent. Out of 114 respondents, 38.6 percent were of age 14 years and 66.7 percent of the respondents were studying in grade 10. The highest proportion 38.6 percent were Brahmin and 71.0 percent got information about sexual abuse from their teachers. More than half (59.6%) respondents define try to rape as a sexual abuse. There was significant association between education of respondents with awareness on sexual abuse. It is concluded that the awareness on sexual abuse is low among adolescents therefore there is need of awareness program and education to adolescents in the school and community for improving their knowledge as well as to make them aware of sexual abuse.

Key words: *Abuse, adolescent, awareness, prevalence, sexual abuse awareness, sexual abuse*

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Introduction

Child sexual abuse is the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally

prepared and cannot give consent, or that violates the laws or social taboos of society. Child sexual abuse is evidenced by this activity between a child and an adult or another child who by age or development is in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power, the activity being intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person. WHO (World Health Organization) state that that female sex, unaccompanied children, children in foster care, adopted children, stepchildren, physically or mentally handicapped children, history of past abuse, poverty, war/armed conflict, psychological or cognitive vulnerability, single parent homes/broken homes, social isolation, parent(s) with mental illness, or alcohol or drug dependency are the risk factor for the victim of sexual abuse" (WHO, 1996).

Child sexual abuse is a global problem with serious life-long consequences. International studies reveal that a quarter of all adults' report have been physically abused as children and 1 in 5 women and 1 in 13 men report having been sexually abused as a child (WHO, 2016). There is very little knowledge about sexual abuse among adolescents. Adolescents get information about sexual abuse from school, mass media, friends and parents (Fouche, 2015). Adolescents are not so aware about sexual abuse and whoever are aware; many know about the harassment only after they have been into those situations (Desouky & Marawan, 2013).

High school students with 11 to 20 years responded that they experienced physical abuse where aggressors were neighbors, strangers and relatives (Lucatero, Hernandez, Guerrero & Vasquez, 2009). Different literature revealed that sexual abuse is one of the sensitive and growing problems of children especially of adolescents. In majority of the cases perpetrators are relatives and known person which might be difficult to recognize the victims that they are going to be abused. Impact of sexual abuse are unpredictable as suicidal thought is the effect of sexual abuse. Many study revealed that the level of knowledge/awareness about sexual abuse among adolescents was not good. Therefore, it is a necessary to assess awareness on sexual abuse among adolescents.

Data and Methods

A descriptive cross-sectional research design was conducted to assess the level of awareness on sexual abuse among adolescents. The study was done in Tribhuvan Secondary School, Baglung

ward no 13 which is 15 kilometers northwest from Baglung city. Convenience Sampling was done to choose this school for the study. This is one of the oldest and well-known government school of Baglung established in 2007 B.S. Most of the adolescents in that area were enrolled in this school so; this school was selected for the study. The total adolescents who study in grade 9 and 10 were taken for the study. Total number of students in grade 9&10 were 114 students. Complete enumeration was technique was used and all adolescents were enrolled in the study.

Total population of the school is 450. The population of the study was the adolescents who study in grade 9 and 10. All 114 students were enrolled in the study. A self-administered questionnaire schedule was developed to collect data on the basis of objectives of the study. It consists of two parts with total 24 questions. Part I consists of questions related to demographic information of the respondents and Part II consists of questions related to awareness on sexual abuse along with 5 questions regarding the experience of sexual abuse.

Tool was finalized on the basis of objectives of the study. Content validity of the tool was ascertained by consultation with colleagues, research advisors, faculties and subject experts. Pretesting of the tool was done in school children similar in setting to assess the clarity, feasibility and appropriateness of tool among 12 (10% of the sample) students of class 9 and 10 (6 from each class) in Shree Nava Prabhat Secondary School, Pokhara. Necessary modification was done after pretesting in order to ascertain the relevancy, consistency and completeness of instrument.

Data was collected after getting approval from T.U. I.O.M. Pokhara Campus and formal permission from Tribhuvan Secondary School. The objectives of the study were clearly stated and explained to each respondent. They were clearly explained about their voluntary participation in the study and they were free to refuse to participate in research. Informed verbal consent was taken from the respondents. Then self-administered questionnaire were distributed to the respondents that were collected on the same day by the researcher herself. Time duration for each respondent was 15-20 minutes. Data was collected from 2074/02/21-2074/03/02. Confidentiality was assured by not disclosing the information given by respondents and it was explained to them.

Data was arranged and tabulated in computer to present the findings and was analyzed and interpreted by employing both descriptive (frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistical method (Chi-square test). The level of significance was set as 5% with p value <0.05 and 95% confidence interval. Regarding knowledge, each of the correct answer was given the weightage score 1. The level of awareness was calculated by using mean value of total awareness. The level of awareness was categorized in low level, average level and high level awareness (Jasmine & Hamed, 2016).

Results and Discussion

Table 1

Respondents Classified According to Selected Background Characteristics

Characteristics	Number	Percentage
Age (in years)		
13	13	11.4
14	44	38.6
15	32	28.1
16	25	21.9
Mean \pm SD	14.60 \pm 0.95	
Gender		
Male	52	45.6
Female	62	54.4
Current grade of class		
Grade 9	38	33.3
Grade 10	76	66.7
Ethnicity		
Brahmin	44	38.6
Chhetri	19	16.7
Janajati	08	7.0
Dalit	43	37.7
Family Type		
Monogamous	107	93.9
Polygamous	05	4.4
Single parents	02	1.8
Father's Education		
Illiterate	09	7.9
Can read and write	23	20.2
Primary level	15	13.1
Secondary level	35	30.7
Higher education	32	28.1
Mother's education		

Illiterate	15	13.2
Can read and write	22	19.2
Primary level	24	21.1
Secondary level	41	36.0
Higher education	12	10.5
Source*		
Teacher	81	71.1
Parents	26	22.8
Other family member	19	16.7
Friends	30	26.3
Mass media	73	64.0

Note: *multiple responses

Source: Field survey 2074

Table 1 shows that 44.0 percent of the respondents belonged to age 14 years and the mean age was 14.6 years. Almost 55.0 percent of respondents were female with 38.6 percent of respondents belonged to age group 14. The mean age was 14.60 years (standard deviation \pm 0.95years) and 66.7 percent of the respondents were of grade 10. The highest proportions 38.6 percent of the respondents were Brahmin and most (93.9%) of the respondents belonged to monogamous family. The study showed that 30.7 percent of the respondents' fathers' and 36.0 percent of the respondents' mothers' education was secondary level. From teacher 71.1 percent of respondents got information about sexual abuse.

Table 2

Awareness on Sexual Abuse among Respondents

Characteristics	Number	Percentage
Meaning of sexual abuse*		
Shown pornographic materials	39	34.2
Touch or catch others, private body parts	43	37.7
Try to see naked/ private parts	46	40.4
Use of vulgar words	48	42.1
Rape	62	54.4
Expose own private part by perpetrator	63	53.3
Try to rape	68	59.6
Knowledge about law		
Perpetrator should be punish	112	98.2
There is law against sexual abuse	76	66.7
Victim of sexual abuse		
Children	02	1.8
Preteens	07	6.1
Adolescents	93	81.6

Youth	12	10.5
Gender of victim		
Boys only	01	0.9
Girls only	28	24.5
Both boys and girls	85	74.6
Place of sexual abuse*		
School	10	8.8
Home	15	13.2
Work place	42	36.8
Public place	93	81.6

*Multiple response

Source: Field survey 2074

Table 2 reveals that 59.9 percent of the respondents defined sexual abuse as try to rape. It was found that 66.7 percent were known about the law against sexual abuse in Nepal and most (98.2%) of respondents stated that the perpetrator should be punished. Regarding the knowledge about the victim of sexual abuse 81.6 percent respondents answered as adolescents where 74.6 percent mentioned both boys and girls can be the victim of sexual abuse. Eighty one percent of respondents indicated public place as a place for sexual abuse.

Table3

Awareness on Consequences and Approach to Stop Sexual Abuse

Characteristics	Number	Percentage
Reason behind sexual abuse *		
Overcrowded households	06	5.3
Thinking lowly of own self	11	9.6
Living with single parents	12	10.5
No friend support	14	12.3
Living with step parents	22	19.3
Parents don't talk about sexual abuse	35	30.7
No sexual education	44	38.6
Pressure from friends	45	39.5
Dress up	48	42.1
Bad family relationship	55	48.2
No discipline in home	55	48.2
Drinking a lot of alcohol	70	61.4
Taking drugs	93	81.6
Consequences of sexual abuse *		
Eating disorder	19	16.7

Sleeping disorder	21	18.4
Depression	30	26.3
Anxiety	62	54.4
Phobia	73	64.0
Suicidal thoughts	84	73.7
Best approach for sharing information*		
Information pamphlets	24	21.1
Showing documentary	44	38.6
Education	63	55.3
Website information	69	60.5
Best approach for stop sexual abuse *		
Education	47	41.2
Awareness program	71	62.3
Strong law	77	67.5

Note: *Multiple response

Source: Field survey 2074

Table 3 shows that total 81.6 percent respondents stated that the using drugs can cause sexual abuse and 73.7 percent mentioned suicidal thought as a consequence of sexual abuse. Sixty percent indicated that website is the best way to share information and 67.5 percent of respondents mentioned strong law is the best approach to stop sexual abuse.

Table 4

Respondent's Experience of Sexual Abuse

(n = 21)

Characteristics	Number	Percentage
Types of abuse faced*		
Try to see naked/private parts	01	4.8
Touch or catch other body parts	03	14.3
Perpetrator expose own private part	04	19.0
Try to rape	04	19.0
Shown pornographic materials	05	23.8
Use of vulgar words	14	66.7
Frequency of event		
Rarely	01	4.8
Frequently	04	19.0
Only once	16	76.2
Perpetrator		
Teacher	01	4.8
Relatives	02	9.5
Stranger	04	19.0
Friends	05	23.8
Lover	09	42.9

Sex of perpetrator		
Female	10	47.6
Male	11	52.4

Note: *Multiple response

Source: Field survey 2074

Table 4 shows that among 114 respondents, total of 21 adolescents were exposed to sexual abuse. Among them 66.7 percent of respondents experienced the use of vulgar word as a sexual abuse and 76.2 percent experience for only one time. Forty three percent of perpetrators were lover among whom 52.4 percent were male.

Table 5

Level of Awareness on Sexual Abuse

(n = 114)

Level of Awareness	Number	Percentage
Low level	58	50.9
Average level	06	05.3
High level	50	43.9

Note: The level of awareness was calculated by using mean value of total awareness (Jasmine & Hamed, 2016). The minimum score of awareness is 12 and maximum score is 40. Mean value is 21.94 and Std. Deviation \pm 5.525.

Source: Field survey 2074

Table 6

Association Between Level of Awareness on Sexual Abuse With Selected Variables (n=114)

Variables	Level of Awareness		χ^2	(df)	p-value
	High level n (%)	Low level n (%)			
Age(in years)					
13-14	27(47.4)	30(52.6)	0.140	1	0.708
15-16	29(50.9)	28(49.1)			
Gender					
Male	25(47.2)	28(52.8)	0.151	1	0.697
Female	31(50.8)	30(49.2)			
Education					
Class 9	13(23.2)	25(43.1)	5.052	1	0.024
Class10	43(76.8)	33(56.9)			
Past experience					
Yes	13(61.9)	8(38.1)	1.683	1	0.195
No	43(46.2)	50(53.8)			
Father's education					
Illiterate	14(43.8)	18(56.3)	0.514	1	0.473
Literate	42(51.2)	40(48.8)			

Mother's education					
Illiterate	18(48.6)	19(51.4)	0.005	1	0.94
Literate	38(49.4)	39(50.6)			

Source: Field survey 2074

Table 6 shows, there is significant association between the education of respondents with awareness ($p < 0.05$) but it is revealed that there is no significant association between level of awareness on sexual abuse with age, gender, past experience and parents' education.

Discussion

The present study showed 54.4 percent of respondents were female with 38.6 percent of respondents belonged to age group 14. The mean age was 14.60 years (standard deviation \pm 0.95 years) and 66.7 percent of the respondents were of grade 10. The highest proportions 38.6 percent of the respondents were Brahmin and most (93.9%) of the respondents belonged to monogamous family. The study showed that 30.7 percent of the respondents' fathers' and 36.0 percent of the respondents' mothers' education was secondary level. This study revealed that the major sources of information on sexual abuse were teachers in 71.1 percent of respondents which is consistent to the findings of previous the study (Nlewem & Amodu, 2016; Fouche, 2015).

In the present study, high level of awareness was seen in 43.9 percent, average level awareness in 5.2 percent and low-level awareness in 50.9 percent. The level of awareness score is dissimilar to the findings of a previous study where good knowledge seen in 27 percent average knowledge in 62 percent and 11 percent with poor knowledge (Anusha et al., 2015).

In this study 59.6 percent of the respondents defined sexual abuse as try to rape and 54.4 percent of them perceived sexual abuse as an expose of private part by perpetrator. This response is similar to the study done in Abia State Nigeria (Nlewem & Amodu, 2016).

The study mentioned that 66.7 percent were known about the law against sexual abuse in Nepal and most (98.2%) of respondents stated that the perpetrator should be punished which is consistent to another study done at Chennai (Joshe, 2015).

Regarding the knowledge about the victim of sexual abuse 81.6 percent respondents answered as adolescents which is supported by a study conducted at rural area of the Northern Cape (Fouche, 2015) while 74.6 percent mentioned both boys and girls can be the victim of sexual abuse which

is similar to the study revealing that girls are not only victim of sexual abuse (Dzimadzi & Klopper, 2007).

Eighty-one percentage of respondents indicated public place as a place for sexual abuse this finding is consistence to the study of Menoufiya University (Desouky & Marawan, 2013) and inconsistent to study where the higher number of respondents responded home as a place of sexual abuse (Jasmid & Hameed, 2016). Regarding the reason behind sexual abuse 81.6 percent stated the use of drug which is consistent to the study conducted at rural area of Northern Cape (Fouche, 2015).

Present study revealed that 73.7 percent mentioned suicidal thought as a consequence of sexual abuse which is inconsistence to the finding of study done at Minnisota University showing anxiety (Muse, 2013). Sixty percent respondents indicated that website is the best way to share information and 67.5 percent mentioned strong law is the best approach to stop sexual abuse. This finding is the similar to the study done in rural area of Northern Cape (Fouche, 2015).

In concerning the prevalence of sexual abuse was 18.42 percent which is consistent to the previous research study (Lucatero, et al., 2009; Joshe, 2015). In this study 66.7 percent respondents experienced the use of vulgar word, faced the exposure of pornographic materials which is consistence to the study done at Tirunelveli district (Pavithra & Relton, 2017).

Present study mentioned that 76.2 percent experienced sexual abuse for only one time which is similar to the study with finding the length of the time of sexual abuse lasted were one time only (Lucatero, et al., 2009). The study showed 42.9 percent of perpetrator were lover and the 52.4 percent of perpetrator were male which is consistence to another study done by Dzimadzi & Klopper, (2007).

There is significant association between the education of respondents with awareness on sexual abuse ($p < 0.05$) but not with age, gender, past experience and parent education. This finding is inconsistent to the study done at Punjab (Kaur, 2017). There is no significant association between level of awareness among experienced and non-experienced respondents which is similar to another study (Dzimadzi & Klopper, 2007).

Conclusion

The study concluded that half of the respondents have low level of awareness on sexual abuse and there is significant association between the education of respondents with awareness. On the basis of finding on awareness level it is needed to provide awareness program to respondents regarding sexual abuse.

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