

## NEPALI MIGRANT LABOURERS ARE HIGHLY EXPOSED TO UNSAFE SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR

Ghimire Madhusudan<sup>1</sup>, Singh Anand Pratap<sup>2</sup>, Ghimire Moushami<sup>3</sup>

### ABSTRACT

**INTRODUCTION:** Unsafe sexual behavior between two partners may lead to incidence of STDs/HIV/ AIDS and can create serious problems in society. Both biological and behavioural variables are playing significant role to determine sexual activities of humans and result may end the probability that infection will occur after unsafe sexual contact between a susceptible and infected partner.

**OBJECTIVES:** To study high risk sexual behaviour among the Nepali migrant labourers in India.

**METHODS:** A cross-sectional survey of 240 Nepali migrant labourers temporarily residing in India was carried out. A brief interview schedule was used to collect information.

**RESULTS:** Most of the Nepali migrant workers (below 30 years) were involved in high risk sexual behaviour. 74.58 percent were exposure to unsafe physical relation.

**CONCLUSION:** Migrants labourers below 30 years with no formal education were involved in high risk behaviour and they could be exposed to STDs/HIV/AIDS.

**KEYWORDS:** Age, India, Nepali migrant labourers, Pornographic events, sexual behaviour

1. Dr. Madhusudan Ghimire, Asst.prof. Community Medicine Department, LMC Palpa.
2. Dr. A.P. Singh, Asso. Prof. Community Medicine Department, LMC Palpa.
3. Mrs. Moushami Ghimire, Lecturer, Community Medicine Department, LMC Palpa.

### For Correspondance:

Dr. Madhusudan Ghimire  
Assistant Professor  
Community Medicine Department  
LMC Palpa  
E-mail: lmcpalpa@gmail.com

## INTRODUCTION

Sex has many dimensions. It is the means of procreation; but can also be used to express the emotional side of love and friendship, just as a material gift would do. Sex and material gifts can therefore be exchanged in a non-commercial transaction when they have the same emotional values. The exchange can occur in both marital and non-marital sexual negotiations because it is inherent in them. This raises a serious question when considering the dividing lines between commercial and affectional sex. In the former, sex is commoditized, sold and bought: there is a fixed or negotiated price attached to the sexual act. In the latter, sex is meant to express the emotional sides of love and friendship; it is determined by religious, cultural and procreational morality. Affectional sex is thus linked to both the individual character and the societal moral attributes. This two categories are not mutually exclusive, and they both involve the circulation of material objects in their negotiations. In the context of Nepal, most of illiterate people with low socioeconomic status are working as labourer in different parts of India. Most of the

migrant labourer are unaware about healthy sexual behavior and may involve in unsafe sexual activities. These all activities of migrants may lead to them for getting STD/HIV/AIDS. 200,000 Nepali sex workers are in India.<sup>1</sup> Nepal's HIV epidemic figure also shows that number of sex workers who migrate or are trafficked to Mumbai, India to work, thereby increasing HIV prevalence in the sex workers' network in Nepal.<sup>2</sup>

## Material and Method

Cross sectional analytical study design was applied among the 240 Nepali migrant labourers who were working temporally in different parts (Allahabad, Varanasi, Hariyana and Delhi) of India. Respondents were selected through simple random process. Information was collected through pre tested interview schedule, key informant and focus group discussion. The detail information about study was provided to the respondents and tried to fulfill their enquiries. Anonymity of all participants was maintained and, saved their wishes and expression. Information was analyzed through SPSS Microsoft process.

## RESULTS

### 1. Demographic profile of respondents

Education		Frequency	Percent
Education	Illiterate	63	26.2
	Primary	93	38.8
	Lower secondary	64	26.7
	S.L.C.	20	8.3
Age	Below 20 years	10	4.2
	20 to 30 years	164	68.3
	31 to 40 years	51	21.2
	Above 40 years	15	6.2
Marital Status	Married	132	55.0
	Non-married	108	45.0

### 2. Exposure to physical relation with condom use

Exposure to physical relation		No. of labourer	Percent
Exposure to physical relation	Yes	179	74.58
	No	61	25.42
Condom used during last physical relation (N=179)	Yes	99	55.03
	No	80	44.97

## 3. Cross tabulation between Age and education level of the migrant laborer and Exposure to pornographic movies

1. Age of the responds	Exposure to pornographic movies		Total
	yes	No	
Below 20 years	7	3	10
20 to 30 years	148	16	164
31 to 40 years	44	7	51
Above 40 years	13	2	15
Pearson Chi-Square 0.252, df=3			
2. Education of the respondents			
illiterate	58	5	63
primary	81	12	93
lower secondary	55	9	64
S.L.C.	18	2	20
Pearson Chi-Square 0.706, df= 3			

**DISCUSSION**

Sexual behavior is related to sex and sex perception of people. It is influenced by culture, social structure, age, sex, education, sexual knowledge, attitude and nature of every individual. Some sexual behaviors are classified as high risk behavior and lead to increase risk of sexually transmitted diseases.<sup>6</sup> Education can play major role for inducing healthy practices which may help to promote safe sexual behavior. Adolescents' education level even within the same socio-economic class is a key determinant of their own reproductive health. Social, economical and political disruptions often involve simultaneous sudden increase in the number of migration and prostitutes.<sup>7</sup> The study found that 26.2% of total respondents were illiterate and 38.8% migrant labourers were able to read and write but they could not have sufficient knowledge regarding sexual behaviour. 45 % unmarried migrants were fall in high risk sexual behavior. A joint study conducted by Harvard school of public health in kalilali district of Nepal stated that sexually transmitted infection among the women in migrant communities was high. Age, marital status and migration status of their husbands were more associated to high risk sexual activities and sexually transmitted infections<sup>1</sup>. The study revealed that maximum of total study population

were exposure to pornographic movies so it could lead to involve into unsafe physical relation. A similar study conducted in Malawi stated that 95.5 percent of 163 migrant were involved in friendship non- commercial sexual contact and they had multi-partnered sexual behaviour<sup>4</sup>. 51.5 percent of them had more than five regular sexual partners and involved in unsafe sex<sup>3</sup>. The study agreed that age of the respondents was associated (Pearson Chi-Square 0.252, df=3) with exposure to pornographic movies but not observable relation between educational status of migrants labourer with pornographic movies. On the observation of behavioural factors of the respondents the study stated that most of them were at high risk of getting unsafe sex and 44.97 percent of total exposure migrants could not use condom to their last physical relation but 82 percent of total migrated truck drivers in Thailand were involved unsafe commercial sexual relation<sup>5</sup>.

**CONCLUSION**

Migrants below 30 years with no education as well as low education were exposed to high risk sexual behavior. Age of the migrant was significantly observable on exposure to pornographic movies.

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