

# Prevalence of Child Sexual Abuse among Public School Students in Janakpur, Nepal

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## ABSTRACT

**Background :** Child Sexual Abuse is any kind of sexual contact with a child under the age of 18. Sexual abuse can be physical or non-physical. Sexual abuse is one of the commonest and serious public issue affecting millions of people each year over the world. One in every five children around the world is suspected of suffering from sexual abuse. Child Sexual abuse has negative physical as well as psychological impact and persists over time to majority. This study aimed to identify the prevalence of Child Sexual Abuse among public academy scholars in Janakpur.

**Methods:** A descriptive cross-sectional study design was used to assess prevalence of Child sexual abuse among 213 academy scholars of Janakpur. Complete enumeration method was used to achieve required sample size.

A semi-structured self-administered questionnaire was used for data collection. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to dissect data; chi-square test was used to find out association between child sexual abuse and socio-demographic variables.

**Results:** Nearly one-fourth (24.4%) of respondents had endured Child Sexual Abuse, among them half of the respondents (50%) experienced Child Sexual Abuse in public places. Likewise, 48% of the respondents revealed about the offence with their friend circle (72%). Nearly half of the respondents felt scared (42.3%) as immediate effect and further than half of the respondents endured anxiety (59.6%) as a late effect of Child Sexual Abuse. There was association of Child sexual abuse with age, gender, grade of children and exposure to media.

**Conclusion:** The study concluded that child sexual abuse is one of the commonest offences among adolescent girls. Nearly one-fourth of respondents endured child sexual abuse in their life.

**Keywords:** Adolescents, Child Sexual Abuse, Public schools

## INTRODUCTION

Children around the world are suffering from several kinds of rights violation and abuses. One of the major violence and abuse that children are facing is Child Sexual Abuse (CSA).<sup>1</sup> Child sexual abuse (CSA) is defined as “the involvement of a child in sexual exertion that he or she doesn’t completely comprehend, is unfit to give informed concurrence to, or for which the child isn’t developmentally set and cannot give concurrence, or that violates the laws or social taboos of society”. Child Sexual Abuse is a most cruel and woeful circumstance and a serious violation of a child’s rights to health and protection.<sup>2</sup>

Child Sexual Abuse means any kind of sexual contact with a child under the age of 18.<sup>3</sup> Sexual abuses is one of the common and serious public health problem affecting millions of people each time each over the world. One in every five children around the world is suspected of suffering from sexual abuse. Also, one in every four girls and one in every six boys are set up to be sexually abused. But it’s the least proved form of violence, only one in 10 incidents is reported.<sup>1,4</sup>

Sexual abuse can be physical or non-physical. Child Sexual Abuse has been taking place in all corridor of Nepal and that it’s wide in families, neighborhoods,

seminaries, thoroughfares, workplaces, children's homes and so on.<sup>9</sup> Children spend utmost of the time in their academy. They can learn and develop own belief, value, vision from the information entered and the conditioning they get involved in the academy.

Child Sexual abuse has negative psychological impact and persists over time frequently to majority. Womanish grown-ups with history of child sexual abuse are doubly likely to essay self-murder than non- abused.<sup>13</sup>

Though several studies have explored the burden of abuse in children and its consequences, prevalence studies are spare from low- income and middle- income countries.<sup>16</sup> This gap in literature is particularly acute in Nepal where there are only a many studies on physical and sexual abuse in children. This study aimed to identify the frequency of Child Sexual Abuse among academy children of Janakpurdham.

## METHODOLOGY

A descriptive cross- sectional study was conducted to identify prevalence of Child Sexual Abuse among 213 secondary academy scholars in Janakpurdham. All secondary academy scholars, 12- 18 years studying in grade 8, 9 and 10 who gave assent were enrolled in the study. Two government schools of Janakpurdham were named by lottery system. Complete enumeration fashion was used to select respondents. A self- developed, self-administered questionnaire was used to collect information of the respondents. Research instrument consists of 2 corridor, part I consists of socio- demographic characteristics of children whereas part II consists of questions related to child sexual abuse like knowledge and source of information about child sexual abuse, forms of sexual abuse, frequency of sexual abuse, places of sexual abuse, perpetrators of sexual abuse, and immediate effects after sexual abuse and disclosure of sexual abuse.

Content validity of the instrument was established by seeking the opinion of experts in the affiliated field. Reliability of the exploration instrument was measured by using Cronbach's alpha. Pre-testing of the instrument was done in 10% of the calculated sample size (i.e. 22 respondents) before data collection.

Data was collected using exploration tool after carrying verbal as well as written concurrence from

parents of each pupil and assent was attained from each pupil. Data was collected from 2024 01-25 to 2024-02-10.

Ethical principles were followed throughout the study. The ethical approval was attained from Nepal Health Research Council (Ref no. 785). Data were anatomized in SPSS using descriptive and inferential statistic. Descriptive statistics was used to describe data, exercising chance, mean and standard deviation as applicable. Chi-square test (Pearson's chi-square) was performed to identify the association between Child Sexual Abuse and socio-demographic variables.

## RESULTS

As depicted in Table 1, more than half (62%) of the participants were age 12-15 years, almost half were female (52.6%). Likewise, more than half (62.9) were from joint family and more than one-third (38%) had family income < 20,000 per month. Moreover, the majority (87.8%) follows the Hindu religion.

Table 2 revealed that almost half (52.6%) of participants answered that Child Sexual Abuse is to force to watch or show genital organs. Almost half (50.2%) of the participants heard about Child Sexual Abuse from TV/Radio. Less than one third (12.7%) of participants answered parents as their source of information, among which (12.7%) answered mother as the main source.

Table 3 depicts that almost one-fourth (24.4%) of participants had experienced Child Sexual Abuse. Half of the participants (50%) experienced Child Sexual Abuse in public places.

Table 4 revealed that less than half (48%) of the participants disclosed their experience of Child Sexual Abuse with their friends (72%). Less than half (42.4%) of the participants reported feeling of scared as the immediate effects and anxiety (59.6%) as a late effect of child sexual abuse.

Table 5 revealed that almost half (51.9%) of the predators were male, more than half (63.4%) of the predators were strangers, and some (1.9%) were parents and siblings.

Table 6 depicts that there is an association of child sexual abuse with age, gender, grade of children and exposure to media.

**Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of participants**

**n=213**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Frequency (N)</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
<b>Age (completed years)</b>	12-15	132	62
	16-18	81	38
<b>Mean±SD (14.99±1.48)</b>			
<b>Gender</b>	Female	112	52.6
	Male	101	47.4
<b>Grade</b>	8	97	45.5
	9	66	31
	10	50	23.5
<b>Type of Family</b>	Nuclear	79	37.1
	Joint	134	62.9
<b>Monthly income of family</b>	< 20,000	81	38
	20,000-30,000	55	25.8
	31,000-40,000	31	14.6
	41,000-50,000	28	13.1
	>50,000	18	8.5
<b>Religion</b>	Hindu	187	87.8
	Muslim	25	11.7
	Christian	1	0.5
<b>Exposure to media</b>	Yes	166	77.9
	No	47	22.1

**Table 2: Knowledge and Source of Information on Child Sexual Abuse\*****n=213**

Characteristics	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
<b>Meaning of Child Sexual Abuse</b>		
To force to watch or show genital organs	112	52.6
To make children touch and fondle genital or other body parts	80	37.6
To make children watch sexual activities	27	12.7
To force children to involve in sexual intercourse	37	17.4
<b>Source of Information</b>		
TV/Radio	107	50.2
Teachers	89	41.8
Social media	52	24.4
Friends/peer	30	14.1
<b>Sharing of information by parents (n=27)</b>		
Mother	27	100
Father	14	51.8

\*Multiple Response Question

**Table 3: Prevalence and characteristics of child sexual abuse****n=213**

Characteristics	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
<b>Victim of Child Sexual Abuse</b>	52	24.4
<b>Forms of Child Sexual Abuse*</b>		
To make children touch and fondle genital or other body parts	24	46.1
Teasing, unnecessary touching	21	40.3
Forced to watch or show genital organs	4	7.6
To force children to involve in sexual intercourse	3	5.7
<b>Frequency of Child Sexual Abuse (n=52)</b>		
1-5 times	16	30.7
More than 5 times	9	17.3
Don't remember	27	51.9
<b>Place of Child Sexual Abuse*</b>		
Public Places	26	50
Home	11	21.1
School	10	19.1
Bus	9	17.3

\*Multiple Response Question

Table 4: Disclosure and effects of child sexual abuse

n=52

Characteristics	Frequency (N)	(%)	Percent
<b>Disclosure about Child Sexual Abuse</b>			
Yes	25		48
No	27		52
<b>Disclosure with*</b>			
Friends	18		72
Parents	6		24
<b>Response to disclosure *</b>			
Believe by no one	24		96
No one care	24		96
Needful help was provided	23		92
Advised not to share with others	1		4
<b>Reason for not disclosing * (n=27)</b>			
Because of shamefulness	12		44.4
Didn't realized it was a wrong deed	7		25.9
Assumed no one will believe it	5		18.5
Thought it as normal	5		18.5
<b>Immediate effects of Child Sexual Abuse*</b>			
Scared	22		42.4
Ashamed	13		25
Worried	13		25
Danger	5		9.7
<b>Late effects of Child Sexual Abuse*</b>			
Anxiety	31		59.6
Depression	8		15.4
Guilt	8		15.4
Sexual problems	4		7.6

\*Multiple Response Question

**Table 5: Characteristics of Predators n=52**

Variables	Characteristics	Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
<b>Gender of Predators</b>	Male	27	51.9
	Female	7	13.4
	Don't remember	18	34.6
<b>Age of Predators (in years)</b>	<19	18	34.7
	20-39	8	15.3
	40-59	23	44.2
	Don't remember	3	5.8
<b>Relation with predators*</b>	Strangers	33	63.4
	Relatives	11	21.1
	Friends	5	9.6
	Neighbor	2	3.8
	Parents	1	1.9
	Siblings	1	1.9

\*Multiple Response Question

**Table 6: Association of Child Sexual Abuse with socio-demographic variables n=52**

Variables	Characteristics	Frequency (%)	p- value
<b>Age (in years)</b>	12-15	24(46.1)	0.007#
	16-18	28(53.9)	
<b>Gender</b>	Female	37(71.1)	0.02#
	Male	15(28.9)	
<b>Grade</b>	8	10(19.2)	0.001#
	9	26(50)	
	10	16(30.8)	
<b>Type of Family</b>	Nuclear	22(42.3)	0.37
	Joint	30(57.7)	
<b>Monthly income of family</b>	<30,000	27(51.9)	0.102
	> 30000	25(48.1)	
<b>Religion</b>	Hindu	49(94.2)	0.103
	Others	3(5.8)	
<b>Exposure to media</b>	Yes	48(92.3)	0.004#
	No	4(7.7)	

# P-value<0.05

## DISCUSSION

In this study, (62%) participants were from the age (12-15) years, which contradicts a study entitled “Child Sexual Abuse among School children of a Municipality- A Descriptive Cross-sectional Study” conducted among 405 students of Kavrepalanchowk, which revealed (28.9%) were from the age group 7-12 years.<sup>19</sup> This study showed that (52.6%) of participants were female, which matches the finding of a study conducted in Kathmandu among 962 students, where (56%) were female.<sup>25</sup> Likewise (87.8%) followed Hindu religion; this finding was similar (74%) with a study conducted in Kathmandu (2018).<sup>25</sup>

The findings of this study revealed that the majority of participants (52.6%) answered that Child Sexual Abuse is “to force to watch or show genitalia”. This finding differs from a study done in Kavrepalanchowk where only (1.5%) gave the same answer.<sup>19</sup> TV/ radio (50.2%) was found to be the main source of information about Child Sexual Abuse. This finding is similar to a study entitled “Awareness of Child Sexual Abuse among Secondary School Students in Kathmandu”.<sup>24</sup> This study showed the mother as the primary source of information about Child Sexual Abuse among both parents. This finding was similar to a study conducted in Kavrepalanchowk.<sup>19</sup>

This study showed 24.4 % of participants had been victim of Child Sexual Abuse. A study conducted in Egypt also revealed similar findings, prevalence of abuse was 36.6 % and approximately one-quarter experienced only one form of abuse.<sup>26</sup> Whereas, a study by Shrestha Susma revealed only (15.8%) experienced Child Sexual Abuse. Likewise, a study on Prevalence of Child Sexual Abuse among school children conducted at Chitwan showed that 41.3% had experienced Child Sexual Abuse.<sup>8</sup>

In this study, (46.1%) answered that they were compelled to touch and fondle genital or other body parts. A study conducted by Basnet R showed (53.2%) gave similar answer.<sup>24</sup> Whereas, a study conducted in Chitwan, revealed different findings that (26.6%) answered they were compelled to touch and fondle genital or other body parts.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, (30.7%) experienced Child Sexual Abuse once. This finding differs from a study where (45.3%) experienced

Child Sexual Abuse once.<sup>19</sup> In this study, (50%) of participants experienced Child Sexual Abuse in a public place. This finding was similar to a finding of Shrestha S.<sup>19</sup> This study revealed that (48.4%) disclosed this issue and most of them disclosed it with their friends (72%), this finding is similar with a study by Shrestha S.<sup>19</sup> The finding contradicts a study by Basnet R revealed that (87.4%) of participants disclosed the issue.<sup>24</sup>

After disclosing the issue most of them (96%) didn't believe the event, likewise (96%) didn't care about the issue. These findings were similar to the findings of a study by Shrestha S where, where the response to disclosure was didn't care about the issue (38.2%) and didn't believe the issue (32.4%).<sup>19</sup> Moreover, the reason for not disclosing the issue was because of shamelessness (44.4%). This study result is along the same line as a similar study conducted in Kavrepalanchowk.<sup>19</sup>

In this study (42.3%) participants experienced scared as the immediate effect of Child Sexual Abuse whereas, (59.6%) experienced anxiety as a late effects of Child Sexual Abuse. This finding differs from a study by Shrestha S which revealed (26.2%) were scared and most of them were ashamed (37.7%) as the immediate effect.<sup>19</sup>

In this study, half (51.9%) of predators were male and most of them (44.2%) were age 40-59 years. Likewise, (63.4%) predators were strangers and (21.1%) were relatives. Similar finding was found in a study by Shrestha S, (65.6%) predators were male and below 20 years (60.1%).<sup>19</sup> Likewise, (54.4%) of predators were strangers and (29.6%) were neighbor. Another study by WHO revealed that most of the offences occur from relatives, neighbor and within the family.<sup>27</sup>

This study showed association of child sexual abuse with age, gender, grade of children and exposure to media. A study conducted in Saudi Arabia revealed similar finding where, gender was significantly associated with Child Sexual Abuse.<sup>28</sup>

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that a high prevalence of child sexual abuse among girls commonly occurs at public places by strangers. Almost one fourth of respondents

experienced Child Sexual Abuse in their lives. Half of the victim had disclosed the offence to their friends and also received the needed help. Enacting child protection laws, policies, and procedures for preventing and responding to child abuse at the local to federal level is highly recommended. Likewise, developing awareness about hotlines among secondary school students may be useful.

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