

Perpetrators and Common Places of Sexual Harassment Against Adolescent School Girls in Nepal

Kalpana Gyawali

Lecturer, Health Physical and Population Education Department, Sanothimi Campus, Bhaktapur
E-mail: gpkalpana81@gmail.com , ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8085-7482>

ABSTRACT

The main aim of this study was to find out the vulnerable places of sexual harassment to the girl students and the persons involved in such unwanted behaviors. It was a mixed-methods study. Altogether 773 girl respondents were selected for obtaining quantitative data from Lalitpur and Rupendehi districts in Nepal. Similarly, 10 focus group discussions, 14 Key informant interviews, and eight In-depth interviews were conducted for collecting qualitative data. The result showed that male peers/ friends, teachers, neighbors/ relatives, and strangers were involved in sexual harassment. Frequency of verbal/gestural type of sexual harassment is higher from male peers and touching/pinching and sexual abuse/assault types of sexual harassment are more common from teachers and relatives. Sexual harassment frequently happens in public transport. In society, teachers deserve great respect and trust from parents and students. They have close access to girl students. However, such trust and closeness transformed into sexual harassment whereby accelerating sexual harassment. The higher incidence of sexual harassment at public transports might be due to the proximity and anonymity, which, in turn, results in high levels of sexual harassment and abuse with very little risk of social or legal consequences. The awareness program against sexual harassment and strong laws and order are essential and the judiciary process should be simple and victim-friendly that can reduce sexual harassment to girl students by various perpetrators at different domains in society.

Keywords: Sexual harassment, perpetrators, adolescent, schoolgirl, sexual offenders.

Introduction

Adolescence is the period of physical, psychological, and social maturity from childhood to adulthood. Generally, the term adolescents refer to those people between 10 and 19 years of age (WHO/UNEFA/ UNICEF, 1989). The health of adolescents is profoundly linked to their development since their physical psychological and social abilities help to determine their behaviors. The healthy development of adolescents is dependent upon several complex factors: their socio-economic circumstances and the environments in which they live, and grow the quality of a family, community, and peer relationships, available education opportunities. Among the different factors, sexual harassment on the adolescent is found to be responsible for the educational and mental health of adolescent girls (Timmerman, 2002). Sexual harassment from different people upon the girl students in different situations and environments may affect adolescents' daily life. Hence, the study is an attempt to find out the

different sexual offenders who involve in sexual harassment on adolescent girl students of Nepal along with the most common places where they have to victimize with such crime.

Sexual harassment is a complex and fluid phenomenon ranging from physical violence to sexually-suggestive gestures and whistling which cannot be easily detected like sexual abuse and violence. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission [EEOC] has defined sexual harassment in its guidelines as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal, non-verbal and physical conduct of a sexual nature when i) Submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment ii) Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment or academic decisions affecting such individual, and ii) Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment (EEOC, 1990). The United States Merit Systems Protection Board (1987) has categorized sexual harassment into three categories concerning how severe these may be as less severe (unwelcomed sexual remarks, suggestive looks and gestures, and deliberate touching); moderately severe (pressure for dates, pressure for sexual favors, unwelcomed letters, and telephone calls) and most severe (actual or attempted rape or sexual assault). The global prevalence rates have been found ranging from 15% to 95%, with women in developing countries more likely to have been harassed (Fogarty, 2012; Geloski et al. 2017). According to UN Women (2016), 40% - 50% of the women in European Union countries experience unwanted sexual advances, physical contact, or other forms of sexual harassment at the workplace. The severe rate of sexual harassment on women has been reported ranging from 70% - 90% in Nepal from several perpetrators (Gautam et. al. 2019; Gyawali, 2010; Malla, 2005; Thapa & Rana, 1994). Along with working and professional woman, sexual harassment to the schoolgirls was also found severe throughout the world and it has been reported at the school level and was found in late elementary school, peaks in early adolescence, and tapers off in high school (Pepler et.al., 2006; Petersen & Hyde, 2009). The USA again revealed that 83% of girl students in the 8-11 grades were sexually harassed and 38 percent of them were sexually harassed by teachers or school employees in America (Hill & Silva, 2005). Witkowska (2005) reported a similar situation where 50% of a sample of 714 girls in grades 9 and 11 reported experience of some form of sexual harassment in schools in Sweden.

Similarly, sexual harassment of 27% of girl students has been reported in the Netherlands. The study of Plan International (2008) on African and Latin American nations also illustrated the severe occurrence of different types of sexual harassment on the girl students by teachers and other offenders at school and other areas.

Few studies have been done in the Nepalese context on sexual harassment at school regarding sexual harassment of the girl students. Even there are few studies over the prevalence of sexual harassment on the girl students but the results have been found severe. Gautam et al. (2019) and Misra and Lamichane (2018) have studied sexual harassment on girl students in Kathmandu valley at public transport and have found around 80 % of the girls have been found sexually harassed at public transports. Thapalia et al. (2020) also reported that around 76% of the girl students in the Kathmandu valley (Tokha) had experienced some forms of sexual

harassment in their lives. In another study by Gyawali et. al. (2012), 85% of school-going adolescents were found to suffer from some kind of sexual harassment like sexual gazing; sexual gestures, and blaming relation with others, and 63% of girls who had been sexually harassed were found to be suffered from mental stress. Sexual harassment on the girl students has been reported at different places and areas from the victims' own homes to public places, school areas, public transport, and workplaces. Moreover, various types of persons have been found involved in sexual harassment which includes friends, teachers, co-workers, seniors, visitors, strangers, and family members (Gyawali et. al., 2012; Hill & Kearn, 2011; Hill & Silva, 2005; Hongkong Education Institute, 2013; Misra & Lamichane, 2018; Neupane & Chesney-Lind, 2013; Plan International 2008; Shrestha, 2012).

Education is vitally important in a young person's life to be aware of sex education. It provides them opportunities for personal, social, and academic development which is effective for their future employment and integration in society. School serves several functions, such as socialization, personality development of students, the transmission of cultural norms and values to the new generation in our society beyond transmitting academic knowledge and skills. The school setting is one of the first places that children learn to relate and interact with one another. Among the different hurdles to students, sexual harassment is becoming a huge problem across the world and adolescents have been found victimized with sexual harassment as they have very little tolerance capacity against it (Hill & Kearn, 2011; Management Systems International, [MSI] 2008; Plan International (2008). A student's experiences in school can have a major effect on his or her self-image and self-esteem and his or her development later in life. Mostly, the sexual harassment at workplaces and the sexual offender in that context have been studied well worldwide. But studies on adolescent sexual harassment in academic settings are very rare. In this context, this study is an attempt to explore the major offenders and places of sexual harassment on girls in the Nepalese context. Therefore, the outcomes of the study might be useful to identify the major sexual perpetrators. Hence, it will be useful to formulate the anti-harassment program and to implement different actions against agents of sexual harassment to minimize the occurrences and negative effects of sexual harassment on academic social and mental health aspects of girl students.

Methods

The pragmatic research design with the concurrent mixed-method (Cresswell, 2014) was used for this study. The sample size for quantitative data was 773 adolescent school girl students from both community and institutional schools from two districts (Lalitpur and Rupandehi). For this sample survey, the sample size for the quantitative study data has been calculated at a 95% confidence level with the 5% confidence interval.

The total 10 focus group discussions (FGDs) with girls students, 14 key informant interviews(KII) with the Principal, Vice-principal of school and parents of the girl students, and eight In-depth Interviews (IDI) with the severely sexually harassed girls those found during the focus group discussions, was conducted. The quantitative and qualitative data were triangulated on different themes. Ethical approval has been obtained from the Nepal Health Research Council (NHRC) to conduct the research and also written consent from the school and

guardians of the participants were received before data collection. The number of respondents for the qualitative study was finalized as per saturation (Zeller, 1993 cited in Morgan 1996). IBM SPSS 20 software was used for quantitative data analysis and the test of independence among variables was carried out using the chi-square test. For qualitative data, case interview and voices of FGDs have been transcribed. The thematic analysis approach was used for qualitative data analysis in the process of initialization, construction, rectification, and finalization (Vaismoradi et al., 2016). Findings of quantitative data have been triangulated with the findings of qualitative data as far as possible.

Results

Characteristics of the Sample Population

The result of the study is based on teenage girl students within the adolescent age group from different ethnicity, location, and school types. The background characteristics of the respondents have been illustrated in table 1. Nepal has a diverse caste system that plays a significant role in determining the social and economic status of its people. Respondents of this study were from different caste/ethnic backgrounds and were grouped into six caste groups (Bhandari & Sharma, 2012) which are Brahmin/ Chhetri/Thakuri, advanced Janjati (Newar, Gurung, Thakali), disadvantaged Janjati, Madhesis, Dalits, and Muslims / others. Among the different caste and ethnic groups, the higher percentage of respondents were from Brahman/ Chhetri and Thakuri Groups (44.5%) followed by disadvantaged Janajati (30.3%) and Advanced Janjatis (17.1 %). Likewise, 52 percent of the respondents were from Rupandehi district as the total number of adolescent girl students was higher at this district than the Lalitpur District. Among the different age groups, most of the girls were between the age of 13 to 15 and the girls aged 15 years old were the highest frequency (38.7 %) than other age groups (Table 1).

Table 1. *Background characteristics of the sample population.*

Socio-demographic characters		Number	Percentage
Caste and ethnicity	Brahman/ Chhetri/Thakuri	344	44.5
	Advanced Janajatis	132	17.1
	DisadvantardhedJanajatis	234	30.3
	Dalit	31	4
	Madhesi	27	3.5
	Muslim	5	0.6
Location	Lalitpur	371	48
	Rupandehi	402	52
School type	Public	420	54.3
	Institutional	353	45.7
Age group	13 years	51	6.6
	14 years	208	26.9
	15 years	299	38.7
	16 years	160	20.7
	17 years	36	4.7
	18 years	13	1.7
	19 years	6	0.8

Common Places of Sexual Harassment

Public transport and public places were found more prone to sexual harassment and among total sexually harassed girl students, 52% of the girls have been found sexually harassed in public transport followed by 50% in public places and 46% of the girls faced sexual harassment at school areas. Not only outside, but 23% of the girls were also found having sexual harassment at their home too. (Table 2). Between the two districts, sexual harassment in public transport and public places was slightly higher at Rupandehi district, while the sexual harassment at school was higher at Lalitpur. Still, the prevalence of sexual harassment at a different place according to the district was not statistically significant ($X^2 = 6.08$, $n = 687$, $df = 4$ $P = 0.19$).

Table 2. Major places of sexual harassment upon girl students

Areas of sexual harassment	Lalitpur		Rupandehi		Total number	Total (Percentage)
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage		
Public transport	160	47	195	56	355	52
Public place	154	45	189	55	343	50
School area	166	49	149	43	315	46
Home (own home or at the home of relatives)	78	23	83	24	161	23
Public gathering and cinema hall	23	7	19	5	42	6

$X^2 = 6.08$, $df = 4$ $P = 0.19$

(Multiple response cases 1216)

Analysis of qualitative data also revealed that school girls have to encounter sexual harassment in public areas and public transports. During the focus group discussion, girls frequently reported that they had faced sexual harassment in public places and public transports while going to and from school.

We have to face various kinds of sexual harassment on public buses. When we are traveling on a crowded bus, at that time, mostly males try to touch our bodies parts and also brush their bodies with our bodies too (A Thakuri girl from Rupandehi).

Girls also shared their experiences of sexual harassment in the classroom too during the focus group discussion. The experiences of a few girls about sexual harassment in the classroom are as follows:

Boys usually tease us at the passage in the school building, at school extra-curriculum programs. They try to look and touch our inner cloth during playing some games and a computer lab. In the classroom, they also try to pinch our leg by pen (Brahmin girl studying in a community school in Rupandehi)

Boys showed different sexual signs such as their middle fingers in the classroom. Sometimes they took out our sanitary pads from our bag and showed to their friends. It makes us shamed and bore. (A Janjati girl studying in an institutional school in Lalitpur)

Not only outside, but girls also expressed their pains of sexual harassment at their home too and one girl expressed her feeling as

We have a small family tea shop and I have to help my mother in my leisure time. At that, some of the costumers tease me and they also hold my hands. Some of the costumes such as policemen and drivers some time propose me for dating with them. (A disadvantaged Janjati girl studying in a community school in Rupandehi during the in-depth interview).

The quantitative and qualitative data show that girls have to encounter sexual harassers at different places from their homes to public transports, but the vulnerability for sexual harassment has been seen more prone to public places and in public transports. As a masculinity culture, some of the sexual harassment is considered normal in the society which has no strong legal punishment against a harasser. Therefore, the males were involved in sexual harassment. Similarly, in public transports, the offenders feel safer to harass due to the larger number of persons and crowded environments. That environment might be the cause behind the higher rate of sexual harassment on public buses. Along with the buses, other places are also found vulnerable to sexual harassment even in their own homes of the girl students.

Sexual Harassment in School Areas

Students have to stay for a long time in the school for their study; therefore, sexual harassment at school might have more impact on their academic performances and mental health. In the study, among the girl students who have faced sexual harassment at school, it was found that 91% of the girls faced sexual harassment at the classroom followed by 83% of the girls during extracurricular activities and 36% of the respondents in the canteen (Table 3). The higher rate of sexual harassment at the classroom might be due to the higher chances of the proximity of teachers with the girl students and other hands the perpetrator may more involve because the girls might feel fear and hesitation to bring out such harassing behaviors in public. Between the two districts, the prevalence of sexual harassment in the classroom is higher at Lalitpur, and sexual harassment during extra curriculum activities and canteen are higher at Rupandehi district. (Table 3). The difference in the prevalence of sexual harassment at different places within the school area at two districts was statistically significant ($\chi^2= 20.54$, $n= 315$, $df=3$, $P=0.0001$).

Table 3. *Prominent places of sexual harassment at school area*

Common places of sexual harassment	Lalitpur		Rupandehi		Total number of respondents	Total Percentage
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage		
Classroom	161	97	125	84	286	91
Extra-curriculum time	119	72	142	95	261	83
Canteen	37	22	77	52	114	36
Library	36	22	30	20	66	21

$\chi^2= 20.54$, $df=3$, $P=0.0001$

(Multiple response cases 727)

Similarly, during focus group discussion, some other places like school fields and lobby, computer class, and science laboratories were also mentioned as the places where girls have to sexually harass as well. Some of the verbatim made by girl students are illustrated below:

Usually, we have to be sexually harassed in the classroom, science lab, and computer class. The teacher intended to touch and brush their body part with our bodies seems unknowing and they take it as a simple matter. Similarly, boys speak vulgar words around us at the classroom and canteen (A Janajati girl studying in a community school in Lalitpur).

Boys remark on our body parts like breasts and thigh and hip during extracurricular activities and. Due to that reason, we cannot play properly.

Not only the male peers but also the teachers were found to be involved in sexual harassment activities in the classrooms.

One of our teachers tells dirty and double meaning jokes in the classroom. Other teachers also slap us at our hip and intentionally touch our body parts. Sometimes they constantly see at our lower body part and the breast also. (A Janjati girl studying in institutional school at Lalitpur).

The Major Offender of Sexual Harassment

Girl students have to encounter different types of people inside and outside the schools and they may have to suffer from sexual harassment by those people. However, the types of harassment and its severity may vary according to the harasser. According to location, at both districts, the sexual harassment by the classmates was higher as compared to other perpetrators which were 77% & 69% in Lalitpur and Rupandehi respectively and the difference was significant at 0.05% level. After the classmate, teachers were found involved in sexual harassment and it was 50% in Lalitpur and 48% in Rupandehi, and the difference was not statistically significant (Table 4).

Table 4. Percentage of girl students sexually harassed by different perpetrators

SH on different situation		Percentage of girls students having sexual harassment from different perpetrators									
		Classmate		Senior students		Teachers		Neighbors and relatives		Strangers	
		No	yes	No	yes	No	yes	No	yes	no	yes
Location wise	Lalitpur	23 (77)	77(265)	89(11(39)	50(170)	50(172)	78(534)	22(150)	54(183)	46(159)
	Rupandehi	31(107)	69(243)	79(275)	21(75)	52(183)	48(169)	72(506)	28(197)	57(200)	43(152)
	P value	0.02*		0***		0.5		0.008**		0.38	
Caste wise	Brahaman/ chettri/ thakuri	30(90)	70(217)	78(243)	22(67)	50(156)	50(156)	75(460)	25(157)	57(170)	43(134)
	Advance janjatis	24(28)	76(90)	91(107)	9(11)	46(54)	54(64)	78(184)	22(52)	58(68)	42(50)
	Disadvance djanjatis	22(45)	78(160)	85(176)	13(15)	55(114)	45(93)	75(312)	25(102)	52(104)	50(103)
	Dalit	25(7)	75(21)	93(26)	7(2)	61(17)	39(11)	57(33)	43(25)	57(16)	43(12)
	Madhesi	31(9)	69(20)	88(26)	12(3)	41(12)	59(17)	74(43)	26(15)	59(17)	41(12)
	P value	0.242		0***		0.33		0.025*		0.64	

(The value in the parenthesis represents the number of respondents)

Senior students, relatives, and neighbors and strangers were also found involved in sexual harassment against school girls. Similarly, among the girls from different castes and ethnicity too, the sexual harassment from the classmate was more frequent than the other perpetrators which were followed by teachers on the girls from all castes and ethnicity but the difference was not statistically significant at 0.5% level (Table 4). Girls from different castes were also found sexually harassed by strangers, neighbors, and senior students and the difference was statistically significant at a 0.5% level.

In qualitative data also, a similar result was seen where classmates were found as major sexual offenders and 26 participants out of 72 participants in FGD said that they were sexually harassed from classmates and girls express their experiences of sexual harassment as:

Boys from our class tease us by using vulgar words. Generally, we ignore it a beginning. After their repeated odd behavior, we used to scold them. But they never change their behaviors. Sometimes they also connect our name with their friends and spread false humor. They also call sister in law (Bhauju) to some of our friends too (Brahman and Janajati girl studying in institutional school at Rupandehi.)

Not only the boys and the teacher were also reported as a sexual offender by girl students and the different experiences of sexual harassment by a teacher has been expressed by the girl students were as

A teacher in our school was used to touch in sensitive parts including the girls studying at the primary level too. Once, we got information from the girls who were harassed sexually from that teacher, the school expelled him from this school (Principle from institutional school at Lalitpur during KII).

The other offenders were unknown people followed by neighbors and relatives. In FGD 13 participants were found sexually harassed by the relatives and their experiences were as below.

I have one man with the age as the grandfather in the neighbor. When he found me alone then he tries to touch and catch my breasts (Dalit girl studying in institutional school at Lalitpur).

One day my brother in law (Bhinaju) invited me to Narayangard to bring some goods. When I reached there, he was staying in a hotel room. When I reached there, he asked me to drink the juice. But I noticed something wrong in juice and I ignored taking juice but, at that time he pushes me at bed forcefully and he tried to do rape me. I coped with the situation and escaped from there. (A Dalit girl studying in community school at Rupandehi during IDI).

Along with the other sexual offender, 19 participants in FGD said that they were harassed by strangers.

People tease us when we are walking on the way in the community and they say, come on come on (A brahman girl studying in community school at Rupandehi).

We have to face a lot of sexual harassment which cannot be expressed. Unknown boys tease us and say Sali, Soltani, Kanchi, etc when we are walking on the way (A Janajati girl studying in institutional school at Lalitpur).

Though the frequency of sexual harassment which was done by classmates/boys was very high, most of them were of less severe types of sexual harassment. Similarly, the sexual harassment was done by strangers of less severe types of harassment, but the sexual harassment which was done by teachers, neighbors, and relatives were of moderate and severe types of sexual harassments. That may be due to the poor chances of the physical proximity of the boy students with girl students, but in the case of teachers and relatives, who have more chances of physical closeness and such proximity which they got, they take unnecessary advantages from it and girl students became victim with moderate and severe types of sexual harassment.

Level of Sexual Harassment from Different Sexual Harassers

The level of occurrences of sexual harassment to the girl students according to different types of harassments from teachers, peers/classmates and relatives/neighbors, numerous single and combinations of responses of the respondents in real-life systems have been analyzed and interpreted with four multiple response questions (MRQ) in Likert's four-point scale (i.e., Never, rare, sometimes, and frequently) answer and subsequent dummy coding (i.e., "Never" numerically coded as 1, and so on up to 4). From the study, adolescent girl students were found harassed sexually by the different sexual offenders at different levels.

The most common types of sexual harassment by teachers were touching/pinching where 37% of the girls said they faced touching and pinching from teachers at different levels. Similarly, in the case of male peers/ friends and relatives, neighbor verbal and gestural types of sexual harassment were found more common and it was 65%. Likewise, 62% of the girl students were found sexually harassed by their male peers/friends and relatives/ neighbors respectively (Table 5). Among other types of sexual harassment, 31% of the girl students were found sexually harassed with messages from male peers/friends. Relatives and neighbors were found more involved in sexual assaults and abuse (8%) at different levels from rare to frequently.

Table 5. Different types of sexual harassment from different offenders

Sexual offenders	Sexual harassment level	Percentage of sexual harassment types			
		Touching and pinching	Messaging (T/A/V)	Verbal/gestural	Abuse/assault
Teachers /staff	Never	63 (411)	94 (612)	68 (446)	94 (615)
	Rare	27 (175)	5 (32)	20 (131)	4 (24)
	Sometimes	2 (14)	0 (1)	3 (20)	1 (6)
	Frequently	8 (51)	1 (6)	9 (54)	1 (7)
	Total	100 (651)	100 (651)	100 (651)	100 (652)
Male peers/ friends	Never	69 (451)	69 (453)	35 (229)	94 (616)
	Rare	25 (165)	16 (106)	28 (182)	4 (25)
	Sometimes	1 (5)	3 (17)	4 (28)	2 (16)
	Frequently	5 (35)	12 (82)	33 (221)	0 (0)
	Total	100 (656)	100 (658)	100 (660)	100 (657)
Relatives /neighbors	Never	57 (390)	73 (493)	38 (261)	92 (630)
	Rare	33 (222)	17 (117)	35 (237)	6 (40)
	Sometimes	3 (17)	1 (9)	4 (25)	1 (4)
	Frequently	7 (50)	9 (60)	23 (155)	1 (4)
	Total	100 (679)	100 (679)	100 (678)	100 (678)

(Multiple responses cases; Value in parenthesis represents the number of respondents)

In qualitative data, according to girl participants' experiences sharing during the focus group discussion, 19 participants said that teachers frequently involved in touching and pinching types of harassments rather than other types of harassments. Similarly, respondents expressed that the verbal types of harassment (teasing by connecting names with other boys, vulgar words and jokes, etc.) were very common from their male peers/friends. According to schools' Head or Assistant headteachers in Key informant interviews (KII), they informed that girls had made many complaints about the teasing and using vulgar words to them by other boys at school. During the focus group discussions, seven cases of sexual abuse and assault on girl students by their relatives were found. Some of the opinions which were expressed during the Focus group discussion and In-depth interview were listed as follows:

My family is living with the parental uncle and my father is working in a foreign country. When my uncle got drunk, at that time he tries to harass me sexually. At that time, he forcefully kisses and touched my sensitive organs. He used to threaten not to tell anything to any person. Some time he purposes some money not to tell his bad behavior to the person and to family members too. When I used to cry during his misbehavior, at that time he used to close my mouth. I have no alternatives too and my mother also has no idea how to overcome this situation. (A Janajati girl studying in community school at Rupandehi during IDI).

My cousin's brother sometimes comes to our home on special occasions. When he comes to my house we all children share the same room for sleep. At that time, when we go to bed at midnight, he secretly starts to harass me by rubbing and catching my body parts and sensitive organs. (A Dalit girl studying in institutional school at Rupandehi during IDI).

The higher cases of a severe and most severe type of sexual harassment by the relatives and neighbors might be due to our social system in which the parents and the girls themselves trust and have to depend on for each other in many other activities. Due to such dependency, such harassment might have happened.

Discussion

Girl students were found sexually harassed at different places from school to their home. Among the most common and vulnerable places of sexual harassment, public transport was in the first rank (31%) followed by public areas which were 30%. A similar situation of higher prevalence of sexual harassment at public places and public transport has been reported by Thapa and Rana (1994) where more than 50% of the girls and women were harassed at a public place in the Nepalese context. Another study done by Mishra and Lamichhane (2018) has also reported that 79% of the female health students of one of the medical institutes in the Kathmandu valley were found sexually harassed at public transport. Geloski et al.'s (2017) review of studies on sexual harassment of women and girls on public transportation found that global prevalence rates ranging from 15% to 95%, with women in developing countries are more likely to have been harassed. The higher incidence of sexual harassment at public transports might be due to the proximity and anonymity of the perpetrators with the girl, which, in turn, results in high levels of sexual harassment and abuse with very little risk of social or legal consequences.

Not only in the public places by the anonymous perpetrators, but 22% girls were also found sexually harassed at the school which resembles with the study by Gyawali, et al. (2012) and they have reported that 20% of girl students were sexually harassed at the school area in Kathmandu valley. In the school area, the classroom and library were the common places where the girls were sexually harassed. Along with the other places, girl students were found prone to sexual harassment inside their home and 16% of the respondents faced sexual harassment there. From this study, it has been seen that our adolescent girls are not safe at any corner of society from sexual harassment. Not only the quantitative study, but the qualitative study also shows that public places, public transport, and school areas are the most common places where sexual harassment takes place against the girl students. As regards the higher incidence of sexual harassment on the teens in public schools Fogarty (2012), showed that about 80% of the females experienced sexual harassment while in school in the United States; similar results have been reported by Hills and Kearl (2011). These results show that school is one of the most vulnerable areas of sexual harassment. In an educational setting *quid pro quo*, sexual harassment is said to occur when a superior (supervisor/lecturer) conditions the granting of an economic/academic reward upon receipt of sexual favors from a subordinate/student or effuse fear by threatened the subordinate/student if he/she refuses to submit to his request (Dhlomo et al., 2012). Similarly, due to male-dominated culture, the girl students have more chances to be victims of sexual harassment from their male peers in the school areas.

Schoolgirls were found sexually harassed by different persons from close relatives to strangers at different places. In this study, peers and friends (classmates & senior students), teachers, and relatives/neighbors were reported as major sexual offenders. Among them, it was found that 39% of the girl students were sexually harassed by a classmate and senior students which were followed by teachers (21%). A similar result of sexual harassment from the teachers also reported by Hill and Silva (2005) revealed that 83% of the girl students in the 8-11 graders were sexually harassed and 38% of them were sexually harassed by teachers and school employees in America. Plan (2008) also reported the higher involvement of teachers and axillary staff on sexual harassment in Africa. Along with the teachers and classmates, other perpetrators were neighbors/ relatives (21%) and strangers (19%). Neighbors and relatives were also found responsible for sexual harassment upon girl students. The peer (boys) were found involved in sexual harassment more frequently but the nature of the sexual harassment behaviors were less severe types. On the other hand, sexual harassment from the teachers, neighbors, and relatives was moderate types to extreme severe types of harassment. The higher prevalence of severe and extreme severe sexual harassment from the teachers and relatives might be due to higher trust to them from the family member of the girl students. Due to this reason those persons get a chance to be close with adolescent girls and they use their proximity negative ways and involve in sexual harassment and it is one of the causes behind the accelerated sexual harassment. Along with the teacher and relatives, girls are also harassing sexual from their male peers and friends where the boys' Male peers and friends might involve in sexual harassment by considering it as a simple thing and as fun and as to show their masculinity power which they may have learned from the society.

Conclusion

Girl students are being harassed by their teachers, peers, relatives, and strangers in their daily life. The cases of sexual harassment at girls at their own home of the girl students also indicate the vulnerability of girls due to sexual harassment at almost all places by many offenders in the Nepalese context. Girls were also found harassed from the stranger. The poor complain rate, lengthy process for justice, and lack of confidentiality of the victim were found responsible for accelerated sexual harassment from strangers. The public transport and public places were noted as the major places where sexual harassment happened and along with those place school areas also reported as the next vulnerable places of sexual harassment on girl students. This situation was unexpected since generally schools were considered as a temple for learning and safe places for the students where students can learn and make them perfect for future challenges. The sexual harassment of girls in the classroom, laboratories, and during extra curriculum activities might affects the overall development of the victim hence it is an urgent need to create an anti-sexual harassment environment at the school level to make an ideal place to flourish the capacity and potentialities of girl students.

Girl students are being harassed by their teachers, peers, relatives, and strangers in their daily life. The cases of sexual harassment at girls at their own home of the girl students also indicate the vulnerability of girls due to sexual harassment at almost all places by many offenders in the Nepalese context. Poor complain rate, lengthy process for justice, and lack of confidentiality of the victim were found responsible for accelerated sexual harassment from strangers. Public transport and public places were noted as the major places where sexual harassment happened and along with those places, school areas are reported as the next vulnerable places of sexual harassment on girl students. This situation is unexpected since schools are considered as temples for learning where students can learn to make them perfect for future challenges. The sexual harassment of girls in the classroom, laboratories, and during extra curriculum activities might affect the overall development of the victim. Hence it is an urgent need to create an anti-sexual harassment environment at the school level to make an ideal place to flourish the capacity and potentialities of girl students.

References

- Creswell, J.W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method approaches* (ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Dhlomo T., Mugweni R.M., Shoniwa G., Maunganidze L., Sodi T.(2012). Perceived sexual harassment among female students at a Zimbabwean Institution of Higher Learning. *Journal of Psychology Africa* 22(2):269–272. DOI: 10.1080/14330237.2012.10820529
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). (1990). *Policy guidance on current issues of sexual harassment*. U. S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Washington. Retrieved from <https://www.eeoc.gov/policy/docs/currentissues.html>
- Fogarty, K. (2012). *Teens and sexual harassment: Making a difference*. IFAS Extension, University of Florida. Retrieved from <https://ifas.ufl.edu/media/smartcouplesifasufledu/docs/pdfs/Teens-and-Sexual-Harassment---Making-a-Difference.pdf>

- Gautam N., Sapakota N., Shrestha S., & Regmi D. (2019). Sexual harassment in public transportation among female students in the Kathmandu valley. *Risk Management and Healthcare Policy*, 12, 105-113 Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.2147/RMHP.S196230>
- Gekoski, A., Gray, J. M., Adler, Joanna R., & Hovarth, M. A.H. (2017). The prevalence and nature of sexual harassment and assault against women and girls on public transport: An international review. *Journal of Criminological Research, Policy and Practice*, 3(1): 3-16. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1108/JCRPP-08-2016-0016>
- Grigentyte, G., & Lesinkiene, S. (2018). Prevalence and characteristics of sexual harassment among high school students: a pilot study. *Clinical Research and Trails* 4(4): 1-5. DOI: 10.15761/CRT.1000228
- Gyawali, K., Neupane, I., Aryal, N., & Thapa, A. (2012). *Sexual harassment and its impact on education among teenage girls students in Kathmandu metropolitan city*. Bhaktapur: University Grant Commission, Nepal.
- Hill, C., & Kearn, H. (2011). *Crossing the line: Sexual harassment at school*. Washington, DC: American Association of University Women.
- Hill, C., & Silva, E. (2005). *Drawing the line: Sexual harassment on campus*. Washington, DC: American Association of University Women, Educational Foundation.
- Hongkong Institute of Education (2013). *Study on students' sexual attitudes and views on sexual harassment*. Retrieved from [https://www.eoc.org.hk/EOC/Upload/Research Report/SH_e Full Report .pdf](https://www.eoc.org.hk/EOC/Upload/Research%20Report/SH_e%20Full%20Report.pdf)
- Krug, E.G., Dahlberg, L. L., James A., Mercy, J.A., Anthony B., Zwi A.B., & Lozano, R. (2002). *World report on violence and health(ed.)*. Geneva: World Health Organization.
- Malla, S. P. (2005). *Sexual harassment in the workplace in Asia*. Export group meeting, Vienna: UN Division of the advancement of women.
- Management Systems International (2008). *Are schools safe haven for Children? Examining school-related gender-based violence*. Washington, DC: U.S. Agency for International Development
- Mishra, D., & Lamichhane, J. (2018). Experience of sexual harassment in public transport among female health science students: A cross sectional study of Kathmandu, Nepal. *Journal of Manmohan Memorial Institute of Health Sciences*, 4(1): 20-32. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.3126/jmmihs.v4i1.21134>
- Morgan, D. L. (1996). Focus groups. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 22: 129-152. Doi: 10.1146/annurev.soc.22.1.129
- Neupane, G., & Chesney-Lind, M. (2013). Violence against women on public transport in Nepal: Sexual harassment and the spatial expression of male privilege. *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice* 38(1), 23-38. DOI: 10.1080/01924036.2013.794556.
- Plan International (2008). *Learn without fear: The global campaign to end violence in schools*. Woking: Plan. Retrieved from http://www.ungei.org/Learn_Without_Fear_English.pdf

- Pepler, D. J., Craig, W. M., Connolly, J. A., Yuile, A., McMaster, L., & Jiang, D. (2006). A developmental perspective on bullying. *Aggressive Behavior*, 32, 376–84.
- Petersen, J. L., & Hyde, J. S. (2009). A longitudinal investigation of peer sexual harassment victimization in adolescence. *Journal of adolescence*, 32(5), 1173-88. DOI: 10.1016/j.adolescence.2009.01.011.
- Shrestha, N. S. (2012). Workplace Sexual Harassment at the hospitals, *Journal of Kathmandu Medical College*, 1(2): 69-70. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.3126/jkmc.v1i2.8140>
- Taylor A. Y. (2011). *Women and the city: Examining the gender impact of violence and urbanization. A comparative study of Brazil, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Liberia and Nepal*. Action Aid: Johannesburg, South Africa:
- Thapa, C., & Rana, A. (1994). *Sexual harassment in public places in the Katmandu valley: Results of survey*. Kathmandu: SathiNepal, Kathmandu.
- Thapalia, R., Dhungana, R., Adhikari, S. K. & Pandey, A. R. (2020). Understanding, Experience and Response to Sexual Harassment among the Female Students: A Mixed Method Study. *Journal of Nepal Health Research Council*, 17(45), 424-430. DOI: 10.33314/jnhrc.v17i4.2313
- Timmerman, G. (2002). A comparison between unwanted sexual behavior by teachers and by peers in secondary schools. *Journal of Youth Adolescence*, 31(5): 397-404. DOI: 10.1023/A:1015684726300
- UN Women (2016). *Facts and figures: ending violence against women and girls*, UN women Asia pacific. Retrieved from: <http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/focus-areas/end-violence-against-women/evaw-facts-and-figures>
- Uggen, C., & Blackstone, A. (2004). Sexual Harassment as a Gendered Expression of Power. *American Sociological Review*, 69, 64-92. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177/000312240406900105>
- United States Merit Systems Protection Board (1987) *Sexual harassment in the federal government: An update*. Washington, DC: U. S. Government Printing.
- United States Merit Systems Protection Board (1994). *Sexual harassment in the federal workplace: Trends, progress, continuing challenges*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing.
- Vaismoradi, M., Jones, J., Turunen, H., & Snelgrove, S. (2016). Theme development in qualitative content analysis and theme analysis. *Journal of Nursing Education and Practice*, 6(5): 100-110 Retrieved from DOI: 10.5430/jnep.v6n5p100
- WHO/UNFPA/UNICEF (1989). *The reproductive health of adolescents: A strategy for action / a joint WHO/UNFPA/UNICEF statement*. Geneva.: World Health Organization.
- Witkowska, E. (2005). *Sexual harassment in schools: Prevalence, structure and perception* Stockholm, Sweden: National Institute of working life.