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A Research on Sexual Harassment among Schools Youngsters

*Ram Raj Pokharel

Abstract

Sexual harassment exists throughout the world. According to various studies, approximately 15 million adolescent girls worldwide have experienced forced sexual intercourse or other sexual acts at some point in their life. Out of these, 9 million adolescent girls were victimized within the past year. Based on data from 30 countries, only one per cent ever sought professional help (UN Women, 2018). Despite of the severity of the problem, it has not yet received the attention it should. The lack of researches in these areas is also one of the major reasons for the failure of effective measures to tackle these problems. Sexual harassment is not well received as sexual abuse or rape or sexual violence because it doesn't produce as severe consequence as the latter ones do. This article based on the research on schools of Godawari Municipality ward No.3 of Lalitpur district and followed by exploratory research design. For quantitative information, interview schedule was used. Only 50 adolescent students both boys and girls were selected for the respondents. The findings show that almost all the respondents have known the types and forms of sexual harassment. Almost all of the respondents have felt harassed once in their lifetime. Girls are the easiest target for harassment. Mostly, perpetrators are mainly stranger and held in public places but some respondent share being harassed by their own relatives and known person like school teachers, friends. Male victims were less like to report cases as they feel humiliation in this male-dominated society. Most of the females also find not reporting cases as they fear of questioned by society of their characters. It is very important to aware from sexual harassment from young age and strict laws should be implemented regarding the sexual harassment.

Keywords: Adolescent, Gender, Sexuality, Harassment and Socialization.

1. Introduction

In order to stop workplace harassment and discrimination against women, the legal phrase "sexual harassment" was developed. In laws and judicial rulings, the phrase is frequently expanded upon and redefined. The laws against sexual harassment do not apply

* Dr. Pokharel is a Lecturer at the Department of Sociology, Patan Multiple Campus, T. U., Lalitpur, Nepal. *ram. Gmail: pokharel240@gmail.com*

to situations outside of the job or at school, and not all sexual activity in the workplace constitutes harassment. (HR-Guide 2015)

Adolescent sexual harassment is a serious problem everywhere. One in ten women in the European Union report having experienced cyber-harassment since the age of 15 (including having received unwanted, offensive sexually explicit emails or SMS messages or offensive, inappropriate advances on social networking sites), while 23 percent of female university students in the United States reported having experienced sexual assault or sexual misconduct in a survey across 27 universities in 2015. In a Middle East and North African multi-country study, between 40% and 60% of women reported having ever been the victim of street-based sexual harassment (mostly sexual comments, stalking/following, or staring/ogling), and 31% to 64% of men reported having ever committed such acts. Male street harassment was more prevalent among younger, better educated, and men who had experienced violence as children. According to data from a nationwide Australian poll, 39 percent of women who have worked for at least five years and are at least 15 years old reported experiencing sexual harassment at work during that time (UN-Women, 2018).

Sexual harassment is defined by law to include requests for sexual favors, advances, or other sexual conduct when (1) submission is a condition of academic or employment decisions, (2) the behavior is severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile, or repugnant environment, or (3) the behavior persists despite the objection of the person to whom the conduct is directed (Office of Institutional Equity, University of California).

Adolescents (aged 10–19) and young people (aged 10–24) make up a bigger share of the population in Nepal, accounting for 24% and 33% of the total population, respectively. According to the data published in the book ‘Condition of Children in Nepal, 2074’, within the period of research, 16 rape cases were published. Within the time period of 4 months’ interval, 50 percent of the girls (48) were raped in the last four months, 30 percent of children were raped in the mid period and 20 percent were victims of sexual abuse in the first 4 months of time span.

According to the data published in the book 994 cases were reported in the year 2074/75 out of which 261 cases were of children below 10 years of age, 590 cases were that of children between 11 – 16 years of age and 144 cases of sexual abuse of children of 17-18 years of age. Most of the cases are not reported and it is predicted that if all of the cases would be registered then there would be increase in the number of reported cases. Out of these cases only 402 cases are recorded. The book also states that 243 cases of sexual

violence were published in newspapers and media. Among these cases, 236 cases were of rape out of which 24 were cases of gang rape and 7 were cases of sexual violence. The highest number of cases i.e., 177 cases were of sexual violence against children of 11 – 18 years of age. A survey by EPACT Luxemburg reports that from a survey of 452 children, 13.7% of children reported to being harassed online out of which 47% were male victims. 21% of the children admitted to blocking the abusers, 11% reported to sharing the incident with their friends and 22% reported being aware about online sexual abuse, harassment (Condition of Children in Nepal, 2018).

Within National and International periphery, the issue is a burning one and must be regarded with uttermost importance. With the large number of adolescents being victimized, sexual harassment organizes their future turning it into a vicious cycle of harasser being a victim as well as the perpetrator. Hence, to properly shape the adulthood of the adolescents, it must be our first and foremost priority to analyze and understand their experience and knowledge on sexual harassment.

2. Objectives

The major goal of this paper is to identify the causes of sexual harassment of adolescents and the effects of that harassment on the psychological health of adolescents in the research region. In addition, the study's special objective is to learn how adolescents perceive sexual harassment.

3. Methodology

The research design for this paper is both descriptive and exploratory. This study is descriptive in nature since it seeks to give accurate information about sexual harassment in this area. At the same time, it is also exploratory in nature because it seeks to investigate the perception of sexual harassment among adolescents in the study area.

Because of limited numbers of sample, purposive sampling method was used. Total 50 respondents were selected as a respect for this study. Students of different schools were purposively selected.

Both primary and secondary sources of data were used but main source of data was primary. The data had been generated with the help of interview schedule. Interview schedule was prepared with both open and closed ended questions. Questions included in the interview schedule were framed in such a way that it can provide more qualitative

type of data rather than quantitative data. While looking for information to verify the accuracy and dependability of both primary and secondary data, this paper also used a number of secondary data sources, primarily written materials and archive records.

Data gathered from the interview schedule was classified and tabulated according to demand of issues. Quantitative data was codified and in order to analyze, ms excel was used. The non-quantifiable qualitative data was interpreted as descriptively as possible.

4. Discussion and analysis of the study

4.1.1 Age of respondents

Age is one of the important factors while discussing about sexual harassments. This section includes age structure of the adolescent of this Godawari ward no. 3 area. The response of the adolescent for the inquiry about their age is clear in the following table.

Table 4.1 Age of respondents

S.N.	Age	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	13	6	12
2	14	9	18
3	15	19	38
4	16	12	24
5	17	3	6
6	18	1	2
Total		50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table. 4.1 shows that 12 percent of the respondents were 13 years old whereas 18 percent of the respondents were 14 years old. The majority of the respondents were 15 years of age covering 38 percent of the total respondent population. 24 percent of the respondents were 16 years old, 6 percent of the respondents were 17 years old and 2 percent were 18 years old.

4.2 Sex of the respondent

Among 50 respondents, there are 27 male and 23 female have been found during the data collection.

Table 4.2 Sex of the respondent

S.N.	Sex	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Male	27	54
2	Female	23	46
Total		50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 4.2 shows that 54 percent of the respondents were Male whereas 46 percent of the respondents were female.

4.3 Educational level of the respondents

Education plays vital role in the life of the people. According to the nature of the study all respondents were educated so I have classified them as per their academic qualification. This chart shows educational status of the respondents.

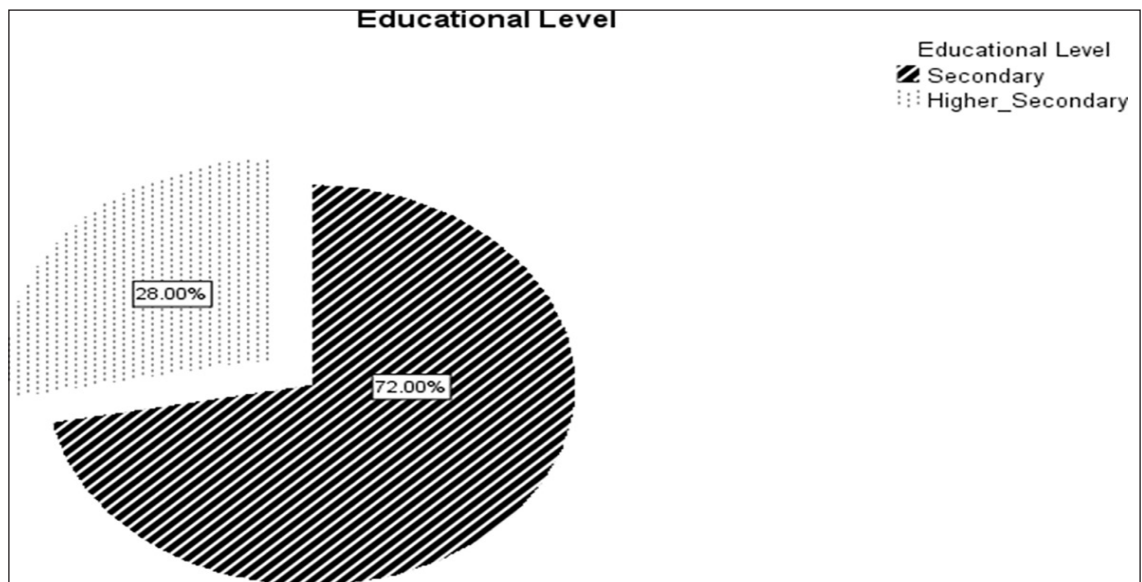


Figure 4.1 Educational level of the respondents

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Figure 4.1 shows that 72 percent of the respondents were secondary level (8-10) students whereas 28 percent of respondents were high school (11-12) students.

4.4 Understanding of sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is an action. It is described as inappropriate sexual activity. It is inappropriate sexual activity that, if permitted to continue, could make the recipient the subject of a QUID PRO QUO and/or a hostile work environment. For instance, offensive sexual remarks, jokes, or innuendoes.

4.4.1 Types of Sexual harassment

The term "sexual harassment" refers to a broad variety of actions, including unwanted sexual contact, sexually suggestive remarks, improper closeness, and repeated unwanted advances. Responses to sexual harassment are displayed in the table below.

Table 4.3 Response on types of sexual harassment

S. N.	Types of sexual harassment	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	unwelcome conduct of sexual nature	17	34
2	insults of a sexual nature	18	36
3	unnecessary familiarity	3	6
4	suggestive comments	2	4
5	sexual advances/repeated unwanted requests	10	20
Total		50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 4.3 represent 34 percent of the respondents found sexual harassment as unwelcome conduct of sexual nature, 36 percent of the respondents found it to be insults of sexual nature, 6 percent of the respondents found it to be unnecessary familiarity, 4 percent of the respondent regarded it as suggestive comments whereas 20 percent of the respondents found sexual advances or repeated unwanted requests assexual harassment.

4.4.2 Awareness on the forms of sexual harassment

Preventative measures are the most powerful tool against sexual harassment. Harassment doesn't just stop happening. In fact, it is more likely that if the issue is ignored, the harassment will get worse over time and become more challenging to stop.

Table 4.4. Awareness on the forms of sexual harassment

S. N.	Forms of sexual harassment	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Quid pro quo	2	4
2	Hostile Work Environment	12	24
3	Indirect Sexual Harassment	32	64
4	Missing	4	8
Total		50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 4.4 shows that 4 percent of the respondents were aware about ‘quid pro quo’, 24 percent of the respondents were aware about ‘hostile work environment’ whereas 64 percent of the respondents were aware about ‘indirect sexual harassment’. The remaining 8 percent were not aware about the existing forms of sexual harassment.

4.5. The gender most susceptible to sexual harassment

According to the report it is found that women are more likely to be subject to sexual harassment. Female from different age groups found that they are victims in many places like schools, colleges and even work places.

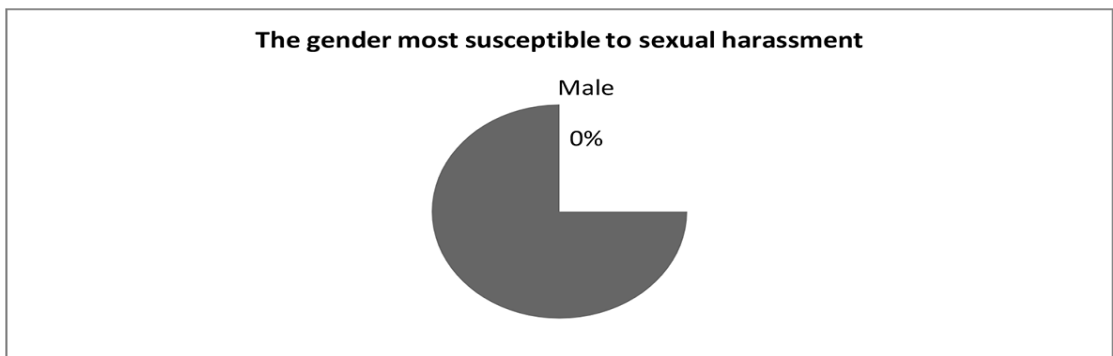


Fig 4.2 The gender most susceptible to sexual harassment

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Figure 4.2 shows that all the respondents believed that females were the most common subjects to sexual harassment.

4.6 Most likely perpetrator

According to the study there are different kinds of perpetrator that we found in our society.

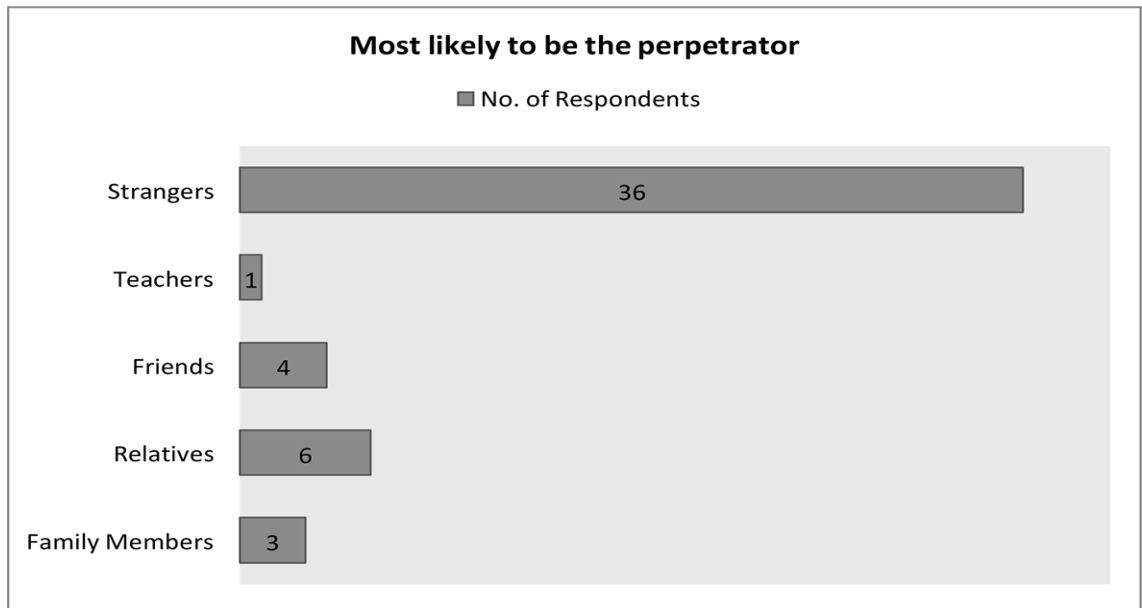


Fig. 4.3 Most likely to be the perpetrator

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Figure 4.3 represent that 6 percent of the respondents believed family members to be the perpetrator, 12 percent believed relatives to be the perpetrator whereas 8 percent indicated friends to be the perpetrators. Also, 2 percent of the respondents believed teachers to be the perpetrators. 72 percent of the respondents take strangers to be the perpetrator.

4.6 Sex of the perpetrator as per the victim

Sex of the perpetrator either it can be of same sex or it can also be opposite sex.

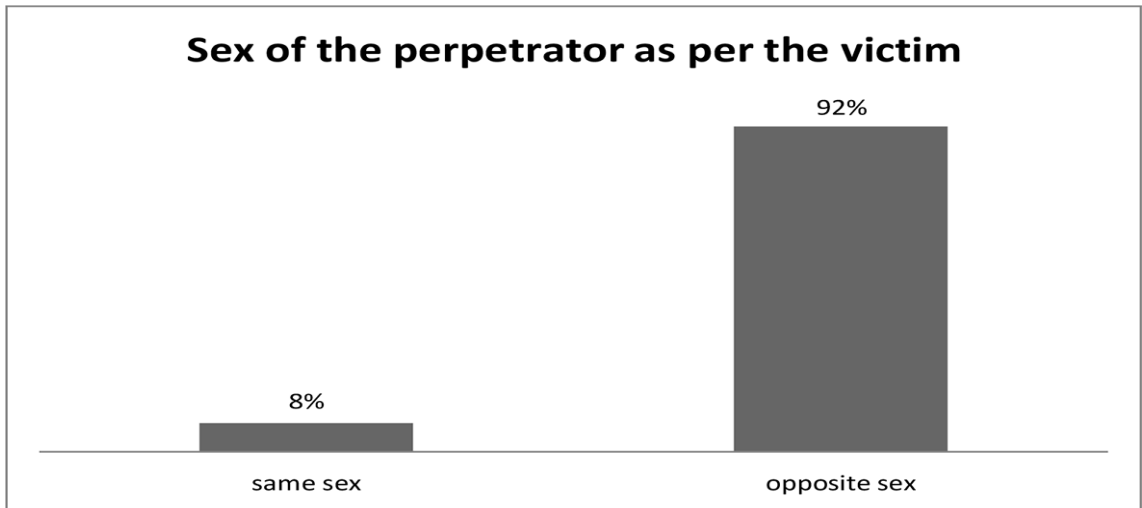


Fig 4.4 Sex of the perpetrator as per the victim

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Figure 4.4 represent that 8 percent of the respondent said that the perpetrators were of the same sex as the victims whereas 92 percent of the respondents agreed to the perpetrator as being of opposite sex to the victim.

4.7 Place where sexual harassment is prevalent

Both the workplace and a setting for learning, such as a school or university, are susceptible to sexual harassment. The majority of times, sexual harassment was first experienced in public areas, according to the respondents.

Table 4.5 Place where sexual harassment is prevalent

S. N.	Place	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Home	4	8
2	Public Place	29	58
3	Office	3	6
4	Bus	12	24
5	School	2	4
Total		50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 4.5 shows that 8 percent of the respondents believed that sexual harassment is likely to occur at home. 58 percent of the respondents believed sexual harassment to occur in public places. 6 percent of the respondents agreed that sexual harassment occurs in offices. 24 percent of the respondents believed that sexual harassment happens in buses whereas the remaining 4 percent believed sexual harassment happens at schools.

4.8 Possible consequence of sexual harassment

Sexual dysfunction, depression, anxiety, headaches, low self-esteem, sleep problems, and weight loss or gain are among the psychological harms that harassment victims typically experience.

Table 4.6 Possible consequence of sexual harassment

S. N.	Consequences	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Involvement in Criminal Activities	7	14
2	Depression	12	24
3	Drugs and Substance Abuse	6	12
4	Sexual victimization and Abuse	3	6
5	Anxiety, Fear, Distrust of Others	21	42
6	Missing	1	2
Total		50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 4.6 represents that 14 percent of the respondents believe that sexual harassment results in involvement in criminal activities, 24 percent agree that it results in depression, 12 percent said that it results in drugs and substance abuse, 6 percent agree to the fact that it results in victimization and abuse whereas the remaining 42 percent agree sexual harassment ends in anxiety, fear and distrust of others.

4.9 Awareness on laws and policies against cases of sexual harassment

According to the laws and policies there are different punishments to the perpetrator looking at the situation of the harassment.

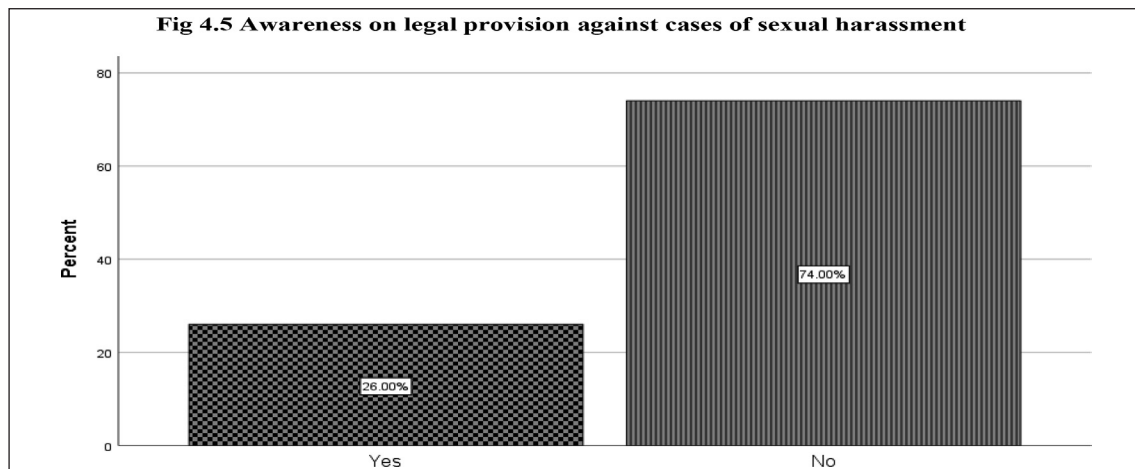


Fig 4.5 Awareness on legal provision against cases of sexual harassment

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Figure 4.5 shows that 26 percent of the respondents were aware about the laws and policies against sexual harassment whereas remaining 74 percent were not.

4.10 Experience of sexual harassment

There are different Sexual Harassment experiences adolescents face for example unwanted attention or physical contact of a sexual nature, jokes or comments about your sexuality or gender and some of them are given below.

Table No. 4.7 Experience of sexual harassment

S. N.	Experience	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Teasing in inappropriate ways	19	38
2	Offensive, inappropriate comments about your body	6	12
3	Groping	1	2
4	Showed inappropriate sexual pictures	2	4
5	Forced you to talk sexual stuffs	2	4
6	None	20	40
Total		50	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Table 4.7 represents that 38 percent of the respondents were teased in inappropriate ways, 12 percent received offensive, inappropriate comments about their bodies, 2 percent experienced groping, 4 percent of the respondents were shown inappropriate sexual pictures, 4 percent were forced to talk inappropriate sexual stuffs, and 40 percent of the respondents agreed to not having experienced sexual harassment of any sort.

5. Conclusions:

The study concludes that adolescents understand different types of sexual harassment. The majority of the respondents stated that the most likely perpetrator were the strangers and very few responses that teachers were the likely perpetrator. Similarly, the 8 percent of the respondent said that the perpetrators were of the same sex as the victims whereas 92 percent of the respondents agreed to the perpetrator as being of opposite sex to the victim. Further, the study concludes that only 26 percent of the respondents were aware about the laws and policies against sexual harassment whereas remaining 74 percent were not. This indicate that the laws and policies related with sexual harassment should be included in school level education.

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