

## SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILING OF ALLEGED PERPETRATORS OF SEXUAL OFFENCE BROUGHT FOR MEDICO-LEGAL EXAMINATION AT A TERTIARY CENTER, DHULIKHEL

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**Date of Submission** : April 2, 2025  
**Date of Acceptance** : April 10, 2025  
**Date of Publication** : August 6, 2025

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**Citation:**

Khan AS, Karki A, Pathak S, Paudel A. Socio-demographic profiling of alleged perpetrators of sexual offence brought for medico-legal examination at a tertiary center, Dhulikhel. Medphoenix. 2025;10(1):67-71.

**DOI:**<https://doi.org/10.3126/medphoenix.v10i1.82640>

**Conflict of interest:** None, **Funding:** None

**Publisher:** National Medical College Pvt. Ltd.  
**MedPhoenix - Journal of National Medical College (JNMC); 2025,10(1), available at [www.jnmc.com.np](http://www.jnmc.com.np)**

ISSN:2631-1992 (Online); ISSN:2392-425X (Print)



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**ABSTRACT**

**Introduction:** Sexual assault is defined as any sexual act committed by one (or more) person against another person without their consent. Sexual assault remains one of the most despicable and cruel crimes that persists in our country.

**Materials and methods:** The study was a retrospective cross-sectional study of medico-legal reports of alleged perpetrators examined in between the period of 13 April 2020-12 April 2024 presenting to the Department of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology, Dhulikhel Hospital. The cases will be assessed for the statistics regarding the demography to age, marital status, address, clothes changed, body injury, genital injuries, bite marks, place of incidence, age gap and relationship with the victim.

**Results:** A total of 129 alleged perpetrators brought for medico-legal examination in the forensic medicine department were included in this study. Majority of the perpetrators belonged to age group between 21 years to 30 years amounting to 34.8% of the cases. Maximum alleged perpetrators were married (58.1%). 34.8% of the alleged perpetrators belonged to O positive blood group. Only 12 out of 129 alleged perpetrators (9.3%) accepted the offence. 53.4% had changed their clothes and 42.6% of them had taken bath after the offence. Most of the incidents (27.1%) occurred in victim's house followed by perpetrator's house (19.4%). The age gap with the victim was 0-10 years in 47.3% cases. Most of the alleged perpetrators (58.1%) were known to the victim.

**Conclusion:** Most of the married young men were involved in sexual offences. Most of the alleged perpetrators had changed their clothes when brought for examination which is a major challenge in identification of the culprit. Most of the alleged perpetrators were acquaintances. Majority of the assailants were from Panchkhal. The research results could provide useful basic data and would be advantageous for policymakers and program organizers to raise awareness among the public.

**Keywords:** Perpetrator, Sexual Offence, Rape

**INTRODUCTION**

Sexual crime is extremely common and widespread, an insidious phenomenon that has serious physical, psychological, emotional and social consequences. It is estimated that one in three women and one in six men will experience sexual violence at some point in their life. Due to many physical, mental, religious, cultural, age-related and social factors, only 15-20% of women, those who have been sexually assaulted report it to the police; therefore, the true incidence of sexual violence is unknown and will probably never be accurately determined.<sup>1</sup>

Sexual offences are a global phenomenon that captivates people at all societal levels. Any sexual act, attempt to

obtain a sexual reward, unwanted sexual remarks or advances, and acts to traffic or otherwise directed against a person's sexuality, using coercion, threats of harm, or physical force, by any person regardless of relationship to the victim in any setting, including but not limited to home and work, are all considered sexual harassment according to World Health Organization (WHO).<sup>2</sup>

In certain situations, rape of a non-partner woman is particularly common, and victims are typically wives or girlfriends, but they can also be men.<sup>3</sup> Life sentence in prison, with or without whipping, is the penalty for rape under Section 357 of the Criminal Code in Nigeria. It is deemed that a 12-year-old is incapable of engaging in

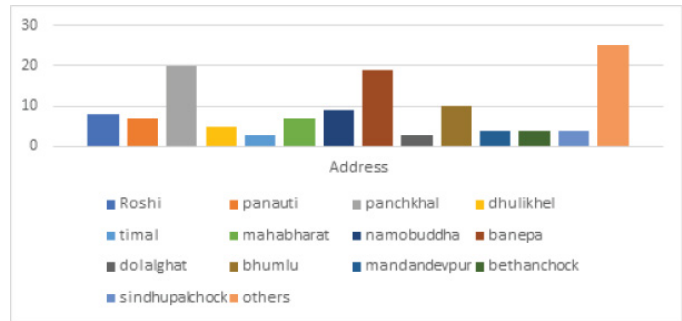
sexual activity, but a boy 14 years of age and older can be found guilty of rape. A man cannot rape his wife unless they are legally separated because consent to marriage entails consent to sexual activity. Prostitutes are among the people who can be the female victim. After any amount of time, a rape accusation may be made. Sexual offenses can be classified into two categories: those that fall under the purview of psychiatrists (such as masochism, indecent exposure, etc.) and those that fall under the purview of the law, such as rape, buggery, incest, bestiality, and indecent assault. Defilement, defined as having sex with girls younger than 16 years old, is typically committed by a close relative or someone they know; complete strangers are rarely involved.<sup>4</sup>

**MATERIALS AND METHODS:**

A retrospective cross-sectional study was conducted in between the period of 13 April 2020 - 12 April 2024 at the Department of Forensic Medicine and Toxicology, Dhulikhel Hospital. An ethical approval was taken from Institutional Review Committee, Kathmandu University School of Medical Sciences (IRC-KUSMS). The department is responsible for conducting medico-legal examination of sexual assault victims and assailant on requisition of investigating authority. Participants include all alleged sexual offence cases which were presented to Department of Forensic Medicine, Dhulikhel Hospital, KUSMS for medico-legal examination. The cases were assessed for the statistics regarding the demography to age, marital status, address, clothes changed, body injury, genital injuries, bite marks, place of incidence, age gap and relationship with the victim. The data was initially entered in MS Excel then analysis was done with Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27. The data were categorized, tabulated and summarized in terms of frequency and percentage.

**RESULTS:**

Data records of 4 years from 13<sup>th</sup> April 2020- 12<sup>th</sup> April 2024 were studied in which 129 cases of alleged perpetrators of sexual offence brought for medico-legal examination was recorded. In this duration, Panchkhal municipality reported highest number of alleged perpetrators of sexual offence i.e.15.5% which was followed by Banepa and Bhumlu municipalities as shown in figure 1.



**Figure 1: Distribution of alleged perpetrators municipal area wise**

Most of the perpetrators (34.9%) were of 21-30 years age, followed by 31-40 years age. 34.9% of the assailants belonged to O positive blood group, followed by A positive blood group (31%). Majority of the assailants followed Hinduism (63.6%) followed by Buddhism (23.3%). Most of the perpetrators (58.1%) were known to the victim, two were friends and others were neighbor, husband, boyfriend, teacher, close relatives and few were even family members and most of the married individuals were involved in sexual offence (58.14%) as depicted in table.1.

**Table 1: Socio-demographic variables of alleged perpetrators**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Age</b>		
0-10	0	0
11-20	22	17.05
21-30	45	34.9
31-40	31	24.03
41-50	11	8.5
51-60	15	11.6
>60	5	3.9
<b>Marital status</b>		
Married	75	
Unmarried	52	
Divorced	2	
<b>Blood group</b>		
A positive	40	31
B positive	22	17.1
B negative	3	2.3
O positive	45	34.9
AB positive	14	10.9
O negative	3	2.3
Unknown	2	1.6
<b>Religion</b>		
Hindu	82	63.6
Buddhist	30	23.3
Muslim	2	1.5
Unknown	15	11.6

The cases of sexual offence occurred mostly in victim’s house (27.1%), which was followed by perpetrator’s house (19.3%) as shown in fig.4. Table 2 illustrates that most of the perpetrators had no injuries on body (58.9%), genitalia (97.7%) and no bite marks (99.2%) when they were brought for examination. 97.7% of the perpetrators were non-reactive to STDs and only one case was reactive for STDs (0.8%). Pubic hair was non-matted in most of the perpetrators (99.2%) and one of them had matted pubic hair (0.8%), treatment was not required in 93.8% cases and 6.2% cases required the same, most of the perpetrators did not accept the offence (90.7%) whereas 9.3% of them accepted their offence.

**Table 2: Distribution of different variables**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Bodily injuries</b>		
Present	53	41.1
Absent	76	58.9
<b>Genital Injuries</b>		
Present	3	2.3
Absent	126	97.7
<b>Bite Marks</b>		
Present	1	0.8
Absent	128	99.2
<b>STDs</b>		
Reactive	1	0.8
Non-Reactive	26	97.7
Unknown	2	1.5
<b>Treatment</b>		
Required	8	6.2
Not Required	21	93.8
<b>Condition of Pubic Hair</b>		
Matted	1	0.8
Not Matted	128	99.2
<b>History</b>		
Offence Accepted	12	9.3
Not Accepted	117	90.7

Most of the perpetrators changed their clothes (53.5%) and washed their body (57.4%) when they were brought for medico-legal examination as shown in figure 2 & 3. Age gap between perpetrator and victim was 0-10 years in 47.3% of the cases, in two of the cases, age gap was >60 years (figure 5).

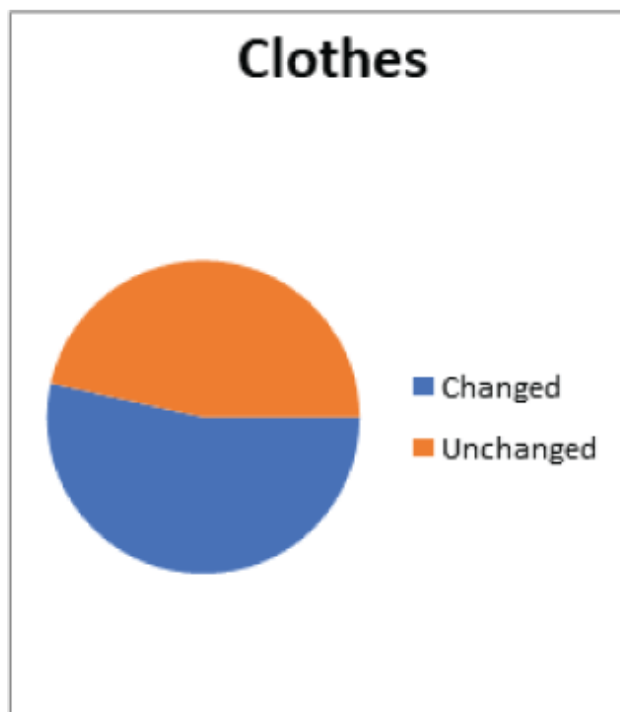


Figure 2: Distribution of clothes changed after incident



Figure 3: Distribution of body washed after incident

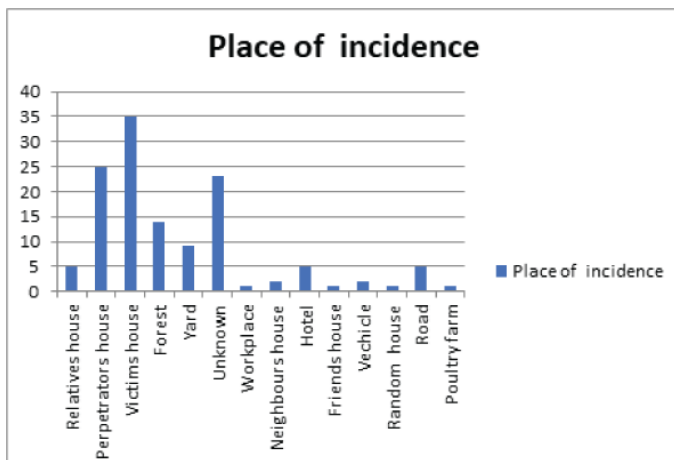


Figure 4: Distribution as per the place of incidence

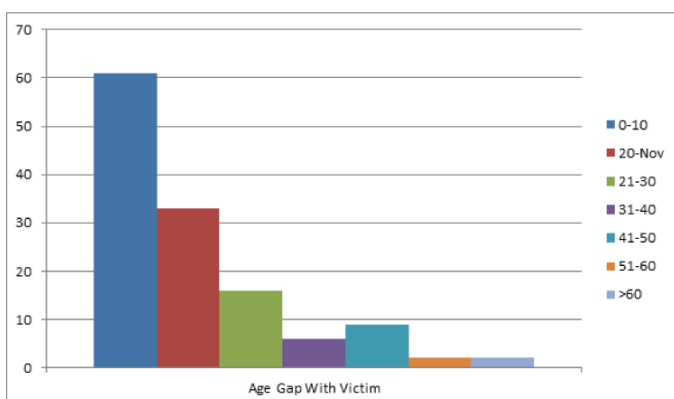


Figure 5: Distribution of age gap with victim

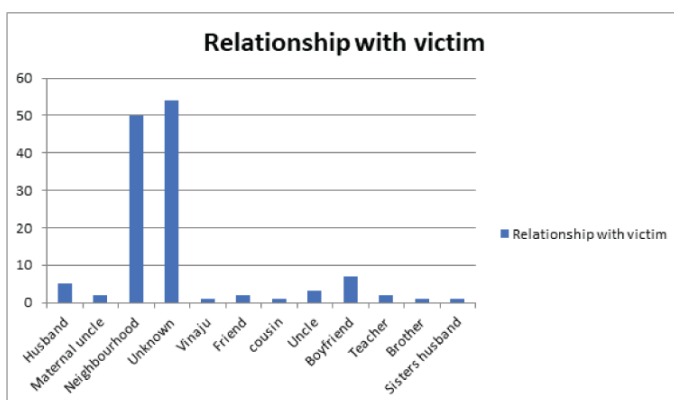


Figure 6: Relationship with victim

**DISCUSSION**

In terms of the victim’s relationship to the alleged offender, most were related to acquaintances (87%) as opposed to strangers (13%).<sup>1</sup> similarly, in our study, 58.1% were acquaintances and remaining 41.9% were not known to the victim. Perpetrators were typically single in the bulk of cases the center receives reports of.<sup>5</sup> In contrast, in our study most of the perpetrators were married (58.14%). The victim’s home (40%) was the location of abuse most frequently reported.<sup>6</sup> Similarly,

in our study victim’s home (27.1%) was the location of offence most frequently reported.

77% of sexual assault offenders were adults, and 23% offenders were under the age of 18. Compared to forced fondling (27%), forced rapes (17%), and forced sodomy (36%), juvenile offenders made up a comparatively smaller percentage of the offenders in these cases.<sup>7</sup> In our study, majority of the offenders belonged to the age group 21-30 years(34.9%). 3.9% of the offenders were more than 60 years old.

The frequency of offenders within age groups decreased gradually with age, reaching half the peak frequency by the late 30s.<sup>7</sup> Similar to this finding, the frequency of offenders in 51 to 60 years age group dropped to 11.6%.

According to a study on gender-based violence in Sierra Leone, 27% of students said that their lecturers and teachers were the ones who committed the crimes. According to a study done in Yaoundé, Cameroon, 8% of GBV cases were committed by teachers, family friends, neighbors, and strangers and 30% of cases were committed by the victims’ classmates or other school friends.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, in our study in 1.6% of cases teachers were involved in sexual offence, 1.6% of cases friends were involved, 38.8% cases neighbors were involved and in 41.9% of cases perpetrators were unknown to victim.

Allowing sexual violence to continue unchecked in schools can have a serious negative impact on student achievement. For example, it has frequently been observed that victims of sexual violence stop going to school altogether or transfer because they fear they will continue to be abused, especially if their abusers are permitted to remain. Girls’ underachievement and irregular attendance were found to be significantly influenced by gender-based violence, including sexual intimidation, verbal abuse, and physical assault, according to Dunne et al. in a study on the effects of gendered school experiences on retention and achievements in Botswana and Ghana. According to a Botswana survey, 11% of the sample’s female students were seriously considering quitting school due to persistent harassment from teachers. Hence, gender-based violence represents a serious obstacle to learning causing not only physical harm but also severe psychological and educational adverse consequences.<sup>8</sup>

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