

Prevalence of Sexual Abuse against Male Children Enrolled in Rehabilitation Centers of the Kathmandu Valley

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Abstract

This study is based on the prevalence of sexual abuse against male children and was conducted in two rehabilitation centers located in the Kathmandu Valley. Thirty male respondents from two rehabilitation centers located at Boudha and Lubhu were taken for research sampling. The study is descriptive and exploratory in nature, in which both primary and secondary data have been used. Face-to-face interviews with respondents, key informants' interviews, and a questionnaire were used to collect the primary data. The qualitative data analysis software, NVivo, was used to code and classify the transcription into different themes. Analytical and descriptive methods were used to analyze and interpret the data. Due to a lack of awareness, victim support, and robust police investigations, street children are victims of all types of child abuse. Boys on the street are given drugs, which eventually cause addiction and make it simple for abusers to turn kids into puppets. Abusers prey on their frailty by offering them cash, gifts, and drugs.

Keywords: prevalence, sexual abuse, male children & rehabilitation center

Background of the Study

Child sexual abuse is children's involvement for sexual purposes or in any kind of sexual activity where they are unable to give informed consent to an adult. Informed consent for any type of sexual abuse with children under the age of 18 is not accepted under current Nepalese law.

Playing sexual games, using sexual words, showing sexual pictures, touching a child's genitals or making the child touch someone's genital or private part, having sex with children, penetration with a finger, penis, any part of the body, or any object inside the vagina, in the mouth, or in the anus of children for sexual purposes of pleasure all count as child sexual abuse. Furthermore, there are growing issues with using the Internet or any social media platform, such as Facebook. This includes downloading sexual images of children, watching child pornography, uploading child pornography, or doing anything sexually related, as well as disseminating an obscene child's nude picture (CeLLRRD, 2015).

Child sexual abuse (CSA) is defined as any coerced, manipulated, or forced sexual contact with a child by an older family member or extended family member (Magalhes, 1998). Sexual exploitation of children includes child prostitution, child pornography, and the participation of a child in pornographic performances. The terms "sexual abuse" and "sexual exploitation" require clarification as above, as they are interchangeably used for purposes of criminal prosecution. Children who have not yet reached the legal age for sexual activities can be subjected to sexual abuse or sexual exploitation. (CE, 2007).

According to the Act related to Children of Nepal 2018, a person below the age of 18 is considered a "child." Similarly, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child defines "child" as "every human being under the age of 18 years, unless the applicable law provides for attainment of majority earlier." (GON, 2018)

On a global scale, in the early 20th century, any form of child sexual abuse was considered a very rare occurrence. In the 1950s and 1960s, in developed countries, small numbers of case studies reported incest involving fathers and their daughters. In the 1960s and 1970s, as a result of the women's movement, more light was shed on the sexual abuse of women and children, although the focus was primarily, and perhaps understandably, on girls.

Nepal has predominantly been a patriarchal society where women are generally subordinate to men. Men were considered to be the leaders of the family and superior to women. The myth of a man's being strong and safe has prevailed in Nepalese society since the early period. However, because of these gender roles, sexual abuse against male youths and children has gone unnoticed.

In Nepalese society, rape is the only form of child sexual abuse; other forms are not taken as seriously as rape. There is a lack of awareness among people that boys could also be sexually abused by sex offenders. Both sexes of children are at high risk of becoming child sex offenders in Nepal (Saathi, 2017).

Despite an increased interest in child sexual abuse, policymakers, researchers, and the media have tended to focus primarily on female victims. Consequently, the sexual abuse of male children is often little understood and commonly goes unnoticed. A key reason for this is that Nepalese social and cultural norms are still controlled by patriarchy, which believes that males are immune to any kind of sexual abuse. Due to this, the issues related to sexual abuse against male children are not being investigated.

As per the record of the Nepal Police in FY 2016–17, there were altogether 743 cases of rape. Out of which, 233 girls were victimized in the Eastern Region of the country, whereas this number was just 32 in the case of the Far Western Region (CCWB, 2017). 995 rapes were reported during the fiscal year 2017-2018. There are 261 cases involving girls under the age of ten. In addition, there are a total of 402 attempted rape cases registered with the Nepal Police (CCWB, 2018). In fiscal year 2018/019, the Nepal Police received reports of 1,420 rape cases, 298 of which were against girls under the age of ten. In addition, there are a total of 399 attempted rape cases registered with the Nepal Police. This is one of the cruelest crimes against children. According to Nepal Police data, a total of 463 children

were victims of gender-based violence. Among them, 149 are of human trafficking, 256 are of domestic violence, and the remaining are of child marriage (NCRC, 2019).

The series of data collected every fiscal year by the NCRC and CCWB is mostly focused on rape cases against female victims, and it reflects that investigations into other forms of child sexual abuse as well as sexual abuse against male children have not been focused. It is important that the actual situation of the male children in Nepal be investigated and disseminated among all relevant stakeholders.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to explore the sexual abuse against the male children enrolled in rehabilitation centers in the Kathmandu Valley. The specific objectives are:

- to reveal the different forms of sexual abuse against the male children.
- to find the type of abusers and the relationship between the child and the abuser.
- to assess the consequences of sexual abuse among male children.

Literature Review

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines child abuse and child maltreatment as "all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development, or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power" (WHO, 2016). Anything that individuals, institutions, or processes do or fail to do that directly or indirectly harms children or damages their prospect of safe and healthy development into adulthood. The main categories of child abuse are physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, sexual exploitation and abuse, and exploitation (SC, 2019).

The World Health Organization distinguishes four types of child maltreatment: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional (or psychological) abuse, and neglect (WHO & ISPCAN, 2006).

Physical abuse

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines physical abuse as the intentional use of physical force against a child that results in harm to the child's health, survival, development, or dignity. This includes hitting, beating, kicking, shaking, biting, strangling, scalding, burning, poisoning, and suffocating (WHO & ISPCAN, 2006).

Non-accidental use of physical force that inadvertently or deliberately causes a risk of or actual injury or suffering to a child. Physical force includes but is not limited to hitting, shaking, kicking, pinching, pushing/pulling, grabbing, burning, genital mutilation, torture, and other physical acts (SC, 2019).

Sexual abuse

Child sexual abuse (CSA) is a form of child abuse in which an adult or older adolescent abuses a child for sexual stimulation. Forms of CSA include asking or pressuring a child to engage in sexual activities (regardless of the outcome), indecent exposure of the genitals to a child, displaying pornography to a child, actual sexual contact with a child, physical contact with the child's genitals, viewing of the child's genitalia without physical contact, or using a child to produce child pornography (NLM, 2008).

Sexual abuse may include but is not limited to indecent touching or exposure, explicit sexual language towards or about a child, and grooming. Sexual exploitation is any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes. Be aware that technology is a tool sometimes used to sexually exploit a child (SC, 2019).

Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is any kind of abuse that is emotional rather than physical in nature. It can include anything from verbal abuse and constant criticism to more subtle tactics such as intimidation, manipulation, and a refusal to ever be pleased. Three general patterns of abusive behavior include aggressing, denying, and minimizing (UIUC, 2007). Emotional abuse is harm to a child's emotional, intellectual, mental, or psychological development. It includes but is not limited to any humiliating or degrading treatment (e.g., bad name-calling, threats, yelling/screaming/cursing at, teasing, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming, etc.) (SC, 2019).

Neglect/Negligent Treatment

Failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, either deliberately or through negligence, is also a form of child abuse. Neglect includes but is not limited to failing to provide adequate food, sufficient or seasonally-appropriate clothing, and/or shelter; failing to prevent harm; failing to ensure adequate supervision; failing to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment or providing inappropriate medical treatment (e.g., administering medication when not authorized); or failing to provide a safe physical environment (e.g., exposure to violence, unsafe programming locations, unsafe sleeping practices, releasing a child to an unauthorized adult, access to weapons or harmful objects, failing to child-proof a space that children will occupy, etc.) (SC, 2019).

Nepal's Constitution defines the rights of the child as follows: "Every child shall have the right to education, health, maintenance, proper care, sports, entertainment, and overall personality development." No child shall be subjected to child marriage, be transported illegally, abducted, kidnapped, or taken hostage.

Section 7, subsection (5), of the Act relating to Children of 2075 (2018) states that every child shall have the right to protection against any type of physical or mental violence and torture, hatred, inhuman treatment, gender-based mistreatment, sexual harassment, and

exploitation. Every child shall also be protected from being exploited economically (GON, 2018).

Child Sexual Abuse(CSA) in the World

The prevalence of child sexual abuse in Costa Rica, Spain, Switzerland (Geneva), Norway (Oslo), and Canada are 45, 37, 23, 18, and 17 percent, respectively (UNICEF, 2001).

In Bangladesh, the official figure for rape was 16.26 percent of victims between 1991 and 1996. A survey of child sexual abuse has shown that half of the girl children in the sample have experienced some form of sexual abuse. The survey states, "It appears that no age is a safe age" (Hayward, 2000).

The Crime in India 1997 study shows that the number of rape victims is increasing. A figure from Delhi has shown that in the first six months of 1994, nearly two out of three rape victims were children. In 1997, there were 770 officially reported child rapes for children under the age of ten, and 3644 for children aged ten to sixteen. At least some 600,000–700,000 Indian children are likely to have experienced sexual abuse, most from family members (Hayward, 2000).

At least 60 percent of rape victims in Delhi are under 16 years of age. The incidence of adolescent rape has increased by 26 percent between 1992 and 1996. 40 percent of the total cases of child sexual abuse are incestuous, with abusers being uncles or male cousins (UNICEF, 2001).

About 15 percent to 25 percent of women and 5% of men in the United States were sexually abused when they were children. Most sexual abuse offenders are acquainted with their victims; approximately 30% are relatives of the child. Strangers are the offenders in approximately 10% of cases of child sexual abuse (Whealine, 2016).

Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) in Nepal

As per the record of the Nepal Police for FY 2016/17, there were altogether 743 cases of rape. Out of which, 233 girls were victimized in the eastern region of the country, whereas this number was just 32 in the far western region. In the previous fiscal year (FY) 2015-16, 681 girls were victims of rape.

In the FY 2016/17, a total of 1,131 rape cases were reported to the Nepal Police, whereas 995 cases were reported in the FY 2017/18. There are 261 cases involving girls under the age of ten. In addition, the Nepal Police have registered a total of 402 attempted rape cases. CCWB monitors the media in cases of child rights violations. 243 of the total cases involved child rape or attempted child rape. Rape is typically committed by a familiar person, such as a neighbor, a teacher, a member of the army or police, a government employee, or a house owner. Online, children are also victimized, exploited, and abused. (CCWB, 2018).

Many children in Kathmandu are involved in rag-picking jobs, which is the worst form of child labor. Children, like ragpickers, live a free-style life without guardians and employers. Ragpickers are highly likely to be involved in criminal activities and sexual behaviors

through their own compulsion or adult coercion. Among 50 children aged 5 to 17, 86 percent are aware of the condom, 82 percent have heard about pornography, 80 percent have watched pornography, 58 percent have had kissing experience, 60 percent have caught breasts, 58 percent have seen others having sex, 20 percent have had sexual intercourse using a condom, 60 percent are aware of STIs and HIV/AIDS, 8% have raped girls, and 345 have had sex with people of the same gender.

According to CWIN's annual report, 59 cases of child sexual abuse and bullying have been reported. Out of 437 rape cases, 261 involved children under the age of 18, and 110 involved children under the age of 10. Street children are shown to be most vulnerable, coming to Kathmandu from outside the valley. A 2008 study by CWIN Nepal reported that boys, though fewer, are vulnerable to sexual exploitation. The commercial sexual exploitation of children through displacement, forced migration, disruption of family units, etc. in urban areas increased during and after the 10 years of conflict in Nepal. Street children are shown to be most vulnerable, coming to Kathmandu from outside the valley (CWIN, 2014).

Males and Sexual Abuse and Exploitation

Up to 4.8% of males in the US had pre-pubertal sexual contact with adult males, often an unrelated acquaintance or stranger. Young boys often report that the abuse started while playing, wrestling, tickling, or horse play with a family member or an admired adult. The child who is being sexually abused does not solicit these interactions but is manipulated by trust, coercion, or violence (Valente, 2005).

Research Methods

The study is descriptive and exploratory in nature. It carried out information and data gathering regarding sexual abuse against male children and the working organizations where respondents reside. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected from primary and secondary sources. The research was carried out at Kathmandu's Sober Rehabilitation Center and Voice of the Children, both of which are located within the Kathmandu Valley. The primary reason for selecting these organizations as sites is because both organizations work with the National Center for Children at Risk (Toll Free No. 104) to rescue the children at risk. The majority of children rescued by the organizations are boys who

were street children and drug abusers.

The sample size was chosen as the foundation for identifying vulnerable children within the organization. Respondents for interview were selected in two ways: each interviewee was selected, and a list of children was prepared with the help of key personnel from NGOs working on the issue. The total number of 112 boys residing in the rehabilitation center is undetermined, and 30 sample boys between 14 and 18 years old were selected by purposive sampling for the study. Face-to-face interviews, questionnaires, KII, and case study methods were used for data collection in this study. Twenty respondents were taken for a face-to face interview, whereas ten respondents were provided with a questionnaire with a set of open-

ended questions as one of the organizations did not allow the children to give interviews on a sensitive issue like CSA. The qualitative data analysis software named NVivo was used to code and classify the transcription into different themes. Analytical and descriptive methods were used to analyze and interpret the data.

Results and Discussion

In terms of age group, 14- to 15-year-olds occupied 50% of the seats, 16- to 17-year-olds occupied 43.33%, and 18-year-olds occupied 6.67%. Out of 30 respondents, the majority were street children. 83% of the children were discovered to be street children who had been living on the street day and night, while 17% were school dropout children who roamed around with friends or random people to live a carefree life and consume drugs. In terms of caste and ethnicity, out of 30 respondents, Tamang have the highest position with a 20% percentage, whereas Muslims have the lowest percentage of 3.33%. Brahmin and Dalit hold equal percentages of 16.67% each (N = 5); likewise, 13.33% belong to Chhetri, and the rest, 30%, belong to ethnic groups. The majority of parents' occupations are in labor, whereas parents involved in agriculture and small vendor businesses have an equal percentage of 7%, while 17% belong to the skilled worker group.

- **Knowledge of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA)**

Children were exposed to information regarding child sexual abuse both from outside and inside the organization. Few people spoke openly about their observations or experiences with child sexual abuse, as if it were normal for them. Some boys could not answer, but with the word "child abuse," they only knew that they should call the police.

Table 1: Knowledge of CSA

Knowledge of the CSA	No. of children	Percentage
Seen or heard about sexual activity outside the organization	13	43
Learned inside the organization	6	20
Don't have knowledge of the CSA	11	37
Total	30	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2020

- *Table 1 shows that 43% of the boys mentioned that they had seen or heard about sexual activities before coming into the organization, 20% of the boys have learned about child sexual abuse inside the organization, and 37% of the boys don't have any knowledge about child sexual abuse. Children who felt shy and awkward about having a discussion on CSA, and those children who were new at the organization, responded with the answer, "Don't have knowledge of CSA".*

- **Forms of Child Sexual Abuse faced by respondent**

According to this study, 14% of children disclosed their experience with child sexual abuse. The use of explicit words was included in verbal sexual abuse. exposure to indecent images or videos (aka "pornography") that depicted sexual abuse or sexual activities,

without being involved, and the solicitation of children for sexual purposes, were included in non-physical sexual abuse.

Table 2: Forms of Child Sexual Abuse

	Forms of Child Sexual Abuse	Number	Percentage
	Exposure to indecent images/video (pornography)	6	43
	Witnessed sexual abuse or sexual activities, without being participated.	6	43
	Use of explicit words	1	7
	Solicitation of children for sexual purposes	1	7
	Total	14*	100.00
*Out of 30 respondents, only 14 had experienced forms of CSA.			

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Out of 14 respondents, 43% (N = 6) of the children were exposed to pornography, and 43% have witnessed sexual abuse or sexual activities without participating. 7% were subjected to explicit language from the abuser, and 7% were approached for sexual purposes.

The respondents were rescued from vulnerable situations and enrolled in the organization, where, out of 30 respondents, 47% were rescued by the National Center for Children At-Risk (Toll Free No. 104), 23% were rescued by organization staff, 13% of children were rescued by police, 13% of respondents were rescued by an unknown person, and 3% of the children were rescued by a family member. The respondents are children who were rescued and kept for recovery. 7% of respondents have spent less than 15 days with the children, 30% have spent 1 month to 6 months with the children, and 53% of the children have spent more than 6 months in the organization. while 10% of the children are repeating their stay at the organization.

These children had been in the organization for more than six months before being released to their families. They again recused themselves from the vulnerable situation and enrolled in the organization for the second time. In terms of level of knowledge about child sexual abuse, 43% of respondents stated that they were aware of sexual activities prior to joining the organization, 20% of respondents learned about child sexual abuse within the organization, and 37% were unaware of child sexual abuse. Out of 30, 14 respondents have faced sexual abuse. 43% of children have been exposed to pornography and have witnessed sexual abuse or sexual activities without participating; 7% have heard the abuser use explicit language; and 7% have been solicited for sexual purposes.

The qualitative data reveals that most of the children were abused by strangers. Most strangers who abuse children are drug addicts, whereas few children mention that they have seen prostitutes and third-gender people abusing their friends. The study reveals that street children are easily exposed to sexual activity, so they learn from different people and try to imitate as well as abuse their friends and/or other children.

The key informants mentioned that boys are especially abused by pedophiles, who seek sexual pleasure from children. These people use grooming techniques like earning the trust of children and their family members by helping them or giving them gifts.

Children on the streets lack food, shelter, and are deprived of love and care, so they mostly rely on drugs or dendrites or accept money or gifts instead of doing some work for random people to cope with their vulnerable situation. Another method is for abusers to take advantage of a child who has lost control due to drug abuse. The major reasons for CSA are the economic condition, substance use and abuse, exposure to pornography, and lack of attention and awareness. Here, the data shows that when children live in an atmosphere where the status of child protection is very weak and the poverty level is high, bad-natured people find it easier to take advantage of weaknesses and abuse children. The study found that children are being disgusted for being abused, which leads to children running away from home, abusing drugs, and becoming suicidal as a response to the problem. Similarly, children are also having psychological problems like becoming aggressive or admiring sexual abuse as a form of pleasure. One reason for the low reporting of sexual abuse is fear of the police and a lack of awareness about both child sexual abuse and the reporting process. Another reason for not reporting child sexual abuse is, children are provided with money or gifts to keep quiet and not to report to anyone by the abuser.

Conclusion

Child sexual abuse is an alarming problem all over Nepal, but boys being abused for sexual purposes is a hidden problem in Nepal. The sexual abuse of women and girls is highlighted in different media, but the fact is that every child is vulnerable to sexual abuse regardless of gender roles. Perpetrators can be anyone, known or unknown, they do not come with a tag or mark. Most of the boys are unaware that child sexual abuse is a crime, and such incidents go unreported.

Street children are suffering from every form of child abuse due to a lack of awareness, a lack of support for victims, and a lack of strong police investigations. Boys on the street are provided drugs, which ultimately lead to addiction, which makes it easy for abusers to make children puppets. Abusers take advantage of their weakness by providing money, gifts, and drugs. In context of reporting the incident, none of the cases were reported, and a major reason for not reporting to the authorities is that the children did not know what should be done after the abuse, and many children have no idea about what had happened to him. When children do not have knowledge about Child Sexual Abuses and at the same time if children are surrounded by negative environment where sexual activities happen around them frequently then such things become normal.

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