



A STUDY TO ASSESS THE PREVALENCE OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT AMONG SCHOOL-GOING CHILDREN (CLASS VI TO VIII) STUDYING IN SELECTED RURAL SCHOOLS OF DELHI- NCR

Meenaxi Chauhan*

Nursing Officer (NDDTC, AIIMS) *Corresponding Author

Dr. Sharda Rastogi

Former Faculty (RAK COLLEGE OF NURSING)

Mrs. Mitali Biswas

Assistant Professor (RAK COLLEGE OF NURSING)

ABSTRACT

Background: The incidence of child sexual abuse is reported to be 53% where the children were exposed to one or more forms of sexual abuse. Among the children who reported being abused, 53% were boys and 47% were girls. The study also highlighted that abuse starts at an age as low as 5 years and the severity increases from the age of 10 years, peaking at 12 to 15 years. The age wise distribution of its findings indicates that 39% children who were sexually abused fell in the age group of 5-12 years, 35% in the age group of 15-18 years and about 24% in the age group of 13-14 years, at the time of abuse. In 50% of the cases, the perpetrators happened to be someone known to the child or in a position of trust and responsibility. **Aim:** The aim of the study was to assess the prevalence of sexual harassment among school-going children studying in selected rural schools of Delhi- NCR. **Methodology:** Quantitative, exploratory research approach with survey design was used to assess the prevalence of sexual harassment among 220 school-going children as samples in selected rural school of Delhi NCR using structured questionnaire tool. **Results:** Findings suggested that the total prevalence of sexual harassment among school-going children was 50.45, out of which sexual harassment among girls was 30 whereas for boys it was 20.45. Among the school-going children 23.63% were touched inappropriately which comes out to be the highest among all type of sexual harassment and 35.9% children has fear of being sexually harassed. **Conclusions:** It was concluded that out of total samples 50.45% were sexually harassed including both boys (20.45 %) and girls (30%).

KEYWORDS : Sexual harassment, prevalence.

INTRODUCTION

Sending your children to school away from you for the first time is very terrifying but gradually this feeling eases. Schools were considered one of the safest places for children but recent data records on crimes against school children counters this belief.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. [1]

The concept of sexual harassment is a relatively new one being coined from the 1970s onwards, although other related concepts have existed prior to this in many cultures. The term sexual harassment was used in 1973 in "Saturn's Rings", a report authored by Mary Rowe to the then President and Chancellor of MIT about various forms of gender issues. [2]

Most victims do not speak out about any incident of harassment as they believe no action will be taken even if they report it to family or police. Many a times the victims are discouraged by family or heads of institution or authorities due to fear that the victim will be blamed as blaming is mostly used as counter strategy. Women are told that they themselves "invited" the rape or harassment. [3]

After the Nirbhaya case, awareness of the youth has increased and there is also an increase in the number of cases being reported to the police. According to a report of Delhi police cited by Dna.com, there has been 16% increase in registration of crime against women in the city with 11,683 such cases being lodged between January 1 and October 20, 2014 against 10,064 cases registered during the same period in 2013. Delhi has recorded over 3,450 cases of molestation, 1,024 cases of eve-teasing and 2,563 cases of harassment as against 2,544, 793 and 2,553 cases in that year. This goes to show the cases of sexual harassment were happening but reporting rates were low due to lack of awareness and support from society and system. [4]

As per NCRB records, the different types of sex-related crimes against children have increased significantly during 2012-16. The table below indicates the increasing trend of different types of sex-related crimes against children. [5]

Type of Crime	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Rape	8,541	12,363	13,766	10,854	19,765
Assault on women (girl children) with intent to outrage their modesty	-	-	11,335	8,390	-
Insult to the modesty of women (girl children)	-	-	444	348	-
Kidnaping & Abduction	18,266	28,167	37,854	41,893	54,723
Buying of girls for prostitution	15	6	14	11	7
Selling of girls for prostitution	108	100	82	111	122
Procurement of minor girls	809	1,224	2,020	3,087	2,465
Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act	-	-	8,904	14,913	12,228

Table 1: Trend Of Sex Related Crimes Against Children In India By Ncrb

Sexual harassment can have a very devastating effect on the individual. That includes psychological health, physical well being and vocational development. Individuals who are being harassed are forced to leave their job, career goals, job assignments, educational programmes or academic majors, the reactions are similar to those reactions due to stress. [6]

Children should be aware that when they are being harassed, they should report to an appropriate person. When an assault occurs it is usually an acquaintance, a friend, or a date. In the ongoing relationship victim considers rape as his/her own fault or think it is not considered rape. They should be provided with information that violence of any form should not be accepted and is not the victim's fault and help need to be sought.

Avoiding sexual harassment right from initiation point will halt the irreparable trauma caused due to sexual harassment. [7]

METHODOLOGY:

Quantitative, exploratory research approach with survey design was used to assess the prevalence of sexual harassment among 220 school-going children as samples in selected rural school of Delhi NCR using structured questionnaire tool.

TOOL 1: Sociodemographic datasheet

The socio demographic profile consists of items regarding personal information such as academic class, gender, type of family, monthly family income, education of parents, type of tuition and behavioral response of student.

TOOL 2: Structured prevalence questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of 12 items which are the behaviors associated with sexual harassment to assess the prevalence of sexual harassment among school-going children and 2 other items related to sexual harassment. The respondents needed to respond in yes or no to the statements depending on whether that has happened with them or not.

The tools were validated by the experts in the field of Psychiatry, Pediatrics, Community health and mental health nursing. The study was delimited to students who were studying in 6th to 8th class of the selected school and who were present at the time of data collection. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Reliability of the tool was done using Cronbach's Alpha and came out to be 0.9.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATION:

The study was conducted after the formal approval of the committee of

RAK College of Nursing. Consent was taken from the parents/ guardians of the children. Privacy and confidentiality of the study participants was maintained throughout the study.

RESULTS:

The sample consists of 220 school-going children at the selected school during the time of data collection. Frequency and percentage were computed to describe sample characteristics and are depicted in the table 2.

Findings suggested that the total prevalence of sexual harassment among school-going children was 50.45, out of which sexual harassment among girls was 30 whereas for boys it was 20.45. Among the school-going children 23.63% were touched inappropriately which come out to be the highest among all type of sexual

Table 2: Frequency And Percentage Distribution Of Sample Characteristics Of School-going Children N= 220

S. NO.	SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS	DESCRIPTION	NO. OF SAMPLE	PERCENT AGE (%)
1	Academic Class	6 th	86	39
		7 th	64	29
		8 th	70	32
2	Sex	Male	110	50
		Female	110	50
3	Type of Family	Joint	63	29
		Nuclear	145	66
		Single Parent	12	5
4	Family Income	Below 20,000	166	75
		20,001-40,000	33	15
		40,001-60,000	17	8
		60,001 and Above	4	2
5	Education of Father	Illiterate	27	12
		Primary	37	17
		Secondary	71	32
		Senior Secondary	52	24
		Graduate	21	10
6	Education of Mother	Illiterate	78	35
		Primary	44	20
		Secondary	69	31
		Senior Secondary	20	9
		Graduate	1	1
7	Type of Tuition	Home Tuition	18	8
		Outside Tuition	143	65
		No Tuition	59	27
8	Behavioural Response of Student	Shy	46	21
		Outspoken	87	39
		Fearless	37	17
		Fearful	50	23

The prevalence of various types of sexual harassment was calculated and frequency and percentage is shown in the form of table (table: 3) and graphs (figure: 1).

Table 3: Frequency And Percentage Distribution Of Various Types Of Sexual Harassment Among School-going Children N= 220

S. NO.	STATEMENT	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1.	Have you ever been stalked upon?	20	9.09%
2.	Has anyone ever touched you inappropriately which made you uncomfortable?	52	23.63%
3.	Has anyone ever asked you to touch their body inappropriately which made you uncomfortable?	10	4.54%
4.	Has anyone made sexual joke or comment to you, which made you uncomfortable?	51	23.18%
5.	Have you ever faced eve teasing (like someone made kissing sound, whistled at you, winked at you, licked their lips while looking at you) anywhere?	38	17.27%

6.	Has anyone showed or gave you pictures, messages, notes or photographs to you, which are sexual in nature which made you uncomfortable?	9	4.09%
7.	Has anyone pinched or brushed up against you in sexual way?	18	8.18%
8.	Has anyone forced you to kiss/hug which felt uncomfortable and inappropriate?	2	0.9%
9.	Has anyone forced you to show your private parts to them?	2	0.9%
10.	Has anyone showed you their private parts?	2	0.9%
11.	Does anyone keep staring at you which made you uncomfortable?	38	17.27%
12.	Has anyone calling/called you desperately to meet them alone?	4	1.82%
13.	Total no. of school going children who faced sexual harassment	111/220	

Apart from that comparison of percentage and frequency was also computed and presented related to sexual harassment among boys and girls which is described in table:4

Figure 1: Bar diagram showing statement wise percentage distribution of sexual harassment among school-going children

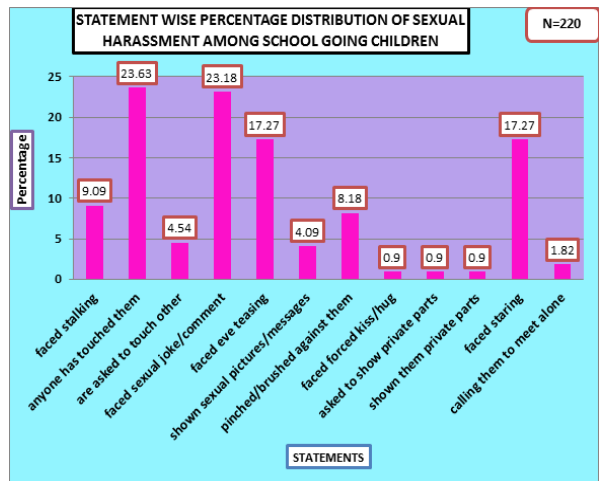


Table 4: Comparison Of Frequency And Percentage Distribution Of Sexual Harassment Among School-going Girls And Boys N= 220

S. NO.	STATEMENT	GIRLS (N-110)		BOYS (N-110)	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Have you ever been stalked upon?	18	16.36%	2	1.82%
2.	Has anyone ever touched you inappropriately which made you uncomfortable?	48	43.64%	4	3.64%
3.	Has anyone ever asked you to touch their body inappropriately which made you uncomfortable?	10	9.09%	0	0.00%
4.	Has anyone made sexual joke or comment to you that made you uncomfortable?	12	10.91%	39	35.45%
5.	Have you ever faced eve teasing anywhere?	36	32.73%	2	1.82%
6.	Has anyone showed or gave you pictures, messages, notes or photographs to you, which are sexual in nature which made you uncomfortable?	4	3.64%	5	4.55%
7.	Has anyone pinched or brushed up against you in sexual way?	16	14.55%	2	1.82%
8.	Has anyone forced you to kiss/hug which felt uncomfortable and inappropriate?	2	1.82%	0	0.00

9.	Has anyone forced you to show your private parts to them?	2	1.82%	0	0.00
10.	Has anyone showed you their private parts?	2	1.82%	0	0.00
11.	Does anyone keep staring at you which make you uncomfortable?	26	23.64%	12	10.91%
12.	Has anyone calling/called you desperately to meet them alone?	0	0.00	4	3.64%
13.	Total no. of school going children who faced sexual harassment	66/110		45/110	

DISCUSSIONS:

The total prevalence of sexual harassment among school-going children in the present study was found to be 50.45. The findings were supported by the National Study on Child Abuse by Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, 2007 in India, which recorded that 53% children faced one or the other forms of sexual abuse. [8]

The prevalence of sexual harassment among girls in the present study was found to be 30 whereas for boys it was found to be 20.45. The findings of the present study were supported by a study done by Kailash Satyarthi children's Foundation in which a little over one-third (35%) of the female respondents and one-fourth males (25%) reported of experience of any severe/extreme form of sexual abuse when they were children. [9]

CONCLUSIONS:

It was concluded that out of total samples 50.45% were sexually harassed including both boys (20.45 %) and girls (30%)

Recommendations:

A similar study can be replicated on large sample and in variety of settings to generalize the findings.

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