

Knowledge and Attitude Regarding Gender Based Violence among Adolescents at Selected School of Ghorahi, Dang

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Abstract

Introduction: Gender-based violence is an alarming social problem that affects people around the world, including adolescents. It comprises physical, sexual or mental impairment and threats of such acts which could happen either in public or private areas. The study finds out knowledge and attitudes regarding gender-based violence.

Methods: A cross-sectional research design was used for the study. A total of 286 adolescents of 9th and 10th-grade students were selected by using a non-probability purposive sampling technique. A Self-administered questionnaire was developed by the researchers based on a literature review. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for data analysis.

Results: Out of 286 respondents, more than half (55.6 %) had an inadequate level of knowledge regarding gender-based violence. Nearly half (49.3 %) had a favourable attitude towards gender-based violence. A minority of the respondents (20.6 %) felt at least one type of gender-based violence in their lifetime. About one-fifth (20.6 %) had unfavourable attitude. There is a significant association between level of knowledge and type of family. However, there is no significant association between the level of knowledge and other socio-demographic variables.

Conclusion: The study concluded that more than half respondents had a poor level of knowledge while half of the respondents had a favourable attitude towards gender-based violence. A minority of respondents had felt at least one type of gender-based violence in their lifetime.

Keywords: Adolescents, attitude, gender-based violence, knowledge

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Introduction

Gender-based violence (GBV) refers to any harmful action perpetrated against someone without their consent, typically rooted in differences between genders such as males and females.¹ According to the United Nations, violence against women encompasses any form of gender-based aggression leading to or likely to cause physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering. This includes threats, coercion, or unjustified deprivation of freedom in public or private settings.² The literature indicates that GBV is prevalent worldwide, yet there is

limited research in Nepal on adolescents' awareness and perceptions of GBV. Given that adolescents spend considerable time in schools, they must understand GBV. Consequently, researchers aim to explore adolescents' knowledge of and attitudes toward GBV in this study.

Methods

Study Design: A quantitative cross-sectional research design was employed to find out adolescents' knowledge and attitudes regarding Gender-Based Violence (GBV).

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Location and Duration: The study conducted at Shree Secondary School, Rajhena, located in Ghorahi-18, Dang, Lumbini Province. Data collection conducted between February and March 2023.

Ethical Approval and Consent: Ethical approval was obtained from NHRC, with administrative approval from Shree Secondary School Rajhena. After being briefed on the study's objectives, each participant provided written assent consent and written consent was taken from parents'. Confidentiality was assured, and anonymity was maintained using coded identifiers. Privacy was ensured by maintaining distance between participants during data collection.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria: The study included all grade 9 and 10 students in school within Ghorahi sub-metropolitan city.

Sample Size and Sampling: A total of 286 students were selected using non-probability purposive sampling for school selection and consecutive sampling for participant selection. Researchers developed a self-administered questionnaire based on a literature review to assess GBV knowledge, while attitudes were measured using a Likert scale.

Statistical Analysis: Data collection tools included sections on socio-demographic variables (Part I), GBV knowledge (Part II), and GBV attitudes (Part III). Knowledge was scored based on correct answers, categorized as poor, average, or good. Each correct option of each component was given one point and for each incorrect answer, 0 score was given. Correct answers was ≤ 50 % of the total score, these respondents was considered having poor knowledge. 51 % to 74 % of the total score, the respondents was considered having average and ≥ 75 % of the total score, was considered having knowledgeable. Attitudes were assessed using a 4-point Likert scale, with total scores converted to percentages and Attitude of adolescents towards gender based violence was be measured by using self-structured Likert scale which was consist of lists of 20 items. All 20 items were scored in 4 -points Likert scale .This was represent as follows; strongly agree =4, agree =3, disagree= 2 and strongly disagree=1.

So, the total score of attitude was 80. The total score was converted to percentage score. The overall level of attitude was categorized according to percentile (25th, 50th & 75th) of total attitude score. Therefore, the level of attitude will be categorized into three level were as follows:

Unfavorable attitude: score (<25th percentile), Neutral attitude: score (25th – 50th percentile), Favorable attitude: score (> 50th percentile) The research instrument underwent content validity testing through expert

consultation. Translation to Nepali and back-translation to English was done, followed by pre-testing on 30 students, leading to necessary questionnaire refinements.

Results

Regarding the socio-demographic variables of the respondents, the data from 286 respondents shows that the majority (55.9%) were aged between 16 and 18 years. Similarly, over half (61.2%) of the respondents were female. Nearly half (49.3%) of the respondents were identified as Janjati. Additionally, the vast majority (87.4%) identified as Hindu. More than half (51%) of the respondents were in class 9. A minority (15%) of the respondent's parents were divorced. Likewise, the data indicates that over half (53.8%) of the respondents lived in joint families. Additionally, 79.7% of the respondents' fathers and 68.5% of their mothers were literate.

Table 1: Socio demographic characteristics N=286

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Age in year		
13-15	126	44.1
16-18	160	55.9
Gender		
Male	111	38.8
Female	175	61.2
Ethnicity		
Dalit	53	18.5
Janjati	141	49.3
Brahmin and Chhetri	92	32.3
Religion		
Hindu	250	87.4
Buddhist	36	12.6
Grade		
9th	148	51.7
10th	138	48.3
Parents Marital status		
Married	243	85
Divorce	43	15
Type of family		
Nuclear	132	46.2
Joint	54	53.8
Education status		
Father		
Illiterate	58	20.3
Literate	228	79.7
Mother		
Illiterate	90	31.5
Literate	196	68.5
Area of resident		
Submetropolitan	62	21.7
Rural municipality	224	78.3

Table 2 indicates that the majority of respondents (55.6%) possessed insufficient knowledge, while a minority (10.1%) had a higher level of knowledge.

Table 2: Level of knowledge regarding gender-based violence N=286

Level of knowledge	Frequency	Percentage
Inadequate	159	55.6
Moderate	98	34.3
Higher	29	10.1

Table 3 reveals that out of 286 respondents, a minority (20.6%) experienced at least one form of gender-based violence in their lifetime. Among those respondents, the majority (47.4%) encountered psychological violence, while a small percentage (6.6%) experienced sexual violence.

Table 3: Type of Gender based violence faced by respondents n=59

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Physical	25	42
Psychological	28	47.4
Sexual	4	6.6
Social	13	22

Table 4 illustrates that approximately half of the respondents (49.3%) held a favorable attitude towards gender-based violence, while only one-fifth (20.6%) expressed a unfavorable attitude towards it.

Table 4: Attitude regarding gender-based violence N= 286

Level of attitude	Frequency	Percentage
Unfavorable	59	20.6
Neutral	86	30.1
Favorable	141	49.3

Table 5 demonstrates a notable correlation between levels of knowledge about gender-based violence and both the type of family and the educational status of the father

Table 5: Association between socio-demographic variables and level of Knowledge regarding gender-based violence N= 286

Variables		Level of knowledge			Chi x ²	p value
		Inadequate	Moderate	Higher		
Type of family	Nuclear family	59(44.7%)	57(43.2%)	16(12.1%)	11.873	.003
	Joint family	100(64.9%)	41(26.6%)	13(8.4%)		
Educational status of father	Illiterate father	26(44.8%)	21(36.2%)	11(19.0%)	7.186	.028
	Literate father	133(58.3%)	77(33.8%)	18(7.9%)		

Table 6 demonstrates a notable correlation between attitudes towards gender-based violence among siblings and the location of residence.

Table 6: Attitude of respondents between socio-demographic characteristics N= 286

Variables		Attitude of respondent			Chi Square	p value	
		unfavorable attitude	Neutral attitude	favorable attitude			
Sibling	Male sibling	No sibling	1(5.0%)	3(15.0%)	16(80.0%)	13.870	.008
		<3 sibling	49(20.8%)	70(29.7%)	117(49.6%)		
		≥3 sibling	9(30.0%)	13(43.3%)	8(26.7%)		
	Female sibling	No sibling	10(45.5)	6(27.3%)	6(27.3%)	9.735	.045
		<3 sibling	40(19.1%)	63(30.1%)	106(50.7%)		
		≥3 sibling	9(16.4%)	17(30.9%)	29(52.7%)		
Area of residence rural municipality	Sub-metropolitan City	34(54.8%)	24 (38.7%)	4(6.5%)	6.546	.038	
	125(55.8%)	74(33.0%)	25(11.2%)				

Discussions

In this study, the majority of participants (72.4%) correctly defined GBV, which contrasts sharply with findings from Lagos State, Nigeria, where only 1.8% of respondents could do so.³ Similarly, the majority (55.6%) of participants exhibited an inadequate level of knowledge, while around one-third (34.3%) demonstrated a moderate level, and only 10% had a higher level of knowledge. These results align with a study in Ogun State, Nigeria, which found that 59% of respondents had poor knowledge of violence against women, with 41% possessing good knowledge.⁴ However, these findings differ from a study in the southern region of Nigeria, where 10.9% of respondents had poor knowledge of gender-based violence, 42.9% had moderate knowledge, and 46.2% had good knowledge.⁵ They also contrast with a study in Tanzania, which reported that 77.9% of participants had moderate to good knowledge of GBV.⁶

The current study indicates that nearly half (49.3%) of participants held a favorable attitude toward GBV, 30.1% held a neutral attitude, and only 20.6% had unfavorable attitude. This finding is similar to a study in Mumbai, India, where 22% of adolescents generally disagreeing with violence against girls.⁷ However, it contrasts with a study in Ondo State, Nigeria, which revealed that 51% of respondents had a negative attitude towards violence against women.⁴

The findings of the present study show that 20.6% of participants experienced gender-based violence, with 54.3% of these being female and 45.7% male. This aligns with a study in Turkey, where 41.3% of women and 22.6% of men reported experiencing violence.⁸

In the current study, participants reported experiencing various types of violence: psychological (47.4%), physical (42%), social (22%), and sexual (6.6%). This finding is consistent with a study in schools in Ilorin, Nigeria, where 40.4% experienced physical violence and 49.7% experienced psychological violence.⁹ It also corresponds with a study in Eastern Ethiopia, which found that 36.2% experienced physical violence, 46.6% sexual violence, and 56.4% emotional/verbal violence.¹⁰ However, it contrasts with a study in Kenya on school-related gender-based violence, where 9.6% reported experiencing sexual assault at school, 53% experienced psychological abuse, and 75% faced physical violence.¹¹ Additionally, it differs from a study in Charikot, Nepal, where 34.5% reported physical assault and 36.2% reported sexual assault.¹²

In the present study, the majority (89.9%) of participants agreed that females were more likely to suffer from GBV, and 31.8% believed sexual abuse is not a form of GBV. This finding resembles a study in Lagos State, Nigeria, where 84% of respondents thought girls were more likely to

suffer from GBV and 10% did not consider sexual abuse a form of GBV.³

The present study indicates a significant association between the level of knowledge regarding GBV and socio-demographic variables such as family type and father's education status. However, knowledge level was not significantly associated with other socio-demographic variables including age, gender, ethnicity, religion, field of study, parents' marital status, siblings, and mother's education status or area of residence.⁵ Similarly, the study found an association between attitudes toward GBV and socio-demographic variables such as number of siblings and area of residence, while attitudes were not significantly associated with age, gender, ethnicity, religion, field of study, parents' marital status, family type, or parents' education status. The study was conducted only among adolescents of 9 and 10 grade students in urban settings so its findings cannot be generalized.

Conclusion

This study concludes that more than half of adolescents had inadequate level of knowledge regarding GBV and around half of participants had favorable attitude regarding GBV. Despite being inadequate knowledge participants had unfavorable attitude.

It is recommended that, based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations have been made. Our finding of the study showed low level of knowledge, structured teaching plan (STP) and conduct awareness program can be done by school in coordination of organization working in this field.

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