

A STUDY ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL ABUSE OF HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN PURULIA DISTRICT OF WEST BENGAL

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ABSTRACT

In the present study the investigators made an attempt to find out the level of Sexual Harassment and Sexual Abuse of higher secondary school students in Purulia district of West Bengal. 120 Students were taken as a representative sample of the whole population in Purulia District of West Bengal. A questionnaire was used for collecting the data. The means of both groups were tested for significance of difference by using CR. The Purposive sampling technique was adopted for selecting the higher secondary schools. For selecting the students stratified random sampling was adopted. The study revealed that the sexual harassment and sexual abuse of Higher Secondary Students in Purulia District of West Bengal is neither high or nor low i.e., satisfactory or average in level. The study also revealed that there is no significant difference between the Sexual Harassment and Sexual Abuse of Rural and Urban, XI and XII, Arts and Science in Higher Secondary School students. On the other hand, the Sexual Harassment and Sexual Abuse of Male and Female Higher Secondary School students in Purulia District of West Bengal differ significantly.

Keywords: Sexual Harassment, Sexual Abuse, Higher Secondary School Students

INTRODUCTION:

India is a democratic country where nearly more than 120 billion peoples live together. The main problem of this extended population is increasing different types of crime and the topmost is the Sexual crime. Students are the future of state or society but somehow they have injured by sexual abuse or harassment a particular time over their whole lifespan. Sexual harassment and Sexual abuse is a superfluous behavior of a sexual nature that obstacles with the right to receive an equal educational opportunity. It is a crucial problem for the student's at all educational levels in the present modern era. Students in elementary and secondary schools, as well as vocational schools, colleges and universities can be suffering from sexual harassment. This problem is more universal than we might think because many students are frightened or too embarrassed to report sexual harassment. Out-of-school the adolescent sexual harassment is a big trouble for both girls and boys in our society today, and the special effects of this experience can affect their lives negatively in later adult life. The evidence we have seen as a concerning image: the sexual harassment and abuse of girls being usual as part of daily life; it is dissimilar from flirting, or other types of behavior that we enjoy or welcome. The harmful impact of sexual harassment and sexual abuse in schools on children and young people aged up to 18 years old. Sexual harassment may get on various forms. It is able to grab or groping; whistles or leering; jokes or pranks of a sexual nature; desires for sexual favors or continual requests for dates; and other oral, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. The wound is not always elder than the victim, and the victim is not always a gender of the opposite sex. Adolescents seem to be abused more often than adults, both by their lawful guardians, elder relatives, and on some occasion by their parents. So it is an urgent need to study the sexual crime and the causes this type of sexual harassment and abuses. In this study we are trying to uphold the reaction from the victim.

Definition of Sexual Harassment and Sexual Abuse:

Sexual Harassment:

- ❖ Uninvited and unwelcome verbal or physical behavior of a sexual nature especially by a person in authority toward a subordinate (such as an employee or student) (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sexual%20harassment>).

Sexual Abuse:

Sexual Abuse may be defined as (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/legal/sexual%20abuse>):

- ❖ The engaging in sexual contact with a person who is below a specified age or who is incapable of giving consent because of age or mental or physical incapacity.
- ❖ The infliction of sexual contact upon a person by forcible compulsion.

Causes of Sexual Harassment and Abuse:

The approach in which men and women were brought up to see themselves and others strongly influences their behavior. There are different viewpoints could construct a climate that allows sexual harassment and abuse. When a student is good at the class, he studies and becomes the favorite student of his sir, in some cases, other students in the class harassed, abused the good student jealously.

- **Racial Superiority:** The high caste male oppresses the lower caste women and wants to highlight the domination of men and their ethnic superiority and the higher bottom.
- **Social and Cultural Factors:** The most central factor that leads to sexual harassment is our social norms. It is also gender-bias and beliefs like men are stronger and wiser. The dominance of male over female. A woman is weak in physical force, always subjected to a physical and sexual assault of the man.
- **Economic Inequality:** Economic inequality is one of the reasons for crime against women. Since women are physically weak so their pay is reduced as compared to men in the private sector.
- **Impacts of Media relations with earn money:** Media has become a main part of life, in the modern world in developed and developing countries. But now today the only purpose of this media is to earn money. Women are easily available as sex commodities for making money near to media. Provocative projection of women by media is a contributor to society as well as the world.
- **Fear of Revenge:** Many times women refrain from complaining of such sexual harassment because these fears work in them if they complied with it, then it may be such a type of retaliation. So instead of complaining of such kind of allegations, they adapted to the situation.
- **Others Factors:**
 1. Lack of strict punishment
 2. More women in working place
 3. Economically poor family environment
 4. Lack of humanism
 5. Lack of respect in society
- Men, who were brought up with a macho attitude, easily carry these social values into the workplace, and treat their female classmates accordingly. Such men often think that women obtain their harassment as a compliment.
- Men in groups often behave in a different way from how they would as individuals. This can clarify some of the "gang harassment"
- Men who believe they are advanced and better than women.
- The signal getting from women, who take the wrong decision and mislead himself.

Modes of Sexual Harassment:

- Calling to an adult as a girl, babe or sexy
- Looking a person up and down (Elevator eyes)
- Giving a message around the neck or shoulders
- Whistling at someone, cat, calls
- Touching the person clothing, hair or body.
- Making sexual comments about a person's body
- Blocking a person's path
- Hugging, kissing, stroking
- Throw sexual comments to someone
- Touching or rubbing oneself sexually around by another person
- Displaying sexual evocative visual
- Giving someone a pat on the shoulder
- Making sexually gestures with hands or through body actions
- Making kissing sounds, hauling, and smacking lips.
- Making facial expressions such as winking, throwing kisses, or licking lips
- Insulting someone with sexual comments about a person's clothing, looks, and body language.
- Speaking lies or spreading the rumor about an individual personal sex life.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

Children are the future of the next generation. These children's will be the nation builder of future, but if a little one is destroyed at the outset, then how will it be a nation builder of a country? Not only teenagers but also children are not free from sexual harassment and abuse, they do not even know that something like this

is going to happen to them. It is really essential for increasing awareness of Sexual Harassment and abuse worldwide. A large number of researchers, through various surveys worldwide, have shown the seriousness of the Issue. There have been a lot of cases of Sexual Harassment that have come into the limelight and have attracted media attention. Sexual Harassment is not only prevalent in the urban areas but also in the villages and rural areas of the country. Prevalence of sexual abuse and harassment, violence and physical abuse are emergent among the youths and are ever more co-occurring with substance abuse. Although men are also wounded of Sexual Harassment, for the most part, a woman has been seen complaining the most about it. It has been seen in the research that women are targets of violence, sexual abuse, and sexual harassment. Women are physically weak by nature which has resulted in discrimination and crimes against women in the society, school, parental house, matrimonial house, and workplace also. It is very bad to hear that nowadays school students are not free from sexual harassment, rather than, the level of such crimes on them is much more. It is noteworthy that the students of the school are not only subjected to violence by their surroundings, but they have also harassed by their own school teacher, private tutor, or their own classmates. We can always read and study these events in different advertisements and newspapers and media. So considering the current situation, it can be said that people have to be aware of sexual crimes and above all the government should be taken strict administrative action against such criminal acts. Therefore, an urgent need at present is to investigate the higher secondary level students that, whether they have ever been sexually harassed or victimized at this level in school or any other places. It is a feeling that has urged these investigators to take up the present study in a particular region of West Bengal. It is expected that this study, though small, it will be able to make some significant contributions to the field of education.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The problem for the present study may be specifically stated as below:

“A study on Sexual Harassment and Sexual Abuse of Higher Secondary School Students in Purulia District of West Bengal”

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE:

Kenny, K; Samah, Abu A; & Othman. J (2011) has conducted a study on “Sexual Harassment: Why Men Do It? A Study to Examine The Predictors That Leads Men To Sexually Harass.” The objective of the study was men’s perception of what brings men to sexually harass. It also seeks to identify the predictors that will give the explanation the variation of men’s likelihood to sexually harass. The findings were 1) lack of precise knowledge in the area of sexual harassment will lead men to perceive that there’s a high likelihood for men to sexually harass given the right “conducive” environment. 2) The more tolerant the organizational environment, the higher the likelihood for men to sexually harass. This study is essential as it proves that the organizational environment has to be a sensitive area of sexual harassment and the organization will look into the matter if there would be a case of sexual harassment in the organization. **Bala, D.; Maji, M; Satapathy, J; & Routray, R.K (2015)** have conducted a study on “Prevalence of child abuse in eastern India: a tip of the iceberg.” The objective of the study was to understand the different forms and magnitude of child abuse across the country had been inadequate. The finding was that 61.69% of respondents report of having physical abuse, 17.17% report one of the major form of sexual abuse, whereas 55.22% faced one of the other form of sexual abuse. 30.85% of children faced emotional abuse and 61.17% of girl child report of gender bias in the family. **Gurung, A; Priyadarshini, S. & E Margaret. B. (2016)** have conducted a study on “Knowledge of Sexual Harassment among the Undergraduate students in Udipi district.” The objective of the study was to assess the knowledge of the undergraduate students on sexual harassment. The finding was found that 82.4% of the students had the average knowledge, 13.2% had good knowledge and 4.4% had poor knowledge of sexual harassment. **Krishnan, S. Syahirah, N.F, Syahirah. N; & Amira. N (2017)** has conducted a study on “Study on Child Sexual Abuse.” The objective of the study was to study child sexual abuse. The findings revealed that children should be alerted honestly and from an early age, about not letting others touch their private parts and telling them that it is inappropriate. The objective of this study was to bring to the surface the sexual exploitation of child brides. **Pal, S.K, Rana. A, Sharma. A; & Sehgal. A (2018)** has conducted a study on “Forensic Study of Child Sexual Abuse in the Northern Range of Himachal Pradesh.” The objective of the study was to determine the socio-demographic profile of sexually assaulted children and their medico-legal aspects.” The finding was that most commonly sexual assaults are committed by the familiar persons and the place of incidence was either house of the accused or victim. The most vulnerable age group was 16-18 years. Delay in medico-legal examination and delay in reporting caused loss of biological evidence.

DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

(A) Geographical Area:

The investigation was delimited to only Purulia District of West Bengal.

(B) Level of Education:

(i) The study was restricted to the Higher Secondary school students under West Bengal Council of Higher Secondary Board of Education of the said District.

(ii) Among the Higher Secondary school students, only the students of classes XI and XII were considered as the subjects of the present study.

C) Type of Study: This study was conducted only at surface level. It was not an “in- depth” study, and no inter-state comparison was done. Only intra-district comparison of sexual harassment and sexual abuse between the male and female students, and between Rural and Urban students, Class XI and XII students, Arts and Science Students, Students were done.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To ascertain the level of sexual harassment and sexual abuse among the higher secondary school students in Purulia District of West Bengal.
2. To find out the difference between the Male and Female Higher Secondary School students in respect of sexual harassment and sexual abuse in Purulia District of West Bengal.
3. To find out the difference between the Rural and Urban Higher Secondary School students in respect of sexual harassment and sexual abuse in Purulia District of West Bengal.
4. To find out the difference between the Class XI and XII Higher Secondary School students in respect of sexual harassment and sexual abuse in Purulia District of West Bengal.
5. To find out the difference between the Arts and Science Higher Secondary School students in respect of sexual harassment and sexual abuse in Purulia District of West Bengal.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY:

The hypotheses were formulated in null form:

1. There is low level of sexual harassment and sexual abuse among the higher secondary school students in Purulia District of West Bengal.
2. There is no significant difference between the sexual harassment and sexual abuse of Male and Female Higher Secondary school students in Purulia District.
3. There is no significant difference between the sexual harassment and sexual abuse of Rural and Urban Higher Secondary school students in Purulia District.
4. There is no significant difference between the sexual harassment and sexual abuse of Class XI and XII Higher Secondary school students in Purulia District.
5. There is no significant difference between the sexual harassment and sexual abuse of Arts and Science Higher Secondary school students in Purulia District.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY:

The Descriptive type normative survey method was applied in this study to find out the sexual harassment and sexual abuse of the higher secondary school students.

Population of the Study

The Higher Secondary School students of West Bengal Council of Higher Secondary Board of Education (W.B.C.H.S.E) in Purulia District of West Bengal comprised the population of this study.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

120 students of higher secondary schools in Purulia district were taken as representative sample of the whole population. Purposive sampling technique was adopted for selecting the schools. For selecting the students stratified random sampling was adopted. At first two separated schools were prepared for sampling in which one was from rural area and another from urban area.

The Tool Used

The Sexual Harassment and Sexual Abuse questionnaire was used for knowing the Harassment and Abuse related crime of Higher Secondary school students. There were 30 items in the scale.

Scoring Procedure:

ITEMS	YES	NEUTRAL	NO
Favourable	1	2	3
Unfavourable	3	2	1

Statistical Techniques

Percentage, Mean, SD, and CR were used to analyze the collected data. CR's were used to verify the hypotheses.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION:

Testing of H₀₁:

There is low level of sexual harassment and sexual abuse among higher secondary school students in Purulia District of West Bengal.

Category	N	Mean	S.D
Higher Secondary Students	120	65.51	15.68

Through the help of cut-off point the researcher has verified the H₁. Here Cut-off Point is $M \pm 1 \sigma$. It means, Mean=71.99, N=120 and $\sigma = 11.27$. Hence $M + 1 \sigma$ is $71.99 + 1 \times 11.27 = 83.26$. And $M - 1 \sigma$ is $= 71.99 - 1 \times 11.27 = 60.72$. Most of Higher Secondary school students (72 in number) i.e., 60 % of students were lies between 83.26 to 60.72 scores. Hence, it can be said that the level of Sexual Harassment and Sexual Abuse of Higher Secondary school students in Purulia district of West Bengal is neither high or nor low i.e., average level of Sexual Harassment and Sexual Abuse.

Table-1: The level of Sexual Harassment and Sexual Abuse of Higher Secondary school students in Purulia District of West Bengal.

Scores	Frequency	Percentage	Levels of Sexual Harassment and Sexual Abuse
Above-83.26	22	18.33%	High
Between-83.26-60.72	72	60%	Average
Below-60.72	26	21.67%	Low
Total	120	100%	

Table-2: Showing the significance difference between variables.

Groups	N	Mean	SD	SED	Mean Difference	CR	Level of Significance
Male students	60	63.25	9.44	1.3	17.48	13.45	Significant at 0.05 & 0.01 level
Female Students	60	80.73	3.47				
Rural Students	60	72.12	12.11	2.05	0.25	0.12	Not Significant at 0.05 level
Urban Students	60	71.87	10.36				
Class XI Students	60	71.88	11.32	2.05	0.22	0.11	Not Significant at 0.05 level
Class XII Students	60	72.1	11.22				
Arts Students	60	71.8	11.41	2.06	0.38	0.18	Not Significant at 0.05 level
Science Students	60	72.18	11.12				

Testing of H₀₂:

From the Table- 2, it is found that a 'CR' is significant if it is 1.96 or more at 0.05 and 2.58 at 0.01 level. Since the calculated CR value 13.45 is more than 1.96 and 2.58 ($13.45 > 1.96 \ \& \ 2.58$), the difference between the two groups is significant at 0.05 and 0.01 level. Hence, the H₀₂ is rejected and the researcher's H₂ is accepted; that is to say that, there is significant difference between the sexual harassment and sexual abuse of Male and Female Higher Secondary school students in Purulia District.

Testing of H₀₃:

From the Table- 2, it is found that a 'CR' is significant if it is 1.96 or more. Since the calculated CR value 0.11 is less than 1.96 ($0.11 < 1.96$), the difference between the two groups is not significant at 0.05 level. Hence, the H₃ is rejected and the H₀₃ is accepted; that is to say that, there is no significant difference between the sexual harassment and sexual abuse of Male and Female Higher Secondary school students in Purulia District.

Testing of H₀₄:

From the Table- 2, it is found that a 'CR' is significant if it is 1.96 or more. Since the calculated CR value 0.12 is less than 1.96 ($0.12 < 1.96$), the difference between the two groups is not significant at 0.05 level. Hence, the H₄ is rejected and the H₀₄ is accepted; that is to say that, there is no significant difference between the

sexual harassment and sexual abuse of Rural and Urban Higher Secondary school students in Purulia District.

Testing of H_0 :

From the Table- 2, it is found that a 'CR' is significant if it is 1.96 or more. Since the calculated CR value 0.18 is less than 1.96 ($0.18 < 1.96$), the difference between the two groups is not significant at 0.05 level. Hence, the H_5 is rejected and the H_{05} is accepted; that is to say that, there is no significant difference between the sexual harassment and sexual abuse of Arts and Science Higher Secondary school students in Purulia District.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

- 1) This study was conducted only in particular district (Purulia) of West Bengal.
- 2) The researcher could not use other research tools like interview, observation etc.
- 3) The present study was conducted only at surface level. It was not extensive and 'in depth' study.
- 4) Only 2 Govt. Schools have taken in Purulia district.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS:

1. It is a humble attempt in this direction to assess the level of Sexual Harassment and Sexual Abuse of Higher Secondary School Students.
2. This study is very much essential for acquiring a brief knowledge about Sexual Harassment and Sexual Abuse of Higher Secondary school Students.
3. The consequence of the study will assist the policy makers and planners to know the real status of Sexual Harassment and Sexual Abuse in the context of Higher Secondary school Students in West Bengal.
4. This study will help to know the causes behind sexual assault and sexual abuse in school going students.
5. This study will help to know the deficit of moral education in school or society.

CONCLUSION:

Sexual harassment and abuse is a big trouble in schools, colleges, universities across the country. It may be domestic in some time, but a significant proportion of incident occurs in organizational sectors, including schools. Sexually torture is more common among adolescents in the society and is hardly ever destructive; as a result, sometimes the oppressed person chooses the way of suicide. In this 21st century the most expected problems will be sexually harassed or abuse among students themselves in schools. In this context, it can be said that not only the adolescents but also children are not safe in the society. In this present day, institutional child abuse enlarged public attention to sexual abuse in general, and in some cases involving teachers and other school employees. The Higher Secondary level is a crucial stage in the present educational system in the state, and so it's our national responsibility to bringing them a bright future rather than a bad experienced like 'sexually torture'. At the end of the above study, we can say that if our future generation has to protect from sexual crime, there will be any strict action to get well soon by the government.

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