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**Original Article**

# Awareness of Child Sexual Abuse Among Secondary School Students in Kathmandu District



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## Abstract

This study explores the awareness among community and institutional school students on child sexual abuse (CSA). The study population was 120 students studying in class 8 and 9 from two institutional and two community schools. The numbers of male respondents were slightly higher than female respondents in both institutional and community schools (51.5% in institutional and 52.1% in community schools). 66% in community and 86.3% in institutional schools answered that raping the child and exposing abuser's body parts to a child is sexual abuse of the child. Children perceive only serious forms or rape as sexual abuse while they are mostly ignorant that less serious types are also sexual abuse. However, comparatively respondents of community school were more aware of the non-contact form of sexual abuse of child than that of institutional school. Students of both institutional and community schools do not have much knowledge about the consequences of sexual abuse, as very few respondents hardly pointed out all the consequences. Furthermore, there was a difference in the level of knowledge between institutional and community school students. The result of the study will be useful to provide baseline information regarding awareness of school adolescents on sexual abuse so that policymakers can develop policies and programs to ensure a protective environment for children in various contexts. Also, awareness needs to be provided regarding CSA from primary school level.

**Keywords:** *Child; Sexual Abuse; Knowledge; Secondary School Students, Kathmandu*

## Introduction

Child abuse refers to any deliberate treatment, omission or neglect that may be injurious to the mental and physical

well-being of the child. Children around the world are suffering from several kinds of rights violation and abuses. One of the major violence and abuse that children are facing is Child Sexual Abuse (CSA). One in every five

children around the world is suspected of suffering from sexual abuse. Similarly, one in every four girls and one in every six boys are found to be sexually abused (CWISH/Save the Children, 2008).

Child Sexual Abuse has been recognized as a social malaise, prevalent within and outside the homes and among all socio-economic strata in the South Asia Region (UNICEF ROSA, 2001). CSA exposes a child to severe mental, physical and psychological risks with consequences such as depression, fear and low self-esteem. But as a social problem, it still remains an unexplored area. Child Sexual Abuse has been taking place in all parts of Nepal and that it is widespread in families, neighbourhoods, schools, streets, workplaces, children homes and so on (Pradhan, 2056 BS) and maybe more frequent than usually assumed. Although some cases of CSA especially rape cases are reported, the majority of abuse cases go unreported because even talking about sex is considered as taboo in our society.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990) has made clear provisions for the state parties to protect

children from sexual abuse and exploitation in different articles. Nepal's Children's Act 1992 has also made some provisions to safeguard the interests of children regarding sexual abuse of children. But the civil code is a little bit more explicit on the issues of rape and incest and the Children's Act keeps rather silent on the other issues of child sexual abuse (Government of Nepal, 1992). So, the laws are still very vague and not specific in different cases of sexual abuse against children.

Child sexual abuse has so far remained a hidden social issue looming in our society where even talking about sex is considered taboo. We also do not have enough knowledge on its causes, the relationship between the abuser and the victim, how the survivor copes with the after-effects, whether some groups of children are more vulnerable than the others and so on. Along with several other socio-cultural factors encouraging CSA, adults' failure to protect remains the major, as adults have less awareness of such kind of hidden suffering and skills to protect children. On the other hand, children themselves are unaware about "what is child sexual abuse", "who could be the abuser", "where could they be abused", "what are consequences of a child being abused"

etc. They are innocent and do not understand what is happening. Thus, children are bound to suffer. Unless and until if the children (students) themselves are not aware of Child Sexual Abuse, till then there remains silent suffering due to sex abuse by abusers among children.

Child sexual abuse is a global problem that is deeply rooted in cultural, economic and social practices. Globally more than 130 million children between the ages of 6 and 11 years are abused, 60% of whom are girls (United Nations, 2006). Children around the world without any boundary of development, richness and access to education are vulnerable and suffering from sexual abuse. It is higher in less developed and poor countries, where the discussion and talking on sex is considered a social taboo, life skill education and sex education are not effective. Child sexual abuse ranges from 3 to 70% in different countries. In India, one in every three children has suffered sexual abuse (Pinki, 2000). In Nepal, various researches in Kathmandu have highlighted that, “between 36% - 65% of sexual assault victims are aged 15 or below 15” (CWISH/Save the Children Norway, 2005). In Nepal, 13% to 18% of children are victims of sexual abuse.

A study has found that 33.5% to 45% of children enrolled in school have been sexually abused (CWISH/Save the Children Norway, 2008).

Childhood sexual abuse can have various serious consequences as damage to internal organs, fracture, even death, or all these children will have emotional damage as depression, anxiety, sleep problems, feeling of isolation. Among students, it may lead to self-destructive behaviour like drug abuse, alcoholism, suicide etc. (Child Protection Centers and Services & Voice of Children, 2008). Due to the lack of parents' guidance, lack of awareness of child sexual abuse among children themselves, age factors (especially students 11-14 years); sex (mostly girls) etc., children are vulnerable to sexual abuse (CWISH/Save the Children Norway, 2005). On the one hand, the effective application of the legal system is questioned; and on the other hand, child sensitivity and rights-based perspective responding to all kinds of abuses and violence against children are absent in national laws and legal procedures.

Students (10 to 19 years) of today are tomorrows adult. The physically, emotionally, psychosexually sound

students can become a healthy productive citizen of the nation. In Nepal, children aged between 11 to 14 years are the most vulnerable group for sexual abuse (CWISH/Save the Children Norway, 2008). Every year 7000 to 12000 women and children are sold among which 20% are below age 16 years children. Among girls being raped, 60% are below 16 years (Child Workers in Nepal Concerned Centre [CWIN] & Save the Children-Norway, Nepal [SCNN], 2003).

Child sexual abuse is one of the most devastating types of child maltreatment, and current estimates indicate that it has increased significantly during the past decade. However, the increased rate of reporting may not reflect a true increase in the prevalence of sexual abuse but may be a result of changes in legislation and society's attitudes toward women and children (Wang & Daro, 1998). In 1997 the number of reported occurrences was approximately 8% of all child maltreatment cases, but many authorities believe this figure represents only a small percentage of the actual incidence (Wang & Daro, 1998). Among 879,000 reported cases of child maltreatment, 10% were sexually abused among which 1.7 victims per 1000 female children and 0.4 victims

per 1000 male children (Sexual Abuse Statistics, 2000).

Children spend most of the time in their school. They can learn and develop own belief, value, vision from the information received and the activities they get involved in the school. In developing countries, 80% of young people are enrolled in schools. In Nepal, 87.4% of children are enrolled in schools (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2001) (this has reached to 94.83% at the primary level in 2017). Among school enrolled children 33.5 to 45% are found to be sexually abused (CWISH/Save the Children Norway, 2008). A study carried out in Nepal among school-going children in Kathmandu Valley by CWIN and SCNN in 2003 has found that 44.5% have come across obscene language, 28.8% were exposure to obscene materials and 13.7% have contact form of sexual abuse among the school going children of Kathmandu Valley are suffering from sexual abuse at different places. The number of boys seeing obscene materials on the Internet was significantly higher. Almost forty per cent of institutional school students watched obscene materials on the Internet while below 10 per cent from public schools reported doing so (CWIN & SCNN, 2003).

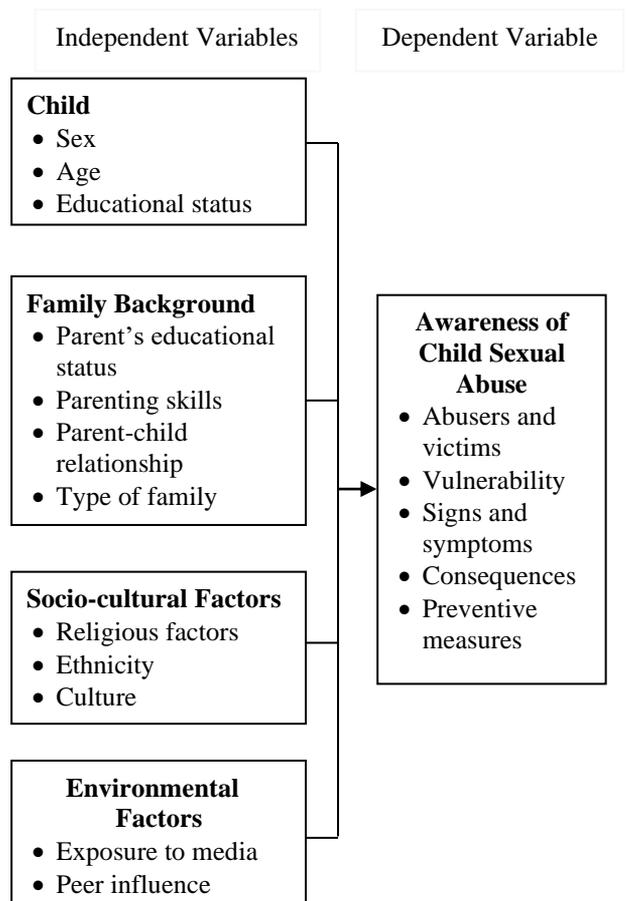
In our country Nepal, little is known regarding awareness level of adolescence on child sexual abuse. Few studies on awareness of adolescence on child sexual abuse had been conducted in some regions of the country. Therefore, further research focusing on greater detail, including different regions of Nepal, is necessary. So, this study intends to explore the awareness of the issue among children so that a realistic action plan and programs can be formulated to create awareness and protect children. To justly and clearly present the realities of children's awareness level and attitude on child sexual abuse, such type of study is very important. The study is expected to explore the hidden phenomenon of sexual abuse among children. This study also intends to make access to information for children and heighten awareness of their own rights.

### Conceptual Framework

Conceptual framework describes how the dependent variable is related to the independent variables. In the study, the dependent variable is awareness on child sexual abuse whose components taken were abusers and victims, vulnerability, signs and symptoms and its consequences. Similarly,

independent variables were characteristics of child which includes age, sex and educational status of the child, family background where parent's educational status, parenting skills, parent-child relationship, type of family were included.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Similarly, socio-economic factors like religious factors, ethnicity and culture and also environmental factors like peers influence and exposure media were also included as independent variables influencing awareness on child sexual abuse. The detailed framework is shown above.

## Research Methodology

In this section, we briefly outline the methodology adopted to undertake this study.

### Research Design

According to our national policy on education 2076 B.S., private schools are classified as institutional schools and government schools are termed as community schools. So students from those institutional and community schools were studied in the study. The research design of the study was descriptive – comparative study to compare the awareness of knowledge on child sexual abuse among community school students and institutional school students.

### Site Selection

Two institutional schools and two community schools of Kathmandu

Valley was chosen for the study. The population for the study was the students studying in class 8 and 9 of respective schools. The list of schools in Kathmandu valley was obtained from District Education Office Kathmandu. From those lists, two schools were selected using a simple random sampling technique.

### Sample Size

The sample size was 40 per cent of the students from each class (8 and 9) of the respective school. Thus the final sample size was 120. Those students (both males and females) who were willing to participate in the research were taken for the study.

### Demographic Characteristics

Majority of the respondents 44.7% in the institutional school and 35.61% in the community school were of age 15 years. Similarly, the numbers of male respondents were slightly higher than female respondents in both institutional and community schools (51.5% in institutional and 52.1% in community schools). More than half of the respondent's father in institutional schools had education at the secondary level (51.1%), whereas in community

schools, only 38.4% of respondents' father had primary level education. On talking about mother's education, in institutional schools, 44.7% had secondary level education and in community schools, 39.7 % had primary level education.

### **Data Collection**

A semi-structured self-administered questionnaire was prepared according to the objective of the study and with the help of the literature review. Then, self-administered questionnaires were distributed to the respondents for data collection in the presence of the researcher. The students were placed as in examination and they were not asked to write their names so that they can fill the questionnaire without any hesitation.

### **Data Analysis**

Data were checked for completeness and consistency and entered into EpiData version 3.1 and then shifted to SPSS for analysis. All the analysis of quantitative data was done using SPSS 17.0. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, mean and median were used for describing the results as per requirements.

### **Research Ethics**

We followed general norms of research ethics and adhered to the "researcher integrity" (Dhakal, 2016) while undertaking this study. The objectives of the study were explained initially and informed consent was taken from the respondents before the distribution of the questionnaire. All things were started only after the approval from Department of Home Sciences, Padma Kanya Multiple Campus, Bagbazar, Kathmandu.

### **Results**

The data collected through structured self-administered questionnaire survey were analysed using descriptive statistics and derived the following major results.

#### **Respondent's Knowledge of Child Sexual Abuse**

Table 1 reveals that out of 47 respondents in Institutional schools, 36 (76.6%) have heard about sexual abuse of child whereas in Community schools, out of 73 respondents, 67 (91.8%) have heard about sexual abuse of the child. This reveals that maximum respondents from Community schools are aware of the sexual abuse of the child.

*Table 1: Distribution of Respondents According to the Acquisition of Knowledge*

Heard About Child Sexual Abuse	Respondents	
	Institutional School (n=47) Number (Percentage)	Community School (n=73) Number (Percentage)
Yes	36 (76.60)	67 (91.80)
No	11 (23.40)	6 (8.20)

Table 2 shows that among the respondents who have heard about sexual abuse of a child, most of the respondents (26 out of 36 in institutional schools and 42 out of 67 in community schools) have heard about

sexual abuse of a child from TV/Radio. Since talking about child sexual abuse is a social taboo in our society, very few respondents (3 out of 36 in institutional schools and 12 out of 67 in community schools) have got information regarding sexual abuse of a child from family members.

*Table 2: Distribution of Respondents Based on Their Sources of Information*

Sources of information	Respondents	
	Institutional School (n=36) Number (Percentage)	Community School (n=67) Number (Percentage)
TV/Radio	26 (72.2)	42 (62.7)
Teachers	8 (22.2)	27 (40.3)
Friends	3 (8.3)	12 (17.9)
Family members	3 (8.3)	7 (10.4)
Newspaper	6 (16.7)	15 (22.4)
Others(Organization)	1 (2.8)	1 (1.5)

\*Multiple responses.

Table 3 shows that majority of respondents in community school (86.30%) and more than half of respondents in institutional school

(66%) answered that raping the child and exposing abuser's body parts to a child is sexual abuse of the child. However, 32 %in both schools

answered sexual abuse of a child is showing pornographic materials and taking naked photos. Similarly, 52.1%

of respondents of community schools answered sexual abuse of a child is the use of obscene language.

*Table 3: Meaning of Child Sexual Abuse as Perceived by Respondents*

Meanings	Respondents	
	Institutional School (n=47) Number (Percentage)	Community School (n=73) Number (Percentage)
Use of obscene language	17 (36.2)	38 (52.1)
Show pornographic materials	15 (32)	48 (65.8)
Take naked photos	15 (32)	43 (58.9)
Fondling of child’s body parts	25 (53.2)	51 (69.9)
Raping the child	31 (66.0)	63 (86.3)

\*Multiple responses.

While asking about the vulnerability for sexual abuse in institutional school, correct responses to item wise questions ranged from 29.8 % to 80.9%. Similarly

in the govt. school, the response ranged from 76.7% to 84.9% which are shown in table 6.

*Table 4: Respondents’ Knowledge of Vulnerability*

Awareness of Vulnerability	Respondents	
	Institutional School (n=47) Number (Percentage)	Community School (n=73) Number (Percentage)
<b>Sex wise:</b> ‘Both girls and boys’	14 (29.8)	56 (76.7)
<b>Age wise:</b> ‘11-15’ years	38 (80.9)	62 (84.9)
<b>Characteristic of the child:</b> ‘Any child’	32 (68.0)	57 (78.2)

Table 5 shows respondents' knowledge about an abuser in which it was found that in institutional school, correct responses to item wise questions ranged

from 4.30% to 31.9%. Similarly, in a government school, the response ranged from 38.40% to 56.2%.

*Table 5: Distribution of the Respondents' Knowledge about Abuser*

Awareness about abuser	Respondents	
	Institutional School (n=47)	Community School (n=73)
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
<b>Relation wise:</b> 'Known person'	15(31.9)	41 (56.2)
<b>Age wise:</b> '>45' years	2 (4.30)	28 (38.40)

Table 6 describes the knowledge of the place of abuse. It was found that most

of the students, 87.2% of institutional and 91.80% of community school were aware as they pointed out that children could be abused anywhere.

*Table 6: Distribution of the Respondents' Knowledge about Place of Abuse*

Place of CSA	Respondents	
	Institutional school(n=47)	Community school(n=73)
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Street	0 (0)	3 (4.10)
School	0 (0)	0 (0)
Home	0 (0)	2 (2.75)
Anywhere	47 (100)	68 (93.15)

Table 7 shows that majority of the respondents (80.82%) in community schools and more than half of the respondents (59.57%) in institutional school think that after the victimization of sexual abuse, a child would either be affected by STIs. More than half of the respondents (53.19% in institutional

school and 69.86% in community school) think that the victim may get pregnant, which is possible only because of penetrative sex? This is quite clear that the students were not aware of other forms of sexual abuse and other types of consequences of sexual abuse.

*Table 7: Distribution of Respondents' Knowledge about Physical Symptoms of Sexual Abuse of Child*

Physical Symptoms	Respondents	
	Institutional School (n=47)	Community School (n=73)
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Difficulties in walking	8 (17.02)	38 (52.05)
Bruises wound in genital parts	16 (34.04)	44 (60.27)
Sexually transmitted infection	28 (59.57)	59 (80.82)
Over-weight or low weight	3 (6.38)	22 (30.13)
Pregnancy	25 (53.19)	51 (69.86)

\*Multiple responses

Table 8 shows that in community schools more than half of respondents had pointed out almost all types of

psychological symptoms. Whereas the respondents of the institutional school had less awareness of it as less than half a percentage of students hardly pointed out all the options.

*Table 8: Distribution of Respondents' Knowledge about Psychological Symptoms of Sexual Abuse of Child*

Psychological Symptoms	Respondents	
	Institutional School (n=47) Number (Percentage)	Community School (n=73) Number (Percentage)
Stay alone	21 (44.7)	45 (61.6)
Sleep disturbances	13 (27.7)	41 (56.2)
Low self esteem	17 (36.2)	51 (69.9)
Depression	21 (44.7)	49 (67.1)
Attempt suicide	28 (59.6)	43 (58.9)

\*Multiple responses

Table 9 shows that students of both institutional and community schools did not have much knowledge about the consequences of sexual abuse of a child, as very few respondents hardly pointed out all the consequences. However, comparatively community school

students were found to have slightly more knowledge about it than that of institutional school students. More than half of the respondents (53.2% in institutional schools and 63.01% in community schools) have answered chronic pelvic pain as the consequence of sexual abuse.

*Table 9: Distribution of Respondents' Knowledge about the Consequences of Sexual Abuse*

Consequences of physical health	Respondents	
	Institutional school n=47 Number (Percentage)	Community school n=73 Number (Percentage)
Chronic abdominal pain	11 (23.4)	35 (47.9)
Chronic pelvic pain	25 (53.2)	46 (63.01)
Disability	3 (6.4)	28 (38.4)
Over-weight or low weight	5 (10.6)	18 (24.7)
Menstrual irregularities	23 (48.9)	48(65.8)

\*Multiple responses

Table 10 shows that the students of the institutional school were found to have a lack of knowledge as less percentage of them hardly pointed out all the behavioural change due to sexual abuse. More than half of community school

students have pointed out all the options. More than half percentages of the respondents in the schools, government (72.6%) and institutional (61.7%) have answered suicidal behaviour.

*Table 10: Distribution of Respondents Knowledge about Behavioural Changes due to Sexual Abuse of Child*

Behavioural changes	Respondents	
	Institutional school n=47 Number (Percentage)	Community school n=73 Number (Percentage)
Sleep problem	16 (34.04)	39 (53.4)
Depression	21 (44.7)	48 (65.8)
Drug abuse	12 (25.5)	37 (50.7)
Suicidal behavioural	29 (61.7)	53 (72.6)
Unusual aggressiveness	7 (14.9)	29 (39.7)

\*Multiple responses

Table 11 reveals that majority of the respondents both in community school and the institutional school had pointed out all the responses of protective skills of sexual abuse. But comparatively the

students of the institutional school were found to be less aware of the protective skills of sexual abuse than that of the community school.

*Table 11: Distribution of Respondents' Knowledge about Protective Skills of Sexual Abuse*

Protective skills	Respondents	
	Institutional school n=47	Community school n=73
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Reject the abuser	11 (32.4)	37 (55.20)
Shout for help	27 (79.4)	57 (85.07)
Report to parents/police	25 (73.5)	58 (86.60)
Differentiate touch	20 (58.8)	52 (77.60)
Should not go alone	22 (64.7)	42 (65.70)

\*Multiple responses

Table 12 shows that most of the respondents both in institutional school (91.49 per cent) and community school (93.15 per cent) answered that the victim should report to parents/teachers/friends about being

abused. Similarly, majority of the respondents (82.98 per cent in institutional school and 91.78 per cent in community school) answered that parents' of the victim should report to the police/authorized person.

*Table 12: Distribution of Respondents' Knowledge about Response for Sexual Abuse*

Response	Respondents	
	Institutional school n=47	Community school n=73
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
<b>Victim's response:</b> report to parents/teachers/friends	43 (91.49)	68 (93.15)
<b>Parents' response:</b> report to police/authorized person	39 (82.98)	67 (91.78)

Table 13 shows that most of the students, 87.24% in institutional school and 93.15% in community school had

awareness of an individual’s role to not to keep the matter of being sexually abused secret.

*Table 13: Distribution of Respondents’ Knowledge about Individual’s Role*

Keep the matter of being sexually abused a secret	Respondents	
	Institutional school n=47	Community school n=73
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Yes	6 (12.76)	5 (6.85)
No	41 (87.24)	68 (93.15)

Table 14 shows that cent per cent of the students from institutional school and community school was aware of the role of government to formulate a law to ensure justice to punish abusers. Whereas almost all the respondents in

institutional school (97.87%) and in community school (100 per cent) were aware of the role of children’s welfare organization to conduct awareness program.

*Table 14: Distribution of respondents’ knowledge about the role of government and children’s Welfare Organization*

Role	Respondents	
	Institutional school n=47	Community school n=73
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
<b>Government:</b> ‘Ensure justice’	47 (100)	73 (100)
<b>Welfare Organization:</b> ‘Conduct awareness program’	46 (97.87)	73 (100)

Table 15 reveals that only 2.14% of institutional school students were found to have adequate knowledge and majorities (65.95%) were found to have inadequate knowledge. In the case of

community school students, 20.56 % were found to have adequate knowledge and 27.39% had inadequate knowledge and majorities (52.05%) had moderate knowledge of sexual abuse of the child.

*Table 15: Distribution of Respondents' Overall Knowledge Level on Sexual Abuse of the Child*

Knowledge level	Respondents	
	Institutional school n=47 Number (Percentage)	Community school n=73 Number (Percentage)
Inadequate knowledge (<50%)	31 (65.95)	20 (27.39)
Moderate knowledge (50% to 75%)	15 (31.91)	38 (52.05)
Adequate knowledge (>75%)	1 (2.14)	15 (20.56)

### Respondents' Attitude on Sexual Abuse of a Child

The questionnaire contained attitude related questions in part III with a total of 7 items/statements. Statements were positive and negative nature related to sexual abuse of the child. The respondents were requested to put a tick (✓) marks in the chosen column because there were 5 columns after each statement. For computing the responses, the following Likert scaling technique

was used. This technique provides a five-point scale and assigns each of the five positions scale value. To all favourable statements numbering procedure from maximum to minimum-5,4,3,2,1 and for all unfavourable statement from minimum to maximum 1,2,3,4,5. The five positions represent from maximum to minimum Strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Uncertain (U), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD).

As they quoted that after assigning the member on each item, we can decide favorableness and un-favorableness of

the particular group towards any subjects. For this, the criteria provided by them are given below.

In the attitude scale, there were 7 items.

For favourable responses was  $7 \times 5 = 35$

For neutral responses was  $7 \times 3 = 21$

For unfavourable responses was  $7 \times 1 = 7$

The attitude scale was developed by using standard deviation.

Table 16 reveals that both in the government and institutional schools, most of the students (95.74% in institutional school and 94.52% in community school) had average awareness of Child sexual abuse.

*Table 16: Comparison of attitude between government and institutional school students' responses*

Attitude scale	Respondents	
	Institutional school n=47	Community school n=73
	Number (Percentage)	Number (Percentage)
Lower attitude	1 (2.13)	2 (2.74)
Average attitude	45 (95.74)	69 (94.52)
Higher attitude	1 (2.13)	2 (2.74)

Students of both institutional and community schools were not found to have much knowledge about the consequences of sexual abuse, as very few respondents hardly pointed out all the consequences. However, comparatively community school students had slightly more knowledge about it than that of institutional school students.

## Discussion

This study was conducted to explore awareness on child sexual abuse among school students and find out the knowledge and compare the awareness among students of government and institutional school. Various researches in Kathmandu have highlighted that 36% to 65% of sexual assault victims are of age 15 years or less

(CWISH/Save the Children Norway, 2005). Therefore, the students studying in class 8 and 9 of both the institutional and community schools were selected as the study population.

The findings of this study revealed that majority of the students of both the schools (66% in institutional and 86.3% in community schools) answered that raping the child and exposing abuser's body parts to the child is sexual abuse of the child. This finding is similar to the study done in Baglung Nepal and Abia State Nigeria (Nlewem & Amodu, 2016, Sharma & Rana Magar, 2018). This clearly shows that though a maximum number of students both in institutional and community schools knew about sexual abuse, they are still not much aware of the non-contact type of sexual abuse. The study suggested that the respondents only know the severe or extreme type of sexual abuse such as rape, molestation, etc. Similar study was done in India also found the same result (Praharaj et al., 2018). Children perceive only serious forms of sexual abuse while they were mostly ignorant that less serious types are also sexual abuse. However, comparatively students of community school were more aware of the non-contact form of sexual abuse than that of institutional

school. Majority of the students identified touching body parts and exhibitionism as forms of sexual abuse and the study suggested that students perceived only serious forms of sexual abuse while they were mostly ignorant that less serious types are also sexual abuse (CWIN & SCNN, 2003).

Most of the students both from institutional and community schools thought that after the victimization of sexual abuse, they would either affected by STIs or get pregnant which is possible only because of penetrative sex. From this, it is quite clear that students were found not to have more knowledge of other forms of sexual abuse and other types of sign and symptoms of sexual abuse. Most of the students of community schools were aware of all types of psychological symptoms that may occur after the victimization of sexual abuse. In community schools, more than half of the students had pointed out almost all types of psychological symptoms. Whereas the students of the institutional school were less aware of psychological symptoms of sexual abuse as less than half of the students hardly pointed out all the options.

Both the students of institutional and community schools were found to have less knowledge about the consequences of sexual abuse, as very few respondents hardly pointed out all the consequences. Mental consequences such as depression, suicidal thoughts, anxiety etc. were not mentioned by the students which were found to be answered by the students of similar type of study done in Menoufiya University Students (Douskey & Marawan, 2013).

Though the majority (91.78%) community school adolescents claimed that they know about protective skills of sexual abuse, they still do not have much knowledge about it as they hardly point out all the responses. But, in comparison to institutional school adolescents, the adolescents of community schools have more awareness regarding protective measures.

While talking about the knowledge level of the students, only 2.14% of institutional school students have adequate knowledge and the majority of 65.95% have inadequate knowledge. In the case of community school students, 20.56 % have adequate knowledge, 27.39% have inadequate knowledge and

a majority of 52.05% have moderate knowledge on sexual abuse of the child.

The result is similar to the study done in Vietnam where 74 per cent of the students were found to have insufficient knowledge on CSA (Ngoc Do et al., 2019).

Most of the students (95.74% in institutional school and 94.52% in community school) have average attitude regarding awareness on child sexual abuse. Thus, in both the institutional and community schools, the rate of the favourable attitude towards the statements on sexual abuse of child lacks to prevent them from being abused. This result is along the same line with a similar study done in Saudi Arabia (AlRammah et al., 2018).

The students of community school have more awareness on protective skills of CSA than that of Institutional school. The majority percentage, 91.78% of community school's students answered that they know about protective measures. Though community school students claimed that they know about protective skills of sexual abuse, but they still do not have much knowledge about it as they hardly point out all the responses. But, in comparison to

institutional school students, the students of community schools have more awareness regarding protective measures.

## Conclusion

The findings showed that community school students have a high level of understanding/knowledge in most issues of sexual abuse of a child, such as what sexual abuse is, who is likely to be abused, where it can happen, what are the sign/symptoms, what are protective skills and so on. However, institutional school students lack an understanding of some of the critical aspects, such as who could be abuser, what are the protective skills. Thus, the finding reveals that there was a difference in the level of knowledge between institutional and community school students. The rate of the favourable attitude towards the statements regarding sexual abuse of a child was average in both the government and institutional school students.

Institutional schools have not paid sufficient attention towards CSA, and that children in institutional schools are more vulnerable to CSA than their counterparts in community schools. However, more awareness-raising

activities need to be conducted at both schools.

Teachers should be trained on child protection policies/measures and curriculum should also include child safety and CSA since this is critical for the child's safety and emotional development. The difference in knowledge level among the community and institutional students should be considered while making educational programs. Similarly, local government and education stakeholders should develop child sexual abuse prevention education programs in schools and communities. There is a need for assessment of health care services and school and community education programs related to providing knowledge on child sexual abuse so that loopholes can be filled and appropriate approaches and strategies can be applied.

Since our research is cross-sectional some limitations should be considered as it would be challenging to conclude causality between the risk factors and outcomes. Also, the self-administered questionnaire might cause recall bias and social desirability response bias.

Last but not least the results of this study can be used as evidence for further research activities on child sexual abuse.

## Disclosure Statement

The authors declare that no potential conflict of interest exists.

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