

Magnitude and Consequences of Sexual Violence among Female High School and Preparatory School Students in Goba Town, Southeast Ethiopia

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Abstract

Violence towards female students in school is devastating and is worldwide. Unsafe learning environment is among the reasons that girls discontinue their studies. In developing world where economic imbalance are extreme, literacy rates are low, basic universal education a goal rather than a reality and HIV pandemic often shocking, the question of violence against women and its impact on education and health is particularly curial. Objective of The aim of the study was to assess the magnitude of sexual violence and its consequences among female high school and preparatory students in Goba town. An institutional based cross-sectional study design was conducted among 296 female students. Pre-tested and structured questionnaire was used to collect data. Systematic random sampling was used to select the participants. Data was analyzed by SPSS version 22 and association of dependent and predictors using variable was declared at 95% CI on $P < 0.05$. Result, Around 96 (32%) of the participants had experienced unwanted sexual acts like verbal jokes before joining high school, 70(23.3%) experienced after joining school and 70(23.3%) in the past 12 months. Vaginal discharge 19(26%), reported abortion 14(19.2%), reported injury on genitalia 13(17.8%) and swelling around the genital 12(16.4%) were major reported consequences of sexual violence. In this study the magnitude and consequences of sexual violence is high. Majority of the perpetrators were students. Therefore, schools and other concerned bodies should aware students on sexual violence and its consequences, Health is particularly curial.

Keywords: Sexual violence; Female students; High schools; Preparatory schools

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Introduction

World health organizational report on violence and health define violence as the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person or a group of community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm or deprivation [1]. There are many forms of violence against women; sexual violence is the most common form of it which includes rape, abuse using physical force, Verbal threats, harassment to have sex, unwanted touching and others degrading acts that often persist over time and are accompanied by threats on parts of the perpetrator [2-5].

Sexual violence is defined by WHO as any sexual act, attempt

to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances acts directed towards a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victims in any setting, including but not limited to home and work [5]. In schools, this may involve sexual harassment, forced sex assault. Rape is the most extreme forms of sexual violence [6]. Violence against women is the world's most prevalent and systemic problem. Data from the world and local studies indicate that in some parts of the world at least one woman in every five has suffered an attempted or completed rape [7,8]. According to WHO between 7 and 48% of girls and young women aged 10–24 years report their first sexual encounter as coerced? Most victims of sexual violence are aged less than 25 years of age [9]. Studies provided evidence that violence is a common at schools [10, 11]. A cross

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sectional school based survey from 2591 students in Vietnam, reported 18.5% of female students had experienced sexual abuse [12]. Study conducted in South Africa indicated that 2.9% of students had been found to have sex [13]. Studies also indicated that the health impacts of sexual violence is more severe because it is linked to some of the most devastating reproductive health issues of our time including unwanted pregnancy, high risk sexual behaviours, STI including HIV/AIDs, unsafe abortion and maternal mortality [10].

The situation in Ethiopia is not different from other African countries where several studies had documented worst scenario. According to the study conducted in Jimma among school girls reported that, 13% and 9.1% of girls faced completed rape and attempted rape respectively in their life time [14]. High rates of sexual violence have similarly been reported in Addis Ababa from the study on factors contributing to sexual violence against female high school students, 21.2% and 25.5% of girls experienced rape and attempted rape respectively [15,16].

Sexual violence is a crime. It is a form of serious human right violation. Ethiopia is one of the countries where sexual violence against women occurs highly. For instance, the result of WHO multi-country study on violence against women, across the world has put Ethiopia in the first place. The percentage of women who had been subjected to sexual violence by an intimate partner is 59% [13].

It is apparent that there are many devastating problems female students encounter with sexually related matter in their high school day (14). Sexual harassment, rape, forced prostitution, unsafe termination of pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STI) are few to mention [14]. School related violence against female students in perpetrated on female students by their male peers and teachers in school which results in missing school, to losing concentration in classes, feeling bad about them and dropping out [7].

Local norms are the great challenges in combating sexual violence in Ethiopia. Rape in case of women is undermined and considered as a fault of women [5]. In order to escape the risk and danger that follow, rape victims in our country are reluctantly requested to inform their problem. Thus information on sexual violence could be so scanty. Based on the information from MOH a study revealed that pregnancy in Ethiopia among girls less than 15 years are three times more likely to end in abortion compared to those ages 20-24 years [15,16].

Schools in many parts of developing countries including Ethiopia don not respond well to the students complaints and many girls do not even complain because of fear of reprisal, especially from teachers but also because they believe that nothing will be done if they complain [17].

Methodology

Study design, area and period

An institutional cross sectional study was conducted from March 1-30, 2013 in Goba high and preparatory school students. The

town is located in the south eastern part of Ethiopia 445 km away from Addis Ababa and 15 km the capital city of the zone, Robe. The total area of the town is about 2,679.38 hectares it is bounded by different farmer association. These include Sinja in the North, Fasil sure in the south, Aloshe in the East and Gama farmer association in the west, Tegona and Bamo are two rivers which closes the town. The climatic condition of the town almost the same throughout the year and its weather condition is Dega the average temperature is about 12°C and the average maximum T° is about 22°C. The annual rainfall it receives is about 1000 ml-1200 ml. The population of the town is approximately 53,558 out of this 27,564 are females and 25,994 are males the most dominant ethnic groups are Oromo and Amhara respectively. In the town there are a number of private and governmental educational institutions among the governmental there about six elementary schools, one high school, one preparatory school, one technique school, one governmental college and one university. During data collection, the preparatory school is teaching 825 students among them 492 are male and 333 are female while a high school is teaching 2538 students, 1249 are males and 1281 are females.

Sample size determination

To determine the minimum number of female students to be included in the study, the single population formula will be used; based on the assumption 95%, level of confidence, 5% margin of error, 23% proportion, 10% estimated non-response rate, the final sample size calculated to be 300 [18].

Data collection and techniques

A pre tested and structured questionnaire was used. The questionnaire was prepared first in English and then translated to Amharic and translated back to English by independent translators to validate consistency. Systematic random sampling was used to select the study participants. The student registration book was used as sampling frame.

Data processing and analysis

Data was analysed by SPSS version 22 and association of dependent and predictors using variable was declared at 95% CI on $P < 0.05$.

Ethical considerations

The data collection was carried out after approval of the research proposal by the Ethical clearance of MWU College of medicine and health science. A verbal informed consent was obtained from individual participants before data collection and all participants in the study were asked that participation is on voluntary basis.

Results

Socio-demographic characteristics

In this study a total of 296 female students of reproductive age group were included with response rate 98.9. 135(45%) were grade 9, 100(33.3%) were grade 10, 31(10.3%) were grade 11 and 30 (10%) were grade 12 .The mean age of the study participant was 20+/_ (4.62) and the median age was 19. Regarding the

religion, majority of the respondent 215(71.7%) were Orthodox Christians followed by Muslim 54(18%) and protestant 21(7%) (Table 1).

Variable	No	Percent
Age		
14-17 years	163	54.3
18-21 years	126	42
above 21 years	7	2.3
Religion		
Orthodox	215	71.7
Catholic	5	1.7
Protestant	21	7
Muslim	55	18.3
Marital status		
Never married	269	89.7
Married	27	9
Education level		
Grade9	135	45
Grade10	100	33.3
Grade11	31	10.3
Grade 12	30	10
Ethnicity		
Oromo	180	60
Amhara	90	30
Tigre	14	4.7
Gurage	12	4
Parental condition		
In union	244	81.3
Separated/divorced	18	6
Only mother	Bitcoin	Bitcoin
	16	5.3
Only father	Bitcoin	Bitcoin
	14	4.6
Both of them not alive	Bitcoin	Bitcoin
	Bitcoin	Bitcoin
	4	Bitcoin
	1.3	Bitcoin
Father education level		
Illiterate	10	3.3
Read and write	39	13
Primary (1-6) grade	32	10.7
Junior (7-8) grade	47	15.7
High (9-12) grade	74	24.7
Certificate	39	31.3
Mother education level		
Illiterate	17	5.7

Read and write	46	15.3
Primary (grade 1-6)	36	12
Junior (grade 7-8)	57	19
High school (grade 9-12) grade	75	25
Current parents monthly income		
Less than 1000etb	61	20.3
1001-2000etb	103	34.3
2001-3000	81	27
>3000	51	17
With whom you live currently		
Parents	200	66.7
Father only	8	2.7
Mother only	45	15
Relative	9	3
Husband	16	5.3
Alone	21	7

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristic of female high school and preparatory school in Goba town, March (2013) (n=296).

Sexual history of study participants

Among the study participants, one hundred three (34.3%) of the respondents reported to had regular boyfriends, 193(64.3%) had no regular boyfriends. 81(27%) of the respondents had experience of sexual intercourse, while 215(71.7%) had no the experience (Table 2).

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Sexual intercourse		
No	215	71.7
Yes	81	27
Reason for sexual intercourse		
Marriage	14	17.28
Personal desire	23	28.4
Peer pressure	10	12.34
Promising word from attacker	7	8.6
For financial purpose	4	4.9
For passing examination	12	14.8
By force	6	7.4
By alcohol	5	6.1
Age at first sexual intercourse		
<15	10	12.34
15-18 year	35	43.2
19-21year	33	40.7
>21year	3	3.7
Lifetime sexual partner		

None	135	45
One	60	74.1
Two	18	22.2
Three	4	4.9
Four and above	5	6.2
Condom usage		
Yes	12	14.8
No	15	18.5

Table 2: History of sexual intercourse of Negade high school and Goba preparatory school female students in March, 2013 (n=296).

Magnitude of sexual violence

A substantial proportion 96(32%) of the participants had experienced unwanted sexual acts like verbal jokes before joining high school, 70(23.3%) experienced after joining school and 70(23.3%) in the past 12 months. About 21(7%) had experienced forced sex without their consent before joining high school and preparatory school, 13(4.3%) had experienced after joining high school and 12(4%) had experienced in the past 12 months. 46(15.3%) experienced forced sex one times in their life time (**Table 3**).

Variable	Before joining school		After joining school		In this academic year	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Sexual violence						
Unwanted sexual act	96	32	70	23.3	70	23.3
Like verbal jokes						
Unwelcome kiss	56	18.7	42	14	56	18.7
Unwelcome touching	44	14.7	36	12	49	16.3
On breast and genitalia						
Forced sex that escaped	22	7.3	17	5.7	24	8
Forced sex without consent	21	7	13	4.3	12	4
Frustrating forced sex	9	3	4	1.3	6	2
Nothing happened	88	29.3	34	11.3	34	11.3
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 3: Magnitude of various forms of Sexual Violence among Female high school and preparatory school students in Goba town March 2013 (n=296).

Variables	Frequency	Percent
Perpetrator		
Boyfriend	11	3.7
Husband	2	0.7
Relative	14	4.7
Teacher	19	6.3
Student	21	7
Stranger	4	1.3
Neighbor	22	7.3
Health professional	5	1.7
Family member	7	2.3
Priest	1	0.3
Place of forced sex		
School	27	9
Attacker's home	26	8.7
Student home	24	8
Hotel	4	1.3
Other	2	0.7

Perpetrators of sexual violence

Regarding the perpetrators, most of the respondents 22(7.3%) were raped by their neighbour, followed by 21(7%) students while 19(6.3%) were raped by teachers. Regarding the age between the victims and the perpetrators, majority of the girls 34(11.3%) reported that perpetrators were in the same age with the victims, 31(10.3%) were older than the victims and 19(6.3%) were much older than the victims (**Table 4**).

Reporting about to whom the victims shared the situation

Around 32(43.8%) shared the situation to their friend, 18(24.6%) shared situation to their sisters and 18(24.6%) didn't shared their situation to anybody. Majority of the victims 39(53.4%) didn't report to any legal body and 34(46.6%) reported to the legal body of which 10(29.4%) reported to police and 11(32.4%) reported to kebele. for those who didn't report to legal body, their main reasons were afraid of their parents 17(43.6%), afraid of public reaction 14(35.9%) and didn't know what to do 7(17.9%). Concerning the action taken to the attacker 13 (38.2%) of attacker were sentenced, 12(35.3%) punished by financial penalty and 9(24.5%) were forced to marry (**Table 5**).

Time of forced sex		
Afternoon	41	13.7
Evening	24	8
Late night	10	3.3
Morning	9	3

Table 4: Perpetrators and age gap among raped females of high school and preparatory school students in Goba town, March 2013.

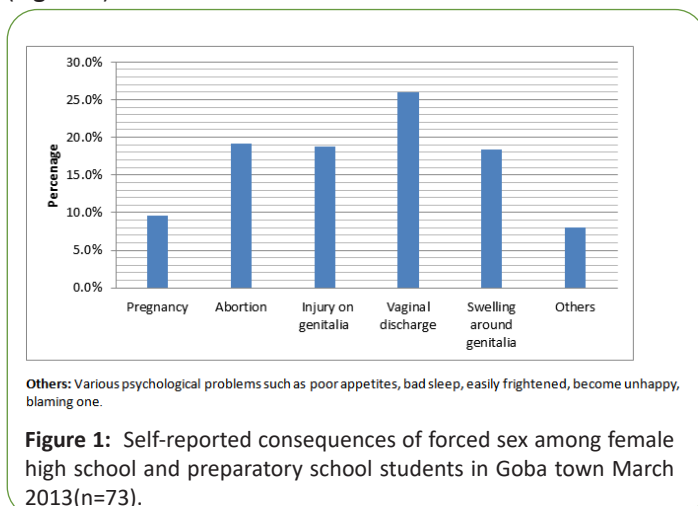
Variables	Frequency	Percent
Not shared	18	24.6
Shared to friend	32	43.8
To sister	18	24.6
To brother	8	11
To parents	10	13.7
To health professionals	6	8.2
To police	4	5.5
Report to legal body		
Yes	34	46.6
No	39	53.4
Legal body		
Police	10	29.4
Kebele	11	32.4
Court	13	38.2
Reason for keeping the secret		
Not know what to do	7	17.9
Afraid of the parents	17	43.6
Public reaction	14	35.9
Afraid of the attacker	1	2.6
Legal body is not helpful	0	0

Table 5: Table showing to whom the participants shared the situation among Female high school and preparatory school students in Goba town March 2013 (n=296).

Consequences of sexual violence

With regards to the immediate outcomes of sexual violence, victims were asked about pregnancy, abortion and other related health outcomes of sexual violence. Majority 19(26%) of the victims reported vaginal discharge,

14(19.2%) reported abortion, 13(17.8%) reported injury on genitalia and 12(16.4%) reported swelling around the genital (Figure 1).



Discussion

In this study, the magnitude and consequences of sexual violence was assessed among 296 female high schools and preparatory student's .It was found out that high prevalence of sexual violence, which includes completed rape, attempted rape and sexual harassment. This study provides evidence; which will help in designing appropriate intervention strategy among high school and preparatory female students. Out of the sexually active participants, 47.4% started sexual activity as a result of rape. When compared with the study done in Hawasa among female night school a student which shows 18.3% of the students started sexual activity as result of rape out of sexually active participants [19]. The difference between these studies is may be due to lack of awareness of the females concerning their sexual right and how to protect themselves from this problem. This indicates the severity of the problems where girls were forced into sex before they intend to do so .The prevalence of lifetime sexual violence was found out to be 89% which is inconsistent with the study done in Mekele, Debarq, Butajira [20]. Study conducted among high school student in Ethiopia is with the prevalence rate ranges from 34.4%-78% [21]. Another taken in Hawasa with prevalence rate ranges from 35%-65.3%(24). This difference may be raised from the reason that the victims might not report their problems

to legal body and may be due to fear of social stigma. The current study showed that the prevalence of lifetime completed rape was reported to be 39.4% among female high school and the lifetime attempted rape was found to be 19%. This finding is in line with the study conducted in Addis Ababa among university female students reported results with the prevalence of lifetime completed rape reported in 12.7% and attempted rape in 27% of the study participants [22]. Similarly, the study conducted among high school girls in Jimma town also showed comparable result of prevalence rate of completed lifetime rape and attempted rape to be 13% and 9.1% respectively [15]. Also, the result of this study also has higher than studies conducted in Ethiopia. This difference may be due to the reason that the punishment imposed on the perpetrators by the legal body is not sufficient. This finding is also higher when compared with the study conducted in Chilly among college female students which shows the prevalence of completed lifetime rape to be 9% and attempted rape to be 6% and the study from South Africa among school pupils reported completed rape to be 2.9% (7). This could be due to the difference in the study population and study setting (instrument use). Concerning the perpetrators, majority were students (22.6%), neighbors (19%), boyfriend (16.7%) and teachers (15.5%) were participated in the forced sex. Most (53.4%) rape victims did not report to the legal body. This may be due to fear of discrimination and stigma among the students and in the community.

The prevalence of sexual harassment was 70.3%, Another study among high school students in Ethiopia also revealed 78% of sexual harassment among students [19]. In the other hand this finding is higher from the study conducted in Addis Ababa among female university students to be 58% [23]. This could be due to the difference in the study population. The finding in this study is also higher than the study done in Butajira in which prevalence of sexual violence was 28.2 % (22), this may be due to difference in study population.

In this study, the potential immediate and long term health outcomes of sexual violence was tried

To be assessed. The prevalence of abnormal vaginal discharge was 26% as compared to study done in Hawassa night school students which was 11.1% (24). This gap may be due to high prevalence of STI. Unwanted pregnancy was found out to be 9.6% as compared to the study done in Butajira where the prevalence of unwanted pregnancy was 17.3% (22) and this gap may be due to the use of emergency contraceptive. The prevalence of abortion is reported to be 19.2% which is comparable with the study done in Hawassa female night school students where the prevalence of abortion was 16.7% [21]. Psychological outcome also reported in significant number of sexual violence victims. Disturbed sleep, thought of ending of life, worthlessness and feeling unhappy was reported in 37%, 27.4%, 17.8 and 28.8% respectively. This results are high when compared to the study done in Butajira which shows the prevalence of disturbed sleep, thought of ending of life, worthlessness and feeling unhappy in 9.3%, 9.3%, 13.3% and 14.7% respectively [22].

Conclusion

The magnitude and consequences of sexual violence is high according to this study. Majority of the perpetrators were students. Concerning the immediate and long term consequences of sexual violence, abnormal vaginal discharge was highly reported among participants. Therefore, in schools different clubs and educational programs should be created to aware students on sexual violence and its consequences. Through mass media, awareness creation campaign, counselling services and formal deliberating session on the root causes and consequences of sexual violence and HIV/AIDS should be made.

Competing Interests

The authors declare that they have no any competing interests.

Authors' Contributions

All authors have contribution to the manuscript; all authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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