

Prevalence of Sexual Violence and its Characteristics among Female Students in Aman High School, Bench Maji Zone, South West Ethiopia – A Descriptive Cross Sectional Study, 2017

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Abstract: Violence against women is usually targeted at women and girls due to their unequal treatment nature in society. It is considered as one of the major women health problems and further is a major obstacle standing against women's human rights. Sexual violence in different forms is widespread throughout the world. Although it is largely hidden by the victims, it is estimated that 12 million people around the world face sexual violence every year. In the developing world, where economic imbalances are extreme and literacy rates low, the magnitude and effect of sexual violence is unquestionably high including Ethiopia. To assess the prevalence of sexual violence and its characteristics among female students in Aman high school, south west Ethiopia School based cross sectional study was conducted to assess the prevalence of sexual violence among female students in Aman high school. A structured self-administrated questioner was used to collect data. Data was entered and analyzed using SPSS version 20 software. The results were presented using absolute numbers, proportions, table and figure. The finding of these result revealed that the prevalence of sexual violence is 41.6% in Aman high school female students from these, 5.1% were attempted rape and 9% were completed rape. The prevalence of sexual harassment(36.4%) which is unwelcome touch on sensitivity body part (5.1%), unwelcome kiss (0.9), unwelcome remark (9.8%), fondling(3.8%), kidnapping(1.3%). Based on this finding the prevalence of sexual violence among female high school students is high. Therefore, the school administrative should prepare awareness creation programs through establishing clubs (gender club) that target against sexual violence.

Keywords: Sexual violence, Female high schools, Students, Ethiopia.

INTRODUCTION

According to the definition of World Health Organization (WHO) sexual violence is depicted as any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person in spite of of their relationship to the victim, in any location, including but not limited to home and work [1]. It is considered as one form of violence against women which is endemic in communities around the world. Also in recent time, it is fact that sexual violence is not a situation located at some area alone. Rather it is found everywhere across the globe irrespective of class, race, age, religion and national boundaries. World Health Organization (WHO) in its report described sexual violence against women as a universal phenomenon that persists in all countries of the world, and the perpetrators are often well known to the victims [2]. Some of the major effects of sexual coercion on girls' and women's are

increased chances of early sexual debut, forced sex, non-use of condoms and others [3].

Women's are violated by sexual partner or non-sexual partner from the community universally and have been becoming common in all regions and cultures. It is considered as one of the major women health problems and further is a major obstacle standing against women's human rights. Sexual violence in different forms including sexual partner violence and non-sexual partner violence is widespread throughout the world. Various findings revealed that sexual violence affects both women's physical, sexual and mental health. In general, sexual violence has a significant negative impact on the health of the population [4].

A study finding by WHO across selected 11 countries described that the percentage of women who had been subjected to sexual violence by an intimate

partner ranged from 6% to 59%. Also, it is believed that up to 70 percent of women throughout the world suffer from sexual violence in their lifetime [5]. Other similar study done magnified the extent of sexual violence worldwide, with an estimated of one in three women is physically or sexually abused; and one in five experienced rape or attempted rape in their lifetime. Although it is largely hidden by the victims, it is estimated that 12 million people around the world face sexual violence every year [6].

Sexual violence is not limited to certain parts of the world rather it is the dominant problem both in developed as well developing countries. A finding obtained from USA discovered that the magnitude of any type of sexual abuse among female high school students was magnificent [7]. Other findings from Chile indicated that the prevalence of rape or attempted rape was estimated to be 63.16% [8].

In the developing world, where economic imbalances are extreme and literacy rates low, the magnitude and effect of sexual violence is unquestionably high. Except considering sexual violence as a serious problem in this region, it was not get adequate attention until recent time. For instance, a study finding in Nigeria illustrated that the magnitude of sexual violence against women was 52.5% [9].

Ethiopian is one of African countries located at the eastern part, where the problem of sexual violence is worse. Culturally men are considered to be dominant decision makers in the family and as well across the society. Within the society women are considered as the one responsible to undertake every activity in home as well to take the command of every man with relation. Although, recently women's right is recognized practically across all nations majority of women have not adequate awareness about their right [10].

Currently, the national policy of Ethiopia has given attention towards violence against girls at the community level ever than before. However, still now the magnitude of sexual violence among high school students is high. For instance a report by WHO indicates that in rural Ethiopia alone, 49% of ever-partnered women have ever experienced physical violence by an intimate partner, rising to 59% ever experiencing sexual violence) [1]. Other study conducted in Debarik found that 59% of women suffered from sexual violence [11].

Violence against women is a major health problem with the country including this study area. However, it often goes unnoticed and undocumented partly due to its taboo nature which is relevant to make appropriate intervention. Data concerning sexual violence among high school female students lacks in

Aman high school. Thus, this study was aimed to assess the prevalence of sexual violence and its characteristics among female high schools students in Aman town. It was believed that the findings of this study would be an important input for future interventions and programs by various stake holders.

Objectives

General Objective

To assess the magnitude of sexual violence and its characteristics among Aman high school female students, Bench Maji zone, south west Ethiopia

Specific Objective

- To assess the prevalence of sexual violence among female students in Aman high school, Bench Maji zone, South west Ethiopia
- To describe the characteristics of sexual violence among female students in Aman high school, Bench Maji zone, South west Ethiopia

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Study area, study design and period

A descriptive school based cross-sectional study design was conducted from April to June, 2017 to assess the prevalence of sexual violence among female students in Aman high school, Bench Maji zone, south west Ethiopia. Aman town is located at 561 km far away from Addis Ababa, capital of the country, and 853 km away from Hawassa, capital city of the region. There is one governmental high school in Aman town; with total enrolled students of 1573 in 2016/17. From those total students 931 are males and the remaining 642 are female students.

Source of population

The source population for this study was all female students attending during the regular program in Aman high school.

Study population

All female high school students in Aman high school attending in the regular program were the study population.

Inclusion criteria

All female students able to understand the self-administered questionnaire found in Aman high school at the time of data collection were included in this study. Exclusion criteria Students who were blind and could not fill the self-administered questionnaire were excluded from the study.

Sampling size determination

Sampling size was determined by using the following assumption: 95% of CI, a 5% of margin of error, 32.8% of proportion from the previous study done among female high school students in Butajira [12].

Using single proportion formula the minimum sample size required for the study was obtained as follows:

$$N = (Z \alpha/2)^2 \left(\frac{P(1-P)}{d^2} \right)$$

Where, N=sample size, P= proportion, d²=margin of error and $Z \alpha/2$ = the value of standard normal distribution corresponding to a significant level of alpha.

$$N = (1.96)^2 \left(\frac{0.328(1-0.328)}{0.05d^2} \right),$$

$$N = 339$$

After adjustment the sample size would become;

$$n_{\text{adjusted}} = \frac{n}{(1+n/N)}, \quad n_{\text{adjusted}} = \frac{339}{(1+339/642)} = 339/1.528 = 221.9 = 222$$

Non respondent rate in this study was estimated to be 10% i.e., Non respondent rate = $222 * 10\% = 222 * 10/100 = 22.2$ and thus the final corrected sample was, $n_{\text{correct}} = 222 + 22.2 = 244.2 = 244$. Accordingly, a total of 244 female students in Aman high school were included in this study.

Sampling procedure

Multi stage sampling technique was used to take the appropriate respondents. First students were grouped in to grade 9 and grade 10 using stratified sampling technique. Then via proportional allocation method the total sample was distributed to the class proportionate to their student size. Then by using simple random sampling the students were selected.

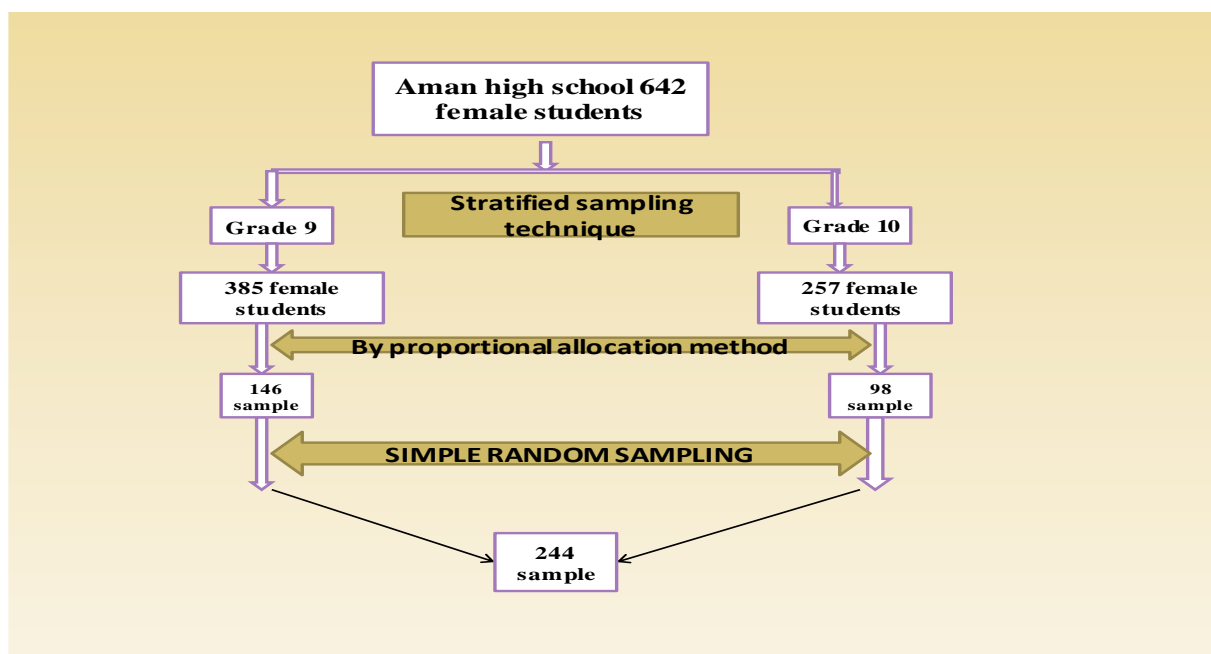


Fig-1: Schematic presentation of sampling procedure for female students in Mizan Aman High school, South West Ethiopia, 2017

Data collection procedures and tools

Data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire to collect quantitative data. The questionnaire was developed by adapting other questionnaires from previous similar studies materials and review of relevant literature. The questionnaire was first prepared in English and then translated into Amharic and back to English to ensure its consistency. Data was collected by three students from graduating class at college of health science, department of public health.

Study variable

- Socio demographic variables (Age, Students marital status, Parent's marital status,

Religion, Sexual history, Residence, Educational level)

- Sexual violence against female
- Characteristics of sexual violence

Operational definition

- **Sexual violence:** a female student who experienced at list one of this; any sexual harassment, completed rape and attempted rape ever.
- **Sexual harassment** a female student who experienced at list one of this; is unwanted and repeated sexual advances which is unwelcome remark, unwelcome touching, kidnapping,

fondling and unwelcome kiss to coercive sexual intercourse ever.

- **Completed rape:** a female student who experienced any forced sexual intercourse obtained by physical or by threatening of body harm, or when the victim is incapable of giving consent.
- **Attempted rape:** a female student who experienced a trial to have sexual intercourse without consent of the women but without penetration of vagina.

Data processing and analysis

Data was entered and processed using SPSS version 20. Descriptive statistic was used to explain the study participants in relation to study variables. The results were then presented using absolute numbers, proportions, table and figure.

Data quality control

The collected data was reviewed and checked for completeness and consistency by the investigators on daily basis. Data collectors and supervisors were trained prior to data collection time.

Ethical consideration

Permission letter was received from department of public health, collage of health sciences, Mizan Tepi University. Informed verbal consent was also obtained from the school director and other

concerned school administrators. Finally, participants were told the objectives of the study prior to filling the questionnaire and the names of respondents were excluded from the questionnaire to keep their confidentiality.

RESULT

A total of 244 eligible female students were participated in this study where 136 (58.1 %), and 98 (41.9%) of them were taken from 9th grade and 10th grade respectively.

Socio-demographic characteristics

Among the total respondents, the predominant religion was orthodox 117(50%) and the most widely distributed ethnic group were Bench 116(49.6%). Most of (92.7%) of the respondents were never married and 146(62.4%) of them reside in Urban settings. Regarding current place of residence, majority 179 (76.5%) of them were reported to live together with family and 25 (10.7%) of them were living alone. Most, 106(45.3%), of respondents fathers were able to write and read, and 42(17.9%) of fathers were illiterate. Nearly half, 110(47.2%), of respondents mother only can read and write, and significant number, 71(30.5%) of them were illiterate. Majority, 195(83.3%), of the respondents parents were living together. About 84(35.9%) of respondents average family income was between 1000 and 2000birr (*Table1*).

Table-1 Socio demographic characteristics of female high school students in Aman high school, Bench Maji Zone, South West Ethiopia, 2017

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Age of respondents	10-15	10	4.3
	16-20	212	90.6
	>20	12	5.1
Ethnicity	Bench	116	49.6
	Kaffa	47	20.1
	Amhara	41	17.5
	Oromo	20	8.5
	Other	10	4.3
	Orthodox	117	50
Religion of students	Protestant	97	41.5
	Muslim	16	6.8
	Catholic	2	0.9
	Other	2	0.9
Marital status of students	Yes	17	7.3
	No	217	92.7
Parents marital status	Married	195	83.3
	Widowed	23	9.8
	Divorced	15	6.4
	Other	1	0.4
Living with (with whom living with currently)	Alone	25	10.7
	With family	179	76.5
	With friends	17	7.3
	With relatives	13	5.6

Reason for being alone	Parents living out of this town	23	92
	Parents not live	2	8
Fathers Educational Status	illiterate	42	17.9
	Can read and write	106	45.3
	1-8	30	12.8
	9-12	48	20.5
Mothers Educational Status	Diploma and above	8	3.4
	Illiterate	71	30.5
	Can read and write	110	47.2
	1-8	30	12.9
Family income	9-12	22	9.4
	100-1000	60	25.6
	1000-2000	84	35.9
	2000-4000	40	17.1
	>4000	15	6.4
Residence	I don't know	35	15
	Urban	146	62.4
	Rural	88	37.6

Sexual History of the Respondents

From the total participants included in this study, more than half, 134 (57.3%) of them had no regular boyfriend presently. Only 58(24.8%) of the respondents had sexual relation, while the rest 176(75.2%) of the respondents had no sexual relation. From those respondents who had sexual relation most, 50(86.2%) of them started at the age of 15-20, and 7(12.1%) of them started with in the age of 10-14,

whereas only 1(1.7%) of had sexual relation when they were above the age of 20. Therefore, almost all (86.2%) of the respondents who had sexual relation started sexual relation at the age of 15-20 years. From those who had sexual relationship the highest number 26(44.8%) of the respondents start sexual intercourse by love affair, 10(17.2%) of the respondents condition of starting sexual relation was by personal pleasure, and 5(8.6%) of them raped (Table 3).

Table-2 Sexual history of female high school students in Aman high school, Bench Maji Zone, South West Ethiopia, 2017

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Have regular boyfriend presently	Yes	100	42.7
	No	134	57.3
Had sexual intercourse previously	Yes	58	24.8
	No	176	75.2
Age at first sexual intercourse (years)	10-14	7	12.1
	15-20	50	86.2
	>20	1	1.7
Reason for first sexual intercourse	Marriage	5	8.6
	Financial	6	10.3
	Love affair	26	44.8
	Unknown reason	6	10.3
	Personal pleasure	10	17.2
	Force	5	8.6

Magnitude and types of sexual violence among studied female students

Concerning to sexual violence history from the total study participants 97(41.5%) of the respondent had faced sexual violence. Moreover from total study participants 23(9.8%) of the respondents had faced unwelcome remark, 12(5.1%) of the respondents had facing unwelcome touching of body parts, 9(3.8) had faced foundling, 3(1.3%) respondents had faced kidnapping, and 2(0.9%) of the respondents faced

unwelcomed kiss. Also 2(0.9%) of them had faced both foundling and unwelcomed remark, 7(3.0%) had faced unwelcome remark, unwelcomed touch and unwelcomed kiss, 15(6.4%) had faced unwelcomed remark and unwelcomed kiss, 5(2.1%) had faced both unwelcome remark and unwelcomed touch. From 234 study participants 12(5.1%) of the respondents had encountered attempted rape, 21(9.0%) had faced forced sexual intercourse.

Out of 21(9.0%) of the respondents who had encountered forced sexual intercourse, most, 13(61.9%) of the victim students was victimized in the perpetrator home. Concerning to the time of sexual violence from those who encountered forced sexual intercourse nearly half, 9(42.9%) of the respondents were victimized in early evening time, 6(28.6%) of the respondents were victimized in afternoon, 4 (19.0) were victimized in late night and 2(9.5) were victimized in the morning.

According to the response from those who had forced sexual intercourse (Completed Rape) 8(38.1%) were become pregnant, 5(23.8%) were did abortion, 3(14.3%) of them had abnormal vaginal discharge, 3(14.3%) of them had genital trauma and the rest 2(9.5%) of them had genital ulcer (*Table 3*).

Table-3 Magnitude and types of sexual violence among female high school students in Aman high school, Bench Maji Zone, South West Ethiopia, 2017

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Faced sexual violence	Yes	97	41.5
	No	137	58.5
Types of sexual violence faced	Never encounter	137	58.5
	Attempted rape	12	5.1
	Kidnapping	3	1.3
	Fondling	9	3.8
	Unwelcome remark	25	10.75
	Unwelcome touch on sensitive body part	12	5.1
	Unwelcome kissing	2	.9
	Foundling and unwelcomed remark	2	.9
	Unwelcome remark, unwelcomed touch and unwelcomed kiss	7	3.0
	Unwelcomed remark and unwelcomed kiss	15	6.4
	unwelcome remark and unwelcomed touch	5	2.1
	Fondling, Unwelcome touch on sensitive body part	5	2.1
Forced sexual intercourse	Yes	21	9.0
	No	213	91.0
Place of forced sex encountered	At my home	3	14.3
	At his home	13	61.9
	At school	5	23.8
Time where forced intercourse encountered	Morning	2	9.5
	Afternoon	6	28.6
	Early evening	9	42.9
	Late night	4	19.0

Perpetrators of lifetime rape

Forced sexual intercourse (Completed Rape) victims were asked to report their perpetrators. According to the report 38.1% were raped by school

mate, 28.6% were raped by neighbor, 19% were raped by teachers and 14.3% were raped by their boyfriend (*Figure 2*).

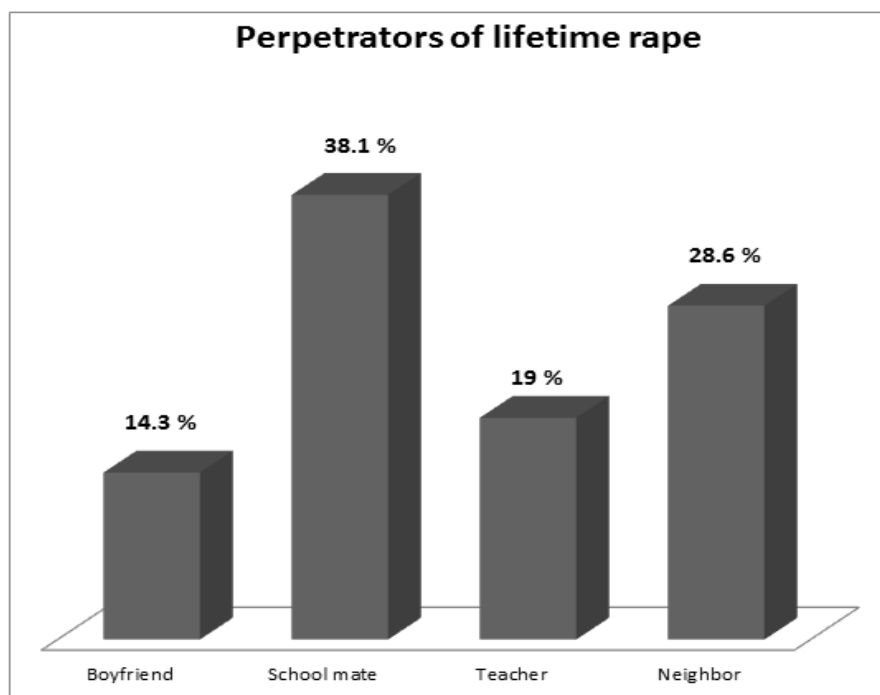


Fig-2 Perpetrators of forced sexual intercourse (completed rape) victimized in their life time among female high school students in Aman high school, Bench Maji Zone, South West Ethiopia, 2017

DISCUSSION

Sexual violence against women and girls is one of the most systematic and common human rights violations. It is speeded through the world irrespective of age, socio-economic, educational and geographic boundaries affecting all societies. Its magnitude also still, not below the expected level especially in developing countries including this study area [13].

This study tried to quantify the current magnitude of sexual violence among female students in Aman High school. Accordingly, the finding from this study discovered that the life time prevalence of sexual violence among female high school students was 41.5%. It was identified that around half of those studied students had experienced different form of sexual violence in their life time. This study was in line with a finding obtained in Nigeria where the prevalence of sexual violence was identified to be 41.9% [9]. However, it was higher than a findings from Butajira [12], Bahir Dar town [14] and Harari region [15] where the prevalence of sexual violence among female students were 32.8 %, 37.3% and 25% respectively. This observed variation might be attributed to, variation in socio demographic factors specially age of the respondents where most of the respondents' in this study were found between 15-20 years. Also it may be resulted due to difference in living conditions, cultures and values given to females in different ethnic groups or societies.

Sexual violence can range from unwanted sexual touching to rape. Based on the finding of this study the prevalence of different form of sexual harassment was (36.4%). It includes unwelcome touch on sensitivity body part, unwelcome kiss, unwelcome remark, fondling, and kidnapping. This study finding was congruent with a study done in Bahir Dar [14], where the prevalence of sexual harassment was 35.8%. However, it was much lower than a finding obtained in Mizan Tepi University where the life time prevalence of sexual harassment was 75.4% [16]. This difference might be occurred due to the variation among study population since risk factors are different between two environments.

Also it was identified that the magnitude of forced sexual intercourse (rape) is 9.0%. This finding was much higher than a finding obtained in Butajira high school female students where prevalence of forced sexual intercourse was 1.2% [12]. However, it was lower than a finding in Harare region which revealed that the prevalence of forced sexual intercourse (rape) was 25.9% [15].

In addition to violations of human rights, sexual violence including rape profoundly damages the physical, sexual, reproductive, emotional, mental, and social wellbeing of individuals and families. It is fact that in addition to violations of human rights, sexual violence including rape profoundly damages the physical, sexual, reproductive, emotional, mental, and

social wellbeing of individuals and families [5]. According to the response from those who had forced sexual intercourse (Completed Rape) 8(38.1%) were become pregnant, 5(23.8%) were did abortion, 3(14.3%) of them had abnormal vaginal discharge, 3(14.3%) of them had genital trauma and the rest 2(9.5%) of them had genital ulcer.

Out of 21(9.0%) of studied female students who had encountered forced sexual intercourse, most, 13(61.9%) of the students was victimized in the perpetrator home. This finding was highest than a finding in Butajira where 33.3% of rape happened at perpetrators home [12]. Also it was identified that 38.1% were raped by school mate, 28.6% were raped by neighbor, 19% were raped by teachers and 14.3% were raped by their boyfriend.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

Based on these findings the prevalence of sexual violence among Aman high school students is high. This indicates that nearly half of the students' encountered sexual violence such as sexual harassment, attempted rape and completed rape. Among those sexual harassment is the dominant one. The Sexual violence is a complex problem with significant physiological effects. Forced sexual intercourse (rape) is significant in this study area and they were mainly perpetuated by school mate and neighbor.

Recommendation

Based on the finding it was recommended that legal body's such as zone administrative office should take a preventive measure against sexual violence. Also it is better if Aman high school prepare education/awareness creation programs through establishing clubs (gender club) that target against sexual violence. School Gender offices should create public awareness toward sexual violence and work coordinately with schools to prevent violence against female students and encouraging victims to report to the legal body. Furthermore, policy makers and those organizations working with youth need to pay attention and consider finding remedial solution to sexual violence. Finally, further study is recommended to determine the associated factor and its outcome

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests regarding the publication of this paper.

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