

Knowledge Regarding Sexual Abuse of Selected University Students of Dhaka City



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Abstract

Introduction: Sexual harassment involves an assortment of coercive behaviors, including physical force, intimidation, and various forms of compulsion, including verbal harassment and forced penetration [1]. Sexual abuse can happen to both men and women. In the United Kingdom (UK), the problem of child sexual abuse (CSA) has epidemic proportions and is a global public health issue [2]. 53,874 incidents were reported under the 2012 Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act as of 2021 [3]. To their ignorance about puberty, sexuality, and fundamental human biological changes, adolescents have a very difficult time addressing their SRH demands. These underlying causes contribute to high rates of teen pregnancy, STIs, sexual assault, poor negotiating skills, forced marriage, and high fertility rates [4].

Methods: The study used a quantitative technique and a descriptive cross-sectional design. Students at Jahangir Nagar University and the American International University of Bangladesh were the intended target group. Jahangir Nagar University and American International University of Bangladesh served as the study locations. The six-month trial period ran from January 2022 through June 2022. For this investigation, primary sources of data were used. The study unit was the individual student. Non-probability (purposive) sampling techniques were used for the investigation.

Results: The majority of survey participants (N=81) 62.2% were aged between 19 and 21 years old, and there was a statistically significant difference in age between students at public and private universities. None of our study participants suffered from any kind of sexual abuse, though they mentioned hearing about it. Regarding the view of sexual abuse, public universities 23% of those polled claimed sexual abuse as a justification for sharing inappropriate photos. At private universities, the response rate for crude jokes is 32.5%. Only the least number of public (2%) and private university (10%) students took part in sexual abuse related awareness or training programs. Regarding the rights of receiving training for prevention and safeguarding from sexual abuse, only 28% of the public and 40% of the private university students replied in affirmative.

Conclusion: Sexual harassment is a sensitive issue, though due various reasons the rate of reporting and providing justice to the victims being delayed all over the world including Bangladesh. There social, religious and policy lacking in this context.

Keywords: Sexual Abuse; Harassment; Crisis management; Dhaka city

Introduction

Sexual harassment involves an assortment of coercive behaviors, including physical force, intimidation, and various forms of compulsion, including verbal harassment and forced penetration [4]. Sexual abuse can happen to both men and women. In the United Kingdom (UK), the problem of child sexual abuse (CSA) has epidemic proportions and is a global public health issue [2] incidents were reported under the 2012 Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act as of 2021 [3]. A study conducted

previously in Bangladesh states that, individual employees leave their jobs when they experience harassment at work or turn to informal safety measures to reduce dangers [5].

A study in Bangladesh demonstrates that, 54.2% of women in Bangladesh report having been assaulted by their lifetime spouse at least once in their lifetime [6]. In a different study its being found that only 30 percent of the sexual abuse cases towards children are reported by the mainline media [7] To understand the

current situation of sexual harassment among the knowledgeable population of Bangladesh the authors decided to conduct this study. According to a study conducted in Bangladesh, the country's laws are not clearly defined in this area, and proper application of the law is required to lower the incidence of such offences. To compound the problem, the study found that Bangladesh's legal framework for sexual offences is weak, confusing in many ways, and not all-inclusive. [8].

The Bangladesh constitution's Article 19(1), (2), and (3) state that there shall be opportunity equality and that governments shall take all necessary steps to end inequality and ensure the participation of women in all spheres of public life. Article 27 states that all citizens are equal before the law and are entitled to the same degree of legal protection (Laws of Bangladesh, 1972). Still sexual harassment being reported from all over the country. Between the ages of 10 and 19, adolescents make up more than one-fifth of Bangladesh's entire population, which numbers about 36 million people [4]. Now, the adolescent birth rate is 113 births per 1,000 women, and 52% of girls marry by the time they are 18 and 18% by the time they are 15. Information sessions in the classroom and online resources regarding adolescent sexual and reproductive health (ASRH) could be very beneficial and trustworthy for the kids. Due to their ignorance about puberty, sexuality, and fundamental human biological changes, adolescents have a very difficult time addressing their SRH demands. These underlying causes contribute to high rates of teen pregnancy, STIs, sexual assault, poor negotiating skills, forced marriage, and high fertility rates [4].

Methodology

Research Question: What is the Knowledge Regarding Sexual Abuse of Selected University Students of Dhaka City?

Aim: To determine how much information university students know about sexual abuse.

Objectives:

1. To gauge college students' understanding of sexual abuse.
2. To ascertain the participant's sociodemographic position.
3. To determine the relationship between education and socioeconomic level

Conceptual Frameworks:

Methods

The study used a quantitative technique and a descriptive cross-sectional design. Students at Jahangir Nagar University and the American International University of Bangladesh were the intended target group. Jahangir Nagar University and American International University of Bangladesh served as the study

locations. The six-month trial period ran from January 2022 through June 2022. For this investigation, primary sources of data were used. The study unit was the individual student. Non-probability (purposive) sampling techniques were used for the investigation.

Sample Size calculation:

Using this formula, the sample size for the research area was determined to be around 81, with a 95% confidence interval. The necessary sample size (n) was determined using Fisher's method,

where $n = Z^2 \frac{pq}{d^2}$ (when population is bigger than 10,000).

Z: Normal deviation at the desired confidence interval. In this case it will be taken at 95%,

Z value at 95% is 1.96

P: The conventional level of significance 0.05 (25)

q: 1.0 - p, which is 1 - 0.05 = 0.95.

d: Degree of precision = 5% or 0.05.

Sample size was as follows:

$$n = Z^2 \frac{pq}{d^2}$$

$$n = 1.96^2 \times 0.05 \times \frac{0.95}{0.05^2}$$

$$n = 72.9904.$$

Considering 90% participation rate the final sample size would be.

$$= \frac{72.9904}{.9} \approx 81$$

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria: University students between the ages of 19 and 25 who were willing to volunteer to participate in the study were included. Students who are mentally impaired and not willing to participate were excluded.

Data Collection: Close-ended, pre-tested structured interview and questionnaire questions were employed. The survey that asks about socio-demographic factors such as age, gender, place of residence, marital status, occupation, monthly income, and education level.

Data Analysis: Data gathered was coded in excel sheet from the interview scripts and then analyzed using SPSS 26.

Ethical Permission: Ethical permission for this study was obtained from the following institution and individual written consent was also obtained from the participants:

- i. Ethical review Board of American International University Bangladesh.
- ii. Ethical review board of Jahangirnagar University.

Results

Socio-demographic information

Figure 1 below shows the biological ages of research participants by kind of university (Public vs. Private) and in years. Most survey participants (62.2%) were aged between 19 and 21

years old, and there was a statistically significant difference in age between students at public and private universities. The results of the survey show that the mean (SD) age in years of the participants is 21.48 (1.82), and there are no differences between the two groups of students attending public and private universities.

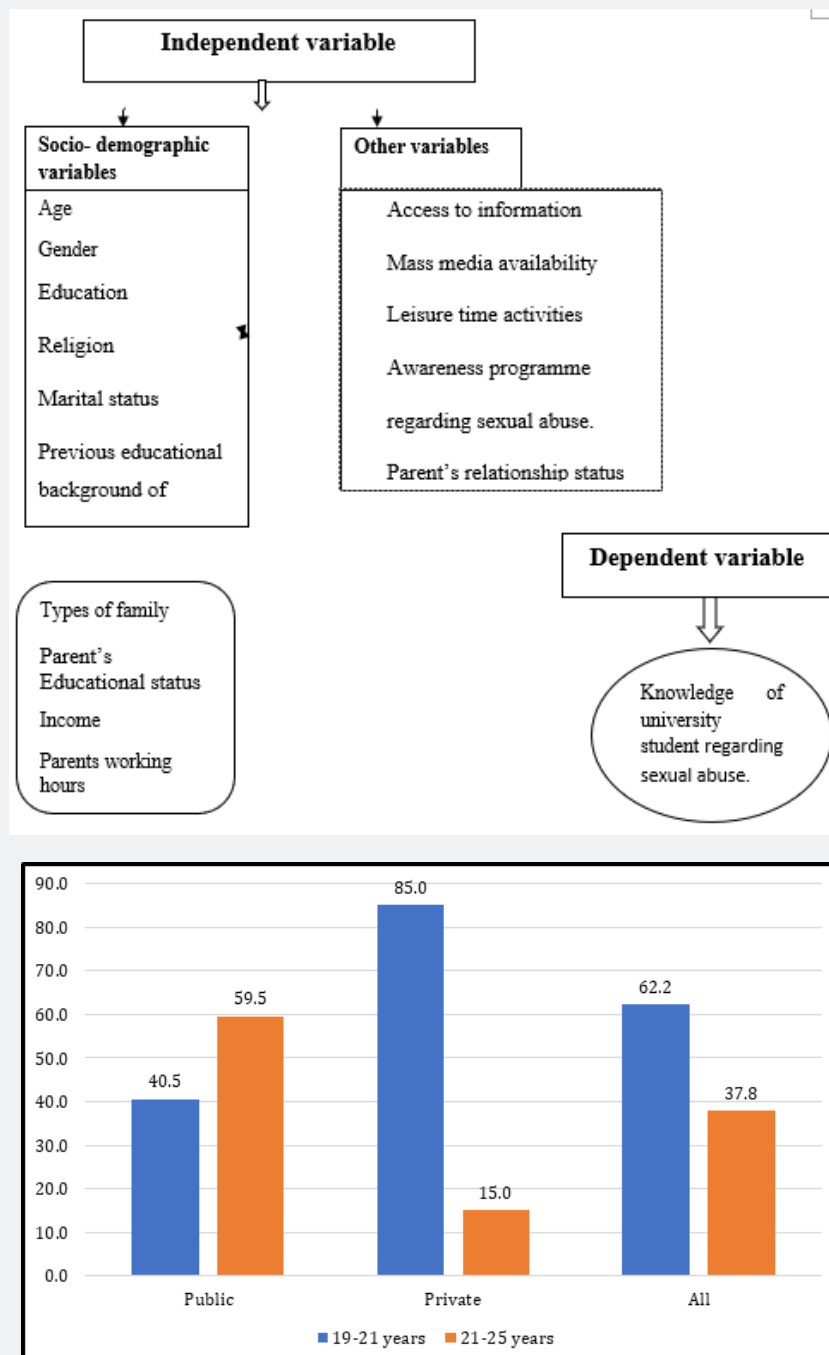


Figure 1: Study participants age in years.

Religious distribution of the participants charted below illustrates that maximum number of participants are from the Islamic faith followed by Hindus. None of the participants are from any other religious faith.

The greatest proportion of respondents are single individuals. In this public institution, the overall response rate is 42 and the percentage is (97.6%), while it is 40 and the percentage is (85.0%) in the private university. Most students (50%) from public

universities and (55%) from private universities in this Table 1 have a science background. Public universities had (31%) and private universities had (35% of the commerce students). Most participants in this survey are residents of Dhaka city (85% from private universities, 97.6% from state universities). To understand the relationship between the parents and respondents, we asked about the openness of conversation. Most of the respondents (93.6%) replied they have friendly relationships with parents.

Table 1: Distribution study participants religion.

Religion	Public		Private		All	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Islam	41	97.6	36	90	77	93.9
Hindu	1	2.4	4	10	5	6.1
Christian	0	0	0	0	0	0
Others	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	42	100	40	100	82	100

p-.150

In Table 2 below, students from public and private universities were asked if they knew what sexual abuse was. Many respondents, 90.5% and 67.5%, respectively, indicated that they did; 7% and 22% indicated that they didn't want to know the answer. Finally, from public and private universities, 2.4% and 10%, respectively,

didn't know the phrase Figure 2. When asked about the occurrence of sexual abuse, both public and private university students heard about this mostly among neighboring family (41.5%), followed by relatives (28%), friends (18.3%) Figure 3.

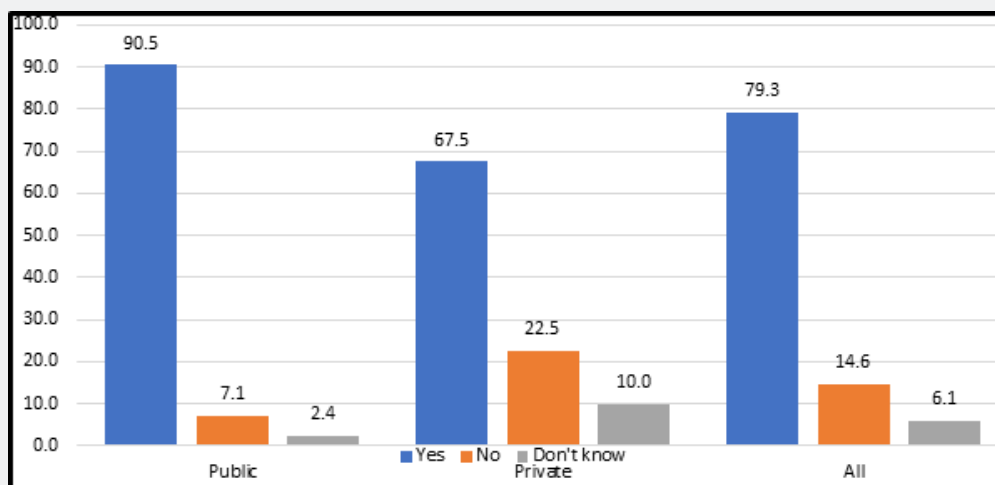


Figure 2: Knowledge about the term Sexual abuse.

Table 2: Distribution study participants parents' behavior.

Behavior	public		private		All	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Conservative	1	2.4	4	10	5	6.1
Friendly	41	97.6	36	90	77	93.9
Total	42	100	40	100	82	100

p=.150

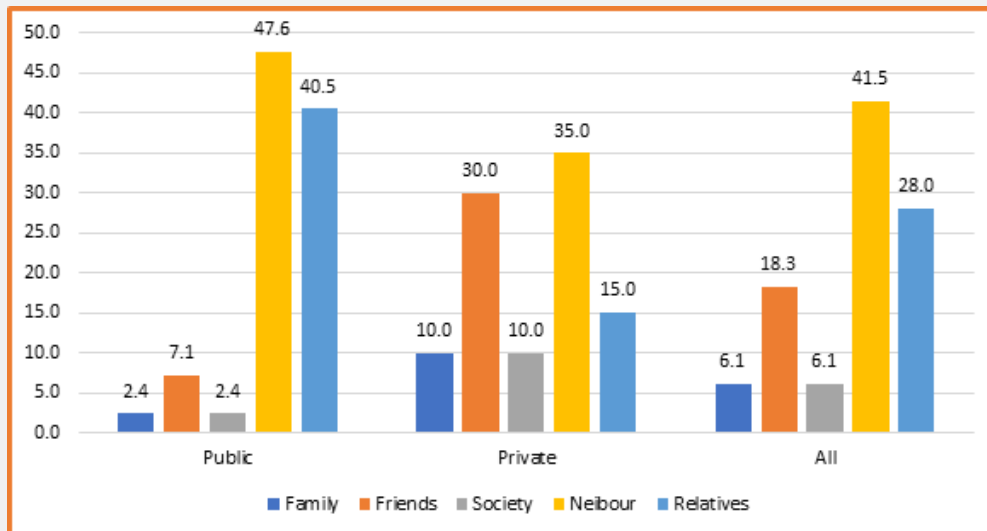


Figure 3: Occurrence of Sexual abuse.

In context of perception regarding sexual abuse, public university Sexual abuse was cited by 23% of respondents as a reason for showing unwanted photos. Dirty jokes receive a 32.5% response rate at private universities. With significant P value for both the causes. Table 3

Considering the type of sexual abuse, public university students have a higher percentage (85%), with a significant P value Table 4. Only the least number of public (2%) and private university (10%) students took part in sexual abuse related

awareness or training programs. Only the public university students considered there is significant relationship (P= .001) Table 5 between domestic violence and sexual abuse. While asked about ethical rights to know about sexual abuse awareness and participating in the training programs, only 28% of the public university students and 40% of the private university students replied affirmatively Table 6. Though 87% of the total study population consider sexual abuse to be a crime, but there 12% consider it otherwise.

Table 3: Distribution of the respondent perception regarding sexual abuse.

Response	public		private		All	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Dirty jokes	4	9.5	13	32.5	17	20.7
Showing unwanted pictures	10	23.8	9	22.5	19	23.2
Peer pressure	8	19	0	0	8	9.8
Showing unwanted gesture	9	21.4	4	10	13	15.9
Whistling	9	21.4	4	10	13	15.9
Dominate to show pornographic video	2	4.8	10	25	12	14.6
Total	42	100	40	100	82	100

p=.001

Table 4: Distribution of opinion about sexual abuse types.

Response	Public		Private		All	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Physical (bruising, blistering, wound, STD's)	5	11.9	17	42.5	22	26.8
Mental (depression, anxiety, mood)	36	85.7	19	47.5	55	67.1
Don't know	1	2.4	4	10	5	6.1
Total	42	100	40	100	82	100

p=.001

Table 5: Distribution of participants opinion about domestic violence relation with sexual abuse.

Response	public		private		All	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Physical (bruising, blistering, wound, STD's)	5	11.9	17	42.5	22	26.8
Mental (depression, anxiety, mood)	36	85.7	19	47.5	55	67.1
Don't know	1	2.4	4	10	5	6.1
Total	42	100	40	100	82	100

p=.001

Most respondents from public universities believe that children between the ages of 11 and 15 are most at risk for sexual abuse, whereas those from private universities believe that children between the ages of 0 and 10 are most vulnerable. Here, the p value is.003, which is important Table 7. Most of the

students attending private universities are shown in the chart above to be knowledgeable about sexual assault law and policy. Table 8 At the same time most of the participants agree with the fact that the current policies and laws to reduce sexual abuse are not enough Figure 4.

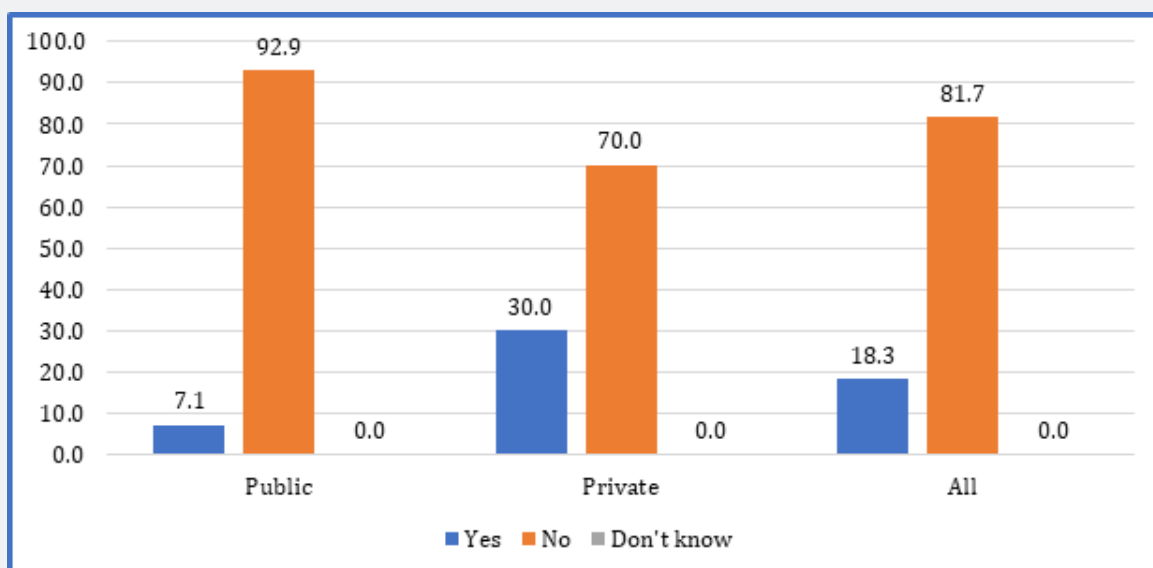


Figure 4: Percipients opinion about Govt. policy for minimizing sexual abuse.

Table 6: Participants knowledge about sexual rights of ethical education.

Response	Public		Private		All	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Yes	12	28.6	16	40	28	34.1
No	29	69	20	50	49	59.8
Don't know	1	2.4	4	10	5	6.1
Total	42	100	40	100	82	100

p=.137

Table 7: Distribution Respondents opinion about vulnerable age group of sexual abuse.

Age group	Public		Private		All	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
0-10 years	8	19	22	55	30	36.6
11-15 years	23	54.8	11	27.5	34	41.5
16-22 years	10	23.8	4	10	14	17.1
23-30 years	1	2.4	3	7.5	4	4.9
31-45 years	0	0	0	0	0	0
45 and above	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	42	100	40	100	82	100

p=.003

Table 8: Participants know about law and policy against sexual abuse.

Response	Public		Private		All	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Yes	24	57.1	32	80	56	68.3
No	16	38.1	0	0	16	19.5
Don't know	2	4.8	8	20	10	12.2
Total	42	100	40	100	82	100

p=.000

Discussion

Majorities (62.2%) of the study's total participants were between the ages of 19 and 21, and there was a statistically significant difference in age between students at public and private universities. The results of the survey show that the mean (SD) age in years of the participants is 21.48 (1.82), and there are no differences between the two groups of students attending public and private universities. In response to the participant's residency question, most respondents are from Dhaka City (85% from private universities, 97.6% from public universities). The chi-square test's P value is.041 (0.05). Therefore, there is a difference between students at private and public universities. Most students (50%) at public universities and (55%) at private universities have a science background. Public universities had (31%) and private universities had (35% of the commerce

students). The remainder are members of the arts group. Chi-square test P value is p=.510 (0.05).

None of our study participants suffered from any kind of sexual abuse, though they mentioned hearing about it. According to research, sexual violence (SV) is shockingly prevalent on college campuses, with worldwide incidence rates ranging from 9% to 97% [9]. On the other hand, a study conducted among Indian college students found that 28.7% percent of them suffered from sexual abuse [10]. In another study conducted in Pakistan reveals that, total of 225 instances of sexual abuse, including all types, were reported by respondents, of which 24 occurred too frequently, 35 occurred 10-50 times, and 166 occurred less than ten times [11]. In study conducted in China found that, 24.3% (350/1441) of the students reported having encountered sexual violence; of these, 23.4% (337/1441) had dealt with non-contact

harassment, 8.8% (127/1441) had dealt with physical contact harassment, and 2.4% (35/1441) had been sexually assaulted at some point in their lives [12]. The probable reason for not getting any data of sexual abuse among the participants is their religious and cultural background. As majority of our respondents comes religious conservative Muslim belief.

Regarding the view of sexual abuse, public universities 23% of those polled claimed sexual abuse as a justification for sharing inappropriate photos. At private universities, the response rate for crude jokes is 32.5%. P values that are noteworthy for both causes. In a study conducted among American university students 90% of the participants faced physical sexual abuse like forceful penetration of genitalia and only 10% percent reported about other forms of sexual abuse [13]. Our study shows just the opposite no incident of forceful penetration was reported by any of our participants. Though the level of education among our study population is high, still there is an unknown barrier or hesitance being noted to talk about sexual harassment.

Our study reveals that the common age group for sexual abuse is 0 to 15, public university students considered the age-group to be 11 to 15 and private university considers it to be 0 to 15. In study conducted in UK showed that, 10% of British children aged between 0 and 16 who participated in a poll in 2019 reported experiencing sexual abuse [14]. In another study conducted in India found 8 to 10 years is the common age of sexual abuse [15]. Both the study's age group corresponds with our finding, the probable reason behind this may be the mental maturity of the victimized population.

Our study results show that students from both public and private university students have good knowledge about laws and policies regarding sexual abuse. 90.5 % of public university students and 67.5% of private students have knowledge about sexual abuse. In a Likert scale analysis done among undergraduate students in India shows that 82.4% of the students had average understanding about sexual harassment, 13.2% had strong knowledge, and 4.4% had poor knowledge regarding sexual harassment [16]. A study in a different setup found that, evidence regarding sexual misbehavior by staff members and student well-being is dispersed over several academic fields, including psychology, law, sociology, education, organization and management studies, health sciences, and policy studies [17].

In context of participating in sexual abuse related training our study result shows only 2% of the public university and 10% of the private university students have attended any form of training program. Regarding the rights of receiving training for prevention and safeguarding from sexual abuse, only 28% of the public and 40% of the private university students replied in affirmative. A study conducted among African university students reveals the shocking fact that, the staff members appointed to deal with sexual harassment related issues, have never received any training from

the institution [18]. The inclusion of CSE (Child Sexual Education) in the school curriculum has received strong parental support (93.9%), according to studies done in Nigeria.

In contrast, teacher perceptions were more diverse, with 46.1% of teachers believing that it is the parents' responsibility to teach CSE and that the best place to do so is at home [19]. A study conducted among Canadian medical students found that they have received no training regarding sexual harassment [20]. So, it may be concluded that though university students from different parts of the world have knowledge about sexual abuse, like our study population but there severe lacking in providing training regarding prevention of sexual harassment.

Policy formation is important in context of sexual abuse prevention being emphasized in study conducted though ecological approach [21]. Our study result portrays the fact that 92.9% of public university students and 70% of the private university students considers current law and policy regarding sexual harassment is not good enough to prevent or lower down the rate of sexual abuse. A systematic review the researchers found that A lack of attention has been paid to population-level interventions to stop child sexual abuse, with the majority of interventions being conducted in educational settings, instead of focusing on the application of those skills, the actual decline in the occurrence of CSA (Child Sexual Abuse), or changes in the conditions of safety in organizational contexts, researchers have employed outcomes assessing knowledge or skills for young people in self-protection and help-seeking [22]. Another study commented that CSA prevention, detection, and response strategies that are systematic and sophisticated are still in their relative infancy [23,24]. It is clear from the above-mentioned facts that there is a lack in existing law and policy to prevent CSA.

Conclusion

Sexual harassment is a sensitive issue, though due various reasons the rate of reporting and providing justice to the victims being delayed all over the world including Bangladesh. There social, religious and policy lacking in this context. Our study revealed all these issues. It shows having good knowledge is not enough to combat with sexual harassment. The gap between policy formation and implementation is clearly noted. The authors believe that openness regarding sexual education among parents and children, students and teachers play a key role in preventing sexual harassment.

Recommendation

The study recommends the followings regarding prevention of sexual harassment:

- i. New and effective laws need to be in place.
- ii. Anonymous online reporting facility for sexual abuse needs to be there.

iii. The educational institute should have a one stop crisis management center.

iv. Training courses at all levels with openness about sex education is a timely need which needs to be recognized and implemented.

Limitation of the study

Due to scheduling constraints, students from other universities were not included in the sample. Most students were not interested in talking about it because it is a sensitive subject in our society, and another limiting factor was that the courses chosen for the poll were not chosen at random. A more representative sample for this study may have been obtained using random class selection.

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