

# A Descriptive Study to Assess the Knowledge Regarding Sexual Abuse Among Adolescent Girls at Government Senior Secondary School, Shri Goindwal Sahib

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## Abstract

**Introduction:** Sexual abuse, also known as molestation, is characterized by one individual engaging in abusive sexual behavior towards another. This can involve the use of force or the exploitation of the other person. Molestation typically denotes a single occurrence of sexual assault, particularly against a young child, while sexual abuse is a term used to describe an ongoing pattern of such assaults. This term encompasses actions by an adult or older adolescent aimed at sexually stimulating a child or any individual induced into such behavior. The exploitation of children or individuals below the age of consent for sexual gratification is labeled as child sexual abuse or statutory rape. This is a descriptive study aimed at evaluating the understanding of sexual abuse among adolescent girls enrolled in Government Senior Secondary School, Shri Goindwal Sahib. **Aim:** The study aims to evaluate the awareness of sexual abuse among adolescent girls. **Methodology:** The research approach adopted in the study was quantitative research approach with descriptive design. The sample size was 100 girls selected from Government Senior Secondary School, Goindwal Sahib. Data collection utilized a self-structured questionnaire, and a convenient sampling technique was employed. **Conclusion:** The results regarding sexual abuse among adolescent girls revealed that majority of girls (60%) had average knowledge score (below mean <18) followed by 40% of them who had good knowledge score (above mean >18). The mean and standard deviation is 18.3 and 3.4, respectively.

**Keywords:** Assessment, knowledge, sexual abuse, adolescent girls

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## INTRODUCTION

*So Kyo Manda Akhiye Jit Jamme Rajaan*  
(“Why call her bad? From her, kings are born.”)  
–Shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji

Sexual abuse is defined as any physical, sexual, or other sensual act that a person experiences from another person, either at the time of the act or later, that asserts their sexual identity as individuals and causes them to feel humiliated, scared, hurt, uncomfortable, degraded, compromised, and powerless [1]. According to international studies, 43.6% of females have experienced sexual violence in their lives, and 120 million girls are expected to have engaged in forced sexual behaviors at some point in their lives. Harassment encompasses unwelcome sexual advances, solicitation of sexual favors, and any sexually explicit verbal, nonverbal,

or physical conduct [2]. Approximately 89% to 93% of the time, attempted or actual rapes against minors were committed by a known individual. The risk of sexually abusing children is very high. A total of 90% of child sexual abuse incidents involve known individuals—relatives, neighbors, stepparents, or other highly regarded individuals. Physically disabled children, such as those who are blind, deaf, or mentally retarded, have been proven to be at higher risk of sexual assault [3].

Effective psychotherapy interventions for children who have experienced sexual abuse and their families are increasingly supported by evidence. The most effective therapy is cognitive behavioral therapy, with significant improvements and less symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder observed for up to a year after treatment [4].

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A non-experimental exploratory study was conducted to evaluate the information regarding sexual abuse among school-going children. A semi-organized questionnaire instrument comprising two sections was utilized to gather information from a sample size of 60. The results revealed that out of 60 understudies, 83% had great information and 17% had average information. A positive connection was found between the degree of information with respect to sexual maltreatment and the instructive capability of parents [5].

A survey study was conducted regarding knowledge of child sexual abuse among younger students at Kattankulathur Secondary School [5]. Quantitative methodology and non-experimental exploration configuration were utilized. The sample size was 180 younger students. Out of which 90.6% of them had average information, 9.4% of them had poor information and not a solitary one of them had good information [6].

A pre-experimental study was done to evaluate the effectiveness of a structured teaching program among adolescent's knowledge on awareness of sexual abuse enrolled in a particular school in the Punjab district of Gurdaspur. The quantitative, pre-experimental technique was employed. A convenient sampling strategy was used to gather the sample of 60 teenagers. The chosen age bracket spans from 13 to 19 years. The results revealed that according to the pre-test knowledge score on awareness of sexual abuse, 20% of participants had good knowledge, followed by 50% of participants who had moderate knowledge, and the other 30% had bad knowledge. According to the post-test knowledge score on awareness of sexual abuse, 88.4% of adolescents had good knowledge [7].

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study aimed to evaluate the understanding of sexual abuse among adolescent girls. The adolescent girls have average knowledge regarding sexual abuse.

## METHODOLOGY

The research approach adopted in the study was quantitative research approach with descriptive design. The sample size was 100 students selected from Government Senior Secondary School, Goindwal Sahib. A self-designed questionnaire was employed for gathering data. The convenient sampling technique was used. Reliability of the tool was established by using the Karl Pearson method. The coefficient of correlation of tool was found to be 0.83. Hence the tool was found reliable.

- Table 1 depicts that majority of adolescent girls were of age 13 to 15 years 62 (62%) followed by 38 (38%) of age 16 to 18 years.
- In education, majority of adolescent girls, 34 (34%) were in 10<sup>th</sup> standard followed by 30 (30%) in 9<sup>th</sup> standard or below, 20 (20%) were in 11<sup>th</sup> standard, and only 16 (16%) were in 12<sup>th</sup> standard.
- In terms of family size, majority of adolescent girls, 47 (47%), belonged to nuclear family followed by 39 (39%) who belongs to joint family, and 14 (14%) who belonged to extended family.

**Table 1.** Frequency and percentage distribution of sociodemographic profile of subjects ( $N = 100$ ).

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
<i>1. Age (in years)</i>		
13–15	62	62
16–18	38	38
<i>2. Education</i>		
9th or below	30	30
10th	34	34
11th	20	20
12th	16	16
<i>3. Family size</i>		
Joint family	39	39
Extended family	14	14
Nuclear family	47	47
<i>4. Education of father</i>		
Illiterate	25	25
Primary education	18	18
Secondary education and above	57	57
<i>5. Education of mother</i>		
Illiterate	34	34
Primary education	22	22
Secondary education and above	44	44
<i>6. Occupation of father</i>		
Laborer	61	61
Professional worker	39	39
<i>7. Occupation of mother</i>		
Home maker	85	85
Working woman	15	15
<i>8. Source of information</i>		
Family and friends	24	24
Mass media	47	47
Others	29	29
<i>9. Have you ever experienced sexual abuse</i>		
Yes	13	13
No	87	87
<i>9.1. If yes specify it</i>		
Contact sexual abuse	6	6
Non-contact sexual abuse	7	7

- In terms of education of father, majority of fathers of adolescent girls, 57 (57%), have secondary and above education followed by 25 (25%) who were illiterate and 18(18%) who have primary education.
- In terms of education of mother, majority of mothers of adolescent girls, 44(44%), have secondary and above education followed by 34 (34%) who were illiterate and 22 (22%) who have primary education.
- In terms of occupation of father, majority of fathers of adolescent girls 61(61%) were laborers followed by 39 (39%) who were professional workers.

- As regards occupation of mother, majority of mothers of adolescent girls 85 (85%) were home makers followed by 15 (15%) who were working women.
- In terms of source of information, majority of adolescent girls, 47 (47%), get information from mass media followed by 29 (29%) from other sources and 24 (24%) from family and friends.
- Majority of adolescent girls, 87 (87%), had not experienced sexual abuse whereas 13 (13%) had experienced sexual abuse out of which 6 (6%) experienced contact sexual abuse and 7 (7%) experienced non-contact sexual abuse.

**Table 2.** Association of knowledge score with demographic variables (*N* = 100).

Variables	Below mean (18 or <18)	Above mean (>18)	Total	df	Chi square	Tab. value
<i>1. Age</i>						
13–15	44	18	62	1	8.15*	3.84
16–18	16	22	38			
<i>2. Education</i>						
9th or below	24	6	30	3	11.3*	7.82
10th	18	16	34			
11th	13	7	20			
12th	5	11	16			
<i>3. Family size</i>						
Joint family	27	12	39	2	4.78 NS	5.99
Extended family	5	9	14			
Nuclear family	28	19	47			
<i>4. Education of father</i>						
Illiterate	19	6	25	2	3.7695 NS	5.99
Primary education	9	9	18			
Secondary education and above	32	25	57			
<i>5. Education of mother</i>						
Illiterate	22	12	34	2	0.591 NS	5.99
Primary education	12	10	22			
Secondary education and above	26	18	44			
<i>6. Occupation of father</i>						
Laborer	38	23	61	1	0.338 NS	3.84
Professional worker	22	17	39			
<i>7. Occupation of mother</i>						
Home maker	53	32	85	1	1.3 NS	5.99
Working woman	7	8	15			
<i>8. Source of information</i>						
Family and friends	17	7	24	2	2.11 NS	5.99
Mass media	25	22	47			
Others	18	11	29			
<i>9. Have you ever experienced sexual abuse</i>						
Yes	9	4	13	1	0.214 NS	
No	51	36	87			
<i>9.1. If yes, specify,</i>						
Contact sexual abuse	5	1	6			
Non-contact sexual abuse	4	3	7			

(\*Means significant, NS means non-significant, tab. means tabulated.

In relation to age, calculated value (8.15) was more than tabulated value (3.84). Hence, we reject the null hypothesis, and there was statistically significant difference between age and level of knowledge regarding sexual abuse.

In relation to education, calculated value (7.85) was more than tabulated value (7.82). Hence, we reject the null hypothesis and there was statistically significant difference between education and level of knowledge regarding sexual abuse.

In relation to family size, calculated value (4.79) was less than tabulated value (5.99). Hence, we accept the null hypothesis and there was statistically significant difference between family size and level of knowledge regarding sexual abuse.

In relation to education of father, calculated value (3.76) was less than tabulated value (5.99). Hence, we accept the null hypothesis and there was statistically significant difference between education of father and level of knowledge regarding sexual abuse.

In relation to education of mother, calculated value (0.59) was less than tabulated value (5.99). Hence, we accept the null hypothesis and there was statistically significant difference between education of mother and level of knowledge regarding sexual abuse.

In relation to occupation of father, calculated value (0.33) was less than tabulated value (3.84). Hence, we accept the null hypothesis and there was statistically significant difference between occupation of father and level of knowledge regarding sexual abuse.

In relation to occupation of mother, calculated value (1.3) was less than tabulated value (3.84). Hence, we accept the null hypothesis and there was statistically significant difference between occupation of mother and level of knowledge regarding sexual abuse.

In relation to source of information, calculated value (2.11) was less than tabulated value (5.99). Hence, we accept the null hypothesis and there was statistically significant difference between source of information and level of knowledge regarding sexual abuse (Table 2).

### **Limitations**

The study exclusively focused on female adolescent girls, and the sample size was restricted to just 100 individuals. A similar study on a larger sample size with more than 100 participants is recommended [8–10].

### **CONCLUSION**

The primary objective of the study was to evaluate knowledge about sexual abuse. A literature review facilitated the development of the study's methodology by the investigators. The research study aimed to evaluate the understanding of sexual abuse among adolescent girls enrolled in Government Senior Secondary School, Shri Goindwal Sahib. Based on the study findings, it was found that 60% students had average knowledge (below mean <18) and 40% students had good knowledge (above mean >18). Therefore, an informational booklet was created to raise awareness about sexual abuse among adolescent girls.

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