

**ORIGINAL ARTICLE****Sexual Violence against Schoolgirls in Jimma Zone: Prevalence, patterns, and consequences****Mekonnen Gorfu\*, Asresash Demsse\*\*****ABSTRACT**

*In this study, an attempt was made to explore the magnitude, pattern and consequences of sexual violence against schoolgirls in Jimma zone. The study utilized a cross-sectional survey among high schoolgirls and one focus group discussion. A total of 1118 girls participated in the survey. Among these subjects, 296 or 26.5 % were sexually active by the time of the survey. Out of these girls, 60 or 20.4% started sexual activity forcefully. Seventy five or 87.3% of subjects reported that they were raped only once while 11 or 12.7% were raped more than once in their life time. Furthermore, 50 or 9.1% of the girls had experienced attempted rape, 462 or 40.9% physical assaults (beating), 849 or 75.9% female circumcision, 208 or 28.2% non-consensual kissing, 230 or 31.1% non-consensual touching and 368 or 49.8% of the subjects experienced offensive sexual languages and comments.*

*The unwelcome physical and psychological outcomes of the rape were very serious. Among the victims of rape 11 or 12.8% had abortion, 25 or 29.6% had too much bleeding, 13 or 15.1% experienced infection of the pelvic, and 10 or 12.4% of the victims experienced vaginal discharges. Regarding psychological consequences, self-hate or blaming, anxiety or fear, irritation, suicidal thought, and depression were reported by 24.6 % (21), 23.6% (20), 15.4% (13), 11.3% (10), and 10.3% (9) of the rape victims, respectively. From these results, it is concluded that sexual violence against schoolgirls is a serious problem in the zone. Due to the severity of the problem, 32(26.7%) of the victim girls were forced to drop out of school.*

*Teachers, schoolboys and street wanderers are found to be participating in sexual violence against the girls. The victims reported that they had consumed alcohol (52.8%) and khat (33.5%) at the time of rape. Besides, threats of harm and use of physical force were found to be important mechanisms used by the rapists. The majority of the victims didn't report to any legal body because of fears and lack of awareness.*

*As sexual violence against schoolgirls is pervasive, efforts must be done to tackle the problem and promote harassment-free environment for young girls. Especially, improvement of law enforcement related to sexual violence or harassment and awareness promotion of the problem and women's rights are very essential. Schoolgirls must be empowered educationally about their sexual rights and how to handle their problems. Sensitization of the problem by police officers, teachers, and other concerned bodies is needed. Besides, training of health professionals and psychologists on how to handle cases of sexual abuse and counseling or rehabilitation is strongly recommended.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Although women are chief supports of a society and vanguard of the family welfare, they have marginal statuses, received the least benefits from the societal resources (Yegamawork, et al, 2003), and violated just because of their gender. The meaning of violence against women may vary from society to society or country to country; and, depending on their culture and knowledge, individuals could craft their own definitions of violence. Nevertheless, the United Nations General Assembly declare that violence against women is any act of gender-based violence that results in or likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threat of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty whether occurring in public or private life (UN 1993). To put this in a nut shell, violence against women occurs in three forms-physical, sexual, and psychological - that are pervasive and interconnected.

Violence against women may manifest itself in many forms, from psychological intimidation and coercion through name calling, sexual harassment, stalking, moderate physical violence (pushing, shoving, slapping), to severe physical violence (beating, using weapons) and sexual assault (Crawford & Unger, 2000). Violent acts towards women could also include battering, sexual abuse of children, rape, dowry-related violence, female genital mutilation and other traditional practice harmful to women, Violence related to exploitation, trafficking in Women, and forced prostitutions (UN, 1993).

Gender-based violence and harmful behaviors directed at women have been existed since the time memorial. Women

have been victimized by different personalities. Both strangers and someone they know can victimize them. They are suffered by criminal violence (i.e., robbery, burglary, aggravated assault, forceful rape, and murder) and intimate violence (i.e., child abuse, incest, stalking, courtship violence, acquaintance rape, battering, marital rape, and elder abuse). Of course, they are much more likely to be victimized by some one they know, an acquaintance, coworker, friend, or relative including a father, brother, or husband (Crawford & Unger, 2000). Below are highlighted the main types of violence against women based on the nature of relationship, the ages of perpetrator and victim, and the form the violence takes.

- **Intimate partner violence:** Partner abuse is the mistreatment of one partner in an intimate relationship by the other, a husband or other intimate male partner. Intimate partner violence, often called domestic violence, includes psychological abuse, such as intimidation, threats, public humiliation, and intense criticism, physical force (e.g., slaps, punches, kicks, etc), and sexual violence such as, unwanted sexual touching, forced or coerced sex, and forced participation in degrading sexual acts (Watts & Mayhew, 2004).
- **Childhood sexual abuse:** It involves a physical contact or non contact (e.g., exhibitionism) sexual interactions between a child and an adult, or between two non-adults in which coercion is used (Crawford & Unger, 2000). Generally, any sexual activity between unrelated adult and children is called child sexual abuse.
- **Courtship Violence:** Courtship violence is one of the different kinds of partner abuses. However, like terms such as dating violence and premarital

violence, courtship violence have been used by researchers to refer to acts of aggression occurring between unmarried women and men. Courtship violence may vary from simple verbal aggression (e.g., screaming, yelling, criticism and threatening) to severe physical violence involving the use of weapons (Crawford & Unger, 2000).

- **Rape:** It is a forced sexual intercourse between non-related adults. It is a physically forced or coerced penetration or an attempt to do so-called attempted rape. Rape is not only committed by strangers against women without their Consents through the use of force, threats or fraud. A husband can also force his wife for sexual intercourse within her will and labeled as marital rape.

In all of the above cases, violence against women various on a severity continuum and may be psychological, verbal, or physical and may be episodic or continuous.

What are the main factors that promote violence against women? There are several complex and interwoven social and cultural factors that are implicated in violence against women (UNICEF, 2000). After reviewing a large-scale literature, White and Kowalski (1998) showed commonalities among all forms violence against women. They developed a model, which describes five levels of interacting factors of violence against women: Socio-cultural, interpersonal, dyadic, situational, and interpersonal factors. According to these authors, the socio-cultural level reflects sexual inequalities, gender role prescriptions, and cultural myths about women. Cultural norms governing aggression as a tool of the power to subdue the weak interact with gender inequalities to create a context conducive to violence against women. Their dyadic level of

analysis calls our attention to the power and status differences between the perpetrator and victim. Besides, interpersonal variables (e.g., attitudinal, motivation, and personality characteristics) appear to underlie various forms male violence towards women. However, in order for male violence against women to occur, the situation (such as time, place, etc) must be conducive to the violence.

Among the different forms of violence, sexual violence has been documented by a number of studies. As Heise, et al (1994) puts it, population based studies conducted in several countries have shown prevalence rates ranging from 5 to 29 %. In the United States alone, six separate investigations showed that between 14% and 20% of women have experienced a completed rape in their lifetime. The problem is also researched in many of the developing countries. For example, in a 1992 study of 400 primary school female students randomly selected from 40 schools in Uganda, 49% of sexually active girls reported that they had been forced to have sexual intercourse, and 22% said that they had been given gifts or rewards to have sexual intercourse (Bagarukaya et al, 1993). A similar school based study conducted in Kenya in 1994 showed that 14% of young girls, aged 15-24, reported that their first sexual initiation had been forced (Heise et al, 1995).

Though the infliction of harm against women and girls has become increasingly recognized as a major health and human right concern (Yohannes, 2003), a few countries have the reliable information regarding the prevalence of violence against women, in general, and sexual harassment against schoolgirls, in particular. Specially, in Africa, little is known about the frequency of violence against women. Estimates of violence

range widely due to the under reporting that skews official statistics, the use of different definitions, and differing data collection methodologies used in surveys (Langford, 2004). Besides, on the part of the victims, lack of awareness, embarrassment, and self blaming play important role for under reporting. Many of the victims, especially of developing countries, do not characterize their victimization as a crime and they may not want to define some body they know who victimized them as a perpetrator. On top of that, women and girls blame themselves for sexual assault (Ermias, 1996).

Sexual harassment among students is a complex and widespread problem. While most targets do not report harassment, surveys indicate that well over half of all female students have been harassed (AAUW, 1993; Shoop & Hayhow, 1994). Though the form of sexual harassment varies from place to place, a cross-cultural review of harassment concluded that it is a common problem in all cultures (Barak, 1997).

There are some lines of research evidences, which indicate the pervasiveness of sexual harassment against schoolgirls in Africa. For example, according to a 1997 South Africa's national study report, girls aged seventeen and under constitute approximately 40% of reported rape and attempted rape (GNU, 1997). In a 1992 study of 400 primary school female students, randomly selected from 40 schools, 49% of sexually active girls were reported to have had force sex and 22% reported that they had been gifts (Bangarukayo et al., 1993). A similar study, in Kenya, indicated that about 14% of girls reported that their first initiations had been force (Heise et al., 1995).

Harassment against schoolgirls is not only a problem of developing countries. As

many research reports indicate, it is also common in developed countries. In the United States, for example, the AAUW's (1993) survey on 1,632 schoolgirls across the country showed that 85% of the girls across the country showed that 85% of the girls had experienced sexual harassment. A survey in Finland on 7,500 female students (15-16 years old) indicated that 7% of them were abused sexually (Cited in Ermias, 1996).

What are the contributing factors to sexual violence against school girls? Increasingly, researchers (e.g., While & Kowalski, 1998, WHO, 2002; Crawford & Unger, 2000) have recognized that no single factor causes violence against women and girls. Rather, several complex and interconnected factors - all of them being manifestations of unequal power relations between men and women (UNICEF, 2000) - are involved. Researchers have identified many determinants of harassment, including individual characteristics, social, cultural, and other attributes of institutional environments. Though the nature of relationship between these variables and violence/ harassment is, to some degree, open to interpretation, the existence of a relationship between these variables can be established. The efforts to prevent violence/ harassment, therefore, must take these variables into account (Heise, 1997).

Age is one of a number of pervasive and interconnected factors that increase girls' vulnerability to sexual violence. According to WHO (2002), young women are more likely at risk of rape. This assertion has been further substantiated by data from various population-based studies, police and justice system reports of different countries. The rape crisis centers' data of USA, Peru, Mexico, Malaysia, and Chile, for example indicated that one third to two

thirds of all victims of sexual assaults are 15 years old or less (Heise, 1993).

Parallel to the age or maturity of the girl, her educational or training level is considered to be a contributing factor to the sexual violence or harassment happened towards her. Based on a number of surveys of sexual harassment in EU countries, European commission (1998) has identified lower level of education as one of the characteristics identified for the victims. Though the evidences about levels of education as a contributing factor of violence seem mixed, Shops & Edwards (1993) recommended empowerment as one of the best ways to prevent harassment. Thus, side to side to their regular education, girls should be educated about harassment according their age and grade appropriate (Shoop & Hayhow, 1994).

The consumption of alcohol and/ or drugs is the other factor often identified as an antecedent of violence. There are important evidence indicating increased Vulnerability to sexual violence could stem from the use alcohol or drugs and excessive consumption of them taken as a factor in provoking aggressive and violent male behavior towards women or girls (Yohanes, 2003).

In addition to alcohol, there are other psychoactive drugs which alter the takers' consciousness. Among these psychoactive drugs khat ("chat") is highly consumed in Ethiopia. Though there is no research evidence regarding the implication of chat in sexual violence, many consumers reported that it increases libido. Generally, although the relationship between alcohol and or drugs and violence appears to be complex, as the perception, and thus the assessment of the situation may be obscured under the influence of substance abuse, one may concluded that such alcohol or drug abuse represents a risk

factor of sexual violence against girls and women (Leather & Lawrence, 1999).

Girls because of different factors can be separated from their parents. This isolation reduces the intensity of supervisory and monitoring by their parents. Besides the close supervisor that the girls can't get from their parents, they can be unfamiliar with the physical environment and be alone. Studies indicate that girls who live away from both of their parents have been found to be at an increased risk of sexual victimization (Meyer, 2000).

In most societies, men have greater access to resources and power than women. Women's lack of economic resources, subjects them to be vulnerable to sexual violence and exploitation. According to some evidences, sexual assault against young women also comes from men on whom girls depended for their support and protection (Heise, et al, 1999). Along similar line, in some Sub-Saharan African countries, it has been observed that young school girls, who came from lower income families, are tempted into sexual liaisons by gifts and other promises from school boys, teachers, "sugar daddies", and others (Leach et al, 2001). As for Leach and her colleagues, boys and girls involved in their study agreed that many young girls enter sexual relations with adult men and/ or "sugar daddies" primarily for money.

Poverty pushes not only girls for sexual exploitation; it also paves a bad way for men (the harassers) to engage in this unhealthy behavior. Studies (e.g., Mechelen, 1992) have shown that poor or unemployed men are more likely to rape and involve in other forms of sexual violence than middle class and successful men. According to Mechelen (1992), many surveys and cross-cultural studies indicated that the vast majority of offenders came

from lower socio-economic classes and are unskilled laborers, or uneducated and unemployed men. Thus, lack of education and economic opportunity can enhance men's sexual violence to commit against girls.

There are ample research evidences which proved that sexual violence against females depends on the attitudes of and perceptions of both the offenders and the victims about forced sex and other antisocial tendencies. For example, some studies on the attitudes of rapists show that: (1) sexually violent men have a distorted view of male-female relationships, (2) they are more likely to believe in myths about rape and use of interpersonal violence as an effective strategy for solving conflict, (3) they have coercive fantasies and more hostile towards women, and (4) they tend to have an exaggerated sense of masculinity (Meyer, 2000; Alan, 1992). The above-mentioned beliefs, thus, may serve as "rationalizations" for sexual offenders, allowing them to imagine that their victims deserved the experience of forced sexual acts. For attitudes and perceptions play an important role in many aspects of social thought (Baron, 2002), wrong sexual beliefs not only distort the offenders' judgment but also urges girls to have a distorted view of male-female relationships. One important investigation, conducted on high school and college aged adolescent girls and boys, indicated that a considerable proportion of the girls and boys believed forced sex to be acceptable if: (1) the boy spent a lot of money on the girl, (2) a woman has past sexual experiences, (3) the man and women are married, (4) a girl gets drunk at parties or on dates, and (5) a boy and girl had been dating for some time (Macmahon, 1996). To sum up, the early establishment of gender stereotypes, the preconceived notions of traits and characteristics

possessed by males and females are believed to contribute to forced sex or rape.

Schools are also important institutional or organizational environments that may present situations that girls are routinely exposed to sexual violence and / or harassment. School violence emanates from a variety of sources; it can be perpetrated by teachers, by students, and even by strangers to the school community (Shoop & Hayhow, 1994). How do schools play a role in exposing girls towards sexual violence? School climates or environments support violent behavior whenever they reinforce sex role stereotypes and attitudes or perceptions that condone the use of violence (Meyer, 2000). The wrong attitudes and perceptions, encouraged by the school, could influence male and female students to conform to certain stereotypical behaviors and make girls vulnerable to sexual abuse (Leach et al, 2001).

Sexual violence against women has serious negative consequences for the society, in general, and for the victims, in particular. Addressing this issue, Mitike, et al, (2002) held that the consequence of sexual violence is a serious problem world wide and devoid of women from participating in socioeconomic development. The outcomes of violence are one of the important public health and human right concerns because the direct physical injury and potentially harmful health behaviors triggered by the violence are serious negative consequences. Specially, the consequences of sexual violence against young women are more devastating because they are linked, directly or indirectly, with the major reproductive health issues of unwanted teenagers' pregnancy, HIV/AIDS unsafe abortions and other adverse pregnancy outcomes (Heise et al, 1996). On top of its unwanted /unwelcome reproductive health

outcomes, sexual violence can disturb the victims' mental health. So, Understanding the psychological consequences of sexual violence/ harassment against girls is equally important. The costs of sexual violence with respect to girls' educational performance are also the other perspective worth to be considered.

Many lines of research evidences indicated that sexual violence clearly interferes with female students' academic performance and achievement motivation. As Belcher (2006) comments, one of the biggest dangers about sexual harassment in school is that it really creates the kind of environment where students feel unsafe, and thus, they mostly miss schools. At the school settings, victims experience fear, discomfort, and embarrassment. Associated with this, Shoop & Hayhow (1994) maintain that victims may become truant and less academically successful because the lives of girls targeted for harassment are often severely compromised.

At educational settings, sexual violence or harassment does not need to be severe to have negative consequences (Fisher et al, 2000). For example, college women who were sexually harassed even at "low level" reported feeling more negative feelings about themselves, their peers, their professors, and their campus, at large. These negative feelings, in turn, will lower or affect their educational performances. Generally, significant numbers of female students who were sexually violated or harassed felt less competent academically and were more likely to leave school (Crawford & Unger, 2000).

The Psychological consequences of sexual violence, at times out weigh the negative physical or physiological outcomes. It is the root causes of lack of academic competences. As the lives of the victims

are severely compromised, they may develop psychopathologic and physical symptoms (AAUW, 1993, Shoop & Hayhow, 1994). Thus, many victims consider the psychological consequences of sexual violence to be more serious than the physiological effects (Yegomawork et al, 2003). The experience of sexual violence often erodes the victims' self-esteem and impairs their social relationships. They may also suffer from self-blame and overall lowered satisfaction with their lives. The victims frequently describe their experiences of sexual violence to be degrading, disgusting, and humiliating. They also feel shame and helpless (Crawford & Unger, 2000). Substantiating this, other authorities (e.g., Fitzgerald et al, 1997, Schneider et al, 1997) indicated that women who are sexually harassed report more negative psychological symptoms than do other women. In relation to this, the AAUW (1993) study showed that victimized students reported feelings of embarrassed, self-conscious, less confident, scared, confused about who they were and less popular in response to sexual harassment.

The psychological experiences of sexual violence or harassment could be long-lasting or short-term and vary in intensity depending on the nature or magnitude of the violence, the victims' expectation, maturity and other factors. For example the experiences of girls after rape or sexual assault may include feeling vulnerable, unloved and powerless, difficulty in distinguishing sexual from affectionate behavior, shame, guilt and fear (Stewart et al, 1996, cited in Yohannes, 2003). Generally, included in the psychological consequences or symptoms sexual violence against female students are: anxiety, depression or diathermia, stress disorder (including posttraumatic stress), decrease dissatisfaction with life, somatoform and

dissociate disorders phobias (Crawford & Unger, 2000, Yegomawork et al., 2003: AAUW, 1993). Besides, these long-term consequence of sexual violence includes poor self-esteem, chronic depression, eating disorders, substance abuse, suicidal attempts and sexual risk taking (WHO, 1997). Sexual violence also increases the risk of poor health causing unnecessary suffering and health problems such as, injuries, unwanted pregnancy, HIV AIDS, and other sexually transmitted diseases and chronic pains.

Although sexual violence and harassment happens all over the world, adolescent girls of developing countries can easily be victimized because of their knowledge, dependant financial positions, traditional gender norms, and other factors. In Ethiopia, however, knowledge of the magnitude and characteristics of sexual violence, in general, and sexual harassment, in particular, is very limited because of the relative scarcity of population-based researches. Studies on the magnitude of sexual violence against women are recent phenomena and the data are relatively scarce. The fundamental objective of this study, therefore, is to investigate the magnitude, characteristics, and outcomes of sexual violence and harassment against schoolgirls in Jimma zone.

## METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in secondary schools of Jimma Zone. A total of 1128 girls, who were selected using stratified sampling technique, participated in the survey. The study utilized a cross-sectional survey and one focus group discussion. The focus group discussion (FGD) was used to enrich or supplement the information that was generated through the quantitative

survey. A structured questioner and FGD guides were prepared to collect the information sought about the nature of sexual violence against school girls in Jimma Zone. The subjects' socio demographic characteristics, the prevalence and outcomes of sexual violence, factors contributing to sexual violence or harassment, and the school girls' sexual beliefs, perceptions or attitudes towards sexual harassment were examined.

Ethical clearance was obtained from Jimma University and from zonal administrative office. Informed consent was obtained from each respondent after explanation of the survey objective. The focus group discussion was carried out in a convenient area with a minimum distraction and where each of the participants can observe each other. Confidentiality of the information obtained was assured and privacy was maintained. The Instruments and procedures, which were used in this study, were not causing any harm to the study subjects, the community and the data collectors. The research participants were told that: (a) they have right to discontinue or refuse to participate in the study and (b) they can ask questions. In developing the questionnaire possible efforts were made to: (a) avoid gender bias words, statements, or phrases, and (b) make the questions clearly worded.

The major concepts used in this study are defined as follows:

- **Physical Violence:** Any form of violent act that can result in physical harm.
- **Prevalence:** In this study, prevalence refers to the percentage of secondary schoolgirls who are victimized during specific period of their lifetime.
- **Sexual Coercion:** Unwanted sexual intercourse with the threat of non-



*physical punishment*, promise or reward or verbal pressure.

- **Sexual abuse:** A violation (sexual, physical, and emotional) committed by a person who holds, or is perceived to hold power over some one who is vulnerable.
- **Psychological or Emotional abuse:** Includes such things acts as physical intimidation, threats, uttering humiliating things (insulting) or any form of verbal attack.
- **Sexual harassment:** Sexual harassment, in this study, includes unwanted and repeated sexual advances that range from unwelcome comments and touching to coercive sexual intercourse.
- **Rape:** It is a form of sexual violence, defined as physically forced or other

wise coerced penetration of the vulva or anus, using the penis, other body parts or an object.

- **Sexual Violence:** It includes all unwanted or non-consensual sexual act, touching or exploitation that are achieved through force, threat or intimidation

## RESULTS

In this study, out of 1,128 samples selected, a total of 1,118 schoolgirls who completed the questionnaire were taken for analyses. The socio-demographic characteristics of the study population or description results are depicted in the following tables.

**Table 1: Descriptions of the Subjects**

<i>Variables/ Characteristics</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<b>Age</b>		
16-18	898	79.6
19-25	209	18.5
>25	21	1.9
<b>Religion (N=1118)</b>		
Muslim	479	42.8
Orthodox	408	36.5
Protestant	170	15.2
Catholic	21	1.9
Others	37	3.3
<b>Place of Birth (N=1118)</b>		
Urban	742	66.4
Rural	376	33.6
<b>Ethnicity (N=1118)</b>		
Oromo	629	56.3
Amhara	265	23.7
Dawero	49	4.4
Kefcho	31	2.8
Gurage	105	9.4
Others	39	3.5
<b>Marital status (N=1,094)</b>		
Never married	972	88.8
Married	82	7.5
Divorced	25	2.3
Widowed	15	1.4
<b>Currently Living (with) (N= 1,101)</b>		
Parents	687	62.3
Alone	117	10.6
Friends	135	12.3
Relatives	111	10.1
Mother or father only	51	4.6

As can be seen from the table, the study population consisted of schoolgirls aged 16-25 at the time of the survey. The mean age of the subjects was 17. The majority (42.8%) of the participants were Muslims followed by Orthodoxes (36.5%). Sixty six percent of them were born in urban while the remaining 34% were born in rural areas.

With regards to the ethnic composition, 56.3% were Oromo, followed by 23.7%

Amhara, and 9.4% Gurage ethnic groups. Most of the respondents were single (88.8%) while only 7.5% were married, 2.3% divorced, and 1.4% of them widowed. At the time of the survey, 62.3% of the participants were living with their parents. The rest were living alone (10.6%), with their friends (12.3%) and relatives (10.1%).

As poverty and economic dependence are one of the pervasive and inter

connected factors that make women or girls at the center of sexual violence and exploitation (WHO, 2002), the subjects parental characteristics are also described. As one important indicator of sexual violence, descriptions of the

parental characteristics with respect to their socio- economical status and other related conditions are presented in the following table.

**Table 2: Descriptions of Parental characteristics of the Subjects**

<i>Variable /characteristics</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<b>Parental conditions (N=1103)</b>		
Mother and father live together	824	74.7
Divorced	135	12.2
Mother /Father only	98	8.9
Both dead	31	2.8
Others	15	1.4
<b>Mother's Educational level (N=1093)</b>		
Illiterate	291	26.6
Read and write	274	25.1
Primary (1-8)	257	23.5
Secondary (9-12)	156	14.3
Above high school	115	10.5
<b>Father's Educational level (N=1081)</b>		
Illiterate	181	16.7
Read and write	235	21.7
Primary	227	21.0
Secondary	239	22.1
Above Secondary	198	18.3
<b>Mother's occupational status (N=1096)</b>		
House wife	643	58.7
Merchant	173	15.8
Farmer	91	8.3
Gov't employee	167	15.2
Others	22	2.0
<b>Father's Occupational Status (N=1091)</b>		
Farmer	378	34.7
Merchant	255	23.4
Government employee	343	31.5
No job	66	6.1
Others	48	4.4

The socio-demographic characteristics of the subjects' parents indicate that 74.7% of live together whereas (2.2%) are divorce, and 2.8% the subjects do not

have parents. The educational levels of the respondents' parents also indicate that 51.7% of the mothers and 38.4% of their fathers had no formal education.

With regards to their occupational status, 58.7% of the mothers are housewives and 34.7% of the fathers are farmers.

Information was sought about the sexual activities of the subjects. Among the 1046 respondents, 296 (26.5%)

reported that they have already initiated sexual intercourse and the age, reasons, and individuals involved for their sexual imitations are presented in the fourth coming table.

**Table 3: Reasons for the First Sexual Initiation**

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Subjects who have practiced sexual Intercourse (N=1,118 )	296	26.5
The age when the first initiation happen (N=296 )		
14-16	174	58.8
17-19	116	39.1
20-22	6	2.1
Individuals involved in the first sexual initiation		
Boy friends	115	38.8
Other students	38	12.7
Husbands	76	25.7
Teachers	38	12.7
Strangers	14	4.7
Relatives	4	1.4
Neighbors	7	2.5
Others	4	1.4
<b>Causes for the first sexual initiations(N=296)</b>		
Marriage	51	17.2
Love (desire)	131	44.1
Forced /raped	60	20.4
Promising words	33	11.1
For exchange of gifts	7	2.5
Others	14	41.4
<b>The age of your first sexual initiator compared to yours (N=271)</b>		
Almost equal	96	35.5
Younger than me	13	4.8
About 5 years older	79	29.0
About 5-10 Years older	50	18.4
Above 10 years older	33	12.1

As depicted in table 3, among the 1118 schoolgirls included into the study, 296 (26.5%) have already initiated sexual activity at the mean age of 15 years old. Out of these subjects 20.4% have started sexual intercourse forcefully while 11.1% and 2.5% of them due to promising words

and for exchange of gifts, respectively. Regarding the age of the perpetrators, in 59.5% of the cases they were older than the victims. This clearly shows that most of the forced sexes were committed by personalities who are physically stronger than the victims. Of course, most (38.8%)

of the respondents reported that they did their first initiation with their boy friends; where as 25.7% and 12.7% of the sexual initiations were done by husbands and teachers, respectively.

asked about the number of rape encounters and the mechanisms used by the perpetrators.. The frequency of reported rape cases and the mechanisms used by the rapists are summarized in the next table.

As indicated in Table 3, 60 (20.4%) of the respondents commit their first sexual initiation forcefully. Besides, they were

**Table 4: The Magnitude of Rape and the Mechanisms used by the Assailants in victimizing the girls**

<i>Variables/ characteristics</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<b>Frequencies of rape cases in life time( N= 86)</b>		
Only once	75	87.3
More than once	11	12.7
<b>The mechanisms used by the rapists *</b>		
Threats of harm	88	29.9
Beating up	96	32.6
Pointing a knife	42	14.1
Pointing a gun/pistol	37	12.4
Making drunk	52	17.5
Forcing to take a drug	30	10.2
Using authority (e.g. being a teacher)	18	6.2
Others	27	9.0
I know another girl who was raped (N=877)	395	45.0

\* More than one answer

Out of the total 86 raped cases, 87.3 % the victims said they were raped only once while 12.7 % said that they were raped more than once. Besides to their own history of rape, the respondents were asked whether they know other girls who are raped. Almost half of the subjects said that they encountered other victims. Regarding the mechanisms used by the rapists, the girls indicated different techniques that are used by the perpetrators in intimidating their victims. Among their mechanisms, beating

up (32.6%), threats to harm (29.9) and making drunk (17.5) were pervasive.

In this research an attempt was also made to investigate the most important factors that could promote rape and other related forms of sexual violence. In effect, the subjects (victims) were asked to remember the incidents when the forced sex happened. Results to the typical scenarios are presented in table 5.

**Table 5: The conditions of the victims by the time they were raped**

<i>Variables</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
<b>The places where you were raped *</b>		
In my home	17	19.6
In a neighbor's house	13	15.1
In school	11	12.6
In a hotel	27	32.2
On my way to home /school	13	14.6
Others	5	6.0
<b>Where were you living when you were raped? (N=85)</b>		
With my parents	40	46.6
My relatives	16	19.1
Alone	17	20.1
Others	12	14.2
<b>The time at which you became raped(N=85)</b>		
In the morning	13	15.8
In the afternoon	26	30.0
In the evening	28	33.2
At night	18	21.1
<b>Substances abused at the time of the rape (N=83)</b>		
Alcohol	44	52.8
Chat /khat	28	33.5
Other drugs	11	13.7*

\* More than one answer

Out of the total rape cases, 32% of the victims said they were raped in a hotel, 19.6% in their home and 15.1% in their neighbor's house. The rest, 12.6% and 14.6% were raped in their school and on their ways to school or home. Most of the girls are raped in the evening (33.2%). The respondents were also asked to remember the kind of drug they took at the time they

were raped. Out of the total respondents who remembered that they took drugs, 44 (52.8%) reported that they drank alcohol. The rest 28 (33.5%) and 11(13.7%) took khat and other drugs, respectively. Twenty percent of the victims were living alone at the time of the rape while 46.6% and 19.1% were living with their parents and relatives.

**Table 6: The Reported Out comes of Rape**

<i>Outcomes*</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
<b>Physical health out comes</b>		
Abortion	11	12.8
Vaginal discharge	10	12.4
Infection of the pelvic	13	15.1
Too much bleeding	25	29.6
Other related problems	37	22.9
<b>Psychological Out comes</b>		
Self hate/blaming	21	24.6
Anxiety/Fear	20	23.6
Depression	9	10.3
Lack of sexual desire	7	8.2
Addiction to psychoactive substances (e.g. Alcohol)	7	8.5
School drop out/withdrawal	32	26.7
Suicide attempt/thought	10	11.3
Frequent headache	7	8.2
Poor appetite	10	11.3
Irritation	13	15.4
Others	4	4.1

\*Multiple responses are possible.

As table 6 depicts, out of the total victims, some 29.6% experienced too much bleeding, 12.4% had vaginal discharge, and the rest 15.1% reported infections of the pelvic organ due to rape. Various kinds of psychological problems, such as self-hate or low self-esteem (24.6%), anxiety (23.6%), depression (10.3%), contemplated suicide (11.3%), and the like. The majority, (26%), of the victims dropped out schools because of their bad experiences.

Questions were also posed to the rape victims to assess their knowledge and attitude to wards their help seeking, and coping mechanisms. In this regards, the research questions to be answered were: Did you seek medical care after the rape? Did you report or accused the perpetrator? If not, why? The victims' reports to these questions are pulled together in the following table.

**Table 7: The raped girls' practices of seeking immediate medical care and reporting the problem**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Those who sought medical care after the rape	54	62.5
Those who reported the violence to justice	29	34.1
To which body you have reported?		
Police	37	43.0
Kebele	23	27.1
Court	14	15.9
Others	12	14.0
I didn't report to any body, because:		
I didn't know what to do	18	20.9
I was afraid of my parents	39	45.4
I was afraid of rumors	33	38.0
I was frightened by the rapist	21	23.9
Of other reasons	10	11.2

\*Multiple responses are possible

As it can be observed from the table 7, 62.5% of the victims reported that they sought medical care or treatment while the rest (37.5%) hushed up their problems. Most (65.3%) of the rape cases were not reported to any of the justices because of the following factors: (1) fear of parents, (2) afraid of rumors, (3) frightened by the rapists, and (4) lack of information or knowledge.

As part and parcel of sexual violence, the prevalence and nature of harassment against schoolgirls were also investigated by this study. In this part of the study, the research questions to be answered were: How often you encountered sexual harassment? Which type of harassment you mostly encounter? Which groups of individuals are mostly participated in sexual harassment against schoolgirls? The following table pulls together the main reports to those questions.



**Table 8: The prevalence and types of Sexual harassment, and individuals involved in the violent acts**

<i>Variables/ Characteristics</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
<b>Experience of Sexual harassment (N=738)</b>		
Always	100	13.6
Sometimes	441	59.8
Never	197	26.7
<b>Types of the violent acts</b>		
Offensive sexual language or comments	368	49.8
Non-consensual touching	230	31.1
Non-consensual kissing	208	28.2
Other Unwelcome sexual advances	41	5.5
<b>Individuals participated in the Sexual harassment</b>		
School boys	230	31.2
Individuals on the streets (street wanderers)	374	50.7
Teachers	128	17.4
Family members	66	9.0
Others	38	5.1

A cursory look at table 8 indicates that sexual harassment against schoolgirls is so prevalent that three-fourth of the respondents had experienced it. The harassment against the subjects include not only unwelcome sexual advances, such as attempted rape (9.1%), non-consensual kissing (28.2%), and non-consensual touching (31.1%) but also a hostile environment nature of offensive sexual language or comments (49.8%).

Considering individuals who create sexual harassment against schoolgirls, street wanderers made up 50.7% followed by schoolboys (31.2) and teachers 17.4%. The respondents also reported that there family

members (9.0%) are involved in the harassers. From this we can conclude that the schoolgirls are suffering from both hostile environment and quid pro quo sexual harassments. Generally, there are different forms of sexual violence encountered by schoolgirls.

The schoolgirls' sexual beliefs and attitudes are very essential in empowering themselves against sexual violence. To this end, the subjects' general knowledge, perceptions expectations or beliefs were assessed. Although the items not inclusive, assessment results of the schoolgirls' sexual beliefs and expectations are indicated in table 10, below.

**Table 9: The subjects' attitude towards Sexual violence**

<i>Variables</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>The school girls who agree with the following statements:</i>		
Men who commit sexual harassment must be punished (N=967)	916	94.8
Sexual harassment doesn't harm women (N=954)	367	38.5
Men can also be harassed (908)	429	47.2
Educating females about sexual violence/or harassment is essential (N=934)	429	46.0
The gov't should give attention to S. Violence (N=946)	786	83.1
The concept of sexual violence or harassment is not well known by students (N=919)	475	51.6
Females who appears with cosmetics and short dresses could be exposed to S. Violence (N=937)	599	63.9
A shy or non-assertive girl is easily subjected to sexual violence (N=915)	518	56.6
Educated individuals do not involve in violent acts (N=928)	347	37.4
Females should be physically fit to protect themselves from sexual violence (N=941)	756	80.4

Although the items included to assess the school girls attitude towards sexual violence are not inclusive, some of their expectations, sexual beliefs, understanding or perceptions are indicated in table 9. Some (46.0%) of the subjects believe that it is essential to empower females about sexual violence and the government should give attention to sexual violence (83.1%) because the concept of sexual violence or harassment is not well know by most of them (51.6%). Regarding the legal perspective of Sexual violence, most (94.8%) of the respondents agreed that men who commit sexual harassment must be punished.

Contrary to the preceding good out look, some of the subjects' responses proved that they have a distorted view of females' rights with respect to violence and how sexual violence can be tackled. For one thing, the respondents agreed that sexual

harassment doesn't harm females (38.5%), for the other thing, they believed that the dressing style of women (e.g. short dresses) could subject them to sexual violence. Most of the subjects (80.4%) agreed that females should be strong physically to protect themselves from sexual violence. some (37.4%) subject reported that educated men do not involve in sexual violence against females.

## **RESULTS OF THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION**

To supplement the quantitative study, an important structured discussion was conducted with ten schoolgirls who are between 16 to 20 years of ages. The major areas of the focus group discussion were concerned probing thoroughly their attitude about sexual violence, the prevalence and patterns of the violence or harassment, and

to examine the most important contributing factors to sexual violence.

The initial, warming up, question forwarded to the focus group was about their knowledge or understanding of violence against girls. To this end, they were asked to mention and discuss all forms of negative behaviors or actions they believe to be types of sexual violence and/or harassment against schoolgirls. The focus group considered rape and physical assault as the only forms of violent acts. Other forms of sexual violence, such as offensive sexual languages/comments, non-consensual touching and kissing, and other unwelcome sexual advances, are not equated by the participants with the forms of sexual violence or harassment.

Regarding the first initiation of sexual intercourse, they explained that many girls go into sexual experience without their interest and before they can plan or want to do it. Some girls may begin by false promises, and peer influences, while others for expectations of material and financial assistance and forced to start sex at early ages. According to the subjects, once they start participating in unwanted sexual activity, the girls could be subject to further sexual exploitation, manipulation or feeling unable to say "no" to sex.

The other important question posed to the group for discussion was about the magnitude of rape and whether they consider it as a problem to girls. Majority of the participants admit that rape is so pervasive and it is a serious problem to girls because of its high potential for the transmission of HIV/AIDS on top of its unwanted reproductive and psychological consequences. Concerning the question, "who are the perpetrators?" the focus group argue for saying that most perpetrators of rape are the victims' boyfriends, teachers

and neighbors. These are the main ones that the participants have been heard to be committed rape of against schoolgirls. They also explained how girls could be subjected to rape. They pointed out that rape by her boyfriend happen to a girl who denied accepting the boy's request for sexual relationships. The boy, in collaboration with his peers, will intimidate her on her way to school, in school or somewhere else. Beating is the common act men use initially, until they find a condition to rape girls.

The participants of the discussion suggested that it is only natural that girls' usual relationships with boys can be turned to sexual coercion. Some boys could be friendly to invite girls to cinemas, movies and drinks and may ask them to have sex with. If a girl said "no", she could be beaten up. The focus group discussion members further suggested that boys do not like to approve a girl's intention to choose a boy friend she preferred for herself. Their own friends or peers also influence to put a girl into intimidation in this regard. They bring letters or gifts from a boy, but do not know that it will be followed by requests for sexual relationships, which if she does not accept turns to violence and intimidation. They also go onto disseminate bad rumors on the girls.

In relation to how schoolgirls can be subjected to sexual coercion, the participants were urged to recall some cases (if any) they know, one of the focus group mentioned the incident of her classmate raped by a university student. The boy /perpetrator, who was attending extension program in Jimma University, was living in the victim's neighbor. The girl, due to her strong ambition to join college, used to ask the boy to help her with her study matters. However, he took

advantage of that opportunity and started to persuade her to have sex with him. Many times she expressed her disagreement. One day, at the moment she went to his room, he raped her. As it was in his room, she cannot scream for help because she believes that people can easily blame her for the incident. Another mentioned the case of a given girl who is close relative to her. She said, "The girl was raped by some body that she knew. He had been always stirring to her so many times when she went to her night school. One day (around 8:00 PM), on her way back to home from school, the man (helped by his two gangs) raped her in a dark corner. But, the girl didn't report to any body (except me) for fear of the rapist and rumors"

Although the participants didn't mention forms of sexual harassment other than rape and beatings, they were led to discuss how prevalent these violent acts are: (a) offensive sexual languages, (b) bad sexual comments, (c) nonconsensual touching and

## DISCUSSION

Violence against women and girls is one of the most devastating consequences of gender inequality. Several research findings worldwide have been published about the magnitude and consequences of gender-based violence. Nevertheless, studies of the magnitude and characteristics of sexual violence against women, in general, and schoolgirls, in particular, are recent phenomena in Ethiopia, and the data are somewhat scarce. Thus, the present study was done to investigate the magnitude, pattern and consequences of sexual violence against schoolgirls in Jimma zone

To achieve this objective, both quantitative and qualitative studies were employed. The quantitative study has helped us to estimate

kissing. They all agreed all such acts are part of the girls' lives-prevalent anywhere they go (schools, recreational centers, etc), on their way to schools, home, shops, and the like.

At the end, a question was raised on how to empower schoolgirls against sexual violence or harassment. While two girls express their fear about the success of empowering girls, the rest responded that anti-harassment or violence strategies could be cultivated and employed. They agreed that non-assertive girls are mostly subjected to violence; so, girls need to be given assertive training on their rights, on forms of sexual harassment, and how to prevent or tackle sexual violence. The majority of the subjects further discuss that school girls should urged to report even "minor" harassments to the justices, let alone rape, attempted rape, or physical assaults.

the prevalence of rape and its outcomes, and the magnitude of other forms of sexual harassments. The qualitative study, which was designed to strengthen the results of the quantitative study, focused on assessing girls' attitude towards sexual violence, their awareness of the problem and the most important contributing factors to it.

Among a sample of 1,128 schoolgirls who participated in the study, 26.9% were sexually active. Out of those girls who started sexual initiation, 20.4% started sexual activity forcefully or as a result of rape. This result indicates the prevalence of rape as a cause of sexual initiation is so high compared to the prevalent rate assessed in rural Uganda in which 14% of the respondents reported that their first sexual intercourse had been coerced (Koenig, et al, 2004). However, the prevalence rates of coerced first sex

observed in other studies are by far greater than this result. For example, in a 1994/95 study of Transkei, South Africa, 14 % adolescents (aged 15-18) reported sexual initiation and a study done in Tanzania (1996), 29% of the adolescents (WHO, 2002). Nevertheless, the comparison of the present result with the findings of overseas should be weighed by taking some factors, such as age differences, sample size differences, the study areas, etc, into account.

Though all may not be involved in the coerced first sexual intercourse, most (38.8%) of the coerced first initiation is done by their boy friends followed by husbands (25.7%) and teachers (12.7%). This study also revealed that most of the perpetrators are known to the victims. This is true to the other studies, done at national level, in Peru, Mexico, Guatemala city, and the USA, which showed that attackers were mostly known to the victims (Heise, 1993).

In line with the magnitude of coerced first intercourse, 11.1% and 2.5% of the sexually active schoolgirls had begun sexual activity because of some promising words and for the exchange of gifts or money, respectively. Thus, besides to the fact that most of the first sexual initiation of the girls is done with personalities who all older and (most probably) stronger than them (see Table3), in observable number of the subjects the sexual initiation is done by deceit.

The frequency of rape indicated that out of the total sexually active girls, 86 were raped. Among these victims of rape, 75 (87.3 %) were raped once and 11 (12.7%) were raped more than once in their lifetime. In relation to this, some 395 (45%) respondents reported that they knew a girl who was raped. The perpetrators while raping the victims used different mechanisms. The major techniques include

beating (32.6%) threats of harm (29.9%), making drunk (17.5%), and pointing a knife (14.1%) and a gun or pistol (12.4%).

As an important element of this study, the reported out comes of rape were seen from two perspectives: physiological and psychological outcomes. While 12.8% of the rape victims had practiced abortion, 29.6% experienced too much bleeding. The other 15.1 % and 12.4% reported that they had infection of the pelvic and vaginal discharge, respectively.

The psychological reported out comes of the rape cases were also serious health out comes. In this study, the rape victims reported that they were subjected to different psychological disorders, including self-hate or blaming (24.6%), anxiety or fear (23.6%), irritation (15.4%), frustration (18.5%), and even the thought of suicide (11.3%). These mental out comes are mostly long lasting and reflect the subsequent trauma the victims faced after the assault. In the same vein, other research evidences (e.g., Yohannes, 2003; Ermias, et al, 1998) indicated that the psychological experience of girls after rape can be revealed in fear and anxiety, self blaming for victimization, low self-esteem, and the like. Because of the different posttraumatic syndrome disorder, mentioned above, 26.7% of the victim girls in this study were forced to drop out of school.

Although 62.5% of the raped girls sought medical care, the majority (65.9%) of the cases were not reported to any legal body. The fundamental reasons given by the victims for not reporting the violence were: (1) fear of parents, (2) fear of rumors, (3) being threatened by the rapist, and (4) lack of awareness of where to go or what to do however, compared to Yohannes's (2003) study, in which he found that 76.7% of the rape cases were not reported, the victims

participated in this study showed a better assertiveness. Minor proportions of the rape victims were, of course, reported to the police not only in our country but also in developed countries. For instance, in a survey made in America in 1992, it is found that 86% of the rape victims have not been reported to the police (Kilpatrick et al, 1992). Nevertheless, victims of the developed countries may not report the incident to the legal bodies in order to maintain their privacy while our cases are influenced by fear and lack of awareness.

In this study, an attempt was also made to investigate violence against schoolgirls in the form of different sexual harassments. Accordingly, the majority (73.4 %) of the subjects reported the experience of sexual harassments. The major violent acts were: (1) offensive sexual languages or comments (49.8%), (2) non – consensual touching (31.1%) and (3) non- consensual kissing (28.2%). Among the individuals who created such kinds of sexual harassments and other unwelcome sexual advances and hostile environments against the subjects, street wanderers took the lion's share (50.7%) followed by school boys (31.29) and teachers (17.4%).

The prevalence of sexual harassment against schoolgirls was also raised in FGD conduct. Though the FGD girls had not considered the acts mentioned in the preceding paragraph as violent acts, they were urged to discuss on their frequency or prevalence. The discussion showed that sexual harassment seem almost part of common culture to their community. As they are not considered as illegal acts, different forms of harassments (such as, sexual comments, non-consensual touching or kissing, etc), are taken as common mechanisms of approaching girls and they are part of their lives, always happen in the walk of their lives.

In this study, it was found that an attempted rape was made to the 9.1%(or 102) of the girls. This is by far smaller compared to a survey done on adolescent girls of Jimma town (Yohannes, 2003). However, 40.9% (or 457) of the girls reported that they were physically assaulted or beaten by different individuals in their life time .The incidence of female genital mutilation was reported by 75.6% (or 849) of the subjects participated in the study.

Attitude of the schoolgirls towards sexual violence has been examined by both the survey and the FGD. In the survey, an attempt was made to assess the subjects understanding of how or why girls can be harassed and mechanisms of protecting them from any form of sexual violence. While the subjects indicated their general agreement on the necessity of government's attention to sexual violence and punishment of the violent individuals, their ignorance of issues related to sexual violence had been revealed on some statements. For example, 63.9% of the subjects agreed that females who appear with cosmetics and short dresses could be exposed to sexual violence. These subjects seem to accept some kinds of blame related to the victims' share of being guilty for sexual attacks or violence. Some (38.5%) of the respondents also dare say, "Sexual harassment doesn't harm women." The other subjects indicated that the concept of sexual violence or harassment is not well known by students. Regarding some indicators of tackling or minimizing sexual violence, a lot of the girls (80.4%) agreed that females should be physically fit to protect themselves from sexual violence; whereas, only 46.0% of the subjects believe in the necessity of education in empowering girls with respect to protecting themselves from any form of violent acts,

The girls, who participated in the FGD, mentioned that rape and physical assault as the only ways of violating women's rights and they agreed that such violent acts against schoolgirls are very common in their communities. After thorough discussion, majority the participants, suggested the importance of assertive training or educational empowerment of girls. They mentioned that girls should be taught "assertive skills" to enable them to express their feelings clearly and help them stop harassment when it occurs. Besides, it is suggested that boys too can be taught how to communicate with girls effectively.

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study revealed a high prevalence of different kinds sexual violent acts perpetrated against female students in Jimma zone. Rape was reported by 29% of the sexually active school girls, The frequency of rape is also indicated that 75 of the girls were raped once and 11 were raped more than once in their life time .out of the 296(26.5%) of the girls who had already initiated sexual activity, 11.1% them started sexual intercourse due to promising words, and 2.5% for exchange of gifts. Attempted rape was reported by 102(9.1%), physical assault (beating) by 457(4.9%), nonconsensual touching by 31.1%, offensive sexual comments by 49.8%) non consensual kissing by 28.2 %, and female circumcision 75.9 %.

The study showed that the perpetrators of rape are mostly known to the victims. Mostly schoolboys (12.2%) and teachers (12.7%) are involved in the forced sexes. However, in the case of other forms sexual violence, such as offensive sexual comments languages, non- consensual touching, and physical assault (beating)

street boys and other wanderers mostly participated.

Rape, the most extreme form of sexual violence, is known for its unwelcome physiological out comes, and short-term psychological problems and long-range emotional traumatic consequences. Serious physical out comes of rape was reported in this study.12.8 % of the cases had practiced abortion and 15.1% experienced infection of the pelvic. Moreover, 12.4% reported unusual vaginal discharge and 29.6% had too much bleeding.

There were also various short-term and long-lasting psychological out comes reported by the victims, the fundamental psychological consequences in cluded the following: self-hatred (24.6%), anxiety or fear (23.6%), frustration (18.5%), irritation ((15.4%), suicidal thought (11.3%) and depression (10.3%). Due to these serious unwelcome mental consequences and the subsequent post traumas 26.7% of the victims dropped out their education.

The majority (62.5%) of the rape victims got medical treatment. But, most of the victims didn't report to any legal body because of fear of their parents (45.4%), fear of rumors (38.0%) and fear of the rapist, Furthermore, some victims (20.9%) did not know what to do.

Sexual violence is a complex, and wide spread problem with significant physiological and psychological effects on the victims and it is also a hidden obstacle to the economic and social development So protecting school girls from violence is sine-qua-non Given the complexity of violent behaviors and the diversity of settings and cultures, there is no simple, one-size-fits-all solution for protection of young women from sexual violence and for

promoting safety learning environments. The serious effort to keep girls free from harassment or violence involves the commitment of different institutions, the awareness of the community, and the empowerment of the girls themselves. Multidimensional approaches and long-term educational strategies are very essential in maintaining an environment that fosters appropriate and respectful behaviors and cooperative interaction among girls and other people. To this end,

based on the findings of this study and other established facts the following recommendations made:

1. The Ethiopian penal law, which deals with only some forms of sexual violence against women (such as, rape, abduction, and trafficking), should address the other sexual harassment acts. The improvement of law enforcement should also include the speed and sensitivity of the processing of cases by the courts as well as identifying mechanisms to encourage victims to report incidents of sexual violence to police.

1.2. Many can take part not only in violating young women's rights but also in the primary prevention of the sexual and promoting of safety environment for the school girls. To this end media should play a significant role in advocating IEC to create and promote awareness about the rights of women, consequences of sexual violence and its preventing techniques. Attitudinal changes of the society of about gender stereotypes, gender relationships, or about women (in general) can be enhanced through the aid of different medias and other sensitization trainings. The appropriate social norms and expectations,

harassment. In doing this, school boys learn to develop concern about the girls' welfare.

and social structures must be promoted. These, in turn, mould the behaviors of the perpetrators of sexual violence.

3. We can prevent sexual violence or harassment from happening by educating girls about their rights. Many schoolgirls are not aware of the acts that violate their rights. We should encourage the young girls to complain for any of the violent acts happen to them and to understand their sexual rights.

4. Schoolgirls should be taught important life skills that enable them to recognize warning signs of unwelcome sexual advances and to control abuse relationships.

5. Schools play need to many of the sexual harassment prevention roles:

- As empowerment is one of the best way to prevent harassment, schools need to build the girls' self-esteem and teach them assertive skills to express their feelings clearly.
- Schools should set "anti-harassment policy" that prohibits all forms of sexual harassment and it should be explained clearly to the school "community" and host it in a visible place, so that all students and teachers know what is expected of everyone. The "policy" should also urge the targets of sexual harassment to report their victimization promptly.
- Teachers can incorporate awareness of this issue in to their curriculum, as one of the social studies course.
- Schools should encourage students organize panels or events around the issue of sexual violence or
- Schools can also educate parents about sexual violence and harassments through meetings and workshops that explain gender-fair child-rearing



strategies, and offer suggestions for parent-child discussions on related issues: sex education, sex equity, and sexism.

- Victims of sexual violence may not seek professional help or tell their problems to anybody. So, identifying those victims and rendering help demand trained "minds". Training, therefore, must be given for health care professionals on the diagnosis, prognosis, and treatment of the problem.
- Finally, further research that will ultimately lead to policy recommendations in the area of sexual violence is needed. The research must include large sample size, the community's attitude towards sexual violence and diversified cultures.

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