



Correlates of Sexual and Physical Violence among Female Preparatory School students in Gurage Zone, Ethiopia

Bisrat Zeleke Shiferaw*, Kenzudine Assfa Mossa and Zerihun Hile

Abstract

Background and Objective: Gender based violence (sexual and /physical), frequently occurs in institutions assumed to be 'safe', such as schools, where perpetrators include peers and teachers. School-related gender-based violence includes but is not limited to rape, unwanted sexual touching, unwanted sexual comments, corporal punishment, bullying and verbal harassment that is based on gender stereotypes which targets female students on the basis of their sex. It is a widespread barrier to girls' attaining educational equity, which also brings with it many health risks. This study aimed the correlates of sexual and physical violence among female preparatory students in Garage zone, Ethiopia.

Materials and Methods: Institution based cross-sectional descriptive study was conducted in preparatory schools of Gurage zone on March 2017. A multi-stage stratified sampling with simple random sampling technique was applied to select the study participant. Data were collected using a pre-tested structured self-administered questionnaire. The collected data was cleaned and entered in to Epidata3.1 then exported to SPSS version 20:00 for analysis. Finally, a multivariate logistic regression model was created predict the correlates of sexual and physical violence among female students.

Result: A total of 686 female preparatory students participated in the study, giving a response rate of 90.3 %. The finding showed that the prevalence of sexual and physical violence were 15.9% and 47.5% respectively. Forceful/ unwilling sex accounts 42(38.5%) from sexually active female students. Age group (i.e. Age<18 years); [AOR 1.72, 95 % CI=1.02, 2.84] and monthly received pocket money [AOR 1.37, 95 % CI=1.06, 2.78] were statistically significant predictors of sexual violence. Whereas, substance uses (i.e. Khat chewing, drinking alcohol and cigarette smoking) were statistically significant determinants of sexual and physical violence among female students.

Conclusion: The study has shown that the prevalence of both sexual and physical violence among female students is found to be relatively higher. Thus, designing specific strategic activates towards early detection, identification and prevention of school related gender based violence through provision of different regular information and communication and empowerment of female students is implicated.

Keywords

Sexual violence; Physical violence; Preparatory school; Gurage zone

Abbreviations

AOR: Adjusted Odds Ratio; COR- Crude Odds Ratio; ETB: Ethiopian Birr; GBV: Gender Based Violence; HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus; NGO: Non-Governmental Organization; RERB: Research Ethical Review Board; SPSS: Statistical Packages for Social Science; STI: Sexually Transmitted Infections; WHO: World Health Organization

Background

Although educational establishments are recognized as places of learning, personal development and empowerment, schools are too often places of discrimination and violence, particularly against girl students. School-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) covers all forms of violence or abuse based on gender stereotypes or aimed at girls on the basis of their gender. It results in sexual, physical and psychological harm to girls [1]. It includes, but is not limited to rape, unwanted sexual touching, unwanted sexual comments, corporal punishment, bullying and verbal harassment that is based on gender stereotypes or that targets female students on the basis of their sex and results in sexual, physical or psychological harm to female students [2].

SRGBV has a long-lasting negative impact on students' academic performance as well as their physical health and mental wellbeing. Several studies point out that the consequences of SRGBV adversely affect girls' educational attainment. Girls report losing their concentration in class, feeling bad about themselves, missing school, and even dropping out (often causing them to leave school after actual gender-based violence or for fear of it). It also has health related consequences in terms of increased exposure to sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV/AIDS, and unwanted pregnancies are also devastating [3].

Sexual and physical violence are the most commonly identified form of SRGBV. Global estimates indicate that almost half of all female students experience some form of sexual and physical violence in the educational context [4]. Studies from around the world, including Africa, south Asia, and Latin America, have documented that substantial proportions of female students report experiencing sexual harassment and abuse on the way to and from school by peers and by teachers [5]. This type of violence is less documented than violence in general, and it even seems to be trivialized. Yet despite such trivialization, school-related sexual abuse often remains a taboo issue, making it difficult to be identified, recognized, dealt with and prosecuted [6].

Generally speaking, evidences related to gender based violence in our country especially in preparatory school settings is scarce. The prevalence, frequency and intensity of violence among girls found in preparatory schools have not yet been the subject of research in Gurage zone. To the best of the researcher knowledge, there is no comprehensive research conducted in the region for reporting acts of school-related violence. Therefore, this study was conducted to assess the correlates of sexual and physical violence among female preparatory students in Garage zone, Ethiopia.

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Materials and Methods

A cross sectional institution based descriptive study was conducted among female students of preparatory schools found in Gurage zone on March 2017. The zone is composed of 13 woreda and 2 city administration. According to the 2017 zonal educational affairs office report a total of 16 preparatory schools are found in Gurage zone, one in each woreda. In the 2017 academic year a total of 9838 students were attended preparatory school among these, 4,282 of them were female.

The sample size was calculated using a single population proportion formula with confidence interval of 95% and margin of error 5%. In the calculation, the prevalence of sexual violence was considered to be 34.4% [7]. Then, by considering 10% non-response rate and design effect of 2, the final sample size was 760 female students.

A multi-stage stratified sampling technique was used; where first 8 preparatory schools were selected from the total 16 schools using lottery method, then, the total sample size was allocated to each preparatory school proportional to the number of female students in the preparatory schools. Finally, participant students were selected from each preparatory school proportional to their grade of study (i.e. grade 11 & 12) using simple random sampling technique students' attendance list was used as a sampling frame.

Data was collected using eight data collectors and four supervisors through pre-tested, structured and self-administered questionnaires. The questionnaire was developed after thorough review of various literatures relevant to the study and prepared in English language. Before the actual data collection, the questionnaire was pre-tested on 5% (38subjects) in one of unselected preparatory school. Finally, filled questionnaires were checked for completeness and consistency of the data by the principal investigator on daily basis.

Before conducting the study, the proposal was publicly presented, defended and letter of ethical clearance approval was obtained from Wolkite University, Research Ethical Review Board (RERB). The purpose of the study was explained to the study participants, anonymity and privacy and confidentiality was ensured. Prior to data collection, informed written consent was obtained from the study participants. While obtaining consent from each participant, information related to publishing the study finding were addressed. The respondents' right to refuse or withdraw from participating in the study was also fully acknowledged.

Data processing and analysis

The collected data was cleaned, coded and entered into Epi-data software version 3.1 and then exported to Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20:00 for analysis. First, descriptive analysis was carried out for each variable. Variables with a p value <0.25 in bivariate analysis were entered into the multivariable logistic regression, and then those variables with a p value <0.05 were considered to be statistically significant in multivariate analysis.

Results

Socio demographic characteristics

A total of 686 female preparatory students participated in the study, making a response rate of 90.26 %. The mean age of the respondents was 17.8 (± 1.6) years, the youngest being 12 and the oldest 35 years old. More than half 357 (52.0%) of the respondents were Orthodox

Christian by religion followed by Muslim 181 (26.4%) and protestant 94 (13.7%). Regarding their ethnicity, Majority of the respondents 496 (72.3%) were Gurage followed by Amhara 86 (12.5%) and kebena 64 (9.3%). About 216 (31.5%) of the respondents are living in rental house far from their family home and concerning the respondents academics status more than half of them 387 (56.4%) were grade 12 and the rest were grade 11 (Table 1).

Family socio-economic characteristics

Out of the total 760 female students, only 140 (20.4%) of their mothers and 64 (9.3%) of their father did not attend any formal or informal education. More than half 366 (53.4%) of their family get a monthly income between 1001-5000 Ethiopian Birr (ETB) and about 381 (55.5%) of the female students receive a monthly incentives of 101-500 ETB from their family (Table 2).

Substance use

With regard to substance use among the respondents, only 45 (6.6%), 27 (3.9%) and 59 (8.6%) of them have chew chat, smoke tobacco and consume alcohol respectively (Table 3).

Sexual experience history

Regarding respondents sexual history out of the total 686 female students, 118 (17.2%) ever had sex since they entered preparatory

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of female preparatory school students, Gurage Zone, Ethiopia, March, 2017.

Variables	Response	N	%
Age category	< 18 years	561	81.8%
	18-22 years	116	16.9%
	>=33 years	9	1.3%
Religion	Orthodox	357	52.0%
	Muslim	181	26.4%
	Catholic	37	5.4%
	Protestant	94	13.7%
	Other	17	2.5%
Ethnic group	Gurage	496	72.3%
	Kebena	64	9.3%
	Silte	21	3.1%
	Amhara	86	12.5%
	Other	19	2.8%
	Initial residence	Rural	360
Urban		326	47.5%
Living condition	With family home	470	68.5%
	Rent home	216	31.5%
If in rental home with whom*	Alone	36	16.7%
	With female friend	115	53.2%
	With husband	6	2.8%
	With relatives	55	25.5%
	Other	4	1.9%
Marital status	Yes	97	14.1%
	No	589	85.9%
Grade attending	Grade 11	387	56.4%
	Grade 12	299	43.6%
Cumulative GPA	50-64 score	183	26.8%
	65-79 score	385	56.3%
	>=80 score	116	16.0%

Note: n= 216

Table 2: Respondents Family Socio-Economic Characteristics, Gurage Zone, Ethiopia, March, 2017.

Variables	Response	N	%
Are your parents live together	Yes	572	83.4%
	No	114	16.6%
If not what is the reason	Divorced	20	17.5%
	Death	23	20.2%
	Job	50	43.9%
	Other	21	18.4%
Which of parents are alive	Mother	75	10.9%
	Father	18	2.6%
	Both are alive	575	83.8%
	Both are not alive	18	2.6%
Educational status (father)	No education	64	9.3%
	Able to read and write	201	29.3%
	Grade 1-8	134	19.5%
	Grade 9-12	118	17.2%
	Diploma and above	169	24.6%
Educational status (mother)	No education	140	20.4%
	Able to read and write	194	28.3%
	Grade 1-8	174	25.4%
	Grade 9-12	78	11.4%
	Diploma and above	100	14.6%
Family income	<=1000	164	23.9%
	1001-5000	366	53.4%
	5001-10000	129	18.8%
	10001-15000	15	2.2%
	>15000	12	1.7%
Monthly received money (incentive)	<=100	242	35.3%
	101-500	381	55.5%
	>500	63	9.2%
Is the received money enough for your expense	Yes	402	58.6%
	No	284	41.4%
How do you perceive the control of your family on you	Tight	414	60.3%
	Average	241	35.1%
	Loose	12	1.7%
	No control at all	19	2.8%

Table 3: Substance use among female preparatory school students, Gurage Zone, Ethiopia, March, 2017.

Variables	Response	N	%
Chat chewing	Yes	45	6.6%
	No	641	93.4%
Frequency of Chat chewing	Usually	11	24.4%
	Some times	12	26.7%
	Occasionally	22	48.9%
Tobacco smoking	Yes	27	3.9%
	No	659	96.1%
Frequency of tobacco smoking	Usually	12	44.4%
	Some times	3	11.1%
	Occasionally	12	44.4%
Consuming alcohol	Yes	59	8.6%
	No	627	91.4%
Frequency of consuming alcohol	Usually	12	20.3%
	Some times	10	16.9%
	Occasionally	37	62.7%

Table 4: Respondents Sexual history, female preparatory school students, Gurage Zone, Ethiopia, March, 2017.

Variables	Response	N	%
Ever had sex since preparatory school	Yes	118	17.2%
	No	568	82.8%
With whom sexual intercourse	Teachers	11	8.3%
	Supportive staffs	7	5.3%
	Sexual partner	70	52.6%
	Class mate	33	24.8%
	Other	12	9.0%
Frequency of sexual intercourse	Once	19	16.1%
	Twice	20	16.9%
	More than Three	79	66.9%
Protected sex*	Yes	76	64.4%
	No	42	35.6%
History of pregnancy	Yes	23	54.8%
	No	19	45.2%
Unintended Pregnancy	Yes	14	60.9%
	No	9	39.1%
Fate of unintended pregnancy	Abortion	14	100.0%
	Gave birth	0	0.0%
Number of Sexual partners	One	82	69.5%
	Two	15	12.7%
	More than two	21	17.8%
Free discussion on sexual & reproductive issues with families	Yes	231	33.7%
	No	455	66.3%

school of which 42 (35.6%) had unprotected sex, 23 (54.8%) had been pregnant and the majority 14 (60.9%) experienced unintended pregnancies in which all of them ended in abortion (Table 4).

Sexual Violence and its complications

The result showed that the prevalence of any form of sexual violence (i.e. unwanted sexual touch, harassment, forceful sex) is 109 (15.9%). Forceful/ unwilling sex accounts 42 (35.6%) and 42 (6.1%) from the sexually active and the total female students respectively. Teachers were found to take the first rank performing sexual violence on female students (i.e. 15/ 33.3%). From a total of 42 female students who faced forceful/ unwilling sex, about 19 (45.2%); 20 (47.6%); 22 (52.4%) and 12 (28.6%) of them reported that they were having physical, psychological, academics and social problems as a result of forced sex (Table 5). Passing exam 19 (41.3%), financial support 11 (23.9%) and being threatened 6 (13.0%) were the three major reasons given by the respondents for having a forced/ unwilling sex (Figure 1).

Anxiety 12 (27.9%), Poor academics achievement 14 (66.7%) and rejection from friends or peers & Drug dependency 6 (40.0%) were the major forms of psychological, academics and social problems resulted due to forced/ unwilling sex as reported by the respondents (Table 6).

Physical violence and its complications

Regarding the physical violence the prevalence of any form of physical violence among the respondents were about 314 (47%) (Table 7). Psychological disturbance poor academics achievement and social disturbance were found to be the three major complication reported by the respondents who encountered physical violence (Figure 2).

Table 5: Respondents Sexual history, female preparatory school students, Gurage Zone, Ethiopia, March, 2017.

Variables	Responses	N	%
Any form of sexual violence	Yes	109	15.9%
	No	577	84.1%
Forcefully/ unwillingly sex	Yes	42	6.1%
	No	644	93.9%
Frequency of forcefully/ unwillingly sex	Once	18	42.9%
	Twice	6	14.3%
	More than two times	18	42.9%
By whom Any form of sexual violence	Teachers	11	8.3%
	Supportive staffs	7	5.3%
	Individuals out of school	70	52.6%
	Male students	33	24.8%
	Sexual partner	10	10.0%
	Other	2	2.0%
By whom forcefully/ unwillingly sex	Teachers	15	33.3%
	Supportive staffs	3	6.7%
	Individuals out of school	7	15.6%
	Male students	9	20.0%
	Sexual partner	10	22.2%
	Other	1	2.2%
Physical injury as a result of forcefully/ unwillingly sex	Yes	19	45.2%
	No	23	54.8%
Psychological problem as a result of forcefully/ unwillingly sex	Yes	20	47.6%
	No	22	52.4%
Academicals problem as a result of forcefully/ unwillingly sex	Yes	22	52.4%
	No	20	47.6%
Social problem as a result of forcefully/ unwillingly sex	Yes	12	28.6%
	No	30	71.4%

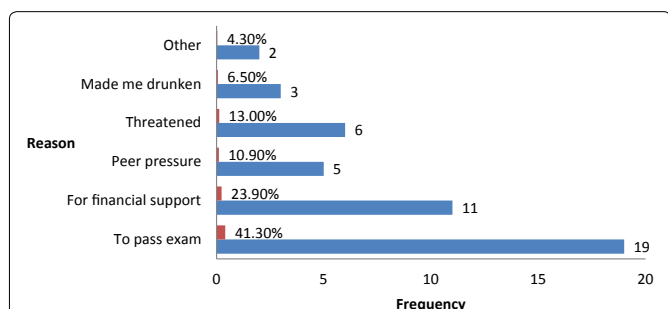


Figure 1: Reasons given for forceful/ unwilling sex, female preparatory school students, Gurage Zone, Ethiopia, March, 2017.

Predictors of sexual and physical violence

The multivariate analysis results show respondents age category, monthly pocket money received from their parents, and substance use habits (i.e. khat chewing, alcohol consumption and cigarette smoking) were found to be the determinants of sexual violence.

Female students whose age is less than 18 years encountered sexual violence more likely as compared to their counterpart [AOR 1.72, 95 % CI=1.02, 2.84]. Similarly, female students who earn a monthly pocket money of less than 500 ETB were found to face sexual violence 1.37 times more likely than those who receive a monthly pocket money of 500 ETB and more [AOR 1.37, 95 % CI=1.06, 2.78]. Concerning substance use habits, respondents who did not chew Khat, drink alcohol and smoke cigarette were found to have less likelihood of encountering sexual and physical violence (Table 8).

Table 6: Forms of physical Psychological and social problems due to forced/ unwilling sex among female preparatory school students, Gurage Zone, Ethiopia, March, 2017 (n = 42).

Variables	Response	N	%
Physical complications	Reproductive organ Trauma	17	40.5%
	Trauma on other body parts	25	59.5%
Psychological complications	Self-blame	9	20.9%
	Fear	8	18.6%
	Anxiety	12	27.9%
	Hopelessness	4	9.3%
	Depression	6	14.0%
	Suicidal ideation/ attempt	2	4.7%
Academicals complications	Poor academicals Achievement	14	66.7%
	Academicals failure from school	2	9.5%
	Academicals dropout	1	4.8%
	Other	4	19.0%
	My boyfriend or husband	10	22.2%
	Other	1	2.2%
Social complications	Rejection from friends or peers	6	40.0%
	Rejection from family	3	20.0%
	Drug dependency	6	40.0%

Table 7: Prevalence of physical violence, female preparatory school students, Gurage Zone, Ethiopia, March, 2017.

Variables	Response	N	%
Physical Violence	Yes	326	47.5%
	No	360	52.5%
Forms of physical violence	Kicked or Dragged	95	23.4%
	Thrown item	77	19.0%
	Pushed or Shoved	108	26.6%
	Beaten with a fist	32	7.9%
	Sharp material	24	5.9%
	choked or Burnt	33	8.1%
	Weapon	22	5.4%
	Other	15	3.7%
By whom physical violence	Teachers	79	21.8%
	Administrative	27	7.4%
	Individuals out of school	116	32.0%
	Male Students	99	27.3%
	Sexual partner	29	8.0%
	Other	13	3.6%

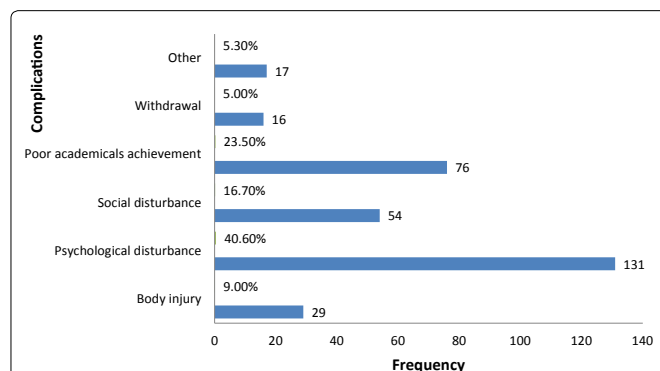


Figure 2: Complications of physical violence, female preparatory school students, Gurage Zone, Ethiopia, March, 2017 (n = 326).

Table 8: Predictors of sexual and physical violence, female preparatory school students, Gurage Zone, Ethiopia, March, 2017.

Variables	Sexual violence		Physical violence	
	COR (95% CI)	AOR (95% CI)	COR (95% CI)	AOR (95% CI)
Respondents age category				
>=18 years	1.00		1.00	
<18 years	2.28 (1.44, 3.65)	1.72 (1.02, 2.84)*	1.40 (1.04, 2.07)	1.21 (0.79, 1.86)
Study level				
Grade 12	1.00		1.00	
Grade 11	1.52 (1.01, 2.29)	1.37 (0.88, 2.19)	0.61 (0.45, 0.82)	0.53 (0.39, 1.04)
Currently married				
Yes	1.00		1.00	
No	0.37 (0.21, 0.60)	0.68 (0.37, 1.26)	0.44 (0.28, 0.68)	0.69 (0.42, 1.13)
Monthly pocket money				
>=500 ETB	1.00		1.00	
<500 ETB	2.13 (1.17, 3.88)	1.37 (1.06, 2.78)*	1.53 (1.08, 2.58)	1.26 (0.72, 2.21)
Chewing Khat				
Yes	1.00		1.00	
No	0.18 (0.09, 0.34)	0.42 (0.37, 0.73)*	0.34 (0.18, 0.68)	0.51 (0.40, 0.81)*
Alcohol consumption				
Yes	1.00		1.00	
No	0.15 (0.09, 0.27)	0.27(0.13, 0.57)*	0.25(0.14, 0.47)	0.19 (0.10, 0.38)**
Smoking cigarette				
Yes	1.00	1.00		
No	0.09 (0.04, 0.22)	0.35 (0.12, 0.79)*	0.25 (0.09, 0.61)	0.68 (0.17, 0.59)*

Note: *Indicates a P-value of <0.001 and †Indicates a P-value of <0.05.

Discussion

The finding of this study showed that the prevalence of sexual violence among female students was 15.9%. It is nearly similar with the study findings in some African countries such as in Sierra Leone (14%), [8] and Cameroon, (15%), [9]. However, it is lower than the findings of studies conducted in India [10] and Zimbabwe [11]; the difference might be attributed to cultural difference, beliefs and myth about sexual violence between these countries.

Regarding physical violence study finding showed that the prevalence rate of physical violence among female students was about 47.5%; which is relatively higher than other similar studies conducted in Tigray (32.3), [7] and Amhara (20.4%) [12] Regions of Ethiopia; Difference in measure of physical violence scale might be the possible explanation for this.

In line with the finding World Health Organization (WHO) Multi-Country Study [13] on women's health and domestic violence against women (Ecological Frame Work for Gender Based Violence (GBV)), this study revealed a statistically significant associations between respondents substance use habits (i.e. khat chewing, alcohol consumption and cigarette smoking) with sexual and physical violence. The result indicates that female students who were found to chew khat, drink alcohol and smoke cigarette were more likely to face sexual and physical violence as compared to their counterparts. Similar evidences also observed from other institution and community based surveys in Ethiopia [13].

Similarly, the finding showed that respondent's age group was also significantly associated with sexual violence; it is consistent with the finding of Ecological Frame Work for GBV developed by WHO [14].

Furthermore, the multivariate logistic regression analysis also indicated a statistically significant association between monthly pocket money and sexual violence; accordingly, sexual violence was

found to be higher among female students who earn a monthly pocket money of less than 500 ETB than their counterparts. Inability to fully cover their monthly expenses due to Lower levels of income might be the possible explanation which in its turn exposes these students for facing different forms of sexual violence.

Conclusion

Overall, this research has shown that the prevalence of sexual and physical violence was found to be 15.9% and 47% respectively. The result also showed that from sexually active students, forceful/unwilling sex accounts about 42 (38.5%). Generally, the finding revealed that female student's age and monthly earned pocket money were found to be determinants of sexual violence. Moreover, substance use (i.e. Khat chewing, drinking alcohol and cigarette smoking) were found to be the predictors of sexual and physical violence among female students.

Therefore, it is recommended that strategy and policy makers (i.e. zonal educational affair office & school administrative) should develop appropriate evidence-based strategies and curricula in schools to prevent school related gender based violence. Thus, designing specific strategic activates towards early detection, identification and prevention of SRGBV through provision of different regular information and communication programs is implicated. Collaborative action with governmental and nongovernmental organizations whose focus is to address sexual and reproductive health services, with particular emphasis to GBV is also recommended. Finally, we recommend a separate and detailed study on the level and the type of forced/unwilling sex among female students, which accounted the major form of sexual violence.

As the study is conducted at zonal level it has strength of being a representative study. However, social desirability bias on SRGBV could be one of its limitations and also cause and effect relationship cannot be ascertained in this study as it is a cross-sectional data.

Availability of Data and Materials

The datasets used and/or analyzed during the current study available from the corresponding author under the permission of Wolkite University on reasonable request.

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Authors' Contributions

Bisrat Zeleke: The principal investigator designed the study, collect, analyses and interprets the data, and also drafted the manuscript.

Kenzudine Assfa: Equally participated in conceptualization of the study, design, analyses and interpretation of results.

Dr. Zerihun Haile: Participated in in drafting and critical reviewing the manuscript.

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