



**ASIAN UNIVERSITY
FOR WOMEN**

SUMMER PROJECT

“Rape: Breaking the Culture of Silence.”

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Abstract

Nepal is one of the South Asian country which have many social and cultural condition that leads to rape such as high rates of illiteracy and unemployment, poor economy condition, masculinity power, sexual frustration and so on. Further, institutional organizations such as school and colleges pays less attention and rarely try to bring this topic into discussion. Sometimes, the victims are even forced to marry the rapist in order to handle the situation. The purpose of this study is to educate adolescents about their sex rights, explore different myths regarding rape and encourage youth to raise voice against any kind of sexual violence. This research is based on both qualitative and quantitative data. Structured questionnaires are used for data analysis. Surveys were conducted in two renowned schools in Kathmandu, Nepal. The total number of participants of the study was 278. This study presents that the female and male perspective regarding the causes of rape is quite different. The male students think that sexual frustration, status of women, and poverty are the major causes of the rape. On the other hand, the female perspective shows that beside sexual frustration, which comes first, masculinity power and social and cultural conditions are the major causes of the rape. Both female and male students want the perpetrator to be punished, however 19% of male students agree with no punishment after marrying the victim.

Introduction

Nepal is a developing country which still has high rates of illiteracy and unemployment, poor economy, social and cultural conditions, and so on. It seems that most of the time institutional organizations such as schools and colleges, as well as families, pay less attention to and rarely try to bring this topic up in discussion. Rape is considered to be a private issue as some people think that it brings dishonor to the family. Sometimes the victims are forced to marry the rapist in order to get over the social stigmatization. Similarly in marriages, women are being taught to cope up with their married life being dominated by common social doctrine law (where men consider marriage as a license to have sexual intercourse with their wife whenever they want) which leads to marital rape. People usually don't feel comfortable to share their experiences of rape or seek justice for themselves because it is considered as a taboo in most societies. Sometimes the victims are pressured by the family and society not to report a rape case in order to safeguard the future of other siblings, thereby "saving the honor" of the family and society. The main goal of this summer project is to raise awareness by conducting a workshop regarding rape and marital rape for school students in Nepal.

Literature Review

Every passing day, we work towards the betterment of our societies, economic well-being, human rights, and women's promotion in various aspects of society, security, education, and more on. Still, some women in Nepal are victims of rape, and their cases are not taken seriously because of existing myths, lack of evidence, and victim blaming.

scenario. In the recent years, there has been significant improvements and advances for women's rights in Nepal, such as membership in the political parties the change makers of society and one-third of seats in higher and lower houses of government.[1] Nevertheless, the situation of women in sense of security and privacy in public sphere are not aggrandized and honored. Cases such as rape and others are not considered serious and brought to justice by the state for the lack of evidence, humiliation of victims and corrupted authorities. An example can be the rape and murder of 13 years old girl in Kanchanpur at the south-eastern part of Nepal. At the first place, the national news agencies published the picture of victim in a very bad condition (victim's corpse in a muddy field surrounded by observers).[2] The personal identity of the victim and her family was not respected and considered essential by media and authorities while the news was broadcasted.

Additionally, victim blaming has become very common in rape cases. Rapists deny the crime or the evidence is manipulated for the criminal's advantage. In many reports and stories about rape, a number of reporters shared their comments freely and publicly judged women's bodies, their way of living, their position, their relationships, their behavior with male friends and other issues that distracted from the crime itself.[3] Although, the news is monitored by police but merely actions are taken to fight against such comments. These public discussion and shared comments can manipulate the case and that has the ability to change case direction, which often ends up in injustice for the women. The people who make such comments judge and criminalize victims by their views which still exist in our societies with poor mindset and myths.

Although the number of reported cases of rape have been increasing in Nepal, the rate is not going down because most of the cases are not fully investigated and the perpetrators are not punished. There are some women who are showing courage and coming forward to report cases of rape and other forms of violence by the media and official authorities' are not supporting them.[4] The main reason is because cases are taken lightly by media; "Reporters said their stories on domestic violence did not get attention until a woman is beaten to death. Senior reporters often think it is beneath them to cover such (light topics)".[5] In conclusion, most of the times myths remain myths, rape cases remain simply newspaper headlines because the action which has been taken against it is not effective and victims of rape are just numbers to authorities.

Objectives

- To raise awareness in school boys and girls about their sexuality rights.
- To know the long term physical and psychological effects of rape.
- To help victims to be able to report their cases and break social stereotypes and taboos regarding rape.
- To clarify wrong myths

Significance of the study

Our research project educated school boys and girls about their sex- rights, and encouraged them to break social stereotypes and taboos regarding rape. Our project also

introduced the term marital rape to them so that in the future they might raise their voice and fight against it. In-depth discussion about different myths allowed students to make clear differentiation between myths and facts.

Methodology

Our project covered both qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative methodology was divided into two sub-groups such as a workshop and drawing competition session on theme “Rape”. In the workshop, we first gave presentation that introduced rape and marital rape, their type and causes, myths about rape, its consequences, and preventive measures. There was also a drawing competition. At the end, we collected quantitative data by conducting a survey of the students that contained general questions regarding rape and marital rape.

Sample Questions

Personal Information

1. Gender:
 - Male
 - Female
 - Others
2. Age:
 - 12 – 15
 - 15 - 18
 - 18 - 21
 - 21 and above
3. Country:
 - Bangladesh
 - Nepal

- o Others
4. Rank it in order reasons why men committed rapes are (the reason which you feel is the most important give it as 1 and the least one give it as 6):
 - o Social and cultural conditions -
 - o Status of women -
 - o Poverty -
 - o Masculinity power -
 - o Sexual frustration -
 - o Hatred or fear of women -
 5. Rank it in order the punishment which you think it most applicable to the rapist (the punishment which you feel is the most applicable give it as 1 and the least one give it as 7):
 - o Death penalty -
 - o Lifetime imprisonment -
 - o At least 20 years imprisonment -
 - o Short term imprisonment (2-5 years) -
 - o No punishment if he marry the victim -
 - o No punishment for the rapist -
 6. Society accept the rape victims after being rape:
 - o Strongly Agree
 - o Agree
 - o Disagree
 - o Strongly Disagree
 - o Not sure
 7. After marriage the husband have sexual rights over his wife so it is not considered as rape:
 - o Strongly Agree
 - o Agree
 - o Disagree
 - o Strongly Disagree
 - o Not sure
 8. If a woman say “no” to have intercourse with her partner, then it actually means “yes” and she can’t express it due to shyness.
 - o Strongly Agree
 - o Agree
 - o Disagree
 - o Strongly Disagree
 - o Not sure
 9. If a woman is raped then that means she brought dishonor to her family:
 - o Strongly Agree
 - o Agree
 - o Disagree

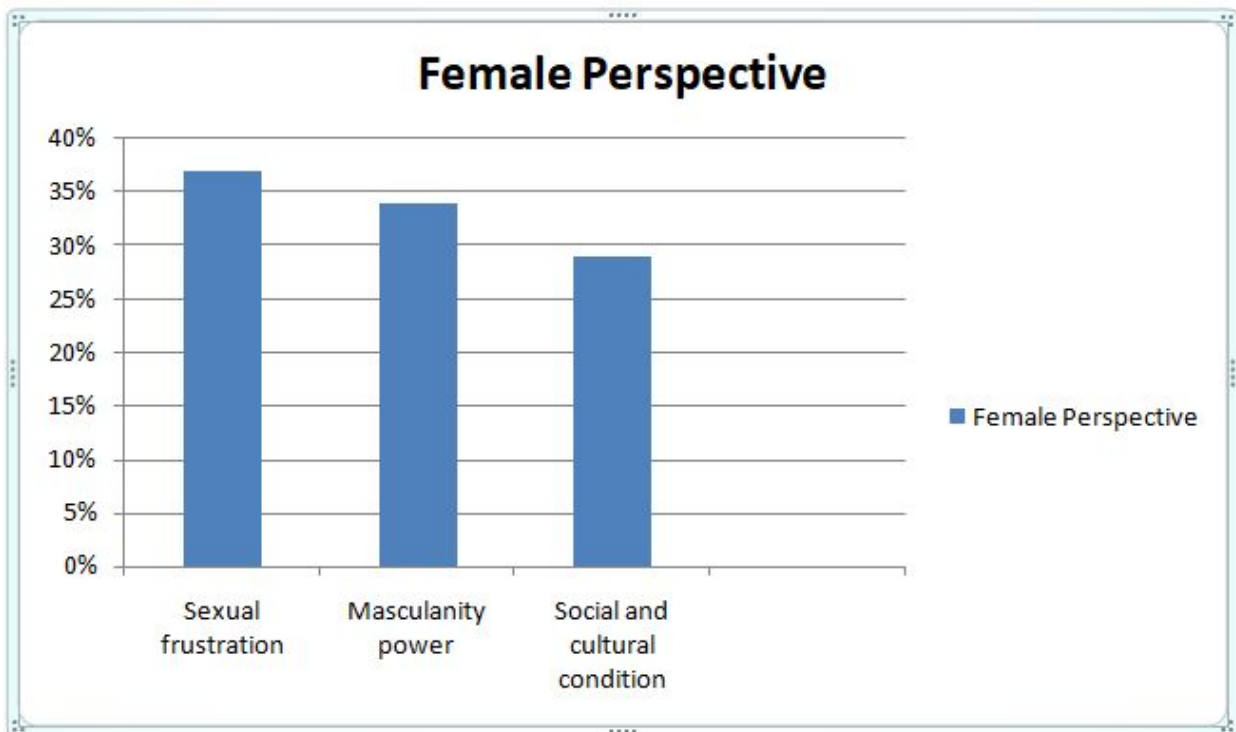
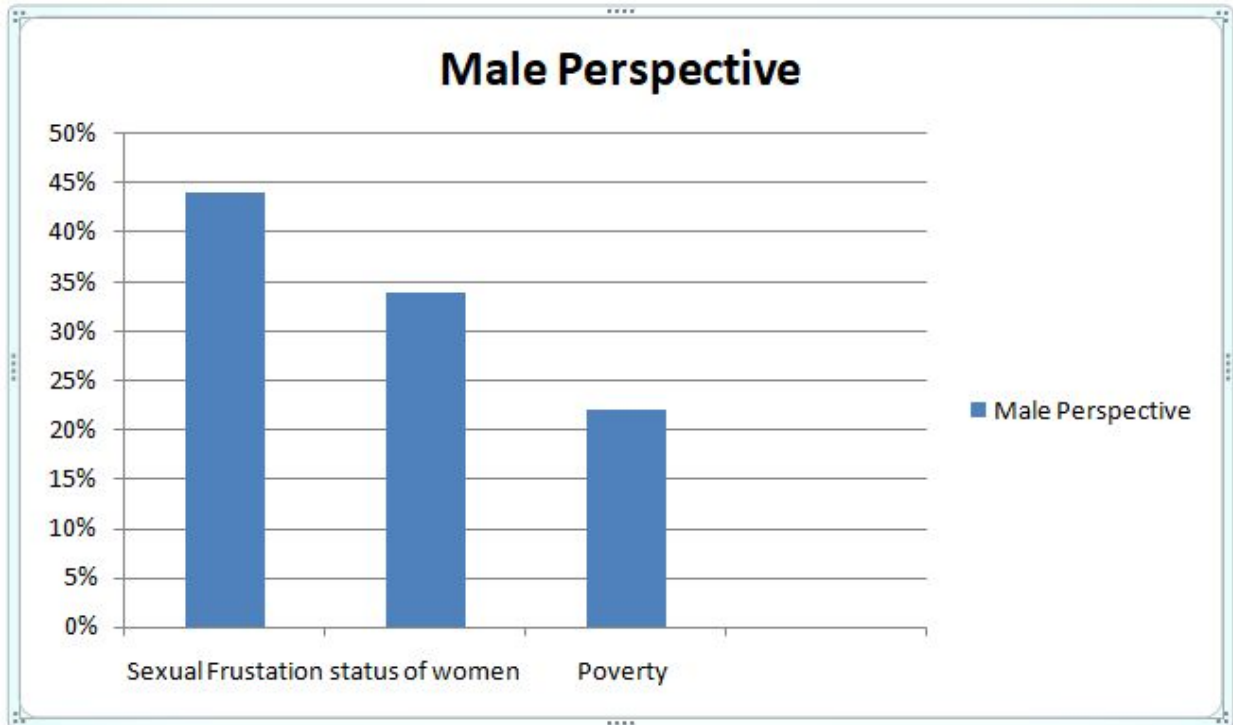
- Strongly Disagree
 - Not sure
- 10. If a man raped a women then that means he brought dishonor to his family:
 - Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
 - Not sure
- 11. Rape of women in Bangladesh or Nepal is more a problem of urban area than rural area:
 - Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
 - Not sure
- 12. Rape in Bangladesh or Nepal is mainly caused due to western influence (dressing or life style):
 - Strongly Agree
 - Agree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
 - Not sure
- 13. In your opinion most Rape are committee by:
 - Strangers
 - Family members

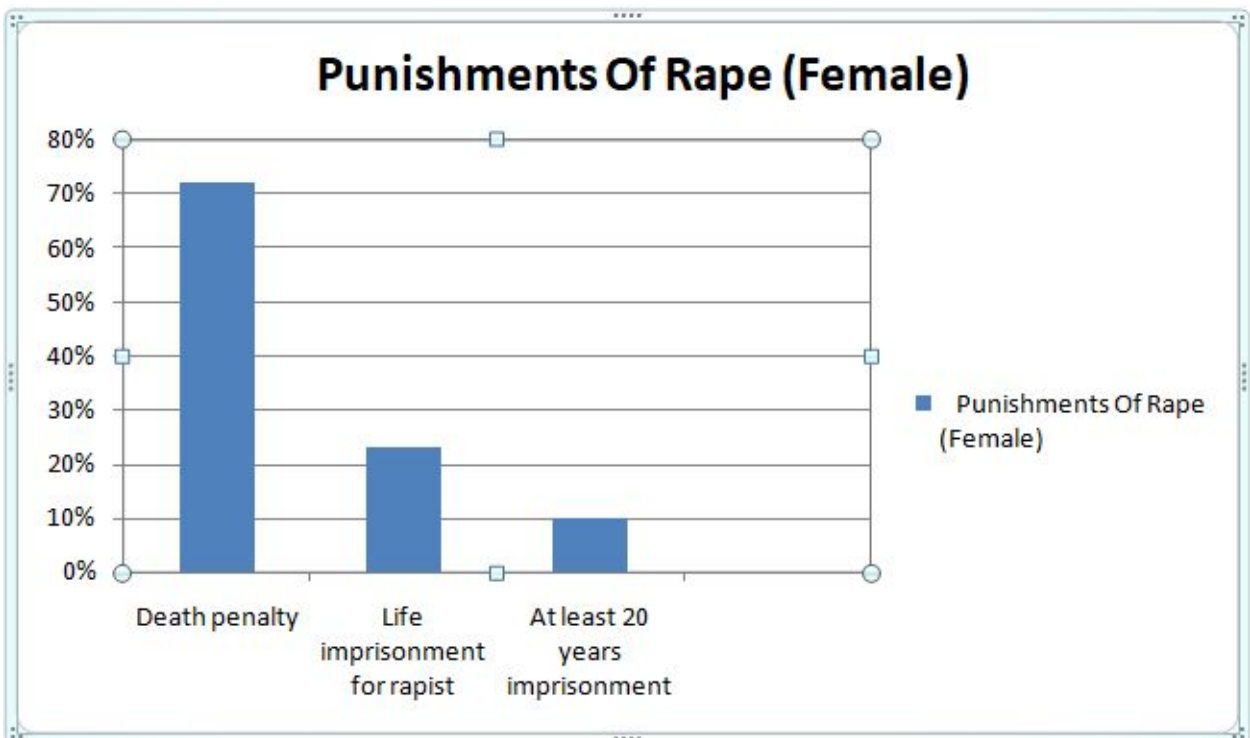
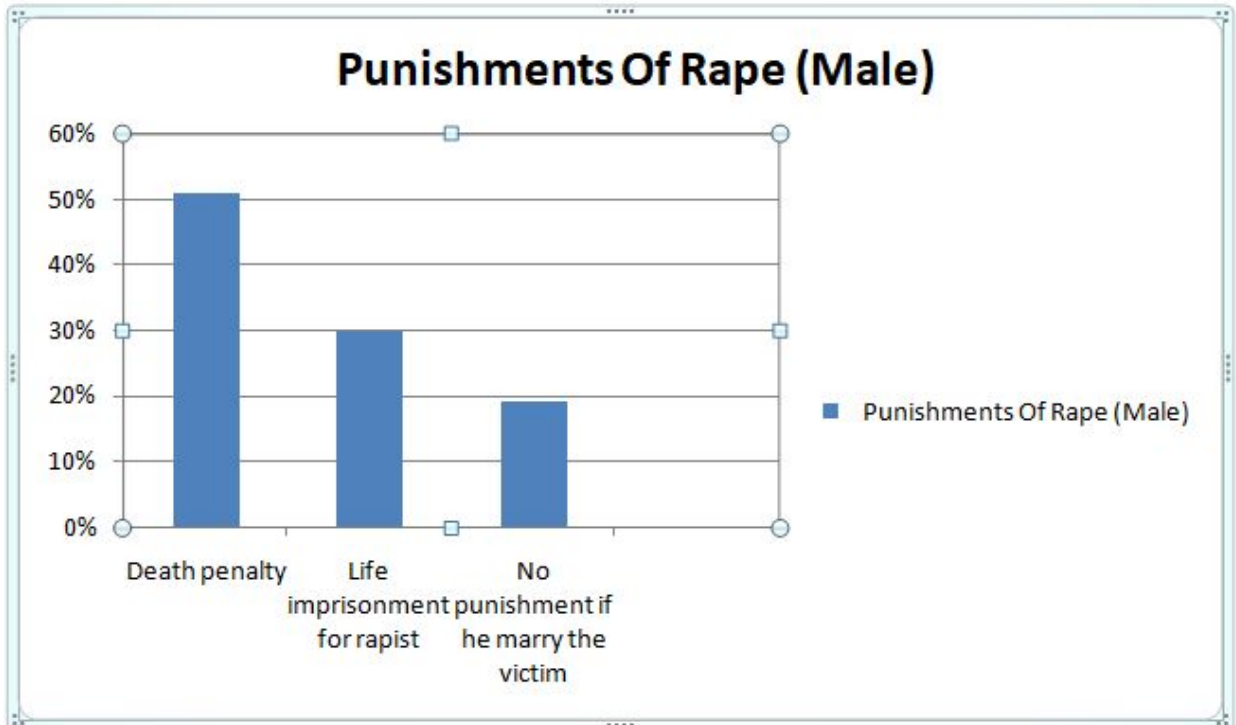
Findings/ Result

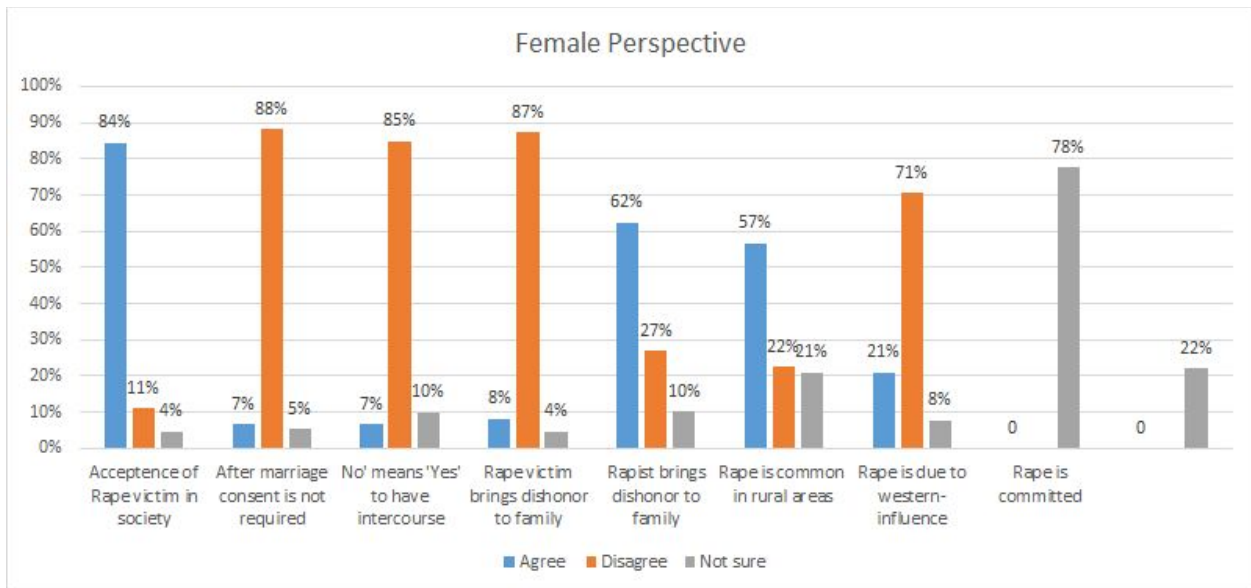
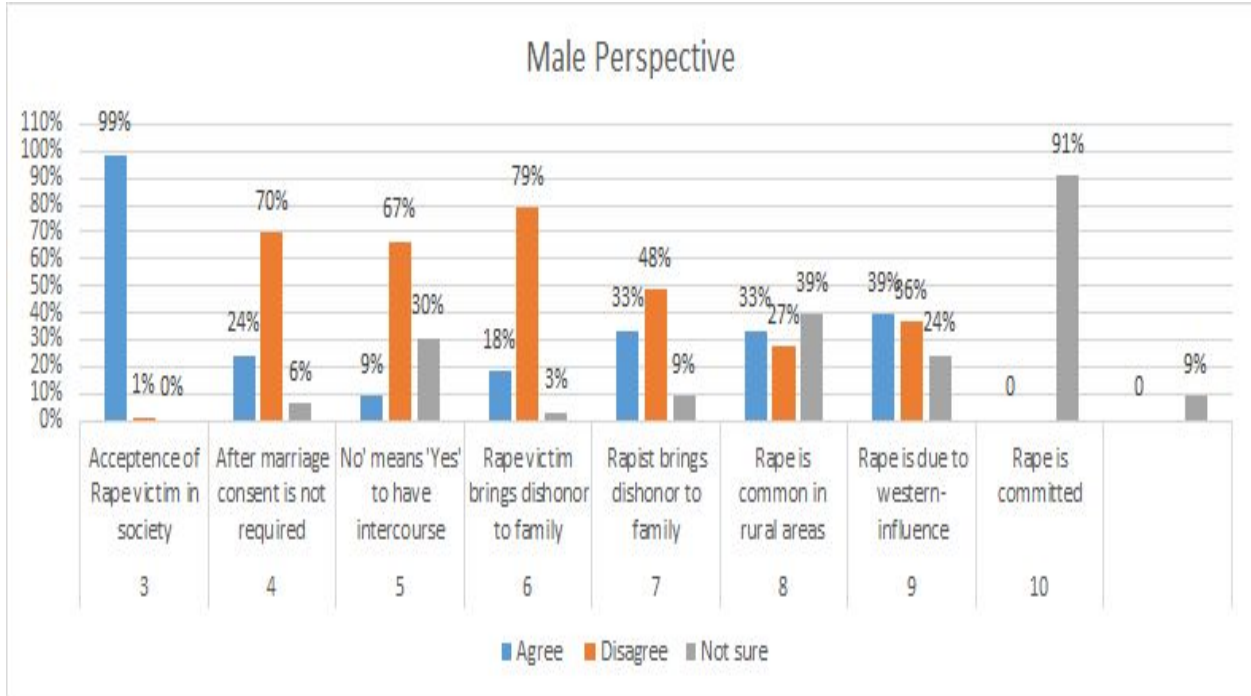
The participants were students of class 9 to 12. The sample size was 278 participants, of whom 245 were female and 33 were male. The results after analysing the survey forms show that the female and male perspective regarding causes of rape is quite different. However because their number was not same it may have negatively affected the accuracy of the finding from the data. The male students think that sexual frustration, the status of women, and poverty are the major causes of rape. On the other hand the female perspective shows that beside sexual frustration, which comes first, masculinity power, and social and cultural conditions are the major causes of rape. Regarding punishment of the

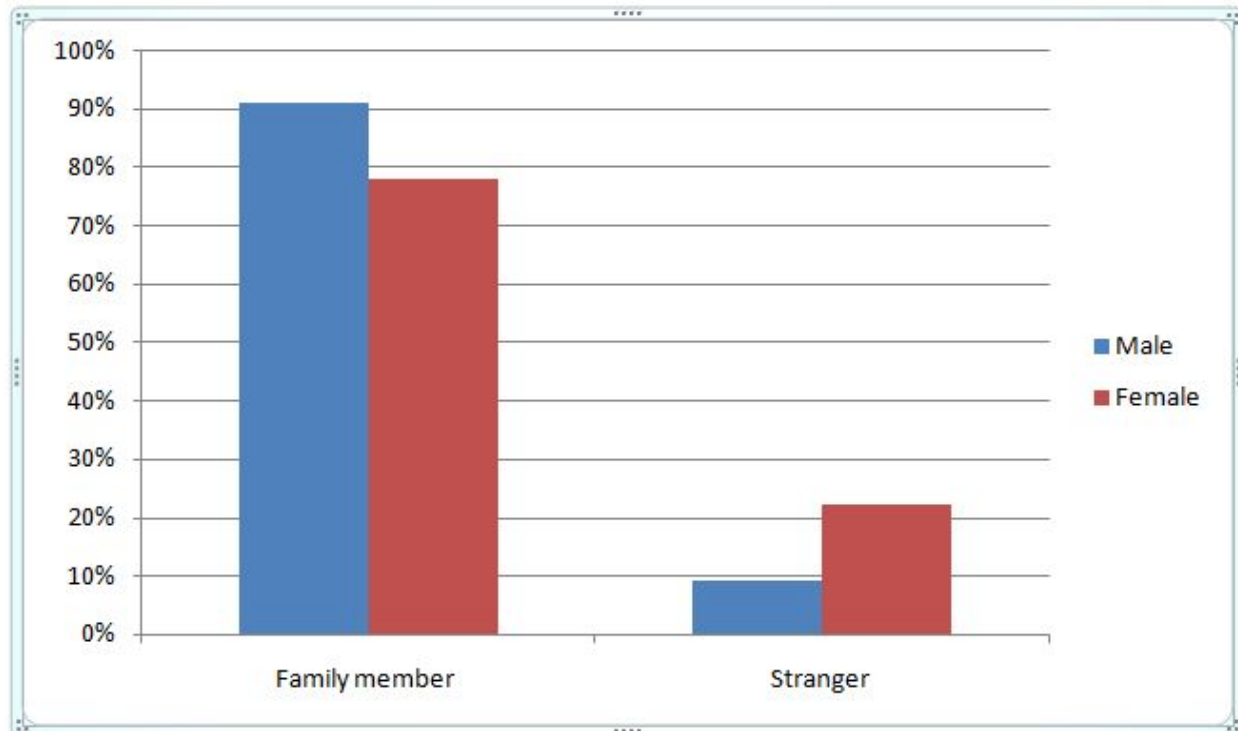
rapist 72% of female students agree with the death penalty, 23% of students say life time imprisonment for the rapist and the rest of the 10% agree with, at least 20 years imprisonment of rapist . However, for the 51% male participants agree with the death penalty, 30% agree with lifetime imprisonment, and the 19% say no punishment if the rapist marries the victim. This shows that (both female and male students) wants the perpetrator to be punished, but 19% of male students agree with no punishment after marrying the victim, the level of punishment of the perpetrator among the female students are higher.

"Rape: A Dangerous Myth"									
From Male's perspective		Ranking (3-1)			From Female's perspective		Ranking (3-1)		
Causes of Rape					Causes and punishments of rape				
1st	Sexual Frustration	44%			Sexual frustration	37%			
2nd	status of women	34%			Masculinity power	34%			
3rd	Poverty	22%			Social and cultural condition	29%			
Punishments Of Rape					Punishment of Rape				
2	Death penalty	51%			Death penalty	72%			
	Life imprisonment for rapist	30%			Life imprisonment	23%			
	No punishment if he marry the victim	19%			At least 20 years imprisonment	10%			
		Agree	Disagree	Not sure		Agree	Disagree	Not sure	
3	Acceptance of Rape victim in society	99%	1%	0%	Acceptance of Rape victim in society	84%	11%	4%	
4	After marriage consent is not required	24%	70%	6%	After marriage consent is not required	7%	88%	5%	
5	No' means 'Yes' to have intercourse	9%	67%	30%	No' means 'Yes' to have intercourse	7%	85%	10%	
6	Rape victim brings dishonor to family	18%	79%	3%	Rape victim brings dishonor to family	8%	87%	4%	
7	Rapist brings dishonor to family	33%	48%	9%	Rapist brings dishonor to family	62%	27%	10%	
8	Rape is common in rural areas	33%	27%	39%	Rape is common in rural areas	57%	22%	21%	
9	Rape is due to western-influence	39%	36%	24%	Rape is due to western-influence	21%	71%	8%	
10	Rape is committed	Family member		91%	Rape is committed	Family member		78%	
		Stranger		9%		Stranger		22%	









Analysis

Since the issue of rape is not discussed openly in Nepal, we held a workshop to know about the knowledge of others about rape. Our main target was youth as they are the change makers of the society. We gave the presentation in two schools of Nepal. First we presented on what is rape, myths of rape, laws of rape and about prevention of rape. Afterwards we held a drawing competition and survey session. The girls at the NGO were not comfortable for talking about rape but the school children were very keen to know about the reasons of rape. They were eagerly responded. Even the boys were listening to us interestingly. Everyone tried to portray their thoughts in their drawings and in the comment section of the survey forms. After analyzing the survey forms we found out that students still had a lack

of knowledge about rape and its myths. Some of the students still have the wrong believe about rape, some have general vision about rape, only few of the students have clear understanding of rape and they strongly agreed with us about the myths, prevention and precaution. We talked with the schools, they were very happy to welcome us and were appreciative about our presentation on this topic. We all realized that gender education should be introduced in the schools so that everyone can have a better understanding about rape, create awareness in the society and adapt necessary measures to protect themselves.

Limitations

The first challenge we faced was getting permission from the schools. As it was summer time most of the schools had exams so it was difficult to manage the schools and the timing for the workshop. The second challenge that we faced was financial problem. The money that was provided by AUW was not sufficient. The third challenge was language barrier as the workshop was held in Nepal. And the last challenge we faced was getting data from boys. We got sufficient data of the girls, but amount of data we got of boys was significant.

Conclusion

As we know the rape rate is increasing so it's high time to raise awareness about it. Teenagers are the best targeted group as they are the rising generation. After the workshop with the survey questionnaires we saw that female and male perspectives regarding causes

of rape are quite different, as male students think that sexual frustration, status of women, and poverty are the major causes of rape. On the other hand, the female perspective shows that sexual frustration, masculinity power, and social and cultural conditions are the major causes of the rape. Though both female and male students want the perpetrator to be punished, still 19% of male students agree with no punishment after marrying the victim. Therefore we conclude that more awareness programs should be conducted so that people will know more about the causes, types and consequences of rape and how they can prevent it. Sexual education should be provided and rape cases should be discussed openly without hesitation. At the end, the families and societies should encourage the rape victims to report the case.

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