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Original Research Article

A Cross-Sectional Study on Profile of Survivors of Sexual Assault at Agartala City.

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Key words

Omnipresent,
Sexual Crime,
Survivor's Age.

Abstract

Purpose: The menace of sexual assault has spanned over the globe. No country is immune to it. This study was conducted to assess the profiles of survivors of sexual assault at Agartala, since there were no other studies on the same population. **Methods:** This was a cross-sectional study spanning 2 years from and done at 3 tertiary hospitals in Agartala, Tripura. Survivors who visited these hospitals and had given written consents (n=167) were accepted as study participants. For incidence, population of Agartala was considered. Modified Kuppaswamy scale was used for socio-economic status. Chi square test was applied to find relations between categorical variables and P value lesser than 0.05 was considered statistically significant. **Results:** Female survivors constituted 98.5% and majority were between 11-20 years. Profession-wise unemployed, homemaker or students constituted 39%. Religion-wise Hindus constituted 68.65%. Marital status-wise unmarried survivors constituted 86.56%. Most of them were either illiterate or finished just primary schooling. Majority belonged to lower socioeconomic status and from urban areas. Count of cases in regards to age, religion, community, socio-economic status was compared to the residence of the survivors and it was found out that $P > 0.05$. **Conclusion:** Sexual assault is an omnipresent occurrence and is not related to the survivor's age, religion, community or, socio-economic status.

1. Introduction

Sexual assault is one of condemned crimes. Inconsistent definitions, different rates of reportage, recording, prosecution and conviction produce differences in statistics which are either unreliable or fallacious.¹ A report by United Nations compiling data from 65 countries, revealed 250,000 or more cases of attempted rape or rape were

registered by police per year.² In 2019, 87 rape cases occurred daily in India.³

Previously no study was conducted to assess the profile of survivors at Agartala, the capital city of Tripura; hence this study was first of its kind to measure the extent of sexual assault prevailing in Tripura.

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2. Materials and methods:

This was a cross sectional study, done at the only 3 government tertiary hospitals at Agartala for 2 years commencing August 2014. Alleged Sexual Assault cases examined at these hospitals were considered as suitable participants. The study was explained to them in their vernacular language and written informed consent was taken from them when major or from parents when minor. Identifying data were kept confidential. Survivors or their guardians who did not give consent for participation, were excluded from the study. Proforma of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for examination of Survivor of Sexual Violence was used to record data.⁴

Variables:

The variables noted are Gender, Age in years (0-10, 11-20, 21-30, 31-40, 41-50), Religion (Hindu, Muslim, Christian, Buddhist), Community (Bengali, Tribals, Others), Residence (urban, semi-urban), Marital status (Unmarried, Married, Socially separated, Divorced, Widow), Educational Status (Illiterate/Primary school, High school/Intermediate, Graduate/Postgraduate, Professional course/honours), Occupation (Legislators/Senior officials/Managers, Professionals, Technicians/Associate Professionals, Clerks, Service workers/Shops/Market sales workers, Skilled Agricultural and Fishery workers, Craft and related Trade Workers, Plant and machine operators and Plumbers, Unskilled workers, Unemployed). Modified Kuppaswamy scale of 2014 was used and their socio-economic status was calculated (Upper, Upper Middle, Middle/ Lower Middle, Upper Lower, Lower).⁵

Statistical Analysis:

Data were entered into SPSS 21(IBM Corp., Armonk, NY, USA), expressed in frequency and percentage.⁶ According to Municipal Census 2015, population of Agartala city was 5,22,600 and the incidence was calculated accordingly.⁷ Relation of count of cases with socio-economic and demographic profile of survivors was done Chi square test was conducted and P value analyzed. P value of <0.05 was considered statistically significant.

Ethics: Institutional Ethical Committee of Agartala Government Medical College has granted permission for this study.

3. Results:

About 67 survivors of sexual assault reported during the study period, out of which only one was male.

Incidence of Sexual Assault was 0.128. Profile of survivors is depicted in **Table 1**.

Table no 1: Profile of survivors of sexual assault.

Variable	Groups	Number	%	
Age	0-11	10	14.9	
	11-20	27	40.09	
	21-30	25	37.31	
	31-40	4	5.97	
	41-50	1	1.49	
Religion	Hindu	46	68.65	
	Muslim	8	11.94	
	Christian	12	17.91	
	Buddhist	1	1.49	
Community	Bengali	51	76.11	
	Tribal	15	22.38	
	Others	1	1.49	
Marital status	Unmarried	58	86.56	
	Married	6	8.95	
	Socially separated	2	2.98	
	Divorced	1	1.49	
	Widow	1	1.49	
Educational status	Illiterate or till primary school	43	64.17	
	High school/Intermediate	22	32.83	
	Graduate/Postgraduate	1	1.49	
	Professional course or honours	1	1.49	
Occupation	Legislators, Senior officials, Managers	0	0	
	Professionals	1	1.49	
	Technicians , Associate Professionals	0	0	
	Clerks	0	0	
	Service workers, Shops, Market sales workers	2	2.98	
	Skilled Agricultural and Fishery workers	0	0	
	Craft and related Trade Workers	1	1.49	
	Plant and machine operators and Plumbers	0	0	
	Unskilled workers	23	38.42	
	Unemployed	39	58.2	
	Residential area	Urban	55	82.08
		Semi-urban	12	17.92
Socio-economic status	Middle/ Lower Middle	3	4.47	
	Upper Lower	15	22.38	
	Lower	49	73.13	

Majority were between 11-20 years. Hindus were 68.65%. About 86.6% survivors were unmarried or below age of legal marriage. About 64.2% were illiterate or studied till primary school. Survivors from urban areas constituted 82.08%. About 73.1% belonged to lower socioeconomic status. **Table 2** is a comparative table between the residence of the survivors and the count of cases based on their age, religion, community and socio-economic status. P value in each was found to be more than 0.05.

4. Discussion:

Mukherjee et al stated that actual statistics of sexual assault is not portrayed.⁸ In present study, 98.5% were females, similar to Fimate et al and Sarkar et al.^{9,10}

Table no 2: Comparative table between the residence of the survivors and the count of cases based on their age, religion, community and socio-economic status.

			Residence of the survivor		Chi- square value	P- value
			Urban	Semi-Urban		
Age	0-10	Count	8	2	0.375	0.984
		% within age group	80.0%	20.0%		
	11-20	Count	21	6		
		% within age group	77.8%	22.2%		
	21-30	Count	19	6		
		% within age group	76.0%	24.0%		
	31-40	Count	3	1		
		% within age group	75.0%	25.0%		
	41-50	Count	1	0		
		% within age group	100.0%	0%		
Religion	Hindu	Count	39	8	3.355	0.34
		% within religion	83.0%	17.0%		
	Muslim	Count	5	3		
		% within religion	62.5%	37.5%		
	Christian	Count	7	4		
		% within religion	63.6%	36.4%		
	Buddhist	Count	1	0		
		% within religion	100.0%	0%		
Community	Tribal	Count	10	5	1.55	0.46
		% within Community	66.7%	33.3%		
	Bengali	Count	41	10		
		% within Community	80.4%	19.6%		
	others	Count	1	0		
		% within Community	100.0%	0%		
Socio-economic class	Lower middle Upper lower class	Count	2	1	3.214	0.20
		% within Class	66.67%	33.33%		
	Lower class Lower middle	Count	10	6		
		% within Class	62.5%	37.5%		
	Upper lower class	Count	40	8		
		% within Class	83.33	16.66%		

Majority were between 11-20 years alike RAINN and Sharma and colleagues.^{11,12} Majority were Hindus which resemble findings of Fimate et al and Bhowmik et al.^{9,13} In the state of Tripura, communities that reside are Tribals (about 19 recognized tribes), Bengalis and others. In the present study, survivors were mostly Bengalis (76.11%). This might be attributed to the fact that tribal communities in Northeastern part of India are more matriarchal in nature. Majority were unmarried, which is in accordant to S.C. Sarkar, Tamuli et al & Sukul et al.^{14,15,16} Mostly were illiterate or studied till primary school, alike S. C.

Sarkar, Bandyopadhyay, Sukul et al, Tamuli et al.^{14,15,16,17} About 58.2 % were unemployed. About 73.13% belonged to lower socio-economic status, similar to S.C. Sarkar and studies from South East Asia.^{14,18} Statistics indicated that there was a 336% increase in child rape cases from 2001 to 2011 in India.¹⁹

Study population was from Agartala city, which is a capital city and hence were from urban area (82.08%). However, when the count of cases from urban and semi urban area were compared to age, religion, community and socio-economic status, it was found out that P value was not

significant, which can be inferred that Sexual assault is an ubiquitous phenomenon and is not dependent on the survivor's age, religion, community and socio-economic status.

5. Limitations:

Apart from tertiary hospitals, some primary health centers are there around Agartala where some survivors might have reported and were missed in the study.

6. Conclusions:

Sexual assault is prevalent throughout and isn't related to the survivor's age, religion, community or, socio-economic standing. Awareness about laws of the land, modification in deep rooted cultural practices can only curb this evil. Many a times, due to poor knowledge regarding the clauses of sexual assault and consenting age for sexual intercourse, many girls get victimized. Hence, sex education should be included as part of curriculum in school.

Ethical Clearance: IEC approval is taken from the Institutional Ethical committee.

Contributor ship of Author: All authors equally contributed.

Conflict of interest: None to declare.

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