

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

Violence against women is almost certainly the most pervasive human rights violation in the world; women around the world experience it in their families, in their work places, and in their communities. They experience violence both at the hands of the state and at the hands of private individuals. This violence includes domestic violence, rape, sexual assault, forced prostitution, female genital mutilation, female infanticide, and sexual harassment (Bond and Phillips, 2001).

Sexual exploitation is usually understood as an unwanted and unaccepted sexual act directed towards an individual. Moreover, it can be defined as being forced, threatened or deceived into sexual activities ranging from looking at or touching, to intercourse or rape (Nosek and Howland, 1998). It is one of the intense kinds of violence against women. It has been defined as violation of a woman's personhood, mental or physical integrity of freedom of movement (SAATHI, 1997). Violence against women is a global epidemic that kills, tortures and maims physically, psychologically, sexually and economically (UNICEEF, 2001).

Death is inevitable, but the experience of bereavement due to loss of the husband creates a severe problem of role adjustment for single women (widows), whether she is young, middle aged or old. Every year deaths of married males in different age groups leave behind widows to cope with the disruption of their financial security, social status and support networks. Moreover, the life of the woman whose husband dies while she is alive has been institutionally made miserable by the norms of patriarchy. She faces emotional trauma, familial exploitation and social stigma. She has to find new support systems, new sources of attachment and new social networks, which are often difficult.

Widowhood is both a personal condition and social institution. It reveals the generalized status of a woman and its understanding helps in the construction of oppressive social structures which makes widowhood personally problematic for individual widows and structurally ordained for single women (widows) as a distinct category amongst women. But the problem of widowhood has been ignored by researchers in social sciences, social workers, social reformers and planning groups.

In Nepal, many women are the victims of different kinds of violence in which sexual violence is one of the major issues. This is even a more severe problem and issue to be dealt with among single women. Due to the long conflict, thousands of people were killed, displaced and most were kidnapped. Many people lost their families, relatives, and- friends and these were the most painful situations. However, the ones who suffered most were the women who lost their husbands. These women had to face many discrimination and challenges since they became widows.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Women are seen and treated differently in Nepalese society; especially the women who are given a title of “widow” after husband’s death. They are restricted from all kinds of rights and opportunities they are entitled to. Men are regarded as the breadwinners of the family and therefore their death affects their wives since the economic responsibilities are all reverted to her. Since they are not recognized as an important member of the society they face not only discrimination but also many forms of sexual exploitation and abuse both inside and outside the house. Due to the traditional norms, rules and regulations created by society which are against women, they cannot express their trauma about the injustice or the violation of their rights. Furthermore, there are very few of such cases which have come into public but still many have remained silent as there are hardly any laws that support them.

In the context of Nepal, being a wife is the most important status that may be achieved by a woman and hence single women (widows) are expected to demonstrate their appreciation to this status by keeping their devotion to the deceased husband. The single women’s lives are expected to be filled with mourning for the losses namely, their husbands, and therefore, their status as a wife. The Hindu ideal of SATI is an example of how widows should perform the role model for other women. Widows have to prove their chastity and faithfulness to their deceased husband by existing an ascetic’s way of life.

During the conflict women have been violated physically, sexually and mentally but the Government of Nepal (GoN) has not been able to develop concrete programmes to support them. Widowhood, though natural phenomenon, has deep rooted stigma to culture, religious and social contexts. The violence and discrimination faced by single women (widows) is extreme both in private and public spheres while government, donor communities and civil society are yet to be sensitized on this issue.

Given the pervasiveness of sexual exploitation against single women (widows) and the seriousness of its consequences for victims, it is surprising that there is no research done in sexual exploitation against single women (widows) in Nepal. Researchers have done few studies on sexual violence against women but these studies have not paid any contribution on the issue of single women (widows). The current study is designed to address this gap in the literature and to investigate the prevalence of sexual exploitation against single women (widows).

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1. General Objectives

- To explore the sexual exploitation against the single women (widows)

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

- To reveal the different forms of sexual exploitation against single women (widows)
- To find out the cause of silence of the sexual exploitation against single women (widows)
- To discover the socio –psychological impact of sexual exploitation among single women (widows)

1.4. Key Research Questions

The study is attempting to answer the questions related with the problems in the issues of sexual exploitation against single women (widows) as:

- How and why are single women more vulnerable to exploit than other women?
- What are the forms and causes of sexual exploitation against single women?
- What is the general background of single women (widows)?
- Why is violence against single women (widows) underreported?
- What are the consequences of sexual exploitation against single women?

1.5. Justification /Rational

There is a dearth of literature and research writing on the subject relating to sexual exploitation against women. However, it has been a burning issue on the contemporary Nepalese society that thousands of single women frequently suffer from different kind of mental and physical tortures relating to sex.

Overtime, the issues and rights of the women have already taken great strides globally but the issue related with single women (widows) of Nepal has not received any public attention and response. In Nepal, there have been some recent developments leading to amendments to the laws governing the rights of women in general but they grossly overlook the problems of single women (widows), particularly the abuse and ill-treatment meted out to them. One of the reasons why the legal regimes have turned deaf ears to single women's issue is that the maladies affecting single women (widows) have-not been thoroughly studied nor their woeful plight has been sufficiently brought out to the public notice. People in Nepal have different perceptions on the treatment of single women (widows) (WHR, 2005). Therefore, it is important that the actual situation and current status of the single women (widows) in Nepal be investigated and disseminated among all relevant stakeholders.

1.6. Limitations of the Study

Due to various constraints of time and cost, this study only explored the issue of sexual exploitation of single women (widows) in general. The study has the following limitations:

- **Limitation of the area:** The first and major limitation of this study was the limitation of the area. Only two groups of single women (widows) from Lalitpur district were chosen as a sample. Thus, it cannot be generalized all over the country.
- **Limitation of the subject matter:** There are so many subject matter regarding single women (widows) but it has only chosen to explore the sexual exploitation faced by the single women (widows).
- **Limitation on the type of respondents:** As the research topic was related to single women (widows). So, the study is only concerned with single women (widows).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The problem of violence against women is not new. However, regrettably, female victims of violence have not been given much attention in the literature on social problems. Nor has any attempt been made to explain why both the public and the academicians alike have ignored for so long the hard fact that women have continuously been ruthlessly exploited in our society (Ahuja, 1998).

2.2 Violence against Women (VAW) in Nepal

The omnipresence of VAW across all communities, cultures, castes, classes, races and religions and in different forms and kinds points to its roots in patriarchy. Some common identified forms of VAW prevalent in Nepal are intimate partner violence, marital rape, polygamy, alcohol abuse violence, incest, dowry related violence, and female infanticide. Other harmful cultural and traditional practices include child marriage, son preference, restriction on women's rights to choice of marriage and various inhuman codes of conducts for widows as well as practices of Deuce (dedicating girls to a god and goddess), Jhuma (in some communities, second sisters remain unmarried and append their life in monasteries) and Badi (ethnic practice of prostitution among young girls). While at community level physical, sexual and psychological violence can be daily features. VAW also occurs while traveling in public transportations, at workplace, schools, sports, clubs, college and hospitals. Different forms of VAW prevalent at community level are rape, sexual harassment, verbal abuse such as "husband eater" and "inauspicious" used against widows, trafficking, and accusation of witchcraft, forced prostitution and others. Hence, VAW ranges from physical abuse to mental torture, sexual exploitation to economical violence and is committed by intimate partner to community people.

Nepal experienced a decade of conflict from 1996 through 2006, characterized by violence, suffering and unrest resulting in women's and girl's increased exposure and vulnerability to gender based violence (GBV). While the post conflict recovery period remains unpredictable and unstable, giving rise to an environment in which sexual and domestic violence is at times tolerated. The State commits VAW through its public policy and state agents. State agents include all people in authority, ranging from state organs, namely, legislative, executive and judiciary, to social security officials and security forces. The State may bring up policies which humiliate and are against national and international laws (NNBN and SAATHI, 2009).

Several incidents of violence against women were registered in 2009. Many women were subjected to violence on charges of not bringing enough dowries, leaving the first husband, polygamy, not giving birth to child or son among others. Some of them even lost their lives at the hand of relatives for those reasons. Police were found dodging their responsibility by filing public offence cases or mediating between the victims of sexual violence including rape and the perpetrators.

More than 300 incidents of domestic violence were recorded and 17 cases of attempted rape

were also made public. A total of 349 cases of violence incurred by families became public. Domestic Violence (Offence and Punishment) was exacted in the year 2009. It was expected that the Act would reduce the number of incidents but it did not happen. The condition of easy escape for the perpetrators persists as the police are eager to settle the case out of court in such incidents. From a girl of 3 years of age to elderly woman of 102 years became victims of this grave violation of rape. A total of 167 girls were raped in the year 2009. Moreover, INSEC documented 37 incidents of trafficking of women and girls (INSEC, 2010).

2.3 Single Women (Widows) and Sexual Exploitation

Widowhood is inseparable from many facets of social relations such as kinship, neighborly relationship, gender relationship, intergenerational relationships etc. Single women (widows) engage in these relationships though in some contexts they are excluded from social life because of their widowhood. Some women are more dependent on men for employment and educational opportunities than others, and as a result their risk is especially high (Decoster, Ester and Mueller, 1999).

Women who depend solely on their own wages to support themselves and their families are unlikely to take risks at work. Their reluctance to either confront or complain makes them easy prey for sexual harassment. It is no wonder that victimization rates are significantly higher among single and divorced women than among older married women. Some studies show pictures of single women (widows) as socially under privileged. This image is reflected by the comparison between single women (widows) and orphans. This comparison especially presumes that single women (widows) have a dependent and vulnerable economic position (Buitelaar, 1995).

In the context of Nepal, there has been no specific research conducted regarding to sexual exploitation against single women (widows). In Nepal, gender specific violence against women occurs across all strata of society and includes rape, marital rape, custodial rape, gang rape, incest, public stripping, harassment through language, gesture and or touch, eve-teasing, trafficking and forced prostitution or the more covert forms through verbal and psychological abuse. A study conducted in 2001 by FWLD and ILO Nepal showed that cases of sexual harassment are not only limited to crowded work places like carpet and garment factories but also in schools, colleges, hospitals, hotels and airlines are rife with unwelcome sexual advances.

A study conducted by SAATHI in 1995 found that nearly half of the respondents had faced a sexual harassment in public and work places. Similarly, 30% had faced rape (SAATHI, 1997). Furthermore, another research done in 2001 reveals that all victims of sexual violence are psychologically disturbed and live under a lot of tension and stress. It also found that negative impacts of sexual violence last for many years (SAATHI, 2001).

According to a survey conducted by CWIN in 2002 on the basis of 49 national daily newspapers, there were altogether 149 incidents of rape case in the year 2002. Among them, 91 cases (57.23%) victims were children below 16 years. Also, among these cases, 33 incidents, the girl below 10 years was victimized. Even a girl of one and half year in age was raped. Many victims are brutally killed after being raped.

The National Workshop conducted by WHR, a NGO working to address the rights of single women (widows) in Nepal, suggests that single women (widows) in Nepal are discriminated against and denied a normal social cultural life. Moreover, widowhood has its own covert and overt rituals and that single women (widows) shouldn't make appearances in public particularly at any ceremonial occasions and the wearing of red and bright color is prohibited to them. The customary practices associated with widowhood further augment their marginalization (WHR, 2000).

Similarly, WHR had conducted a pilot study in 2001 in 17 districts of Nepal. The pilot sought from 80 single women (widows) noted that illiteracy, ignorance, and fatalistic outlook were the major source of single women's (widows) woes and sufferings. An acute need to educate, inform and empower them was felt imperative.

Again, in 2005, WHR conducted a similar study entitled, Problems and challenges of single women (widows) in Nepal, covering 410 single women (widows) from 21 districts which identified the following facts about single women (widows).

On educational front, the single women (widows) were behind, 29 percent single women were completely illiterate and 11 percent barely able to read and write.

The principal reason for violence and harassment as cited by the respondents was to capture the property owned by single women (widows).

Sexual harassment and verbal abuses were two forms of violence meted out to most of the single women (widows). Majority of them (nearly 50%) had faced verbal abuses. A substantial number

of respondents preferred to remain silent on the issue. However, they said that sexual exploitation put them under both physical and mental stress.

The majority of single women (widows) (65%) were managing household expenses by themselves whereas; only 7 percent were supported by in-laws.

42 percent of widowed women favored remarriage and 24 percent opposed it.

The economic problems faced by single women (widows) after the death of husband were associated with food, cloth, shelter, health to education of children.

A bulk of women (49%) received no economic support from any organizations.

44 percent single women (widows) had received nothing in the name of property.

Majority of single women (widows) were victim of the casual dress code imposed on them by customary rituals and the cultural practice. Their lives have been adversely affected with the ban of dress and ornaments.

25 percent of respondents had properties but they were transferred to the names of other family members after the death of husband. Similarly, a huge population of women 62 percent had no property to be transferred.

The legal knowledge level of the women was found pathetically low, only 16 percent women knew such provision made in the legal system.

In Nepal, widowhood is not viewed as an inevitable period in the life cycle of a woman but as a personal and social aberration, to be deviously wished away. The census of 2001 hardly mentions the population of single women (widows). From this, one cannot but conclude that single women (widows) in Nepalese society are nonentity and they hardly feature as a variable in any census or statistics. Media running after sensational stories picks their tragic tale only when they carry news value for wider consumption (WHR, 2005).

UNFPA had conducted a study entitled “Situational Analysis of Gender- Based Violence in Surkhet and Dang districts, Nepal” in 2008, which identified high incidence of widespread sexual and domestic violence in both districts. The major findings regarding sexual violence of that study can be pointed out as:

Younger Women, between the ages of 15 and 20, reported more episodes of sexual violence than all other age categories.

Women with no education reported slightly higher incidence (79 percent) of sexual violence, compares to women who have receive education (74 percent).

Dalit women reported highest amount of sexual violence, compared to other ethnic groups.

Location most frequently reported for episode(s) of sexual violence is respondents own home.

Unmarried and separated/divorced women reported highest level of sexual violence 91 percent and 95 percent, respectively. Women who are separated/divorced are eight times more likely to report sexual violence incident(s), compared to married women.

Women who stated that the head of their household mother/father reported elevated levels of non consensual oral, vaginal or anal sex.

Separated/divorced women reported nearly two times more non consensual sexual acts that did married are widowed women.

The most prevalent form of sexual violence reported is offensive/sexual comments, with 75 percent of women interviewed reporting having experienced offensive sexual comments and nearly 70 percent reporting that they had experienced such violence more than three times to frequently.

The most frequent reported perpetrators of offensive sexual comments included neighbors (36 percent) and community members (26 percent).

Sexual exploitation of women is the outcome of the inequality prevailing in the society. Women are much more victimized because they are not given enough power inside the family or outside it. Patriarchal system and socialization process has shaped our thinking and behaviour in such way where woman is considered as inferior being and man has power over her. If we want to prevent the women from sexual exploitation, there is need to eliminate all sorts of discrimination including economic, social and gender discrimination.

2.4 Legal Acts in Nepal for Sexual Exploitation

The Public Offences and Punishment Act (1970) criminalize certain acts that include violating the peace by obscene speech, remarks, or signals or showing pornographic materials in public places. The Defamation and Libel Act (1959), and the Country Code Chapter on Intent to Commit Sexual Intercourse of the Country Code (1963) each deal with certain aspects of sexual harassment. However, there is no specific law dealing with sexual harassment in the work place in Nepal. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal states that citizens shall not be discriminated against on the basis of Sex (Source: UNFPA and FWLD; 2009).

The Acts stipulate that:

Individual involving in sexual harassment act will be imprisoned for one year and NRs ten thousand amounts as a penalty.

The victim of sexual harassment can register their complaints in district court within one year of incident.

If within the office premises, any client teases or asks rubbish things with the intention of torturing them he is charged NRs 5000 as penalty.

Humiliating women's dignity and exploring the confidentiality of women is taken as crime. If anybody does it then he or she will be kept imprisoned for six months and penalty of NRS from 100 to 500.

If any female is harassed in public place, the harasser will be imprisoned for two years and have to pay penalty of NRs Ten thousand. But this condition is applicable according to the condition and proof of the incident.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

The research design of the study was descriptive to identify the problem about the **Sexual Exploitation** faced by **Single Women** in the Society with respect to their life and the perception of society towards them.

3.2. Nature and Sources of data

Both primary and secondary data have been used in this study. Preference has been given to the primary data which were collected through the methods of semi-structured interview, case studies and focus group discussion.

Secondary data have been gathered from different sources: books, articles, journals, research reports, interest sites, and agencies like NGOs, INGOs, GOs and others which are mentioned in reference.

3.3. Study Area

Lalitpur district was chosen as the study area. The study has been concerned with two groups of single women (widows) from Lalitpur district.

3.4. Sampling Method

The researcher selected 30 single women (widows) purposively for this study and was exclusively dependent on the judgment. So, the sampling procedure is by its nature, purposive or judgement sampling. It has been assumed that those samples selected purposively represent all the victims of the universe.

3.5. Data Collection Techniques

Different data collection techniques have been used to collect the primary data.

3.5.1. Semi Structured Interview

Semi Structured Interview was the most important tool for data collection. It was designed to interview the single women (widows) to assess their knowledge about the victims of sexual exploitation that they are aware of and also to find out if they have been victims themselves. There were altogether 13 open and structured questions used to find the general background of the perpetrators and survivors and forms of exploitation. Similarly, open questions were used to investigate how single women (widows) are adopting or coping with the situation.

3.5.2. Case Study

From the total 30 respondents 6 respondents were taken for the case study to understand the severity and magnitude of sexual exploitation against single women (widows). These respondents were chosen purposively to serve the need of the research.

3.5.3. Focus group Discussion

Two focus group discussions were conducted with the single women from two different places of Lalitpur district viz. Khokana and Lubhu. More than 20 single women (widows) were gathered with the help of WHR and STEP Nepal in both focus group discussions. The discussion concentrated on the various issues regarding the causes of sexual exploitation, the associated silence and remedial measures to be taken to prevent sexual exploitation against single women (widows).

3.6. Validity and Reliability

For maintaining reliability and validity of the study:

I have prepared tools with the help of literature review and regular consultation with the expert according to need.

The reliability of instrument was done by conducting a pretest amongst few single women (widows) (10% of the sample) of another group with same environment by the same tool

prepared. Some of the questions were reviewed and changed according to the result of the pretest.

The confidentiality of the respondent was maintained specially the confidentiality of the single women (widows) who were involved in case study.

I used simple and local language to avoid confusion and ambiguity.

3.7. Ethical Consideration

The ethical consideration was maintained in this study by the following ways:

Verbal permission was obtained from the respondents.

The respondents were informed about the objectives and purpose of the study.

Privacy and confidentiality of the respondents were maintained.

3.8. Data Processing and analysis

After completion of the data collection, the data was reviewed critically for completeness, clarity and consistency. A tabulation sheet was developed to gather all data based on the themes; it was analyzed systematically and treated statistically through percentage and mean value. The analyzed facts and figures have been presented in various tables and graphs.

This research report including conclusion and recommendations has been prepared on the basis of the analysis and interpretation of the data.

3.9. Operationalisation of the concept

i) Exploitation:

“Exploitation is the illegal or improper act or process of using a person or the resources for monetary or personal benefit, profit of gain.”

(Texas department of human Resources)

ii) Sexual Exploitation:

There is no legal definition of sexual exploitation. Any practice or scheme of conduct that may include sexual contact and exploitation can be considered as being for the purposed of sexual arousal or gratification for sexual abuse of any person. In other words, sexual exploitation is uninvited behaviour of sexual nature that is offensive, embarrassing, intimidating or humiliating and may affect workers’ job performance, health, carrier and livelihood (Malla, 2001). In this study, sexual exploitation against single women (widows) denotes the following:

Verbal: Use of offensive sexual comments

Non verbal: Blocking ways, learning against and confronting someone with pornographic materials

Physical harassment: Physical touching, deliberate touching, brushing against

Violent: Incest and rape

iii) Single Women (Widows):

In this study, single women (widows) refer to those women who have lost their husband due to various reasons.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATIONS OF FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter attempts to shed light on some of the background characteristics of the interviewed single women (widows) on issues of awareness, incidences, and legal positions in relation to the existing situation of sexual exploitation against single women (widows). The data includes women’s personal position on experience of sexual exploitation, distribution by age, religion, caste/ ethnicity, literacy status and occupation they are involved in. In addition, it explores the causes and consequences of sexual exploitation against single women (widows).

4.2. Knowledge about Sexual Exploitation

Sexual exploitation is the act of using physical force for fulfilling sexual desire, use of sexual terms and sexual jokes threatening another person or oneself resulting in bodily harm, death and psychological deprivation. Sexual exploitation can occur anywhere and anytime. The term sexual exploitation is a common term now. Media and Television has made it more popular these days.

Table 1: Heard about Sexual Exploitation

Topic	Responses	No. of respondents	Percentage
Heard about Sexual Exploitation	Yes	25	83

	No	5	17
Total		30	100

Source: Field Survey, 2010

Table 1 describes the responses of the respondents regarding awareness of the term sexual violence. Most of the respondents had heard about harassment i.e. 83% and 17% had not heard about harassment. The reason behind respondents not having known the term sexual exploitation may be due to the feeling of shame, awkwardness or maybe they were confused with the term.

4.3. Experience of Sexual Exploitation

In the words of Ahuja R.(1998), “There are no women who have not suffered at one time or another harassment, humiliation, exploitation and violence that shadow her sex. A women’s life lies between pleasures at one end and danger at the other end. In daily life, women are routinely defined by sex, and even if not all men are potential kidnappers, rapists, batterers, molesters and torturers of women, all women are potential victims”.

Experiences of Sexual Exploitation were categorized as verbal, non verbal, physical harassment and violent. Use of offensive sexual comments was included into verbal exploitation whereas blocking ways, learning against and confronting someone with pornographic materials were classified as non verbal exploitation. Similarly, physical touching, deliberate touching, brushing against were included in physical harassment and incest and rape were categorized as a violent sexual exploitation.

All respondents were found to have experienced some form of sexual exploitation as classified in the study. Some of the respondents at first had denied about experiencing any kind of sexual exploitation. However, talking about verbal physical harassment was taken easily after facilitation. I had known from secondary sources that 1 out of 2 of respondents had faced the problems of rape and incest respectively. But they did not reveal that to me.

Table 2: Incidence of Sexual Exploitation

Types of Sexual Exploitation	Percent of population
Verbal	84

Non-verbal	46
Physical Harassment	34
Violent	10

(The percentages overlap because respondents were permitted to check each pertinent category)

Source: Field Survey, 2010

N=30

The table reveals that the most prevalent form of sexual exploitation against single women (widows) is oral with 84 percent. Similarly, 46% respondents said that they experienced non-verbal sexual exploitation. Other 34 percent respondents of the population reported experiencing physical harassment. The other 6 percent stated that they had been subject to violent sexual exploitation.

4.4. Frequency of Sexual Exploitation

To know about the frequency of sexual exploitation, single women (widows) were asked, "How often does it occur?", 57 percent responded that they were victimized sometimes; 30 percent reported that they were exploited quite often and 13 percent comprised the often.

Table 3: Distribution of respondent by frequencies of Sexual Exploitation

Frequency of Sexual Exploitation	Number of Respondents	Percent
Quite often	9	30
Often	4	13
Sometimes	17	57
Total	30	100

Source: Field Survey, 2010

4.5. Identify of perpetrator

Table 4: Relation of victim to perpetrator

Relation of victim to perpetrator	Percentage of perpetrator
Relatives	7
Neighbours	30
Friends	3
Driver and Conductor of public vehicle	23
Persons in authority	24
Strangers	13

Source: Field Survey, 2010

Most of the perpetrators approximately 87% were known to the victims. The known perpetrators were either neighbours, relatives, friends, driver and conductor of public vehicle or persons in authority such as employer, teacher, doctor, social worker or police. Only 13% were strangers.

4.5. Background of the Respondents

Age of the Respondents

In the case of sexual exploitation, age is an important variable in analysis for all kind of women. In Nepal, rape victims can be found in all age groups. The study done by SAATHI revealed that more than 39% of survivors had been raped in less than 19 years. But the incest rate was found high in the age group of 30-39 years which was 32% (SAATHI, 2001). However, the present study gives different picture.

All the respondents in this study were single women (widows) the ages of 15 to 55 years. Age was divided into four categories which are represented in the following table with their respective percentage of respondents.

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents by age

Age	No. of respondents	Percentage
15-25	3	10
26-35	14	48
36-45	11	36
46-55	2	6

N=30

Source: Field Survey, 2010

The present study gives different picture from previous researches associated with women. The above table shows one interesting fact that sexual exploitation is prevailed in all age groups of single women (widows). Thus, no direct relationship can be deduced between age and the sexual exploitation against single women.

Religion of the Respondents

Most of the people in Nepal follow Hinduism. So, the data obtained also showed that more number of respondents as expected. Out of 30 respondents, 23 respondents practiced

Hinduism, 3 respondents Christianity, 3 respondents Buddhism and 1 respondent Muslim.

Table 6: Distribution of respondents by religions

Religion	Percentage
Hindu	77
Christian	10
Buddhist	10
Muslim	3

N=30

Source: Field Survey, 2010

Caste/ Ethnicity of the Respondents

The respondents were asked to which caste/ethnicity they belong, and groups were classified into five categories.

Table 7: Distribution of respondents by caste/ethnicity

Ethnic/Social Group	Number of Respondents
Brahmin/Chhetri	7
Janajati	6
Dalit	2
Newar	13
Other	2
Total	30

Source: Field Survey, 2010

The table reveals the caste among five ethnic/social group. Approximately 23 percent of the respondents belong to Brahmin/Chhetri, 20 percent represent Janajati, 7 percent belong to Dalit, 43 percent represent Newar and 7 percent represent other caste group including Muslim and Sanyasi.

Educational Status of the Respondents

Literacy is one of the major indicators of socio-economic development of the nation. It reflects the status of women /men in the society. In other words, education is not only a means of knowledge but also a step towards self independence. It is one most effective means of empowerment of women. In case of single women, it is often the only means with which she could gain confidence and dignity to lead a normal life in society. In a study done by SAATHI, 56% of the rape victims were illiterate .The study concluded that education empowers a person, she becomes less vulnerable to sexual violence, but it might also be the fact that educated victims refuse to be identified due tofear of loss of social prestige (Deuba and Rana, 2001).

Table 8: Educational Status of the Respondents

Educational Status	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	10	33
Literate only	6	21
Secondary level	7	23
Above Secondary level	7	23
Total	30	100

Source: Field Survey, 2010

The above table shows that out of 30 respondents, 33 % were illiterate. Similarly, women with primary level, secondary level and above secondary level of education were 21%, 23% and 23% respectively.

Table 8 reveals that majority of the exploited single women (widow) were illiterate. However, not only illiterate women, educated single women (widows) were also the victims of the sexual exploitation. Hence, the direct relationship between education status and sexual exploitation against single women (widow) cannot be established. In other words, it can be assumed that single women (widow) of all educational levels can be victimized; the choice of the victim doesn't depend on education status of the single women (widows).

Occupation of the Respondents

It is really hard to define the occupation of women in the western way. Most of the women work in the household and contribute a large component to family income. However following table shows the main occupation of respondents.

Table 9: Distribution of Respondents by Occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
Agriculture	10	33
Carpet factory	2	7
Sewing	4	13
Wage (labor)	6	20
Office	2	7
Hotel/restaurant	2	7
Others	4	14
Total	30	100

Source: Field Survey, 2010

The above table shows that 33% of the respondents practiced agriculture for their survival.

Some of them help their family in agricultural works. 20% of the respondents depended on wages (labour) for their living. Similarly, 13% of the total respondents worked as tailors. Other three categories such as carpet factory, office and hotel/restaurant constituted the same percentage i.e. 7%. Thus, sexual exploitation can be experienced by the single women (widows) not only in particular occupation it in all sorts of occupations.

Economic Status of the Family of the Respondents

In this study, the researcher classified the economic status of the family on the basis of sufficiency of food.

Table 10: Distribution of the respondents by the economic status of the family

Economic Class	Frequency	Percentage
Lower (not enough food)	18	60
Middle (just enough food)	10	33
High (more than enough)	2	7
Total	30	100

Source: Field Survey, 2010

Table 10 depicts that among the total respondents, 60% were below poverty line. They didn't have sufficient food in order to sustain their life. Similarly, 33% respondents are from middle class family. A few population 7% have sufficient food to run their life. Thus, this study suggests that sexual exploitation of single women (widows) is not a problem of a particular economic class.

4.7. Causes of Sexual Exploitation against Single Women (Widows)

The omnipresence of VAW across all communities, cultures, caste, class, races and religions and in different forms and kinds points to its roots in patriarchy. Furthermore, the main reason for sexual harassment of women /girls in Nepal is the deep rooted cultural values directly interlinked with patriarchal social system, discriminatory social practices and lack of laws and attitudes of the society that disempowered the women (Deuba and Rana, 2001). It is also believed that a girl should be in the protection of the father; after she marries; she should be in control of her husband; if she becomes a widow; even then she should remain in control of her son.

The following table is based on single women's own perception of why they were sexually exploited.

Table 11: Causes of Sexual Exploitation against Single Women (Widows)

Responsible Factor	Frequency	Percentage
Male Superiority	11	36
Widowhood	8	27
Dependence on Perpetrator	5	17
Dress	2	7
Other	4	13
Total	30	100

Source: Field Survey, 2010

Most of the respondents feel that women who have lost their husbands have been institutionally made miserable by the norms of patriarchy. This study shows that the highest listed cause of sexual exploitation is male superiority (36%). Similarly, 8 respondents put blame on themselves for sexual exploitation. In other words, they feel that they were sexually abused due to their widowhood. Third highest listed cause, according to the respondents, is dependence on perpetrator. Victims of sexual exploitation were found to be dependent upon perpetrators for their livelihood and employment opportunities. These victims were coerced in sexual relationship due to the threat of perpetrator. A small number of 2 women said that dress code (white dress) of a widow is responsible for sexual exploitation. Likewise, other causes mentioned by them were society, lack of support of family and lack of laws.

4.8. Sharing of the Incidence

When the victims of sexual exploitation were asked if they had talked about the incidents with someone, the majority of respondents said that they had narrated their sad tales of woe to their friends (60%). According to them, friends are most valuable support to them and can understand the situation very well since they, themselves, have been the victims of unwanted sexual behaviors in the society. Similarly, 23 percent of respondents said that they had talked to their relatives and 12 percent told their co-workers. Only 5 percent victims approached their family.

4.9. Reporting of the Incidence

Interestingly, none of the sexual offences explored in this study was reported in the police or court. One reason for low reporting of sexual abuse and assault is the personal blame that comes with it. Unlike most other crimes where the survivor can seek public justice and can state that the other person was at fault, sexual assault is likely to lend the blame to the victim (Hayward, 2000). Moreover, the lack of access and awareness about the process of reporting and filing a case as evidenced in this study is one major cause of sexual exploitation against single women.

According to An advocate, Mr, Yubaraj Sangraula, “Many girls and women have experienced rape. The crime comes to know, however it is compelled to be silent due to lack of appropriate and clear laws. If it is reacted to, the victims have to be ridiculed due to lack of knowledge and traditional taboos. Thus, many girls and women are victims of sexual violence” (Deshantar, 9 Feb, 2009).

Reasons for not reporting Sexual Exploitation

When asked whether they had made any attempt to report the case to (police or court) authority?, all the respondents said they had not made any effort to register the case against perpetrator.

Table 12: Reasons for not reporting sexual exploitation against single women

Reason for not Reporting	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Did not know what to do	9	30
Dependence on perpetrator	5	17
Fear of society	6	20
Family prestige	3	10
Self-accusation	4	13
Poor economic status	3	10
Total	30	100

Source: Field Survey, 2010

The major reason for not reporting to the authority is that the victim did not know what should be done after the exploitation. It reveals that single women (widows) lack the knowledge about the legal provisions for the sexual exploitation. Out of 30 respondents only 14 single women (widows), which are 47 percent, knew about the law regarding sexual exploitation against

women. They too only knew that the perpetrators are punishable especially in the case of rape and incest.

Similarly, 17 percent respondents mentioned dependence on perpetrator as a reason for not reporting to the authority. Single women (widows) vulnerability stems from the dependency on other persons (male) in terms of economic, social, employment etc. which ultimately leads to sexual exploitation of them.

Approximately 20 percent single women (widows) reported that they have the fear of society which is responsible for not reporting to authority. They were scared of ostracism by the societies if they made the incidents known to the public. In Nepali society, women easily get branded as having - a loose character women and hold the sole responsibilities for inviting such advances.

Interestingly, 4 respondents indicated that they did not report to the authority due to the “Blame the Victim syndrome”. This is due to the society belief which instills upon the victim that she must have done something to cause the sexual exploitation. This reason was given by the victims who felt that they trusted the perpetrator too much.

10 percent single women (widows) mentioned that due to the fear of losing family prestige, they did not register the case against perpetrator. Other 10 percent respondents reported poor economic status as a reason for not reporting the case to the authority. According to them, fighting a case against the perpetrator is very expensive which is not possible to finance due to their financial vulnerability.

Besides these reasons, the participants of both FGD mentioned the reasons for not reporting sexual exploitation against single women (widows) as fear of perpetrator and no one to help them.

4.10. Consequences of Sexual Exploitation against Single Women (Widows)

Physical Effects

Physical effects were mostly seen in the victims in the case of rape and incest. Minor physical effects like headaches, lethargy, sleep disturbances, sexual problems, and weight fluctuation were seen in the victims of sexual exploitation. Out of 30 respondents there were 1 case of rape and 2 cases of incest. Consequently, 1 victim became pregnant and she had to abort the child. However, none of the victims had their medical test done.

Psychological Effects

The study found that the most common psychological effect among the victim single women (widows) was 'Being in Tension'. The scene of the event of exploitation was always at the back of their minds and made them tense.

Likewise, another problem faced by the victims was 'Disturbed Sleep'. Their inner turmoil didn't let them sleep. Consequently, their psychological effect had become more acute.

The single women (widows) were quiet most of the time and lost in their inner depressions and frustrations. They did not feel like speaking to anyone.

Similarly, the victims didn't like to talk with anyone. Even if they did, they could not participate in conversations except monosyllables of "yes" and "no".

Besides these effects single women (widows) also suffered from other psychological problems such as:

Self blame

Afraid of small matters

Cry often

Attempt to commit suicide

Loss of confidence to go outside

Having revengeful attitude towards perpetrator

Getting angry very quickly.

Low self esteem

Feelings of being powerless

Social effects

The death of a woman's husband marks the painful transition from a wife to a single woman that relegates her to a state of physically alive and socially dead (WHR, 2005). Social effects of sexual exploitation against single women (widows) are explained under the following sub-headings:

Response of victim towards the Society

Most of the victims didn't like to go or take part in social activities. The respondents, who faced the physical harassment in public places, did not wish to go anywhere due to risk of repetition of such actions. Similarly, the victims of violent sexual exploitation i.e. rape and incest didn't like to communicate with others especially the male. One respondent out of 30 single women (widows) involved in prostitution openly, worked as a sex worker, without having fear of society. They have negative attitude towards the society which is the outcome of the sexual exploitation.

Response of Society towards victims

It was very difficult to find out the attitude of the society towards the victims due to the under reporting of the incident of sexual exploitation. However, the respondents of questionnaires and FGD reported low attitude of the people, neglect by family, neglect by friends, forced to leave home, criticism of their way of dressing, society and family members declining to accompany them in public as ways in which society reacted to WWDs.

CASE STORIES

Case 1 : Bimala Involving in Sex Trade

Bimala Shah is a resident of Palpa aged 42. She arrived in Lalitpur with her husband 12 years ago. She lost her husband due to his alcoholic addiction. After the death of her husband, she had the responsibility of her three children. Being uneducated she had to face many difficulties; she had no other choice than to be engaged in domestic work like dish washing. After all she had to earn her livelihood. Doing this job for earning, she could not earn enough to earn her livelihood, so she got involved in sex trade.

Case 2: Ramala Potential Victim of Suicide

Ramala Jha aged 37 was about to go to bed when her husband suddenly suffered stomach pain so he was rushed to the nearest hospital. She lost her husband on the way to the hospital. Her in-laws curse her for her husband's death. She suffered a lot of mental and physical torture. She was raped by her maternal uncle in her house itself. She was helpless and could do anything about it. She even tried to commit suicide but one of her friend gave her the contraceptive pills so she could get rid of the "curse" she had in her.

Case 3: Janaki as an Example

Resident of Lubhu aged 27 Janaki Devi lost her husband 7 yrs ago due to liver failure. After her husband's death, she faced lots and lots of pains and difficulties. She was insulted and hated by her own family members. She sexually harassed in many ways. She got fed up of this, so she started raising her voice against it. She herself got aware about her rights. She even dared to take off her white widow clothes and got into wearing colorful clothes. On doing this, she had to face many problems from her family and society. She gave a damn to them and started living a normal life how a normal women should live, enjoying her rights. Now she is a chair person of cooperative and also teaches in a local school.

Case 4: Nirmala Mentally disturbed

Nirmala dangol, aged 53 is a local resident of Khokana. She lost her husband 20 yrs back due to an unknown disease. Her two sons have already grown up and are married too. Due to her husband's death, she could not earn enough to send her children to schools to educate them. She had said that due her husband's death she was helpless and couldn't do anything. She got frustrated of it. Side by side, she is still sexually exploited by the different agents of the society. Consequently, she is mentally disturbed and taking medicine.

Case 5: Meena Self -accusation

32 yrs old Meena Maharjan owns a canteen shop in Khokana. She lost her husband 4 yrs back due to kidney failure. Now she is staying with her in-laws. She has suffered sexually from the costumer of her shop which leads her in mental problems. On the other hand, her family even called her witch and tried to kill her. However, she afraid to express her trauma with others. The reason for her silence, she says was because she accused herself for the happening such actions.

Case 6: Kamala Waiting for support

22 yrs old Kamala Sharma belonged to Jhapa. She got married at the age of 18. Her husband committed a suicide. After her husband's death, she continued living in her parent's house. She got raped by her own maternal uncle. She has a feeling of hatred for him. She told her family about it but instead of love and support, she got nothing but hatred from her family.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusion

It is an incontrovertible fact that single women (widows) are at a high risk of sexual exploitation. They are sexually exploited like other women but they are additionally vulnerable to sexual abuse due to the loss of their husbands. In this study, most of the respondents were familiar with the term sexual exploitation. Every single woman has once faced some kinds of sexual exploitation in their life. Verbal exploitation (use of offensive sexual comments) was the most common type of sexual exploitation faced by the respondents.

The study shows that age, education, caste/ethnicity, religion, occupation and economic status of single women can not be linked with sexual exploitation of single women (widows). In other words, sexual exploitation of single women (widows) was found in each stratum of these variables. The study is, thus, now able to reflect some of the myths and misconceptions surrounding violence against women particularly sexual exploitation against single women (widows).

Male superiority was identified as the major cause of sexual exploitation against single women (widows) and the next reason was widowhood. Other responsible factors for exploitation were dependence on perpetrator, dress; society, lack of support of family and lack of law.

In the context of sharing and reporting the incidence of sexual exploitation, majority of respondents share their experiences with their friends whereas only few respondents share their trauma with their family. Interestingly, none of the sexual offences explored in this study was reported in the police or court. The major reason for not reporting to the authority is that the victim did not know what should be done after the exploitation. It reveals that single women (widows) lack the knowledge about the legal provisions for the sexual exploitation. Other reasons given for not reporting to the authority by them were fear of society, dependence on perpetrator, self-accusation, family prestige and poor economic status.

Impacts of sexual exploitation are most traumatic for single women (widows). Minor physical effects like headaches, lethargy, sleep disturbances, sexual problems weight fluctuation were seen in the victims of sexual exploitation. However, none of the victims had their medical test done. They faced severe psychological effects after being victim of sexual exploitation. Even minor sexual offence warrants greater psychological impacts upon them. Depression was the

most manifested impact on single woman (widows) after sexual exploitation followed by disturbed sleep and feeling like not speaking to anyone. Similarly, various social effects like low attitude of the people, neglect of family, neglect of friends, forced to leave home, criticism of the way they dress, society and family members denial to accompany them etc are experiences that single women continue to face. Hence, the social perception upon them is very negative.

5.2. Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the results from survey respondents and focus group discussions:

Recommendations to the Government

The new constitution to be drafted by constituent assembly must guarantee non discrimination based not only on sex but also on gender marital status, pregnancy, sexual orientation and gender identities. Both direct and indirect discriminations need to be addressed.

GoN should fully operationalize international instruments, UN Security Resolutions 1325 and 1820 and the UN Convention on the Elimination all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), to ensure women's safety, well being and participation in the peace and development processes at all levels of society.

Recommendations to Family of Single Women (Widows) and Concerned Organizations Working in the Field of Single Women (Widows)

Concerned organizations working in the field of single women (widows) and VAW should work together.

The women activist and police women should be given priority and make a provision of special post at every police stations so that the victims can feel secure and comfortable to express their feelings with them and report the incidences.

There should not be any kind of dress code and food restriction. Single women must have freedom as other women for wearing any kind of dresses and using any kind of ornaments and cosmetics.

Victims of sexual exploitation should be provided financial, legal and mental support.

Single women (widows) must be organized in groups in order to get the opportunity to share their problems and feelings which ease their psychological burdens and ease life.

Health care facilities and access to them must be ensured. Security measures should be enforced to prevent suicide.

In order to curb the sexual exploitation perpetrated against women, women must be encouraged and legal procedures must be eased so that women can report against the perpetrator of violence. The family members and community people should be sensitized to hold positive views toward single women (widows).

There should be rehabilitation center for the victim women in case of rape and incest.

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