

INTIMATE AND NON-INTIMATE PARTNER SEXUAL VIOLENCE: PERSPECTIVES OF ADOLESCENTS IN RAJASTHAN

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Sexual violence has increasingly been documented in India, and notwithstanding the Nirbhaya case that caught the world's attention, the evidence in India, as globally, indicates that sexual violence, that is, forced sexual relations take place overwhelmingly in intimate partner and not non-intimate partner relations (WHO, 2014).

Several gaps exist in our understanding of the context of sexual violence in India:

- **Much of what is known is about spousal violence, and comparatively little available with regard to sexual violence among the young and unmarried**
- **What is available focuses on forced penetrative sex and not other forms of violence, such as sexual harassment, non-contact acts and unwanted sexual touch, which are also acts of violence and which are experienced overwhelmingly by the young**
- **More is known about young women's and girls' reports of the experience of violence than of young men's and boys' reports about its perpetration**
- **Relatively little is known about the correlates of sexual violence experienced or perpetrated by young people**

In light of evidence suggesting that increasing proportions of unmarried girls have experienced and unmarried boys have perpetrated sexual violence, it is important to understand the context of non consensual sexual relations among unmarried young people

Drawing on a sample of unmarried adolescents aged 15-19 from a study conducted in a north-western state of India, namely, Rajasthan, in 2012, our objectives are to examine:

- **Various forms of sexual violence – non-contact form of sexual violence, unwanted touch, and forced sexual relations -- experienced, and the prevalence of these forms of violence among boys and girls**
- **The prevalence of sexual violence perpetrated by adolescent boys**
- **Factors that are associated with the risk of experiencing (girls) and perpetrating (boys) sexual violence**



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STUDY LOCATION AND DESIGN

- **The study was conducted in urban and rural areas of all 33 districts of Rajasthan, a north-western state of India**



- **147 primary sampling units (PSUs); 73 and 74 PSUs from urban and rural areas**
- **In each PSU, list of adolescents was prepared using inputs from household listing; 12-20 unmarried adolescents selected in each PSU using systematic sampling**
- **Focused on ages 15-19**
- **Girls were interviewed in 76 PSUs and boys in 71**
- **Interviewed a total of 1,164 unmarried girls and 745 unmarried boys aged 15-19; response rates >90%**

DEFINITIONS, MEASURES, ANALYSIS

- **Non-contact forms of sexual violence -- whether someone:**
 - Made dirty comments or gestures at the respondent
 - Forced respondent to watch pornographic materials
- **Unwanted touch -- whether someone:**
 - Hugged or kissed respondent forcefully
 - Touched respondent's private parts/forcefully made respondent touch perpetrator's private parts
 - Attempted to have sex with respondent
- **Forced sexual relations -- whether :**
 - [FOR THOSE REPORTING SEXUAL RELATIONS WITH A ROMANTIC PARTNER] first sex with the romantic partner was consensual or forced and any sexual experience with romantic partner thereafter, if any, was consensual or forced
 - [FOR ALL] Someone forced respondent to have sex
 - [FOR ALL BOYS] Respondent forced a girl to have sex

- **Probed in two ways –**
 - **During face-to-face interview**
 - **Through anonymous format (using sealed envelope technique)**
- **In face-to-face interview**
 - **Probed both girls and boys on “experience” – specifically with romantic partner among those who reported sex with romantic partner**
 - **Boys on “perpetration” – specifically with romantic partner among those who reported sex with romantic partner**
 - **Probed on both lifetime and recent (for some indicators)**
- **In anonymous format, a single question was asked**
 - **Of girls - “has anyone ever forced you to have sex”**
 - **Of boys - “have you ever forced any girl/woman to have sex with you”**

- **Descriptive data on girls' and boys' experiences of sexual violence and on boys' perpetration of sexual violence**
- **Multivariate logistic regression analysis to examine the correlates of such experiences (girls) / perpetration (boys)**

- **Non-consensual sexual experience/perpetration is an extremely sensitive issue and hence, very likely to have been under-reported, particularly experience/ perpetration of unwanted touch and forced sex**
- **Survey did not ask about who the perpetrator was for each experience, hence it was not possible to separate out experience by type of perpetrators**
- **Cross-sectional data, causal relations not possible to draw; we are thus only looking at correlates**



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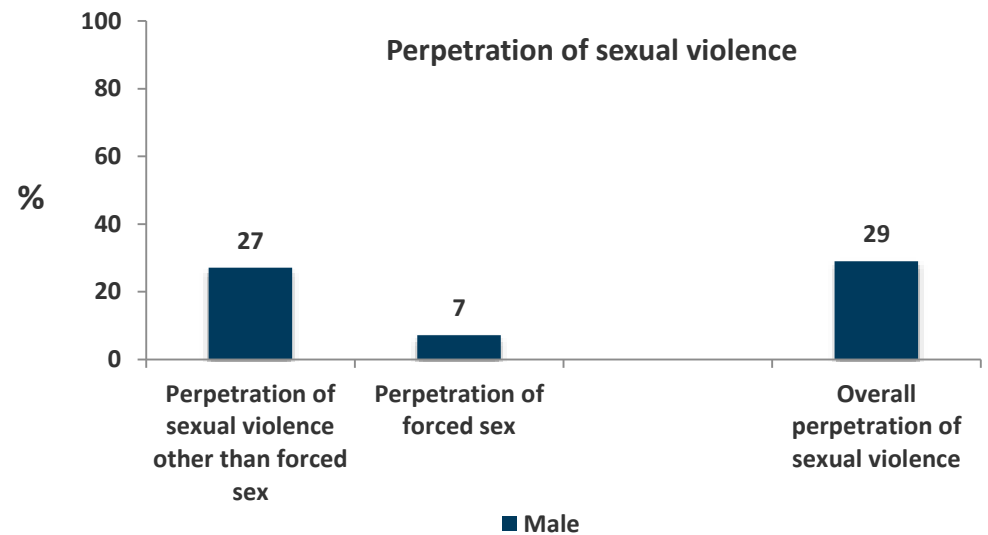
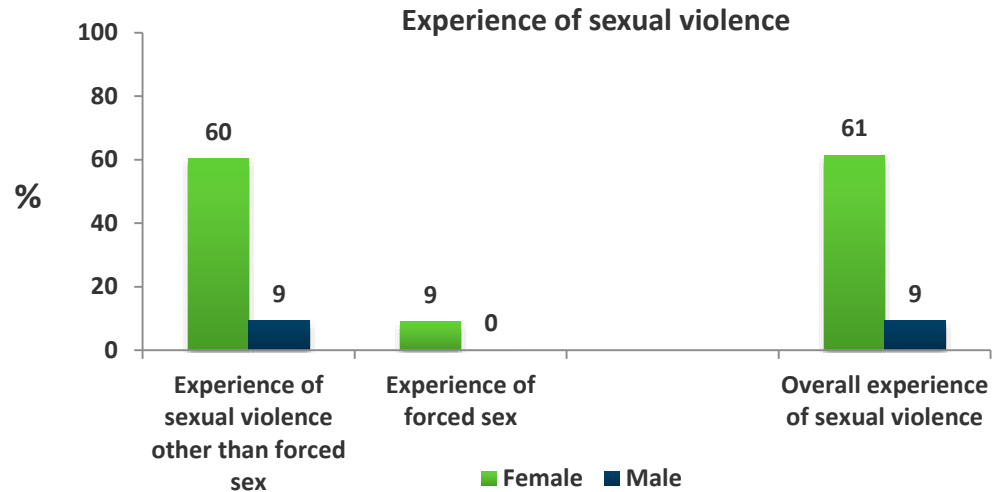
FINDINGS

Selected background characteristics of surveyed adolescents

Characteristics	Girls	Boys
Mean age	16.5	16.7
Mean years of schooling completed	8.1	9.3
Engaged in paid work (%)	23.1	24.6
Resided in rural areas (%)	65.6	73.2
Hindu (%)	81.9	93.7
SC/ST (%)	31.7	37.6
Belonging to poor family (first two quintiles) (%)	36.5	44.5
Exposed to television / print media / internet (%)	76.2	88.8
Can move within community alone (%)	30.1	NA
Witnessed parental violence during childhood	16.4	9.1

Prevalence of sexual violence

- Overall, 61 percent of girls and 9 percent of boys reported experience of any form of sexual violence (non-contact forms of sexual violence, unwanted touch, forced sex)
- Nine percent of girls reported experience of forced sex
- Far fewer boys reported perpetrating any forms of sexual violence
- But almost as many boys reported perpetrating forced sex as girls reported experiencing it



Forms of sexual violence (experienced)

	Girls (%)	Boys (%)
Dirty comments or gestures	59.0	0.0
Forced to watch pornography	2.0	8.1
Any non-contact forms of violence	59.3	8.1
Hugged or kissed forcefully	2.8	1.4
Touched/made to touch private parts forcefully	9.3	1.0
Attempted to have sex	1.8	0.0
Any unwanted touch	11.3	1.9
Forced to have sex	9.0	0.0

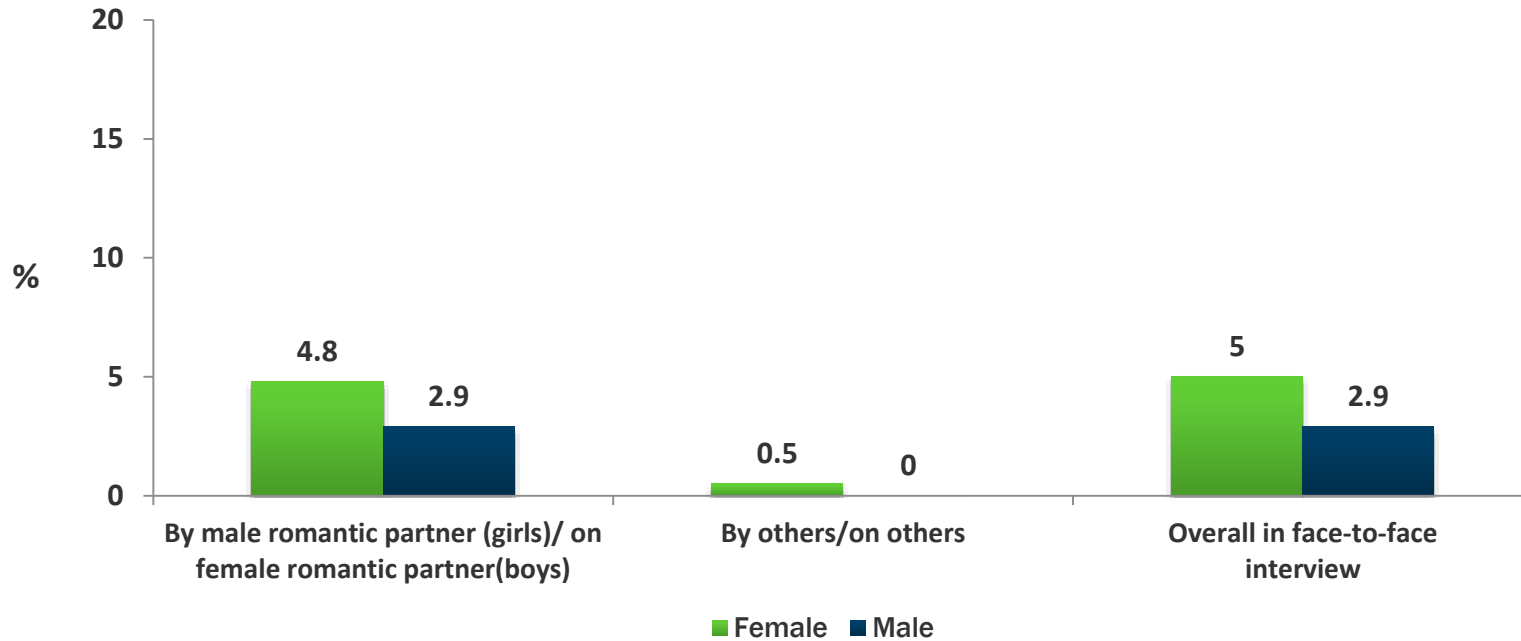
- Girls were most likely to report experience of receiving dirty comments or gestures, followed by unwanted touch and forced sex
- Boys however were most likely to report being forced to watch pornography

Forms of sexual violence (perpetrated by boys)

	Boys (%)
Made dirty comments or gestures	27.0
Forced someone to watch pornography	1.2
Any non-contact forms of sexual violence	27.0
Hugged or kissed forcefully/touched/made to touch private parts	3.7
Attempted to have sex with a girl/woman	0.7
Any Unwanted touch	3.9
Forced a girl to have sex	7.2

- Boys were most likely to admit making dirty comments/gestures to girls/women (27%) followed by perpetrating unwanted touch
- A considerable minority (7%) of boys admitted forcing a girl/woman to have sex

Forced sex by romantic partner



- Of 5% of girls who reported forced sex in face-to-face interview, almost all of them reported that it was by their boyfriend; similarly for boys
- In fact, of all girls who had reported sexual relations with a boyfriend , 64% reported that the male partner forced them at first sex; 20% boys reported so (data not shown)

Correlates of experience (girls) and perpetration (boys) of violence: explanatory variables

- **Socio-demographic characteristics**
 - **Current age, years of schooling completed, engaged in paid work, place of residence, household economic status, caste, religion**
- **Indicators of agency, access to information, peer network size**
 - **Perceived self-efficacy (for girls), mobility experience (girls)**
 - **Frequent mass media exposure (boys), number of friends (boys)**
- **Indicators of risk taking behaviour (boys)**
 - **Alcohol or drug consumption, exposure to pornography**
- **Parental and community context**
 - **Witnessing parental violence in early adolescence, experiencing violence in early adolescence perpetrated by a parent, parental disapproval of social interactions with opposite-sex peers,**
 - **prevalence of physical fights in the village or urban neighbourhood, poverty at community level and community perception of safety of girls in the community**

Results of multivariate logistic regression (girls' experience)

Correlates	Non-contact form	Unwanted touch	Forced sex
Socio-demographic factors			
Current age	+**	+~	NS
Number of years of schooling	+***	NS	NS
Currently working for pay	+*	+~	NS
Rural residence	-*	NS	NS
Agency			
Perceived self-efficacy	_***	_***	_***
Freedom of movement in community	+**	+*	NS
Parental and community context			
Witnessing parental violence	+***	+***	+***
Experiencing violence by parents	NS	+*	NS
Community perception that village is unsafe for girls	+~	+***	NS

Results of multivariate logistic regression (boys' perpetration)

Correlate	Non-contact form	Unwanted touch	Forced sex
Socio-demographic factors			
Current age	+~	NS	+***
Number of years of schooling	+*	NS	_*
Currently working for pay	+**	+**	NS
Mass media/Peer network			
Frequent mass media exposure	+*	NS	+**
Number of friends	+~	NS	NS
Risk taking behaviour			
Alcohol or drug consumption	+**	NS	NS
Exposure to pornography	+***	+***	+***
Parental context			
Experiencing violence by parents	+~	NS	NS

- **A large proportions of girls reported experiencing non-contact forms of sexual violence and a considerable minority experienced unwanted touch and/or forced sex; a few boys reported being forced to watch pornography**
 - **Many fewer boys, however, admitted perpetrating such violence, although a considerable proportion of boys perpetrating unwanted touch or forced sex**
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- **Majority of the reported forced sex experienced by girls was perpetrated by a male romantic partner**
 - **Findings from multivariate indicate that girls who have more freedom, who work, are in school are at greater risk of violence - possibly because they are more likely than others to be placed in settings in which boy—girl mixing happens; boys in similar settings are also more likely to perpetrate**
 - **Girls who possess greater self-efficacy are less likely to experience violence but those who have witnessed parental violence are more likely to have experienced each form of violence**
 - **Boys' risk taking behaviours – alcohol, exposure to pornography -- as well as exposure to parental violence while growing up also emerged as important correlates**

- **In conclusion, opportunities for boy-girl mixing will increase as more adolescents pursue an education, and more girls join the work force, and this calls for importance of action that will break this association between increased mixing opportunities and violence; programmes that build skills in new forms of conflict resolution, new norms of masculinity and femininity**
- **The finding that girls with greater self-efficacy are less likely to experience violence raises optimism that building life skills among girls empowers them to avoid violence or adopt strategies that protect themselves from violence even in situations of boy-girl mixing**
- **Much depends on parents – girls who have witnessed parental violence are more likely than others to submit to violence and boys who have experienced violence are more likely to perpetrate it.**
- **Parents are key – programmes must support them to recognise and break this intergenerational link, and at the same time, adopt more egalitarian parenting practices**