

Attitude of Graduate Students towards Rape Victims

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Abstract

Background: Without a doubt there are few categories of crimes that affect the community and its victims as much as rape, sexual assaults, and the other so-called sex-related or sex crimes. Being raped, sexually assaulted or experiencing any form of unwanted sexual attention is a very distressing experience with effects that can be long lasting. *Aim:* To assess the attitude of youth towards the female rape victims. *Methods and Material:* Sample consisted of 300 graduate students from three selected colleges of Punjab. Simple randomized sampling technique was followed to select sample. Attitude towards rape victim scale developed by Wards' (1988) was used. The study was conducted from 12th Oct.2015 to 30th Oct.2015. The data was analyzed with descriptive and inferential statistics wherever required. *Results:* The descriptive statistics showed that 64% of study subjects had moderately favourable attitude, followed by 27% of subjects who expressed favourable attitude and rest of the subjects (9%) exhibited unfavourable attitude towards the rape victims. Chi-square computed significant relationship of both gender ($\chi^2= 9.950, p<0.001$) and type of family ($= 10.688, p<0.01$) with attitudes towards rape victims. *Conclusion:* A little more than one fourth (27%) of the population explicitly showed favourable attitude, which challenges the society for a great need to generate awareness among youth to foster positive attitude towards rape victims.

Keywords: Attitude; Female Rape Victims; Graduate Students; Gender.

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Introduction

Rape is the oldest means by which a man seized or stole a wife. A man simply took whichever woman he wanted, raped her, and then brought her to his tribe as his possession. The American Heritage Dictionary defines rape as the crime of forcing a female to submit to sexual intercourse. Rape is a violent infringement on the personal dignity of an individual. It is a crime that is often misunderstood and surrounded by myths [1].

Rape is the most underreported crime in the world. Obtaining an accurate measurement of rape and other types of sexual assault is a challenge. Determining the scope and nature of rape and other types of sexual assault depends on how these crimes are defined and measured. It is important to note that statistics are derived from different sources employing different practices to gather information [2].

According to National Crime Records Bureau's (NCRB) latest 2014 report, there were 33,764 victims of rape, while 33,707 rape cases were reported in the country during the year 2013. National Crime Records Bureau reports state that the number of reported rapes in India is only an estimated 1% of the total number of rapes that take place annually in the country [3].

Immediately following a rape, most women are in a state of shock. They may or may not be physically injured but all have been through a life threatening situation and will need time and support to recover. Women may react differently to an assault. Some women may become hysterical while others go through a denial stage and appear calm and in control. The circumstances surrounding the rape may vary as well, but all victims feel varying degrees of fear, guilt, embarrassment and anger. These emotions will not surface all at once but will affect the woman for a long

time after the attack. It is important for all those close to her, especially the men, to understand her feelings and support her through the crisis [4].

Women who have suffered sexual attacks, including attempted rape may describe a wide range of feelings like confusion, fear of death or another attack, afraid of not being believed, frightened, guilty, powerless, angry, ashamed, depressed, numb, lacking self-confidence, dirty, uninterested in sex, flashbacks or nightmares. Every person reacts differently and it is not unusual for feelings to change from day to day. In particular there can be a long gap between the assault and the emotional reaction. It can be difficult to talk about the attack to friends or family, yet it is important to have understanding and support [5].

It has been seen that rape victims are victimised and made to feel guilty after rape has occurred as if it was their doing or they called it on to themselves. The society in general is not very kind to rape victims. Keeping this in mind a study was conducted to assess the attitude of youth in colleges towards rape victims and to seek relationship between their

attitudes towards rape victims & socio-demographic variables like age, gender, types of family, place of living and marital status.

Methodology

A descriptive approach conducted to assess the attitude towards rape victims among graduate students. Simple randomization sampling technique was used to select 300 graduate students from three selected colleges of Punjab. After obtaining informed consent Attitude Toward Rape Victim Scale (ARVS; Ward, 1988) was given to students to fill, which was a 25-item Likert type Scale, Responses indicate participants' levels of agreement with each statement on a 5-point scale ranging from 0 (*disagree strongly*) to 4 (*agree strongly*). Since the development of the ARVS, it has been used in 15 countries throughout the world, with most studies reporting Cronbach's alpha scores greater than .80. Sociodemographic profile was also obtained from students like age, gender, place of living, type of family and marital status.

Results

Table 1: Sociodemographic characteristics n = 300

S. No.	Characteristics/Variables	Frequency(n)	Percentage(%)
1.	Age		
	18 - 20	66	22
	21 - 23	150	50
2.	Gender		
	24 - 26	84	28
	Male	154	51.3
3.	Place of living		
	Female	146	48.7
	Rural	155	51.7
4.	Type of family		
	Urban	145	48.3
	Nuclear	220	73.3
	Joint	72	24.0
5.	Marital status		
	Extended	8	2.7
	unmarried	266	88.7
	married	34	11.3

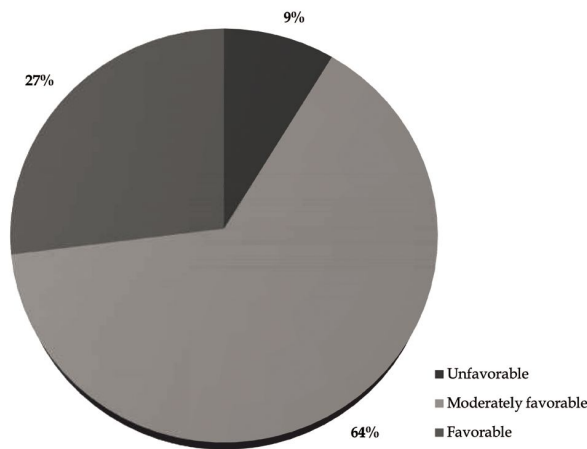
Table 1 reveals the frequency and percentage distribution of socio-demographic characteristics of study subjects. Half of the study subjects (50%) were in age group of 21 year – 23 years. Number of participants according to their gender (Male=51.3%, female=48.7%) and place of living (Rural=51.7%, urban=48.3%) were nearly the same with a little difference in percentage. 73.3% students belonged to nuclear families. Majority of study subjects (88.7%) were married.

Table 2 show that (64%) of study subjects had moderately favourable attitude, followed by (27%) of subjects who expressed favourable attitude and rest 9% of subjects exhibited unfavourable attitude towards the rape victims.

Chi-square was computed and significant relationship was found between gender (= 9.950, $p < 0.001$) and type of family (= 10.688, $p < 0.01$) and attitudes towards rape victims among graduate students. Age, place of living and marital status had

Table 2: Attitude towards rape victims among graduate students n=300

Attitude	Frequency	Percentage	Mean± SD Score
unfavourable	27	9	30.77± 1.704
moderately favourable	192	64	53.58±8.972
favourable	81	27	70.83±3.379

**Fig. 1:** Percentage distribution of attitude of graduate students towards rape victims

no significant relationship with attitude towards rape victims among graduate students.

Discussion

The findings of the present study revealed that there was significant relationship of gender and type of family with attitude towards rape victims among graduate students. These findings were congruent with findings of the study conducted by Patitu, Carol Logan which assessed the attitudes of college students toward rape victims. Subjects for the study consisted of 400 undergraduate students attending a large research institution in the south. Gender, class, and ethnicity differences were studied. While no significant differences were found by class and ethnicity, a significant difference was found by gender. Men reported a higher score than women, denoting more unfavourable attitudes toward rape victims [6].

The results of present study were also consistent with results of study conducted by Barbara Nagel et al who concluded a significant relationship between sex and attitudes toward victims of rape. However, a more acute analysis of the ANOVA results indicated that only African American males significantly differed from White and African American females, whereas White males did not differ in attitude from the latter two groups. Furthermore, the results of the hierarchical regression found that sex as a strong predictor of attitudes for African Americans, regardless of socioeconomic status [7].

Conclusion

Hence, findings of present study revealed that a large part (64%) of the population was in dilemma, they refuse to stand on any of the extreme, they neither had favourable nor unfavourable attitude towards rape victims. Nearly 1/4th of the youth population was in favour of rape victims. Finally, it can be said that there is need to be with rape victims by keeping positive empathetic and favourable approach towards rape victims. As statistical calculations also revealed that gender and type of family had significant relationship with attitude towards rape victims among graduate students, so it should be educated in colleges to both genders equally about the desideratum of the rape victims after tragedy like rape to survive and lead a normal and smooth life.

Nursing professional, that is nurses working in clinical practice, community health nursing, nursing research, may an educat, counsel and motivat and help in making the students, teachers and parents aware about psychological trauma caused after rape to a victim and they can enforce the youth for positive empathetic approach towards rape victims.

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