



A Baseline Study on Reported Cases of Elder Abuse in Nepali Press

July 2008 - July 2010



National Human Rights Commission



Geriatric Center Nepal

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Foreword

A newly born, as the time rolls by, attains adulthood from its childhood and youth hood. All living beings pass through this natural phenomenon regardless of their own life forms and all of them grow old, become feeble and pass away one day. The earthly truth, therefore, is that this natural cycle has been continuing ever since the evolution of human descendants and will continue forever. Yet, another truth is that there has been change in era and so have the customs and traditions of the society because the change, which occurs with the pace of time, is unavoidable. No one can prevent or stop it. As we know that human beings are social beings, we are bound to submit ourselves to the social norms and values.

In the 21st century, the world has turned into a global village along with the pace of development. Today, the citizens of one country come forward to extend their feasible support to the citizens of another country in order to minimize the harrowing situation emerged through the natural catastrophe. In this regard, the government of the concerned country ought to be ever ready to involve itself for the citizens' rights and liberties that ensure the arrangement of citizens' prosperous life. Needless to say, since there doesn't exist any frontier for human rights and humanity, the voice from one country is being raised against the exploitation and repression perpetuated in another country ensuing in the progress in the outlook of universal fraternity. Therefore, it is quite observable that this pleasant status of globalization has the impact on the life style of the people and social norms and values. Similarly, the advent of new culture often supersedes the norms and values of old culture causing them to fade away eventually. The followers of old culture, therefore, find it difficult to adapt in the new culture. Having the cleavage emerged between the new and old generations, therefore, there has been fraction in the family structure resulting in the rapid growth of nuclear families. Subsequently, the elderly people are compelled to lead abandoned and lonely life due to the misunderstanding in the family. Sadly enough, they may even land up at the geriatric home seeking for shelter.

The senior citizens Act, 2006 has determined the age limit up to 60 years for a person to be recognized as a senior citizen. The state provides @ RS 500/- per month to the senior citizens as social security allowance but this hasn't soothed and secured the life standard of the citizens. Various forms of incidents including the incidents of ill treatment are taking place sporadically in daily life. The senior

citizens have been the victims of ill treatment of their own offspring appeared as property claimants and others. The de-facto situation is such that the Government doesn't have the reliable data with regard to the abuse perpetuated on the senior citizens. Therefore, it is high time that the Government and other concerned stakeholders took appropriate steps in order to prevent such type of abuse perpetuated on the senior citizens on the ground of property and other reasons.

At times, the attention of the Government and all the Nepalese is drawn to the detailed news on the incidents of abuse perpetuated on the senior citizens published in some national dailies. It is, therefore, necessary that the rights of senior citizens should be incorporated within the fundamental rights provisioned in the proposed Constitution. Likewise, it is necessary that the deficiency with regard to senior citizens Act 2006, Regulations 2008 and senior citizens social security procedures 2009 must be necessarily amended with due arrangement.

The Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007 has mandated the National Human Rights Commission of Nepal (NHRC) for the protection and promotion of human rights. The Commission has been executing all the mandated activities by remaining within the periphery of its jurisdiction. It has been carrying out the promotional activities with regard to the rights of senior citizens and also sending in the recommendations by conducting monitoring and investigation on the incidents of the ill treatment perpetuated on the senior citizens.

It is indeed commendable that the Geriatric Society has compiled the news articles on the incidents of the abuse on the senior citizens published in various National dailies with analytical approach through various perspectives. I am confident that this research based materials will help the Government and other concerned stakeholders to move ahead. The Commission is delighted to have got the opportunity to publish this book.

I sincerely thank Mr. Krishna Murari Gautam and Shova Khanal and their team of Geriatric Center Nepal for compiling the materials appeared in various newspapers thereby making it a source of research and study. My sincere thanks goes to Shakila Neupane, Kajol Bhandari and Kushal Gautam for their support extended for materializing this venture. I also extend my thanks to the Strengthening Capacity of National Human Rights Commission (SCNHRC) for the support provided to publish this book.

Ram Nagina Singh
Member
National Human Rights Commission

Executive Summary

Abuse and neglect of senior citizens is a growing concern of all societies. Proper understanding of the magnitude and characteristics of Elder Abuse is necessary for developing policies and programs to curb this social evil. Information on elder abuse in Nepal from its national perspective was not available. It is to meet this urgent need that Geriatric Centre Nepal (GCN) took the initiative of conducting this study. This is the first time that information on elder abuse collected, analyzed and presented in the form of a comprehensive report for the country. Though within its limitations, information content of this report could be used as a baseline to initiate national debates, future studies, and process for formulation of policies and programs concerning elder abuse.

This study is based on cases of elder abuse reported in the two prominent national dailies, Kantipur and Anapurna Post, in a period of July 2008 to July 2010. Such data base limits study of cases that could not draw media attention, such as emotional and psychological abuse. A total of 117 cases of different elder abuse were reported by these dailies in last two years. Duplications were omitted for cases covered by the two dailies together. As the first study of its type in Nepal, some of the finding are expected, some surprising and some inconclusive. It is expected that these findings will draw attention of policy makers, social workers and academia to take initiatives from their own perspective based on their areas of interest and expertise.

It was found that physical abuse was the most common form of elder abuse reported in print media (43%) followed by the neglect (33.3%). Media reporting of behavioral and emotional mistreatments were absent. The study revealed high number of cases from districts with better access roads and high population density. Cases of elder abuse show increasing trend from western to eastern Nepal, picking up at districts with urban centers and major cities such as Kaski, Kathmandu and Morang.

Abuse led to death of the victim in 49% of cases reported. Elders living with families were victimized more often than those living alone. Most incidents of elder abuse took in family homes. Elder abuse does not follow any seasonal trend. Majority of

the victims were elder women. Abusing women of witchcraft did not lead to victim's death. Night and morning hours are the critical time when elders are abused the most. The general assumption that elders are abused more as they get older was not found true. Most of the victims were of 60 to 65 age group and the reported cases of elder abuse did not increase with the higher age. Most abusers were strangers to the victim. In cases where lawful rights and demands of elders were ignored, the government is categorized as an abuser in this study. Police action was taken in 74% cases but arrest of abuser was reported only in one third of those cases.

Considering the inadequacy of information reported in the print media, it can fairly be said that awareness level of news reporters has to be substantially raised on basic characteristics of elder abuse and its importance so that the quality of reporting could be improved.

The study recommendations are focused on awareness building. They include: a) establishing a national center for prevention of elder abuse that would maintain time series information on elder abuse cases reported to the media, police, governments and the communities; b) design and implementation of district and region level workshops to be participated by media, government service units including police, social workers and leaders; c) mass awareness programs through radio will be effective. For this, the existing network of more than 300 FM radio stations operating in different parts of Nepal can be utilized even to benefit illiterate population in remote areas, these FM radio stations spread over 75 districts could also be a focal point for information flow from local to central and vice-versa, d) a national program should be launched to establish one Elder Service Center in each VDC for ensuring welfare of elders in a sustainable manner in the long run.

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Chapter one

Introduction

1. Background

Respect for elders and protection for weaker are the two basic human values that all societies have been promoting since the beginning of human civilization. Family and education institutions have been responsible for inculcating such values in each individual. However, these values are eroding in almost all societies and elder abuse is the result of such behavioral deviations. It is rapidly becoming a major concern with changing socio-economic paradigms and the growing number of elderly population. In many countries the concern has already reached to a scale that is demanding new institutional measures to curb the existing level of elder abuse.

Developing countries such as Nepal are making progress in improving health services and birth control programs. Success in these fronts of development have lead to decrease in birth rate and increase in life expectancy. Population growth rate of Nepal hovers around 2% while growth rate of elderly population (60+) is moving up at higher rate of about 3.5% which is expected to continue moving up (GCN 2009). According to census of 2001 Nepal had 6.5% population of elderly that reached up to 8% in 2007 and the rate is ever increasing (Dahal, 2007)). Comparable figures for elderly in Japan (65+) are estimated at 23% for the year 2010 (PRF, 2010). However, Nepal's "developing" status gives it lead time to get prepared for the situation with learning from developed countries.

The first concern for this growing elderly population is their safety at home and in the community. It is only after curbing the hidden problem of elder abuse that any further steps could be taken towards putting the "United Nations Principles for Older Person" into practice (Annex 1). Understanding elder abuse and coming up with suitable program for its prevention is the first step toward this direction. This study is the first such step for Nepal.

Elder abuse is difficult to bring under scientific investigation and come up with a blanket solution for the problem. The form and magnitude of elder abuse are sensitive to many variables including the emotions and mind set of persons involved. Accordingly, the relevance and effectiveness of measures for curbing elder abuse in different context also vary.

Irrespective of the challenges involved, investigating different attributes of elder abuse is the proven way to understand its nature which would then make it possible to identify plausible solutions. There is a complete absence of information on the magnitude and characteristics of elder abuse in Nepal. This gap has been the major bottle neck to come up with any national policy and programs that are based on scientific investigation from national perspective. It is to fill this gap that Geriatric Center Nepal undertook this study with its own resources.

2. Justification

Elder abuse is a hidden problem because it is commonly associated with social taboos and people generally prefer to remain quiet about it. However, things are changing with increasing awareness level, societies being more open, enhanced reach of media and, of course, growing cases of elder abuse because of the changing structure of the society.

Elder abuse has already been established as a regular part of social research in many developed countries. (Refer INPEA, National Adult Protective Service Association, National Care for Elder Abuse etc). However, it is relatively a new subject even for open discussion in Nepal. There is no literature available and no research has been done on the subject. Therefore, it was necessary to take this pioneering initiative to establish a baseline that would provide some understanding of nature and magnitude of the problem of elder abuse in Nepal. The outcome of this report is expected to meet the following objectives.

3. Objectives

As this is the first study on elder abuse with national perspective, it aims to:

- Provide general understanding of the nature and magnitude of elder abuse in Nepal
- Explore areas for further research on elder abuse in Nepalese context.
- Establish information for awareness building activities.
- Provide recommendations to the government and concern agencies for future actions for prevention of elder abuse.
- To sensitize media to cover elderly abuse phenomena.

4. Methodology

4.1 Team Building

A well experienced team of professionals with broad understanding of ageing issues was formed to carryout the study. One day discussion session was

arranged among the team members in Geriatric Centre Nepal to finalize the types of information needed for the study. The study Team was led by Mr. Krishna M. Gautam, Founder Chairperson of GCN.

4.2 Selection of Information Source

The two most popular daily newspapers: Kantipur Daily and Annapurna Post were selected as information source for this study. These are the two most read vernacular dailies that have the highest circulation and largest network of reporters spread over Nepal.

It is generally assumed that only the extreme cases of elder abuse are reported to the media in Nepal which has never been analyzed yet. Whatever the samples were available in two year time, which can be taken as the tip of the iceberg of the phenomena. Only two daily newspapers could be included considering the resource and time available for the study. Researchers used library of Nepal Press Council for the purpose

4.3 Time Period

The two daily newspapers published from July 2008 to July 2010 were reviewed by the research team. This was judged to be the time and cost effective means for developing some understanding on elder abuse in Nepal within the resource limits of GCN.

4.4 Screening of Information

News and events published by these dailies were discussed for each day. The study team discussed on whether a case could be taken as abuse and if yes of which type. The meeting classified and disintegrated information content of the available reports into different components. Corrections were made for any duplication of the same news. Reported information that was judged by the group to be over stated or unrealistic was excluded from the analysis. Master Table of information was developed and coding was done.

4.5 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed in excel. Simple statistical tools for measure of central tendencies were used for quantitative analysis of the available information. Ranking was used for analyzing subjective information.

4.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The study gives an overview of characteristics and magnitude of elder abuse in Nepal based on media reports. The information generated is expected to provide a basis for policy makers and academicians alike to identify priority areas for their work. It will also encourage media houses to identify their role in curbing the social problem of elder abuse.

The study is based on secondary data available in the period of two years. Findings from this study are limited to the published news in the two national daily newspapers that generally report only the extreme cases of elder abuse.

Some of the cases which are not highlighted by the media but reported to the police authority or elsewhere could not be included in the study. So the findings have its limitations to generalize to the whole elderly population of Nepal.

4.7 Report Organization

The first chapter gives general background, objectives and methodology adopted for the study. The second Chapter presents review of literature for understanding different theoretical aspects of elder abuse. Data analysis and interpretation is the subject of third Chapter. Finally, the report culminates into summary and recommendation in the fourth Chapter.



Chapter Two

Literature Review

1. Definition

WHO defines Elder (60+) Abuse as “any type of action, series of actions, or lack of actions, which produce physical or psychological harm, and which is set within a relationship of trust or dependence. Elder abuse may be part of a cycle of family violence; it may be caused by caregivers, or may be the result of a lack of training of social and health institutions, who cannot meet the needs of older persons” (WHO, 2008).

The core feature of this definition is that it focuses on harms where there is “expectation of trust” of the older person toward their abuser. Thus it includes harms by people the victim knows or with whom they have a relationship, such as spouse, partner or family member, a friend or neighbor, or people that the victim relies on for services. Many forms of elder abuse are recognized as types of domestic violence or family violence.

A set of interactions between an elderly and other person may or may not be termed Elder Abuse depending on the trust and understanding between the persons involved and the ultimate effect on the wellbeing of the elder concerned. With the changing social values and norms, some behavior may cease to be seen as Elder Abuse. Also a traditionally accepted behavior may come under the definition of Elder Abuse with emerging new socio-cultural norms and values (NCPOP, 2009)

Elder abuse does not include victimization by general criminal such as thief, burglar, and murderer as they are prone to people of all ages. However, such act can be termed Elder Abuse if it occurs because of the special relationship of abuser with the victim who is 60 over.

The study “Missing voice: views of older persons on elder abuse” (WHO/INPEA, 2002) indicate that older people perceive abuse under three broad areas: neglect

(isolation, abandonment and social exclusion), violation (of human, legal and medical rights), and deprivation (of choices, decisions, status, finances and respect).

Different words and phrases are commonly used to mean the Elder Abuse as defined above. They include: “elder mistreatment”, “senior abuse”, “abuse in later life”, “abuse of older adults”, “abuse of older women”, and “abuse of older men”. Elder abuse can be understood as any form of behavior in opposition to the wellbeing of old person (60) and that is against the general principle of “respect to elders and protection to weaker”.

2. Abuse Types and Their Indicators

Elder abuse can take various forms and its prevalence can be detected through different indicators as is shown in the following table developed by WHO in 2002.

TABLE 2.1
Types and Indicators of Elder Abuse

Indicators relating to the elderly person				Indicators relating to the caregiver
Physical	Behavioral and emotional	Sexual	Financial	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complaints of being physically assaulted - Unexplained falls and injuries - Burns and bruises in unusual places or of an unusual type - Cuts, finger marks or other evidence of physical restraint - Excessive repeat prescriptions or under usage of medication - Malnourishment or dehydration without an illness-related cause - Evidence of inadequate care or poor standards of hygiene - Person seeks medical attention from a variety of doctors or medical centers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Change in eating pattern or sleep problems - Fear, confusion or air of resignation - Passivity, withdrawal or increasing depression - Helplessness, hopelessness or anxiety - Contradictory statements or other ambivalence not resulting from mental confusion - Reluctance to talk openly - Avoidance of physical, eye or verbal contact with caregiver - Older person is isolated by others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Complaints of being sexually assaulted - Sexual behavior that is out of keeping with the older person's usual relationships and previous personality - Unexplained changes in behavior, such as aggression, withdrawal or self-mutilation - Frequent complaints of abdominal pain, or unexplained vaginal or anal bleeding - Recurrent genital infections, or bruises around the breasts or genital area - Torn, stained or bloody underclothes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Withdrawal of money that are erratic, or not typical of the older Person - Withdrawals of money that are inconsistent with the older person's means - Changing a will or property title to leave house or assets to “new friends or relatives” - Property is missing - Older person “can't find” jeweler or personal belongings - Suspicious activity on credit card account - Lack of amenities, when the older person could afford them - Untreated medical or mental health problems - Level of care is not commensurate with the older person's income or assets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Caregiver appears tired or stressed - Caregiver seems excessively concerned or unconcerned - Caregiver blames the older person for acts such as incontinence - Caregiver behaves aggressively - Caregiver treats the older person like a child or in a dehumanized way - Caregiver has a history of substance abuse or abusing others - Caregiver does not want the older person to be interviewed alone - Caregiver responds defensively when questioned; may be hostile or evasive - Caregiver has been providing care to the older person for a long period of time

Parameters to define certain type of behavior as Elder Abuse may differ with a given set of socio-cultural values that change over time. Examples are the following conditions that US state laws have included as Elder Abuse.

- Rights abuse: denying the civil and constitutional rights of a person who is old, but not declared by court to be mentally incapacitated. This is an aspect of elder abuse that is increasingly being recognized and adopted by nations
- Self-neglect: elderly persons neglecting themselves by not caring about their own health or safety. Self neglect (harm by self) is treated as conceptually different than abuse (harm by others).
- ‘Abandonment’: deserting a dependent person with the intent to abandon them or leave them unattended at a place for such a time period as may be likely to endanger their health or welfare.

3. Perception of Elder Abuse and Reporting

Understanding of abuse and neglect differs with culture. A behavior considered abusive in one culture may not be so in other. These cultural differences make it difficult to ascertain particular behavior as abuse or neglect. Many cases of elder abuse go unreported also because of such difficulty or confusions. Age and gender of the viewer are also found to influence if a behavior is perceived as abuse or neglect. Therefore, it is important that people in general are made aware of the main indicator of abuse (NCPOP, 2009).

Elder abuse is a unique social crime that even victim would prefer not to report or do it so hesitatingly for obvious reasons such as fear of retaliation, family pride and self-neglect or forcing oneself to accept it as yet another misgivings of old-age. The problem is further aggravated with lack of any institution where such reporting could be made, lack of trust in the existing judiciary system if it exists at all, and self assessment of being unable to go through judiciary process and then live with the uncertain consequences of it. As a consequence, the problem of elder abuse continues to thrive in societies leaving each of its members vulnerable to its sufferings later in life.

Not withstanding these fine points, it is worth noting that the subject of elder abuse is increasingly becoming a subject of public concern and debate, though in most cases limited to physical abuse.

4. Awareness Building

Making elder abuse a subject of mass concern is the important first step to take towards addressing the issue. Reports from NCEA and many other agencies have observed that elder abuse is still largely hidden under the

shroud of family secrecy and is grossly under-reported. Further, that the domestic elder abuse cases reported to State adult protective service or aging agencies represent only the tip of the iceberg. These and many other such observations made for more open and developed societies like USA sufficiently highlight magnitude of the problem for least developed countries like Nepal, with poor physical and institutional infrastructures.

Making elders aware of their rights and building confidence of victims to report cases are the two primary steps in moving towards curbing elder abuse. At the global level, United Nations has been working for awareness building on elder abuse through various government and non-government organizations. World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) is observed each year on 15th June.

“The day is in support of the United Nations International Plan of Action which recognizes the significance of elder abuse as a public health and human rights issue. Governments, non-governmental organizations, educational institutions, religious groups, professionals in the field of aging, interested individuals as well as older persons themselves will promote a better understanding of abuse and neglect of older persons by organizing activities around the world to raise awareness of the cultural, social, economic and demographic processes affecting elder abuse and neglect.” (INPEA Press Release Link).

5. Parameters of Progress with Elder Abuse

Most of the available literatures on Elder Abuse are at earlier stage of developed compared to those of Child Abuse. Most of the available literature on elder abuse is limited to defining and understanding it, ignoring the treatment of an abused elder. However, various concepts and tools developed in dealing with the problem of child abuse can also be relevant in understanding basics of elder abuse and the need for treatment.

Adult Victim of Child Abuse (HAVCA), a UK based NGO, has adopted following indicators developed by ©Barbara Whitfield 2003 (Table 2.2). This tool, though originally developed with focus on adults making progress in coming out of the effects of child abuse they suffered, is equally relevant also to assess improvements or progress of elders in coming out of Elder Abuse they suffered. The value of this work lies in its utility in setting target or expectations while providing treatment or support to the victim. This forward looking tool also provides basis for setting objectives of policies and programs for treating victims of elder abuse.

Table 2.2
Indicators of Progress in Overcoming Effect of Abuse

Victim	Survivor	Thrivor
Doesn't deserve nice things or trying for the "good life."	Struggling for reasons & chance to heal	Gratitude for everything in life.
Low self esteem/shame/unworthy	Sees self as wounded & healing	Sees self as an overflowing miracle
Hyper vigilant	Using tools to learn to relax	Gratitude for new life
Alone	Seeking help	Oneness
Feels Selfish	Deserves to seek help	Proud of Healthy Self caring
Damaged	Naming what happened	Was wounded & now healing
Confusion & numbness	Learning to grieve, grieving past aggrieved trauma	Grieving at current losses
Overwhelmed by past	Naming & grieving what happened	Living in the present
Hopeless Uses outer world to hide from self	Hopeful Stays with emotional pain	Faith in self & life Understands that emotional pain will pass & brings new insights
Hides their story	Not afraid to tell their story to safe people.	Beyond telling their story, but always aware they have created their own healing with HP
Believes everyone else is better, stronger, less damaged	Comes out of hiding to hear others & have compassion for them & eventually self	Lives with an open heart for self & others
Often wounded by unsafe others	Learning how to protect self by share, check, share	Protects self from unsafe others
Places own needs last	Learning healthy needs (See Healing the Child Within & Gift to Myself)	Places self first realizing that is the only way to function & eventually help others
Creates one drama after another	See patterns	Creates peace
Believes suffering is the human condition	Feeling some relief, knows they need to continue in recovery	Finds joy in peace
Serious all the time	Beginning to laugh	Seeing the humour in life
Uses inappropriate humor , including teasing	Feels associated painful feelings instead	Uses healthy humour
Uncomfortable, numb or angry around toxic people	Increasing awareness of pain & dynamics	Healthy boundaries around toxic people, incl. relatives
Lives in the past	Aware of patterns	Lives in the Now
Angry at religion	Understanding the difference between religion & personal spirituality	Enjoys personal relationship with the God of their understanding
Suspicious of therapists-projects	Sees therapist as guide during projections	Sees reality as their projection & owns it.
Needs people & chemicals to believe they are all right	Glimpses of self-acceptance & fun without others	Feels authentic & connected, Whole
"Depression"	Movement of feelings	Aliveness

©Barbara Whitfield 2003 published on http://www.havoca.org/HAVOCA_home.htm.

A victim of Elder Abuse can come out of its effect and live a normal life after proper treatment or support. Progress made by the victim or effect of such treatment (medical or psychological) on victim could be judged by the indicators given in column two and three above.

Chapter Three

Analysis and Synthesis

1. Introduction

This chapter analyses information on elder abuse cases reported by the two national dailies namely Kantipur and Annapurna Post in the last two years (July 2008 – July 2010). They were selected for their large network of reporters and distribution system spread across the country. Kantipur and Annapurna Post dailies are printed about 250,000 and 85,000 copies each day respectively. These estimates are believed to be on higher side.

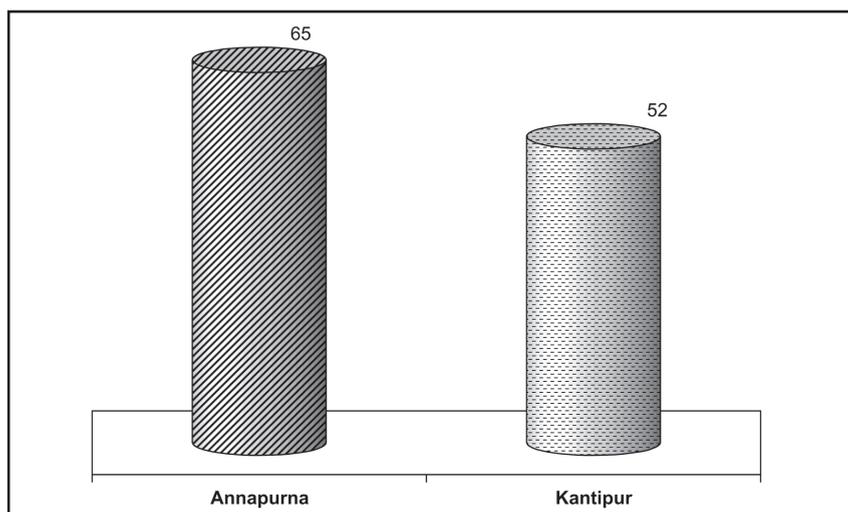
Nepal population for July 2010 is estimated at about 28.5 million out of which almost 2.28 millions (8%) are 60+. For the purpose of this study, old or elderly refers to a person of sixty and over.

2. Reported Cases

A total of 117 cases of elder abuse were reported in last two years. . A total of 52 and 65 different cases of elder abuse were reported by Kantipur and Annapurna Post respectively, i.e., after omission of duplications. In cases where more than one elders were abused, the number of victims were considered for the analysis.

It is worth considering that more than 74% of these reported cases in print media were also reported to police. There could have been additional cases that were reported to police, other systems of governance or elsewhere but were not reported by the selected print media. Such cases are not included in this study.

Figure 3.1
Number of Elder Abuse Cases Reported by the Prominent Two Dailies
(July 2008- July 2010)



3. Distribution of Reported Cases by District

A district was taken as the unit for analysis because most reportings were district based and information specific to Village Development Committee or Ward within the district was not given. Cases of elder abuse were reported from 47 districts, out of 75 districts of Nepal. Not a single case of elder abuse was reported from the remaining 28 districts. District names were not mentioned in two reported cases (category 9 in Table 3.1 below).

Table 3.1 Number of Reported Cases by Districts

District Category	Districts Names	No. of Districts	Cases from each district	Total Cases	% of total cases
1	Kanchanpur, Aaachham, Bajura, Banke, Bardiya, Dailekh, Surkhet, Rukum, Mugu, Bara, Rautahat, Dhading, Sindhupalchok, Dolakha, Mahottari, Khotang, Okhaldhunga, Sankhuwasabha, Taplejung	19	1	19	16.2
2	Kailai, Dang, Pyuthan, Nawalparasi, Lamjung, Chitawan, Lalitpur, Udayapur, Dhankuta, Panchthar, Sarlahi	11	2	22	18.8
3	Myagdi, Siraha, Kapilvastu, Palpa, Gorkha, Makawanpur, Kavre, Nuwakot, Ilam, Jhapa	10	3	30	25.6
4	Kaski, Ramechhap, Bhojpur	3	4	12	10.2
5	Parsa	1	5	5	4.2
6	Tanahu	1	6	6	5.1
7	Morang	1	10	10	8.5
8	Kathmandu	1	11	11	9.4
9	District Unspecified	NA	2	2	2
	TOTAL	47		117	100

Efforts were made to see if the prevalence of elder abuse shows any trend as we move from western to eastern Nepal and the result is given in Figure 3.2 below. The same information is also plotted over map of Nepal (Figure 3.3).

Figure: 3.2. Number of Reported Cases and Their Distribution by Districts

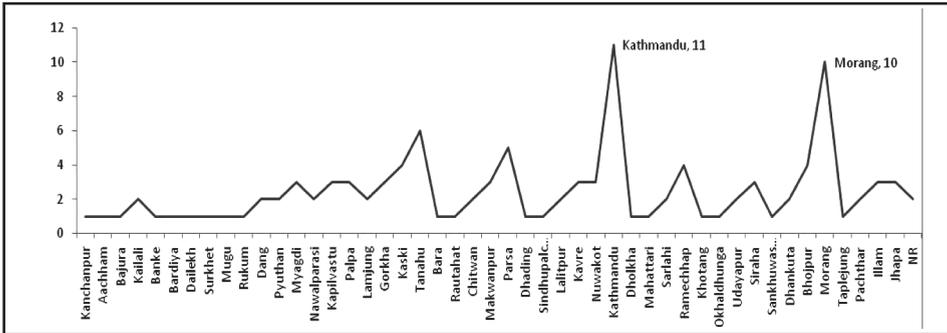


Figure 3.3 Dot map of Reported Cases of Elder Abuse from Districts (July 2008- July 2010)



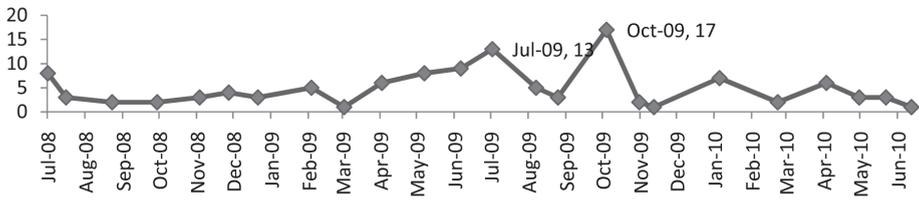
Nepal can be broadly divided into three climatic zones, namely High Mountains, Mid-Hills and Plains or Terai. It is interesting to note that major cities like Kathmandu and Morang show very high number of cases. Compared to other districts, these two are marked by their high population density, higher level of literacy rate, easy access network and presence of media centers (Table 3.1, Figure 3.2, and 3,3). Cases were not reported from high mountainous districts that are characterized by low literacy rate, low communication links or media access and low population density. For instance, some districts like Humal, Jumla, Mustang, Manang Rasuwa and Solukhumbu fall in this category. The other mid hill districts with such characteristics include Darchula, Bajhang and Baitadi.

The western part of Nepal has comparatively lower population density, literacy rate, road network and other modern infrastructures from where the fewer cases had been reported than in eastern part of Nepal. It can be seen in Figure 3.2 that there are higher picks in districts with urban centers and cities such as Kaski, Kathmandu and Morang.

4. Seasonal Variation of Events

Understanding the seasonal variation of reported events could be helpful to organize time specific intervention programs. Efforts were made to see if reported cases of elder abuse vary by months. Figure 3.4 below show that more cases of elder abuse were reported in July and October 2009. But it is not so in the same months of 2008. These figures do not show any clear seasonal or monthly trend for occurrence of elder abuse.

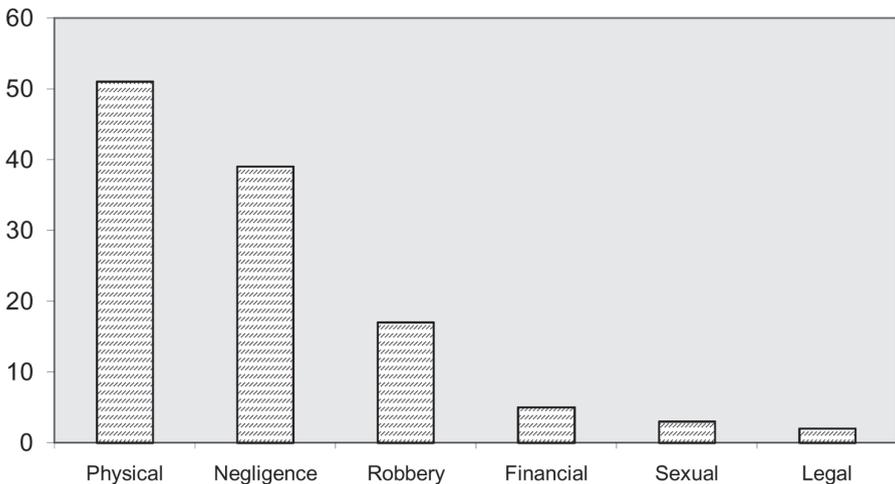
Figure 3.4 Variations in Cases of Elder Abuse by Months



5. Types of Elder Abuse

Difficulties were faced in grouping a particular case of elder abuse based on the information content in the media report. However, having discussion in the research team and considering the ultimate intention of abuser, the events were categorized into six main types as listed in Figure 3.5.

Figure 3.5 Types of Elder Abuse



Physical Abuse

Table 3.2 shows that out of 117 cases, a majority of elders (51) experienced physical abuse. Among these victims, 35 died and 11 suffered different degrees of injuries. Physical abuse led to death of more males (19) compared to females (16). However, more females (8 victims) were injured than males (3 cases). A victim had burnt skin and one permanently lost mental balance after being physical abused.

Table 3.2 Physical Abuse and Effect

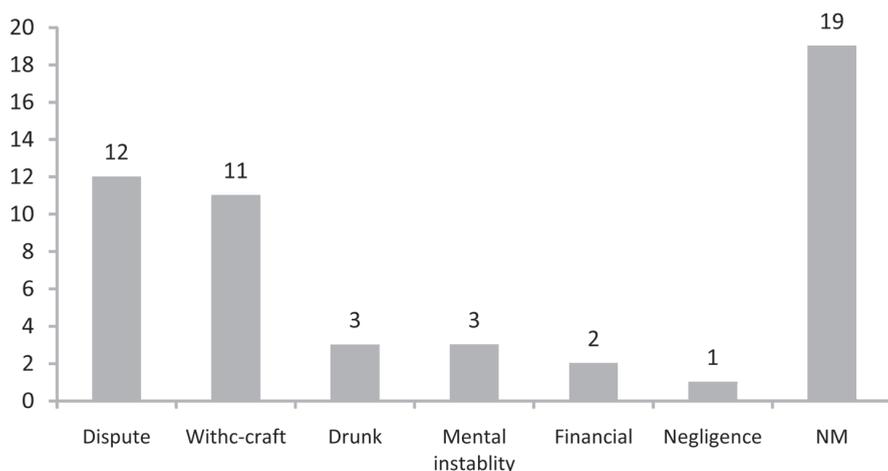
Dead	Injured	NM*	Burnt	Mental Case
35	11	3	1	1
Dead	Male	Female		
	19	16		
Injured	Male	Female		
	3	8		

NM = Not mentioned

Causes for Physical Abuse

The study also revealed reasons for the incidence of physical abuse (Figure 3.6). For example, verbal disputes that led to physical harm was reported in 12 cases. Blaming an old woman for witchcraft was the second most common cause for physical abuse (11 cases). Only females were charged with witchcraft and mostly poor and widows were the victims. All cases of witchcraft were from rural area and mostly from Terai belt of Nepal. Abusers in such cases were generally neighbors and the incidence occurred in presence of group of neighbors and villagers. None of the women blamed for witchcraft died after physical abuse. Health condition of this category of victims ranged from minor injuries to serious condition that required hospitalization. Health status of two victims of physical abuse was not reported.

It is interesting to note that three victims who were mentally unstable were physically abused for their misbehaviors. Similarly, three of the abusers were alcoholic. Elders were also physically abused for property ownership disputes (2 cases of financial abuse in Figure 3.6).

Figure 3.6 Cause for Physical Abuse

Neglect

After physical abuse, neglect by family members was found to be the most common form of elder abuse. Out of 117 cases, 39 cases of neglect or deprivation of proper care were reported. In 12 of 39 cases, elders could not receive Old-age-allowance that they were entitled to receive as per the existing government rules. This was taken as neglect by the government officials responsible for distribution of old-age allowance.

In nine cases, dead bodies of elders were found abandoned in public places. The cause was assumed to be negligence because no signs of physical abuse were reported. Such instances were taken as reflection of neglect faced by the elderly while alive. Some other forms of neglect included the following:

- Family or relatives forcing old person to get admitted in old age homes against their will.
- Intentionally abandoning an elderly in cities, crowded market places, or near old age homes from where they could not return home on their own. Such abandoned elders generally resort to begging, mostly in areas of holy shrines such as temple. Such abandoned elders generally die of illness, hunger or extreme weather, unattended by anyone.
- There was a case where a senior was expelled from home and was living in forest cave for more than seven years.
- There were cases where elders could not exercise their constitutional rights such as buying or selling a property, claiming for old-age allowance, and opening bank accounts because the government did not availed them vital legal documents such as citizenship certificates. Such cases were considered a neglect of seniors by the government machinery.

- Elders also suffered neglect by family members when their grown children migrated out in search of better opportunities leaving frail elders at home in remote villages to take care of themselves, and/or abducted or killed by parties involved in armed conflict that lasted for a decade (1996 – 2006) in the past.

There are limited old age homes in Nepal and most of them are run by charities. Old age homes are generally over crowded. Elders living there also suffered neglect by the caregivers. Reported cases of negligence in old age homes included lack of warm clothes in winter and insufficient food for residents as the old age homes did not have sufficient budget to fully meet such needs of the residents.

A group of elderly also took out street demonstration with a demand to end discrimination against them by the government. Such incidence reflects the general feeling among elders of being neglected by the society/government.

Sexual

Three old women were sexually abused. Abusers were under high influence of alcohol. One of the rapists was killed by the villagers and one was arrested and handed over to the police. It is interesting to note that one of the victims was 102 years old lady in a village. She was repeatedly raped by an alcoholic and she complained it to the villagers. But villagers ignored her call for help thinking that she was not in her right mind. It was only when villagers saw the rapist raping the lady that they caught the abuser and handed him to police and he was released after some days in police custody. This case represents a serve prevalence of ageism and poor judicial system to punish elder abusers.

Financial

This type of abuse includes cases where abusers fraudulently try to gain from the property of elderly people. A total of five cases were reported out of 117. Victims were killed in four of the five cases. Among dead, one was male and rests were females. Two of the cases were about disputes relating to land ownership. In one case the elder was beaten to death by his relative. There was a case of one millionaire lady who was forced to take refuge in relatives' house because an acquaintance tricked her to sign legal documents to transfer her property ownership to the abuser.

Robbery

Robbery is considered a crime of general nature and not a type of elder abuse. However, considering the high number of cases (Figure 3.5), it was felt worthwhile to mention it separately. Many reports considered for this study led to believe that victims were robbed specifically because they were old and weak. In other words, there was sufficient ground to believe that elders are more prone to victimized by robbers. However, further research is necessary to substantiate this observation.

Legal

Only two cases of legal abuse were reported in last two years. In one case, a fraudulent heir apparent managed to obtain death certificate from the government office in the name of living old lady. The next report is about an 84 years old lady continuously following up one legal case of her property rights since last forty years and the court has not given any decision yet. This was considered a case of elder abuse by the legal system though it too could arguably be put under the neglect of senior citizen by the government. The case of issuing a death certificate for a living lady could as well be considered a case of financial abuse.

Behavioral and Emotional Abuse

It is interesting to see that no incident of behavioral or emotional abuse was reported in two years period. It is well accepted that incidences of verbal, emotional or psychological abuses are difficult to verify as they lack physical evidence or witness that could be presented in the court of justice, if and when needed. Such abuses could become a subject of media interest, particularly for national news, only when they persist for long period leading to some incidence of physical harm. Also, behavioral and emotional abuses cause behavioral and emotional changes among victims. But it is difficult to establish cause and effect relationships between these two sets of behaviors. Because of these limitations, it is rare to find main stream media reports on such abuses as there were none reported in last two years. This is one of the limitations of this study which is based on the reported cases in the national print media. Studies based on police and/or legal records are also prone to such limitations especially in countries like Nepal where there is absence of any functional institution at the community level to look into interpersonal behavioral relationship within a family.

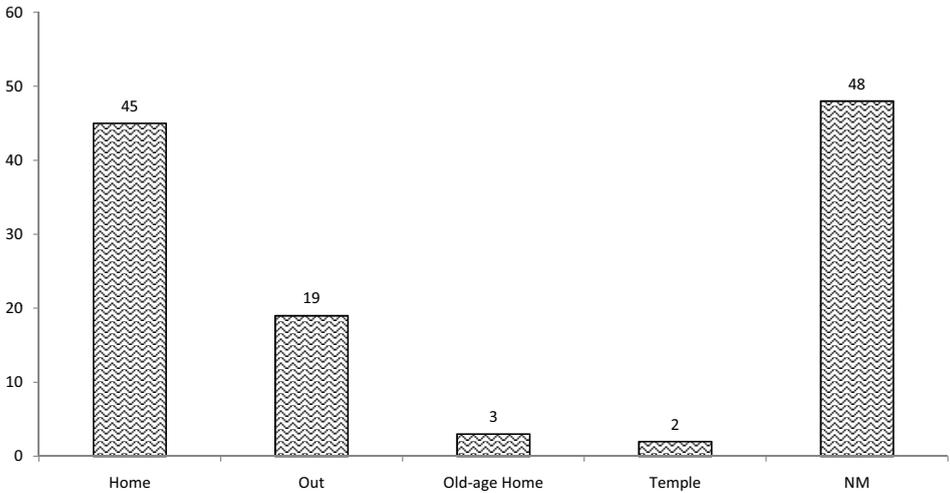
6. Location of Abuse

Figure 3.7 show that the incidence of elder abuse occurs mostly (38.5%) within family homes. Analysis of news content reveled that news-reporters generally do not consider it important to mention where the incidences of elder abuse occurred as the locations of incidence were not specified in 41 % of reported cases. This data suggests that journalists/reporters generally do not consider it important to report specific location where the incidence of elder abuse took place.

It is particularly interesting to note that elder abuse also occurs in places like temple where people gather for worshipping the God. Generally, old people frequent temples more where they are abused often. These abuses mostly involved snatching away jewelry and bags of elderly by petty thugs. Abandoned elders are found resorting to begging in these sites and they too are often victimized.

Elder abuse in nursing homes and old-age homes were also reported. Insufficient budget and untrained personnel were reported to be the main cause for neglect in old age homes.

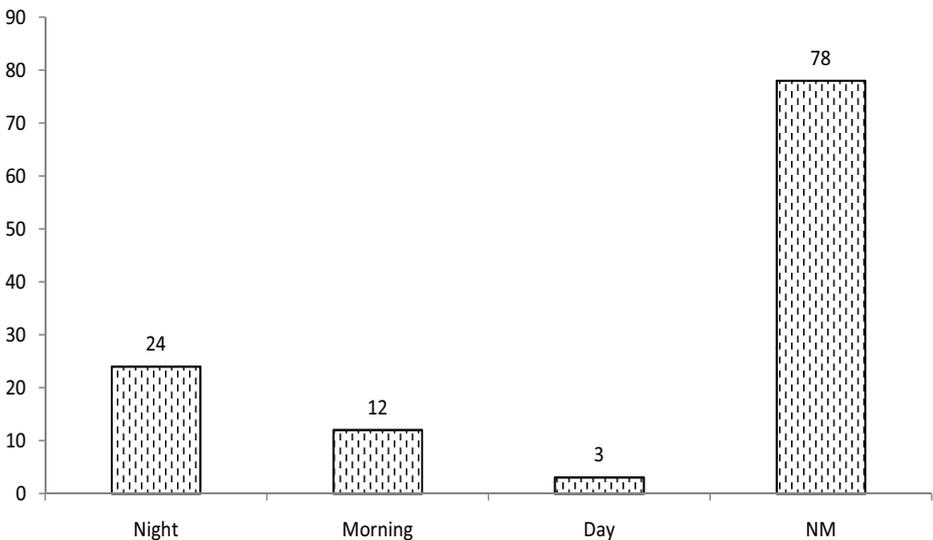
Figure 3.7. Places Where Incidence of Elder Abuse Occurs



7. Time of Abuse

The time of incidence was not reported in 78 out of 117 events (Figure 3.8). Among the reported cases, the incidence of elder abuse was higher at night and in the morning (24 events at night and 12 events in the morning). It was rare in day time. The findings suggest that elder abuse is more common while the movement of people is quite low.

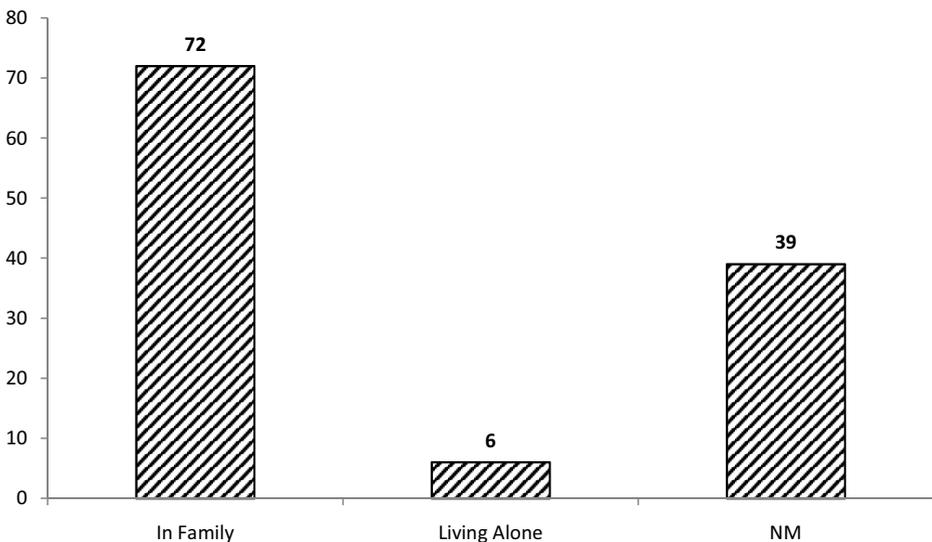
Figure 3.8 Time When Elders Are Most Vulnerable to Abuse



8. Family Types and Living Arrangements

It is clear to see in Figure 3.9 that 62% of victims of elder abuse were living with their family where as only 5.1% victims were living alone. This findings for all types of abuse challenge the general belief that an elders are safer within his/her family than those living alone. Information on living arrangement of a victim was not reported in 33% (39) of cases. Elders living alone face less chances of abuse at their residence but share the same probability of being abused out of their residence.

Figure 3.9 Living Arrangement of Victims



Note: NM = Not mentioned

9. Ethnicity/Caste of Victims

For the purpose of this study, victims were grouped into different categories based on their family names that generally reflect their caste and/or ethnicity. Family names of victims were mentioned only in 91 of 117 reported cases. It would be erroneous to conclude that the castes/ethnicities that show higher cases of elder abuse in Table 3.3 below represent the general characteristics of entire population of a particular ethnicity/caste. Firstly, the small sample size does not allow characterizing the entire population of a particular caste/ethnicity. Secondly, it could as well be because the reported cases happened to be concentrated in areas that are easily accessible for reporters. However, Table 3.3 helps to prioritize for starting ethnicity based study on elder abuse in Nepal.

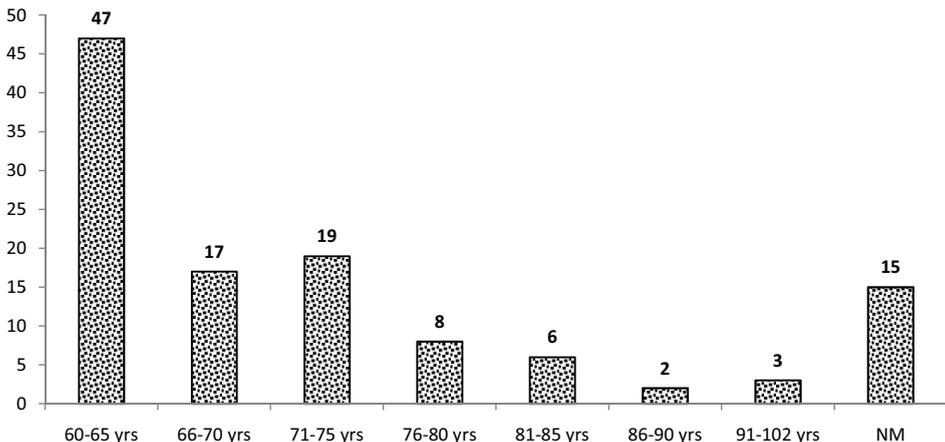
Table 3.3. Victims by Caste/ethnicity

Group	List of Family Names							Case from each family name	Total
A	Ahir	Bakkhati	Bhandari	Bista	Bujhel	Chaudhary	Dhami		
	Dhobi	Dum	Fauja	Gagai	Gelal	Gharti	Giri		
	Katuwal	KC	Khanal	Koirala	Lama	Limbu	Maden		
	Magar	Mahatara	Majhi	Meyar	Mishra	Murau	Niraula		
	Pariyaar	Paudel	Pokhrel	Puri	Saaud	Sardar	Shah		
	Shahi	Shrestha	Siwakoti	Subedi	Sunari	Sunuwar	Teli		
	Thakur	Tharki	Upreti	Pandey					
B	Darnal	Ghimire	Khatun	Mahat	Nepali	Thapa	Yadav	1 Case from each	46
C	Gurung	Khatri	Saru					2 Cases from each	14
D								3 cases from each	9
E	Khadka,	Rai						4 cases from each	8
F	Bika							5	5
G	Tamang							9	9
G								NA	26
								Grand Total	117

10. Age and Vulnerability to Abuse

It is generally expected that people become more vulnerable to abuse as they advance in age. However, Figure 3.10 refutes such expectations. It was found that most of the victims were of 60-65 age group and the cases of elder abuse did not increase with higher age. One explanation for this result could be because people of 60-65 age are likely to be more active and may tend to assert their rights and role in matters of their interest which the potential abuser may find unacceptable and incidence of elder abuse occurs.

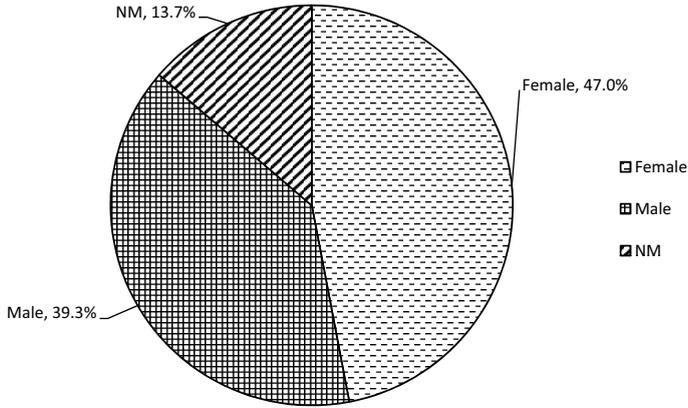
Figure 3.10 Relations between Age and Vulnerability to Abuse and Neglect



11. Victims by Gender

Women were found to be victimized more often (47%) than men (39%). This finding (Figure 3.11) supports the generally expected weak physical conditions of women particularly that of widows, in a patriarchic society marred by poverty like in Nepal. Victim's gender was not reported in almost 14% cases.

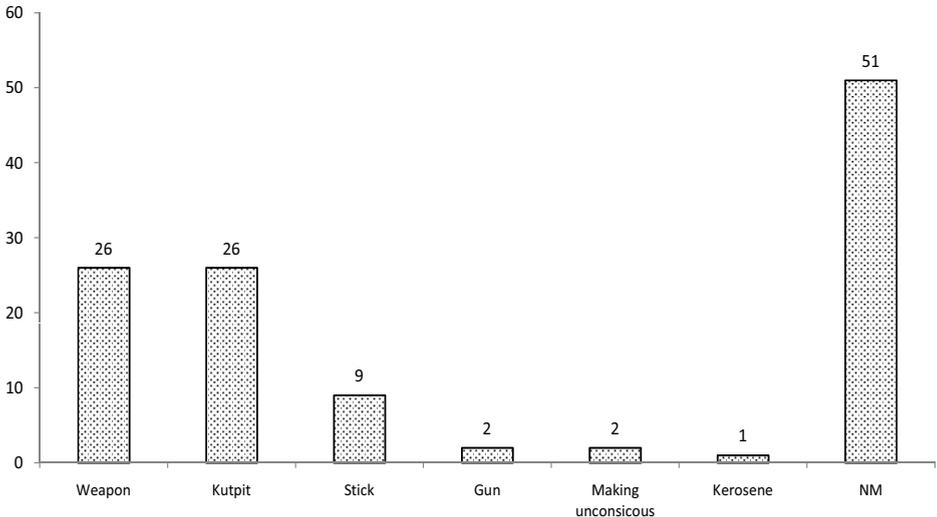
Figure 3.11 Victims by Gender



12. Means Used for Abuse

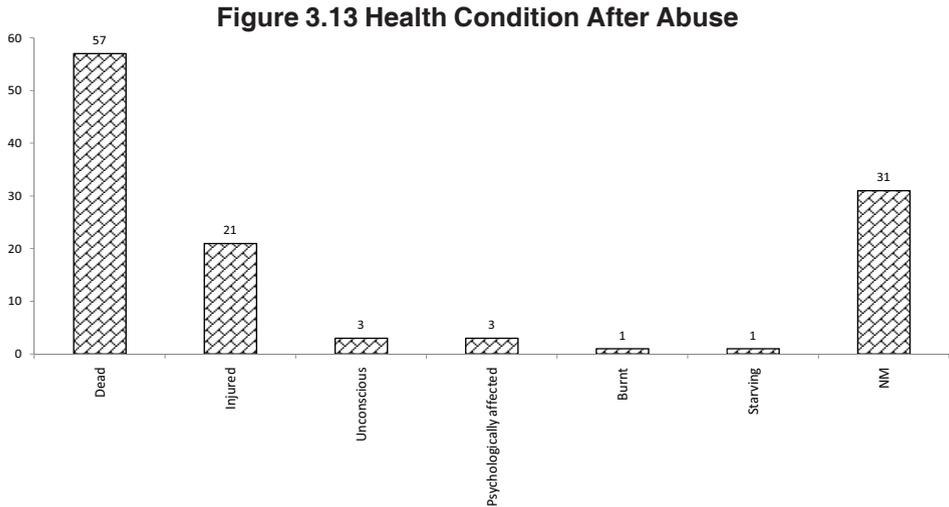
Figure 3.12 shows that weapons (except gun) were used in 22% (26) cases of physical abuse. Other weapons used by the abuser included axe, knife, or any sharp object that happened to be easily available for abuser at the time and place of the event. Fist fights were used in equal number (26) of cases. In one case the abuser used kerosene to burn the old family member. In two cases, elders became unconscious after consuming fruit drinks and eating some apparently normal looking but medicated edibles offered by strangers with the intention of taking away elder’s belongings. In about 43% of total cases, information was not reported if any weapon was used.

Figure 3.12 Means Used for Physical Abuse



13. Health Condition After Abuse

Different types of abuses resulted into death of victims in almost 49% (57) cases as shown in Figure 3.13 below. Majority of these abuse types were physical and negligence, respectively. Health condition of victims was not reported in 31 cases.



14. Victim’s Relation with Abuser

The study revealed that most of the abusers were strangers. For the purpose of this study, cases where elders were denied of their rights were taken as abuse by the government, including cases where old-age allowances were not provided. Table 3.4 indicates that relatives were the third most common abusers followed by son. It is generally expected that elders are abused more often by daughter-in-laws at home than son but the study revealed otherwise. This could be because most abuses by daughter in-laws are of emotional and verbal in nature. Such abuses were not reported in the media.

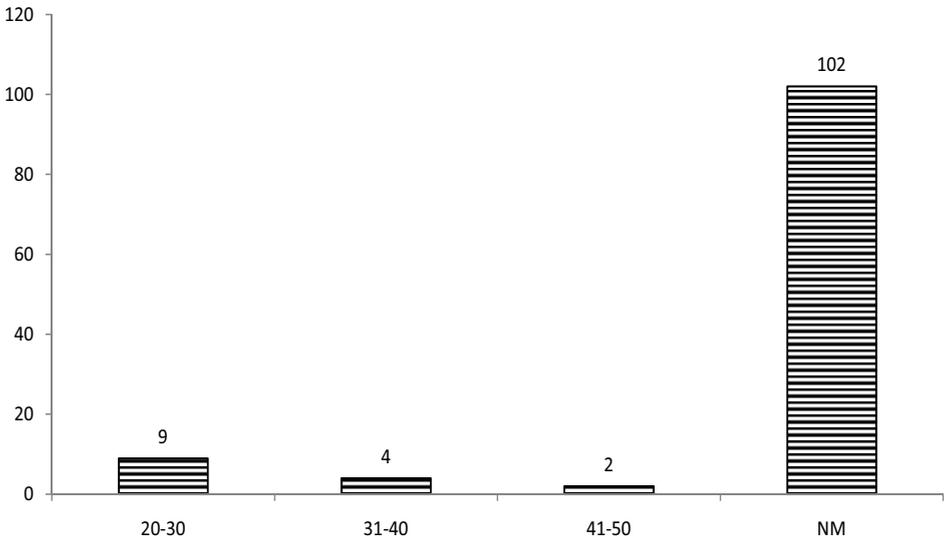
Table 3.4 Victims Relation with Abuser

S.No.	Victims Relation with Abuser	Total Cases of All Abuse Types
1	Stranger	22
2	Government	17
3	Close Relatives (Son 10; Husband 3; Son-in-law 1; Grandson 1; Daughter-in-law 1; Co-wife 1 ;)	17
4	Villagers and neighbors	17
5	Other relatives	16
6	Not mentioned or not identified	26
7	Acquaintance	2
	Total	117

15. Age of Abuser

Information on age group of abuser can be helpful in defining the target group for elder abuse prevention program. However, age of abuser was not reported in 102 of 117 cases studied. It indicates that reporters do not consider it important to be specific on the age of abuser. Among the reported 9 cases, abusers were quite young (20-30 years old) as shown in Figure 3.14 and most of them were male.

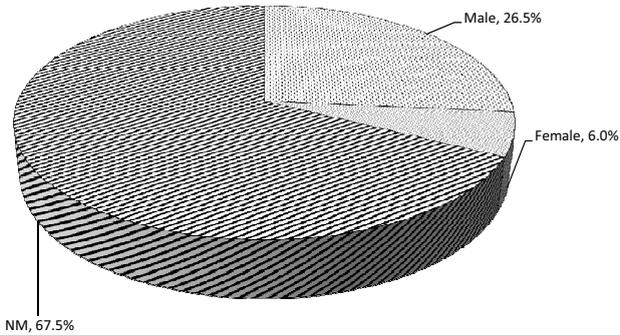
Figure 3. 14 Age of Abusers



16. Gender of Abuser

Gender of abuser was not mentioned in 79 out of 117 cases studied (Figure 3.15). Of the information available for 38 cases, 31 were male and 7 were females. Considering the large gap between these two figures, it is tempting to generalize that male are more likely to be an abuser in most of elder abuse cases.

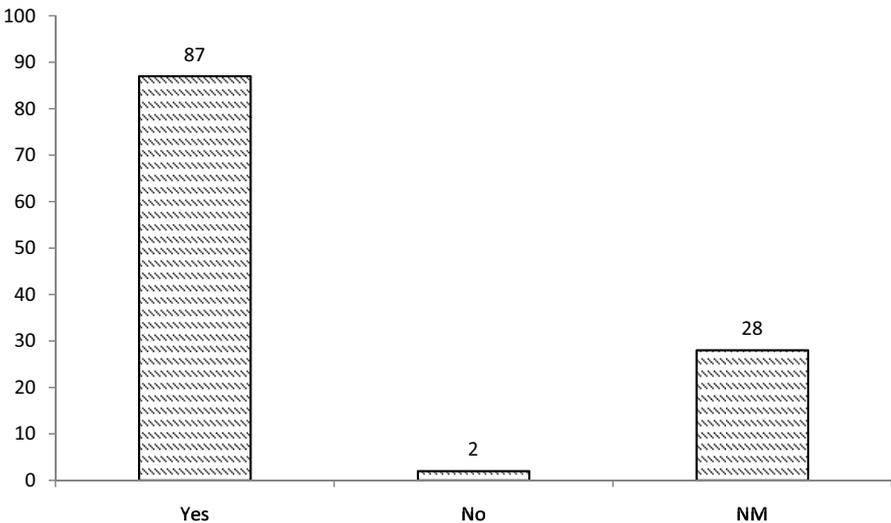
Figure 3.15 Gender of abusers



17. Police and Arrests

It is clear to see in Figure 3.16 that police was informed in 74% (87) of the reported cases. A total of 57 victims were dead among 87 cases of elder abuse of all types (Figures of 3.13 above). In other words, death had occurred in most cases of elder abuse. Police was involved only in 25% cases where victim was not dead. These figures reveal that most cases of elder abuse become a subject of interest for media and the police only when the death occurs. This leads to conclude that most abuse cases (75%) go unreported by the media and unnoticed by the police if abuse does not lead to death of the victim.

Figure 3.16 Involvements of Police



Follow up reporting was found to be rare even on cases where police action was taken. Of the 87 cases where police was involved, arrest of abuser was reported only in 26 cases. Information about action taken against abuser was not available in 69 cases of elder abuse cases reported.

Chapter Four

Summary and Recommendation

This Chapter summarizes main findings from previous chapter and moves on to suggest policy and program recommendations for all concerned.

1. Prevalence of Elder Abuse

A study by Philip Bulman (NIJ Journal NO 265, 2010) has estimated for year 2003 that 1.6 percent of old Americans (65+) suffered physical abuse. Other forms of elder abuse such as financial exploitation and emotional mistreatment were experienced by 5.2 and 5.1 percent old US citizens, respectively. These figures reflect high level of exposure of elder abuse cases in American society. Further it is said that these figures represent only “tip of the iceberg”. These figures compared with the fact that only 117 elders, out of the estimated total population of 2.2 million elders, suffered different types of abuses in last two years highlight how little of abuse cases are exposed to Nepali media. Not a single case of emotional and behavioral abuse was reported. These findings only highlight the sever lack of awareness about elder abuse in Nepal and absence of mechanisms to make such events a subject of public information.

Less information available to public on prevalence of elder abuse also means less pressure for the government and other concerned agencies to come up with suitable policies and programs to curb the problem. Therefore it is high time to initiate activities that would bring out hidden information on prevalence of elder abuse in Nepali society to public scrutiny. The role of media is critically important for the purpose.

2. Quality of Press Reporting on Elder Abuse

This study revealed that, firstly, it is rare for elder abuse to get reported in the press unless it takes some from of a criminal case such as victim’s death. For example, not a single case of emotional and behavioral type of abuse was reported in two years. Secondly, such news is not given prominent place in the paper as they are given little space in some corner of inside pages (see

Annex 3). Thirdly, the information contents of reports were too little and obscure. For example, most of the reports did not give information that could be helpful to locate the place of event and the persons involved. These observations lead to conclude that there is need to raise awareness level of communities and media personnel on basic characteristics of elder abuse and the importance of reporting them properly.

3. Elder Abuse as Public Information

Identifying a case of emotional and behavioral elder abuse requires an in depth understanding of mind set of both abusers and the victims. Such skill could be developed only by continuous observation over an extended period. Such task could be performed effectively by neighbors and/or the community members provided they already have basic understanding of principles of elder abuse.

Like in many other societies, it is a social taboo in Nepal for an outsider to look into the interpersonal relationships within a family. This makes it difficult for any case of elder abuse to come out in the public arena before it develops into some event of public crime. Even then, it may not get the attention of national media in lack of network for information collection and dissemination as evident from the low cases reported from remote districts. Even if these conditions are fulfilled, the media personnel need to understand the importance of proper reporting, which was found to be grossly lacking.

4. Characteristics of Elder Abuse in Nepal

This study has revealed some characteristics and magnitude of elder abuse as it prevails in Nepal. Findings give fewer answers but are more helpful to raise pertinent questions for taking initiatives towards curbing the problem in the future.

- Elder abuse is severely under reported. Most of the reported cases are from easy access areas. The number of reported cases increases moving from western to eastern and northern to southern parts of Nepal. There are no reportings from remote and high mountain areas characterized by low population density, high poverty and low access to modern amenities. It is difficult to ascertain whether the higher cases of elder abuse from urban centers are due to: a) easy access to media, or b) elders in urban centers is more likely to be abused and if so what are the causative factors? How abuse differs from the same population size living in urban and rural settings?
- Most cases were reported only because the event took a form of general crime where elders died, robbed, raped or led to violation of general laws for public order. It was obvious from the reported cases that victims had gone through a long period of emotional and behavioral abuse. There is absence of formal or informal social system and legal provisions by which emotional and

behavioral abuse could be detected, reported and the abuser punished. Having identified this gap, answers need to be sought for what form of social and legal system could be viable for addressing such issue in Nepal.

- This preliminary study show in its limited way that elder abuse occurs more often in certain caste/ethnicity than in others. The validity of these finding needs to be further verified with extended research on different communities before suitable intervention program could be designed for specific target population.
- Much of the findings about location, time, living arrangement, age and gender related to cases of elder abuse are agreeable to common reasoning and expectations. This gives a base on which awareness development program could be designed and implemented. But again, answers had to be sought for question like who should take such initiatives at what scale to begin with. Some of the reliable findings of this study include the following:
 - ❖ There is absence of organization at any level in the formal or informal sector that could be used as a reliable source of information on elder abuse as it exists in Nepal
 - ❖ Media reports cases of elder abuse more for its current news value and less for the value of information in building a society that ensure safe social environment for elders.
 - ❖ Media attention is drawn primarily when elder abuse takes the form of a public crime of concern for police and judiciary. Prevalence of abuse short of such attributes remain hidden as “family matters” where it still is a social taboo to look into how each member in the family is treated and their basic human rights protected.
 - ❖ There is need to create a mechanism by which elder abuse cases from remote parts of the country are also brought to national attention.
 - ❖ Government machinery has not been effective in implementing special service provisions that it has promised for its senior citizens. As a result, senior citizens living in families and in old age homes generally feel neglected and abused even by the government. This is evident from the fact that many able bodied senior citizens had to resort to measures such taking out street protests or call strike for making their voices heard.
 - ❖ Elders living with families are victimized more often than those living alone. Night and morning hours are the critical times when elders are abused the most.
 - ❖ A majority of victims are females and abusers are mostly males of 20-30 years age group.
 - ❖ Elders in the age group of 60-65 were found to be more vulnerable to elder abuse than those of higher age group. A further study on social

and psychological causative factors is critically important to establish clear understanding for these phenomena.

- ❖ Police involvement in higher number of cases can be explained for most abuse cases take a form of public crime. However, the low numbers of cases where abusers are arrested and punished for the crime demand further investigation to identify the cause. It could as well be because there is absence of proper legal provisions for the police to take appropriate actions against the abuser.

4. Recommendations

Findings of this study have led to the three main recommendations as point of departure from the present situation.

- 4.1 There is urgent need to establish a National Center for Prevention of Elder Abuse that would maintain time series information on elder abuse cases in Nepal. Such an organization would collect information from media, police, judiciary, local government and communities. Thus maintained data bank would provide a strong basis for developing suitable policies, programs and legal provisions not only for curbing the social ills like elder abuse but also for addressing other issues of ageing population in Nepal. Such national center would work as watch dog on issues of elder abuse, in particular. To begin with, Geriatric Center Nepal has already taken the first step towards the direction with the information used for this study. Cooperation and support from other concerned agencies could only expedite the process.
- 4.2 It is high time that a national program be implemented to build awareness on elder abuse. Such program should focus on media personnel, police, and the judiciaries. The existing network of TV, FM/AM radio-stations, print media and local government (Secretary of Village Development Committees) need to be involved in awareness building process. The program activities should include but not limited to the following.
 - Organization of regional workshops in each of the five development regions where representatives from TV, Radio, Print Media, and District Governments would participate. Information provided to these participants would automatically be passed on to communities and families in the region because of their nature of involvement with general public. The workshop objective should be to make key personnel aware about basic principles of elder abuse and the importance of making the issue a subject of concern for government and public alike.
 - There are about 300 FM radio stations operating in different parts of the country. They together cover population not only of entire Nepal

but also that of adjoining provinces of India such as UP and Bihar. Some of these radio stations are community based and broadcast in local languages. Together they form a national network of local radio stations. Also, there are many “radio-program production houses” in Kathmandu and other major cities of Nepal.

These existing resources of radio-network could be effectively used for: a) collection of local information **from** communities, and b) dissemination of information **to** local communities. FM Radio as a media is more suitable in Nepal for it can reach out to illiterates unlike print media, to poor unlike TV, people of all local languages and living in areas with poor access roads. These radio stations could also be made to function as network for information sharing both ways, i.e., sharing of global events with local communities and sharing of local events with national and international level agencies. Such activities could also regularly feed into the data bank of the proposed National Center for Prevention of Elder Abuse suggested above.

Therefore, the need of the hour is to start a radio program on elder abuse for broadcasting all over Nepal periodically, i.e., fortnightly or monthly to start with.

- 4.3** Detail surveys should be made to generate sufficient information that could provide a reliable basis for understanding general characteristics and magnitude of elder abuse as exists in different parts of Nepal.
- 4.4** Implementation of program that promotes establishment of Elder Service Center as a NGO in all VDCs should be expedited (GCN 2010).

Knowledge and experience gained from implementation of one or all of the three activities suggested above could then guide the suitable policy and program for implementation process in the future.



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Annex 1

The United Nations Principles for Older Persons

Bearing in mind the standards already set by the International Plan of Action on Ageing and the conventions, recommendations and resolutions of the International Labour Organisation, the World Health Organization and other United Nations entities, Encourages Governments to incorporate the following principles into their national programmes whenever possible:

Independence

1. Older persons should have access to adequate food, water, shelter, clothing and health care through the provision of income, family and community support and self-help.
2. Older persons should have the opportunity to work or to have access to other income-generating opportunities.
3. Older persons should be able to participate in determining when and at what pace withdrawal from the labor force takes place.
4. Older persons should have access to appropriate educational and training programmes.
5. Older persons should be able to live in environments that are safe and adaptable to personal preferences and changing capacities.
6. Older persons should be able to reside at home for as long as possible.

Participation

7. Older persons should remain integrated in society, participate actively in the formulation and implementation of policies that directly affect their well-being and share their knowledge and skills with younger generations.
8. Older persons should be able to seek and develop opportunities for service to the community and to serve as volunteers in positions appropriate to their interests and capabilities.
9. Older persons should be able to form movements or associations of older persons.

Care

10. Older persons should benefit from family and community care and protection in accordance with each society's system of cultural values.
11. Older persons should have access to health care to help them to maintain or regain the optimum level of physical, mental and emotional well-being and to prevent or delay the onset of illness.
12. Older persons should have access to social and legal services to enhance their autonomy, protection and care.

13. Older persons should be able to utilize appropriate levels of institutional care providing protection, rehabilitation and social and mental stimulation in a humane and secure environment.
14. Older persons should be able to enjoy human rights and fundamental freedoms when residing in any shelter, care or treatment facility, including full respect for their dignity, beliefs, needs and privacy and for the right to make decisions about their care and the quality of their lives.

Self-fulfillment

15. Older persons should be able to pursue opportunities for the full development of their potential.
16. Older persons should have access to the educational, cultural, spiritual and recreational resources of society.

Dignity

17. Older persons should be able to live in dignity and security and be free of exploitation and physical or mental abuse.
18. Older persons should be treated fairly regardless of age, gender, racial or ethnic background, disability or other status, and be valued independently of their economic contribution.

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