

Rape Profile in Mountain Province

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Abstract

The Philippine Commission of Women states that rape is among the dominant form of violence against women and their children (VAWC) in the Philippines. This is true in Mountain Province. The study revealed that among the 10 municipalities of Mountain Province, for four years 2014-2017, Paracelis consistently holds the highest reported cases of rape. Most of the victims' ranges from ages 20 and below and perpetrators ranges from ages 11-30 years old. As revealed by the data obtained in the Provincial Police District, rape takes place between 8:00 in the morning to 8:00 in the evening. Amicable settlement is still being practiced in the province due to lack of orientation/awareness of the victim and family members of the victim on laws against amicable settlement. Institutional mechanism should be strongly established in the barangay level.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

Rape, along with abuse, continues to challenge the law enforcers and policy makers in ending violence against women and children. Shpancer (2016) commented in his article that in the 1960s, the feminist movement was able to change how America views, and treats rape; and that feminist consciousness raising, insightful theorizing, and persistent advocacy have led to immense progresses in how rape survivors are treated by the law enforcers, the courts, and the media.

Researchers have been investigating the nature of rape, its implication to culture and society, and the factors that triggers the commission of rape. The effects of rape to victims and possible intervention measures were also explored through several studies, but the prevalence of rape in the global perspective is escalating.

The World Health Organization (2021) published that 1 in 3 of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their life. It is also reported in the National Sexual Violence Resource Center that

one of six American women has been a victim of rape, either attempted or completed, in her life.

Similarly, according to the Council for the Welfare of Children (2016), the first ever National Baseline Study on Violence Against Children (NBS-VAC), about 3.2 percent of children and youths experienced forced consummated sex during childhood. However, the reported statistics and reports are superficial figures since it does not portray the actual cases in each community.

In the Philippines, there were 1,897 cases of rape reported in 2016 and that one woman or child is raped every hour (Morales, 2017). In her report, Gutierrez (2017) mentioned that rape is the most common form of sexual abuse, followed by incest then inappropriate touching. The incest rate is pegged at 33%. From 2011-2016, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) served a total of 2,770 incest victims out of a total of 7,418 victims of sexual abuse, with a recorded average per year fluctuating between 400 and 500 victims.

According to Baron and Straus (2014), gender inequality, social disorganization, percent residing in SMSAs, the circulation of pornography, economic inequality and percent unemployed have direct effects on the incidence of rape. Also, Sarkar (2013) posited that extensive research over the past 3 decades (and more) suggests that several mental health issues underlie sexual violence, particularly rape. Stotzer and MacCartney (2016) also cited the following as individual factors that have been found to lead to increase rape proclivity among men which include: Rape myth acceptance, High sexual arousal to rape depiction or sexual violence, pornography consumption, desire to have power over women, increased levels of hostile sexism, and increased gender stereotyped attitudes toward women. On the other hand, Crall and Goodfriend (2016) otherwise found that rape myth acceptance on target campus was quite low and that students disagree with rape myths.

Carr and Van Deusen (2004) also posited that pornographic use was common among men that may add to the risk of sexual aggression. Specific, violent or rape-theme content of the pornography has been associated with propensity to rape and pro-rape attitudes from self-reports of men who have admitted raping.

Thornhill and Palmer (2000) also argued that the young men should learn that past Darwinian selection is the reason that a man can get an erection just by looking at a photo of a naked woman; why he may be tempted to demand sex even if he knows that his date truly does not want it; and why he may mistake a woman's friendly comment or tight blouse as an invitation to sex.

To pressing issues on rape and sexual abuse, the government with the aid of NGOs has taken initiatives to set up crisis centers for rape survivors in collaboration with the different sectors of the community to help victims deal with the trauma and encourage them to report rape. Several rape-related laws have also been passed to address the concern. Through the provision of suitable legal support and health services, it is hoped that women victims of rape be encouraged to come forward for proper intervention and justice to be served accordingly (Philippine Commission on Women, 2009).

Sarkar (2013) defined rape as vaginal or anal penetration in the absence of lawful consent. However, the Philippine Republic Act No. 8353, known as the Anti-Rape Law of 1997, expanded the definition of the crime of rape and re-classified it as a crime against persons. Previously, it was classified as a crime against chastity and belonged to the group of crimes that include adultery, concubinage, acts of lasciviousness, seduction, corruption of minors, and white slave trade. As a crime against persons, the law no longer considers it as a private crime. Anyone who has knowledge of the crime may file a case on the victim's behalf. Prosecution continues even if the victim drops the case or pardons the offender.

The Philippine Commission on Women (2009) defined rape as committed under the following circumstances: A man has sexual intercourse with a woman: through force, threat or intimidation; When the victim is deprived of reason or is unconscious; through fraudulent machination or grave abuse of authority; and when the victim is under 12 years of age or is demented, even if none of the above conditions are present. Any person who, under any of the above conditions, commits an act of sexual assault through oral or anal sex or by inserting an instrument or object into the anal or genital orifice of another person.

This study is attached to the theory of Baron and Straus (1987) that social constraints

against rape is reduced by the social disorganization. This framework is used in the study since it is believed that the factors that contribute to the commission of rape and the victim vulnerabilities are influenced by the community and the environment.

Parenting skills and role of family is also considered in this research since the concept “home is where love is” is a manifestation that a child’s future depends on the quality of support given by parents. The kind of upbringing one receives in the family may influence how he reacts to a given situation. In this research, victims may be raised by parent-offenders or offenders were bred from unstable families.

This study is also anchored to the theory on the proliferation of pornographic materials by Baron and Straus (2014). According to Peter and Valkenburg (2016) pornography is related with more liberal sexual attitudes connected with stronger gender-stereotypical sexual belief.

The concept map reflects the factors contributing to the commission of rape and the victim vulnerabilities both affect the profile of rape cases in Mountain Province. The presence of the factors such as the things that motivate the offenders to commit crimes and the causes that make victims become targets of rape greatly affect the increase of rape incidences

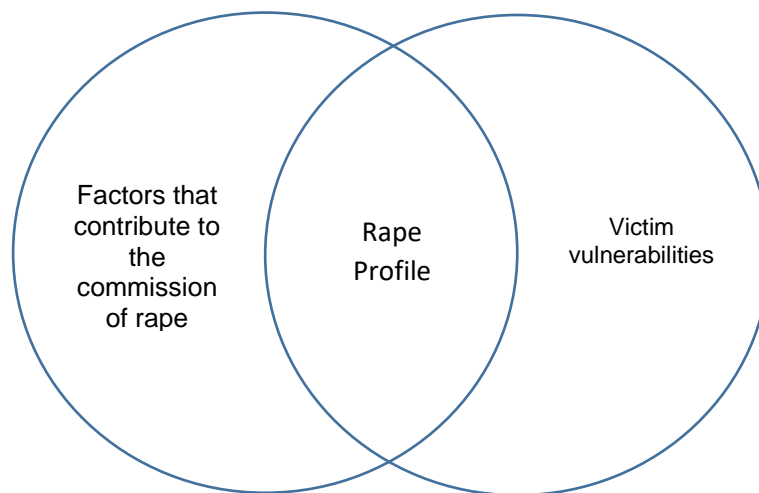


Figure 1. Paradigm of the study

Statement of the Problems

This study aimed to look into the profile of reported rape incidences in Mountain Province and it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of rape cases in Mountain Province according to:
 - a. Rate
 - b. Time of commission
 - c. Place of commission
 - d. Type of rape
 - e. Status of rape cases
 - f. Victim age group
 - g. Offender age group
2. What are the factors that contribute to the commission of rape?
3. What are the victim vulnerabilities?

Significance of the Study

Since rape is becoming a public concern because of the damages it can cause the victims’ personality and future, this research is conceptualized to help understand why rape is widely committed in the province despite the living traditions and culture that prohibit incestuous relationships and exploitation. It also aims to propose intervention programs that would help mitigate the commission of rape cases based on the results and findings of the study.

Scope of the Delimitation of the study

This research is focused on the profile of reported rape cases in Mountain Province that were reported and consolidated by the Women and Children Protection Desk Unit of

Mountain Province Police Provincial Office from Calendar Year 2014-2017. The factors that contribute to the commission of rape; victim vulnerabilities; and the possible intervention measure that can be undertaken by concerned agencies to mitigate rape incidences. The effects of rape experiences on the victims and personal reasons why the suspects raped were not included in the study.

Methodology

Population and Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in Mountain Province. The data on the profile of rape cases were gathered from the reported rape cases recorded by the Mountain Province Police Provincial Office. Three social workers and two police women assigned at the Women and Children Protection Desk were interviewed to determine the factors and victim vulnerabilities.

Research Design

The study used the documentary analysis as a system of procedure for evaluating the police reports from the Mountain Province Police Provincial Office. Since this method requires at least two data sources, interview was also used to corroborate the findings across police reports; hence, the use of thematic analysis.

Instrumentation

Interview guide was used to identify the factors that contribute to the commission of rape and the victim vulnerabilities. The interview guide is semi-structured to allow the informants to freely express their views.

Documents and records from the existing data from police reports were also used to profile rape cases in Mountain Province. A checklist was prepared for the frequency counting and percentage on the profiles of rape.

Data Gathering

The researchers sent a request letter to the provincial director of Mountain Province Police Provincial Office (MPPPO) for the data

needed to determine the profile of rape in Mountain Province and to interview WCPD personnel. Request letters were also sent to the Bontoc Municipal Social Works and Development (MSWD) and the Provincial Social Works and Development (PSWD) to ask the participation of the social workers.

The data obtained from the MPPPO were analyzed according to profile and were interpreted. Interview results were used to support the findings of the study. Personnel from the MSWD, PSWD and Women and Children Protection Desk at the Bontoc Municipal Police Station were interviewed regarding the factors that contribute to the commission of rape and the victim vulnerabilities.

Data Analysis

Document analysis was used to determine the profile of rape cases according to rate, time and place of commission, type and status of the case, victim age group and offender age group through frequency counting.

The results of the interview from social workers and WCPD personnel were studied using thematic analysis. The results from the document analysis and interviews were triangulated with the observations of the parents who were interviewed were carefully. The results of the interview were translated and coded according to similarities where themes were derived.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Rape Profile in Mountain Province

This section presents the five profiles of rape cases according to rate, time of commission, place of commission, status of the case, victim's age group and suspect's age group. Looking at the profile gives a better understanding on the status of rape cases in Mountain Province that would give light for this research to recommend suggestions on how to mitigate the rape incidences.

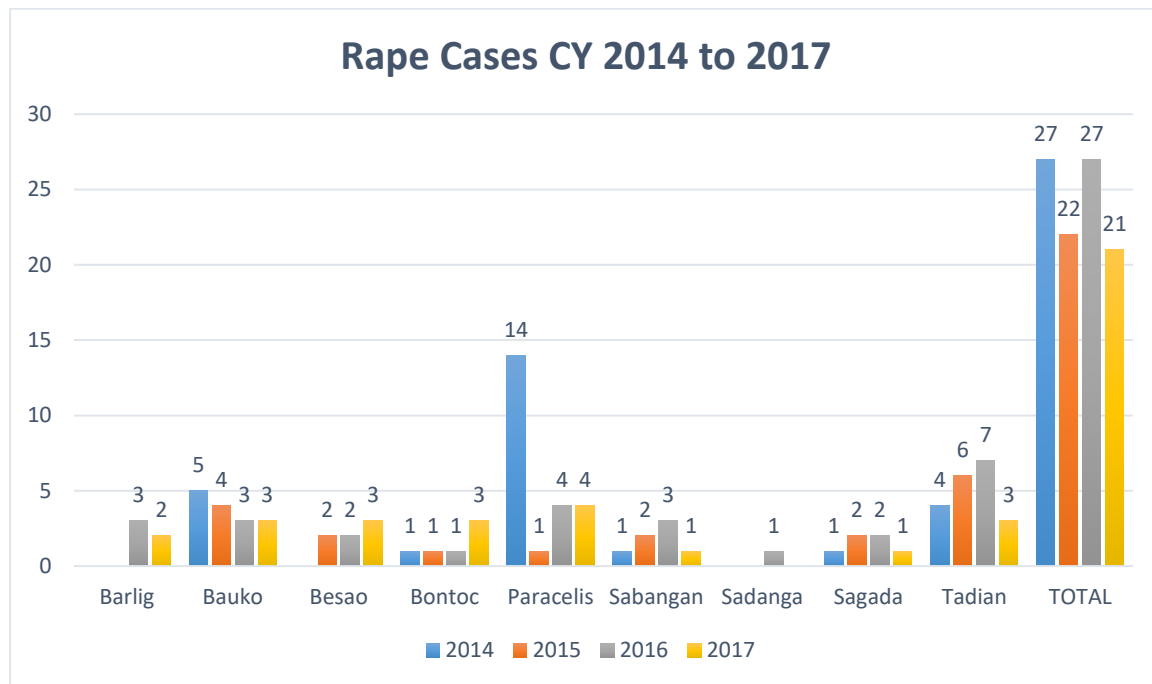


Figure 2. Rape Profile according to Rate

Figure 2 shows the rape incidence profile from Calendar Year 2014-2017 in all 10 municipalities of Mountain Province with 97 reported cases. The highest is 27 rape cases reported in 2014 followed by 25 reported cases in 2016. The third year with highest reported cases is 2017 with 22 cases and 2015 holds the least number of cases with 21 reports. The gap of the reported cases per year is too close that it is still considered as alarming since there is no substantial difference on the number of incidences.

It is also reflected on the table that the municipality of Paracelis holds the highest number of reports from 2014-2017 with 23 cases. In an interview with one of the respondents who is also a MSWD personnel at Bontoc, she said that, “*Paracelis lacks neighborhood watch because the houses are apart from each other.*” The distance of the houses can make victims helpless because there are no neighbors to call on for help. Women and children become vulnerable when they walk home on their own from work or school late at night or for those going to school are unaccompanied by parents or guardians and are left on their own.

The municipality with the second highest reported rape cases is Tadian with 19 reports from 2014 – 2017, followed by Bauko with 15 cases.

It can also be noted that Sadanga having one count of reported rape case, which transpired in 2014 can be attributed to several assumptions; one, the effort of the academe (MPSPC) on its unceasing advocacy and campaign against VAWC, which is perpetually initiated by the Criminology Department, Extension Unit and Gender and Development System during the annual celebration of the 18-Day Campaign to End VAWC; and second, on cultural practices where offenders are fined expensively and excommunicated from the barangay.

Rape Profile according to Time of Commission

Time is a significant profile to be reflected since it can be a consideration in the advocacy against rape. As recorded, most rape cases happened between 4:00 in the afternoon to 8:00 in the evening with 30 cases followed by 23 cases that happened between 8:00 in the morning and 12:00 at noon. Eighteen rape cases were reported to have been committed between 8:00 in the evening and midnight.

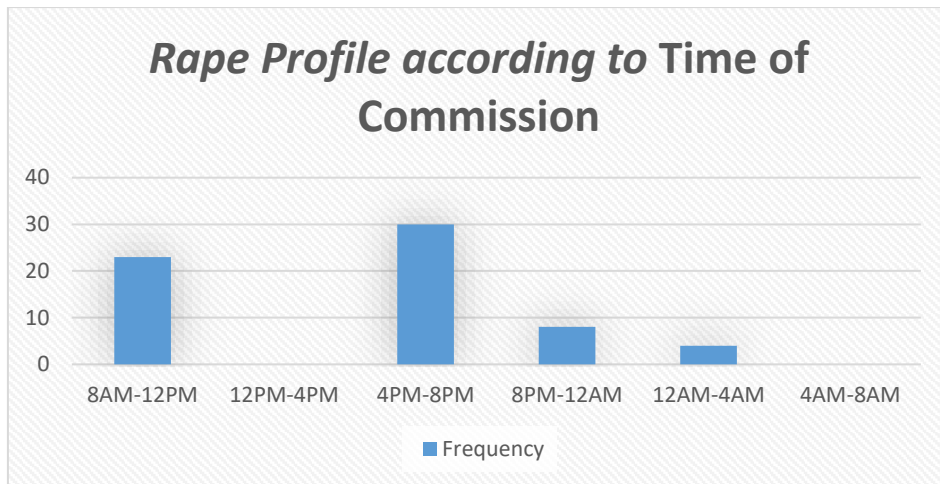


Figure 3. Rape Profile according to Time of Commission

On the other hand, only four rape cases were reported to have been committed from 12:00 midnight to 4:00 in the morning which is considered as the time bracket with the least number of rape occurrences.

Conclusively, the time profile suggests that rape incidences usually happen from eight

o'clock in the morning to eight o'clock in the evening. The time frame suggests that rape usually happens during day time. This may be supported with the thought that children victims are not attended by their working parents during day time.

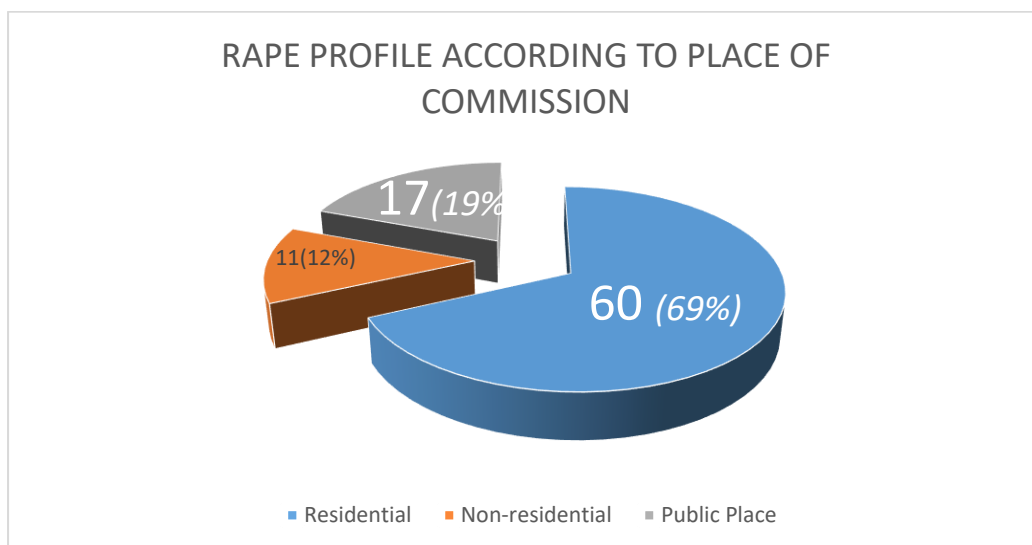


Figure 4. Rape Profile according to Place of Commission

As seen in figure 4, 69% of rape cases happened in residential places. In this study, residential refers to private dwellings and boarding houses where families of either the victim or the suspect live. It can be assumed that this type of rape is incest rape where offenders are family members. This result is supported with the Busch-Armendariz, et al. (2015) report that rape typically occurs at or near the victim's house and perpetrator's house.

The second classification of place

where rape usually happened is non-residential with 19% of the total reports while 12% was reported to have been committed in public places. Non-residential place includes behind the building, school, government office, nipa hut, camping area, construction site, warehouse and vehicle. In the report of Busch-Armendariz, et al. (2015), sexual assaults also happen at work place and car. Public places, in the study, refer to bridge, forest, plantation/garden, street and waiting shed.

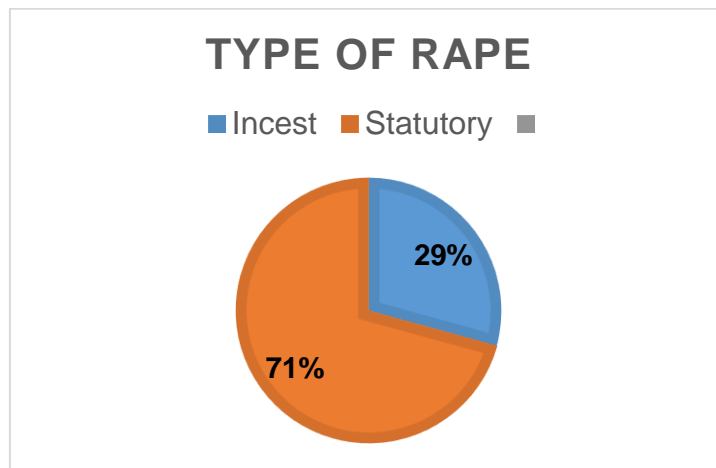


Figure 5. Type of Rape

The type of rape with the highest occurrence is statutory which is defined as an adult having sexual intercourse with a minor. According to Sandomir and Butler (2011), statutory rape is the carnal knowledge of a person without force or threat of force in which the person is below the statutory age of consent.

The type of rape which is less committed is incest with only 12% occurrence. This means that victims know and are related by blood with their offenders. According to Millan, et al., (2017) incest means having a

forced sexual intercourse with family members without permission or doing sexual permission. Though less committed, it is still an issue that needs to be addressed since incest relationship is considered abnormal in Mountain Province. Millan, et al. (2017) further posited that incest is underreported, though rampant, because of the fear to destroy the good image of the family. They further explained that incest is considered as taboo since it brings shame to the family of the victim.

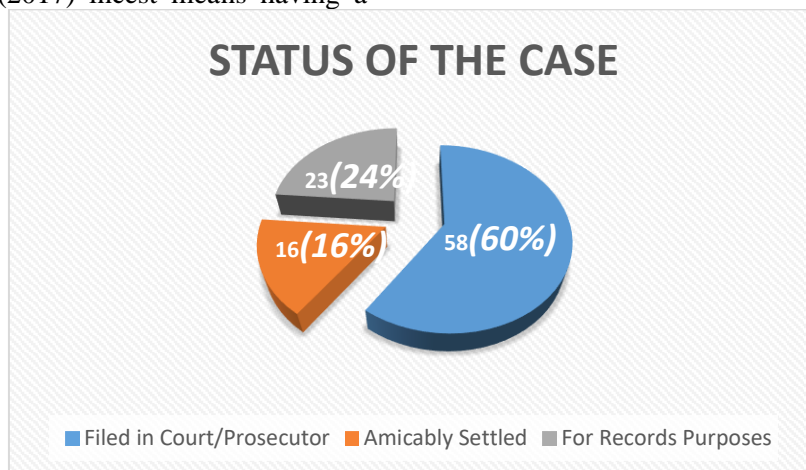


Figure 6. Status of the Case

As shown in Figure 6, 60% of the reported cases were already filed in the prosecutor’s office and in courts. This may signify that victims are no longer afraid to sue the suspects to seek for justice. As stated by a policewoman assigned at the Women and Children Protection Desk, “The growing number of reports on Violence against Women and Children, along with rape cases, means that the law enforcement is working since they are able to convince victims to report sexual abuses.” This

account supports the findings that the law enforcers are trying their best to file charges against perpetrators and to protect the community.

Thence, 24% of the rape cases were reported for records purposes only. In an interview with a social worker, she said that, “Some victims only report rape cases for records purposes because they cannot file charges against the suspect due to strong blood relations.”

Lastly, the remaining 16% of the reported rape cases were amicably settled either on the barangay level or during prosecution. However, according to the report of Chiu (2018), it is illegal to push parties to amicably settle because the underlying issue might be physical abuse, and it could result to more serious harm to death. This result is similar to the findings of UNWomen (2013) that men who committed rape do not face legal consequences since liberty persists.

Despite the existence of RA 9262 that advocates the penalization of rape offenders, there are still people from Mountain Province who still hold to their traditional practices on settling cases. This may imply that rape victims and their family members need to be educated/oriented on rape laws particularly on RA 9262, where amicable settlement is a violation against the law and those that attempt to mediate will be punished by the law.

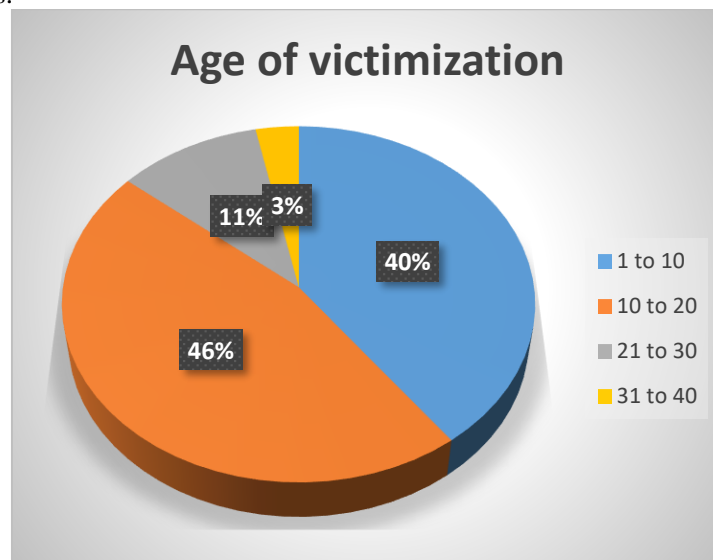


Figure 7. Victim Age Group

It can be seen on figure 6 that 46% of rape victims in Mountain Province have an age range of ten to twenty (10-20) years old. National Baseline Study on Violence Against Children (NBS-VAC) released in 2016 by the Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC) that one in five children below 18 has experienced sexual violence while reaching maturity. The World Health Organization (2021) indicated that about 1 in 3 of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their life. This is consistent with the findings of Testa and Livingston (2009) that female college students and young women are at higher risk of sexual assault, rape, and substance-related rape.

The age bracket of victims with the second highest percentage is one to ten (1-10) years old. Perez (2016) reported in the CNN Philippines that children compose 7 of the 10 victims of rape, and rape victims are getting younger. This finding is consistent with the

study of Kilpatrick (2000) that 99% of forcible rapes occurred when the victim was less than 11 years old. This age group is vulnerable not only because they are physically weaker, but they lack discernment. They can be lured through simple things like petty cash and goods. Furthermore, they are easily intimidated and frightened. Finkelhor (2010) posited a similar result wherein children between ages 7 and 13 are most vulnerable to child sexual abuse.

The third highest is 11% under the age bracket of twenty-one to thirty (21-30) years and three percent each for age 31 to 40 and 41 to 50. This implies that females who are in the middle-adulthood and adulthood are still vulnerable to sexual assaults and violence. This is consistent with the report of Busch-Armendariz, et al. (2015) that the highest prevalence rate of sexual assault for women occurs in the eighteen and older age group who are usually to be victimized by someone they knew as an acquaintance or friend.

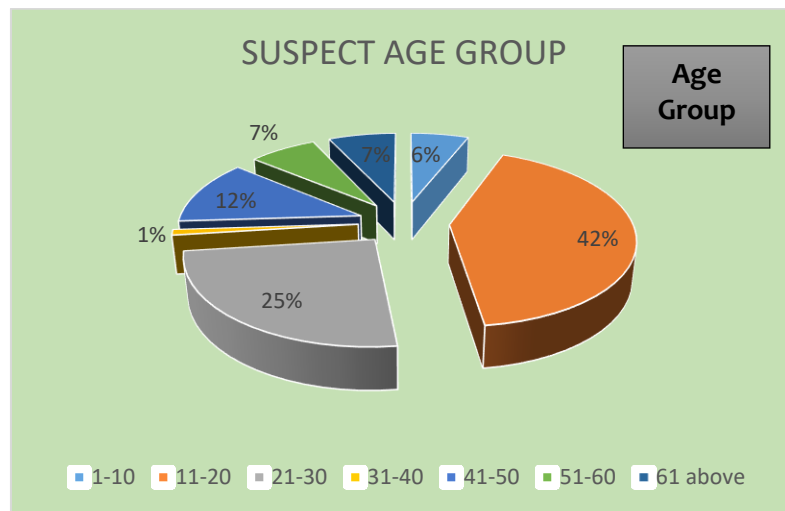


Figure 8. Suspect Age Group

Age bracket of eleven to twenty (11-20) has the highest percentage of 42%. Lussier (2015) cited that juvenile sexual offending starts at the average of 14 years or middle adolescence which corresponds to a period when children's behavior is an onset of rebellion such as using hard drugs and prostitution.

Second is age bracket 21 to 30 with 25% which is consistent with the statistical report of RAINN that 25% of rape perpetrators belong to the age bracket of 21 to 29 years old and that half of perpetrators are 30 years and older.

The third highest is 12% under the age bracket 41 to 50; while only one suspect belongs to the age bracket of 31 to 40.

According to the records consolidated by the MPPPO, the youngest suspects to have committed rape were seven and eight years old. This can be explained by the position of Lussier (2015) that retrospective studies suggest that unusual childhood sexual behaviors are early signs of persistent juvenile offending.

Factors Contributing to the Commission of Rape

Experience. In this study, experience is referred to the practice or knowledge of a person in consented sex and rape. Murphy (2017) reported that men who rape tend to start young, in high school or college, with someone they know. WHO (2017) reported that men have the tendency to become violent if they have a history of child maltreatment, exposure to domestic violence against their mothers, harmful use of alcohol, and unequal gender norms including attitudes accepting of violence.

Curiosity. Some young rape offenders are curious about what sex is all about which leads some to explore pornographic materials where these materials stimulate sexual desires. In the study of Arulogun et al. (2016) they corroborated earlier findings that sexual behavior can be acquired through exposure to pornography and sexual models on the internet through imitating and copying of such act.

Availability of easy victims. One reason why most victims of rape are children is the fact that they are physically weak, poor in making judgment, easily coerced and threatened. In addition, children of young age are left at home in the custody of relatives when parents are working.

Some victims are reported to have been intoxicated before they were raped, making them easy victims by either friends or strangers. Busch-Armendariz, et. al. (2015) reported that 10.2% of sexual assault victims in Texas have been under the influence of alcohol during the commission of rape. In an article posted by the Michigan Student Life (2018), it cited Carr and Van Deusen (2015), to have reported that 35% of men reported to have used alcohol to obtain sex by getting a woman drunk. They also reported that peer pressure to have sex and alcohol-related sexual coercion are important factors in the social setting in school as surveyed.

Victim Vulnerabilities

In this study, victim vulnerability refers to the exposure of individuals to rape. There are situations when persons become victims of rape because they are susceptible to factors that contribute to rape. The following are some of the victim vulnerabilities that were derived

from interviews with social workers and document analysis.

Influence of social media. The internet has brought information at the fingertips of all users and its influence is vast that even children that have access to it are affected. The influence of media refers to the impact of what people see from the social medias that turned into a platform that normalized taboos already. In an interview with a social worker at Bontoc, she said that, "People today imitate what they see on the television and social media." Some people would even intentionally visit pornographic sites. The Michigan Student Life (2018), in their analysis, pointed out that pornography is among the factors that contribute to sexual violence.

Poor home training. According to the respondents, they refer this to the lack of bathroom training, improper dressing and letting male household members hold the private parts of children.

Bad exposure. This can be equated to belonging to peer groups that are open and exploratory when it comes to negative vices like alcohol and drugs. Under the influences of these substance makes a person vulnerable and defenseless. Mohler-Kuo et al. (2004) found that women experience unwanted sex when they are too intoxicated to give consent. Moreover, in the study of the World Health Organization (2017), women are more likely to experience intimate partner violence if they have low education, exposure to mother being abused, abused during childhood, and attitudes accepting violence.

Absence of adult supervision. The absence of supervision refers to the lack of guidance, may it be physical presence or moral guidance, of parents or trusted guardians to children who are vulnerable to abuse, especially sexual abuse. Children who are not attended are susceptible to sexual abuse since they can be easily lured. Further, Arulogun (2016) posited that parental capabilities in parent-child communication need to be strengthened to deliberate issues with children on cultural norms that deal with sexual and reproductive health so that the amount of misinformation will be reduced. Further, Finkelhor (2013) found in his study that children not living with both parents and those who live in households marked with parental discord and violence have a higher risk of sexual abuse.

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation

Summary

The status of rape cases in Mountain Province is profiled according to rate, time of commission, place of commission, status of the case, victims' age group, and suspect's age group. The cases that were included here were from 2014 to 2017. On the rape profile according to rate, the highest reported rape case was in 2014 with 27 cases from the 97 reported cases in all municipalities of Mountain Province. Among the 10 municipalities, Paracelis holds the highest number of reports from 2014-2017 with 23 cases. Other municipalities like Tadian and Bauko have a number of cases with 19 and 15 cases respectively. The least is Sadanga which has one count of reported case.

On time of commission, the time profile suggests that rape incidences usually happen from eight o'clock in the morning to eight o'clock in the evening or during day time. The type of rape with the highest occurrence is statutory, and the less committed is incest.

Another profile is the status of the case. It shows that among the 97 cases that were reported, 60% of the reported cases were already filed in the prosecutor's office and in courts. It should also be noted that majority of the victims with 46% belong to the age group of 10 to 20 years old. As for the suspects, the highest number of offenders belong to age bracket of 11 to 20.

This study highlights three factors that contributes to the commission of rape. These are experience, curiosity, and availability of the victims.

Based from the interviews, there are situations where persons can be vulnerable to rape. These situations can be the influence of social media, poor home training, bad exposure, and absence of adult supervision.

Conclusion

In light of the study, the following are concluded:

- For the past four years, the highest reported rape incidence happened in the municipality of Paracelis, Mountain Province. This is attributed to the fact that in terms of geographical location, the aforementioned municipality is not a safe neighborhood

- notwithstanding the fact that houses are far from each other.
- Most victims of rape are 20 years old and below for at this age are more vulnerable where in cases of children victim are less discerning, easily persuaded and physically overpowered by the perpetrator
 - In like manner, most of the perpetrators belong to the age bracket of 11 to 30 years. Most likely, this most perpetrators in this age group are teens to young adult. In other words, puberty age where this group of individuals begins to experience and develop hormonal changes thus becoming curious and exploratory.
 - Majority of the rape cases were filed in court/prosecutors office; however, despite the law that prohibits amicable settlement, it is still being practiced because most of the complainant/victims are not fully aware of the Republic Act 9262.
 - Relative to factors contributing to rape and victim vulnerability, responses of those interviewed remain to be traditional.

Recommendation

Base on the conclusions of the study, the following are strongly recommended:

- Forcing of Strong partnership with different Municipal LGU's and other Peace and Order Councils to increase advocates to stop rape. Through these partnership programs, policies will be articulated to the grass root levels.
- Department of Social Welfare should probe further to these rape cases in order to make realistic and achievable programs in preventing rapes and help rape survivors.
- Since majority of the perpetrators are in the young age bracket, schools should also strengthen advocacy against rape and help guide the young ones towards making a better life, right choices emphasizing responsibility, accountability and that in every action there is a consequence.
- For the Academe to intensify advocacy, campaign seminar and orientation on different GAD Laws by reproducing and distributions of Educational Campaign Material to promote the awareness on RA 8353 and RA 9262;

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