

# Asian Resonance

## Violence against Children: A Stigma against Humanity With Special Reference to Balkalyangrih in Varanasi City

### Abstract

Sexual violence against children is a crime that cuts across caste and class divides and results in lifelong physical and psychological damage to the child. In majority of the cases, the offender is a member of child's family or someone known to the child. Since the abuser has access to the child, abuse can be continual and can range from fondling and molestation to rape for a long period of time. In most of the cases, families are extremely reluctant to report the offence, since it involves family honor. When they do gather the courage and resolve to take up the case, the child is exposed to a humiliating and traumatic process with no guarantee of justice at the end of it. Crime is not an offence against an individual but against the society as a whole. This paper is attempting to explore various kinds of child abuse and its consequences. Try to find out some solutions to remove this problem wholly.

**Keywords:** Sexual Violence, Physical Violence, Emotional Violence, Stigma

### Introduction

#### Objective of the Study

1. To find out the causes behind child sexual abuse.
2. Try to know the consequences of abuses.
3. To explore suggestions by discussing this topic.

Sexual violence against children is a crime that cuts across caste and class divides and results in lifelong physical and psychological damage to the child. In majority of the cases, the offender is a member of child's family or someone known to the child. Since the abuser has access to the child, abuse can be continual and can range from fondling and molestation to rape for a long period of time. In most of the cases, families are extremely reluctant to report the offence, since it involves family honor. When they do gather the courage and resolve to take up the case, the child is exposed to a humiliating and traumatic process with no guarantee of justice at the end of it. Crime is not an offence against an individual but against the society as a whole.

In the present social context children are more vulnerable to crime and it's mandatory that the state should protect the life and liberty of its citizen especially the marginalized and weaker sections. But the proved ineffectiveness on the part of the state to curb the violence against children erodes the confidence in the rule of law. The neglect and indifference towards them during the investigation and subsequent prosecution help the offenders bypass penal provisions of law. The increasing rate of acquittal in offences against children shows that judicial responses towards child victims are not sympathetic. The right of victims is restricted to the compensation awarded to them. More over the social accusation upon the victim doubled their sufferings. The victims of these sorts of abuses are considered as a stigma on the society and are subjected to social boycott. They are again and again victimized by various institutions including media, resulting in forced alienation from society and family.

For these reasons the child victims need to be attended by the State and civil society with caution and care so as their emotional integrity, social well being, intellectual sobriety and mental health are protected and well guarded. But unfortunately the problems and sufferings of child victims have not achieved sufficient attention. So, Jananeethi

**Priyanka Singh Upadhyay**

Assistant Professor,  
Dayalbagh Educational Institute,  
Agra

# Asian Resonance

being a human rights organization programmes in the past for promotion of child rights badly felt the need of that has embarked several organizing a one day workshop exclusively for school children and teachers.

Child abuse or maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical and/or emotional ill treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.

## Literature Survey

Studies conducted by various NGOs and institutions in 1995 and 1997 respectively in Delhi revealed that more than half the girls surveyed had experienced sexual abuse by family members; 76% women across five cities in India admitted sexual abuse as children. In Maharashtra, India, it is alleged that 500 girls under 16 years of age were sexually Abused and then photographed for blackmail. In Nepal a survey conducted in 1996 on domestic violence found that 13 per cent of The respondents knew about at least one case of child sexual abuse.

In a sample survey of child sexual abuse in Bangladesh in 1997, half of the 150 persons interviewed admitted experiencing some form sexual abuse in childhood. The study Findings also show that children as young as five years had been abused. A study of injuries and deaths from assault in Thailand states that sexual assaults on children under 10 years old were reported from almost every hospital in 1998. Child abuse in India, according to the NCPDR (National Commission for Protection of Child Rights) report, increased to 763 for 2009-10 from 35 in 2007-08. Child abuse complaints included incidents of rape, trafficking, humiliation, physical and mental torture. As per the NCPDR report, in India, the maximum number of child abuse complaints was received from Uttar Pradesh which stood at 179. Uttar Pradesh was followed by Delhi, Orissa, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal from where 127,58,46,42 and 39 cases were received respectively. North eastern states of India, Sikkim, Meghalaya, and Tripura reported no child abuse complaints.

To deal with the child violence or child exploitation in India, the protection of Children from sexual offences bill, 2010 has been drafted. The draft bill describes a boy or a girl below the age of 18 as a child. The draft bill also describes any kind of physical contact with sexual intent as sexual assault. Child abuse is defined as the physical, emotional and the sexual abuse of children.

Child sexual violence in India begins as early as five, ratchets up dramatically during pre-pubescence and peaks at 12 to 16 years. Some 21 percent of respondents acknowledged experiencing severe sexual abuse like rape, sodomy, fondling or exposure to pornographic material. Ironically, 71 per cent of sexual assault cases in India go unreported. India has the largest number of working children in the world. 69% children in India are physically abused, 50,000 children were found to be missing last year

says the Government of India report on child abuse. Recent report published by our social welfare department shows that 53% of children are sexually abused, which means India is in a hurry to achieve the first place beheading Thailand. Even in the state of progressive Kerala, despite their advancement in education and health care are ahead in the case of increasing instances of sexual atrocities especially against children. Kerala ranks third in this issue. It is not an exaggeration that the CRC, Indian Constitution and various legislations provides for the protection of the child against violation of its rights, abuse and exploitation. Still this crime remains the most under – reported and the innocent victims suffer this human right violation silently. In this context Jananeethi and SOS- children's village jointly organized a one day workshop on 19th November world day on child abuse for school children on Child sexual abuse. Jananeethi (People's Justice) was registered as a Charitable Society in the year 1992. Since then the organization has undertaken enormous initiatives to fight human rights violations at different levels to enable the 'weak' and the 'disadvantaged groups' seek justice and fair access to resources. Nearing the completion of 15 years, Jananeethi still remains largely inadequate to address the ever-growing issues of injustice, abuse, discrimination and unfair means that impair the right to live with dignity, which are enshrined in our Constitution. In an Indian context it is becoming increasingly difficult to avail 'justice', as the courts are beset with problems of cost, delay and ineffectiveness. It is the privilege of the mighty and elite few who run the show with the use of their money and power virtually beheading the rights of the poor. Ignorance about the basic rights, human rights, fundamental rights, laws of the land, compounded by the problem of illiteracy, deprives the socially and economically marginalized people of 'justice'. They are highly influenced by the political, religious and socially upward groups who keep them in state of perpetual ignorance and impoverishment and make them believe that whatever life offers them is their fate and that they have no right to question or seek for justice, equity and human rights. Victims of torture are often left alone or face extreme social boycott while the perpetrators are often organized, justified and protected by the State. Jananeethi's primary recipients of services are battered women, disserted children, landless dalits and tribals, disabled persons, unorganized workers, and victims of torture and organized violence (both by State and non-State actors). Last year 12 child sexual abuse cases were reported in Jananeethi, legal proceedings are initiated in all, where as three of them are provided with shelter homes for their safety.

It is a long-hidden issue that India is finally beginning to wrestle with. The government moved recently to establish a National Commission for Protection of Children's Rights and plans are afoot to present an offences against children (Prevention) Bill

# Asian Resonance

in the Parliament. The proposed document has specific sections dealing with various crimes against children, including sale/transfer, sexual assault, sexual/physical/emotional abuse, commercial sexual exploitation, child pornography, grooming for sexual purpose, incest, corporal punishment, bullying and economic exploitation.

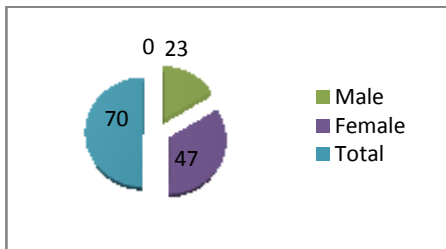
India is home to more than 375 million children, comprising nearly 40 percent of the country's population, the largest number of minors in any country in the world. Despite its ethos of non-violence, tolerance, spirituality and a new trillion-dollar economy, India hosts the world's largest number of sexually abused children, at a far higher rate than any other country. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), one in every four girls and one in every seven boys in the world are sexually abused, hardly encouraging, but still far below India's totals.

### Research Methodology

The researchers carried on a survey with regard to child sexual abuse of Varanasi district in May –June 2010. an interview schedule was used to elicit information from the victims of child sexual abuse. The researchers particularly went to collect information from female/male victims whose age range from 11 to 18 years in balkalyan grih in Varanasi district. Sample size of the study is 70. Most of the victims came from very low socio economic background and low level of education. Besides interview schedule unstructured interview method was also used for the research work. The tables indicate sexually abused on the different basis. Few of the question that were asked and their sociological interpretation are as follows:

**Table-1**

Sexwise Distribution		
Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	23	32.85
Female	47	67.14
Total	70	100.00

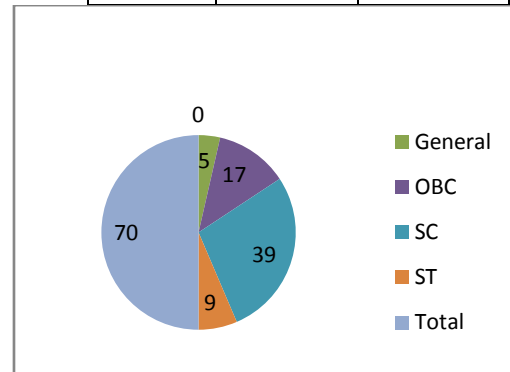


In our sample, the number of females abused sexually is much higher in comparison to male. However this sample is not representative of the society.

**Table- 2**

Castewise Distribution		
Caste	Frequency	Percentage
General	5	7.14
OBC	17	58.97
SC	39	55.71

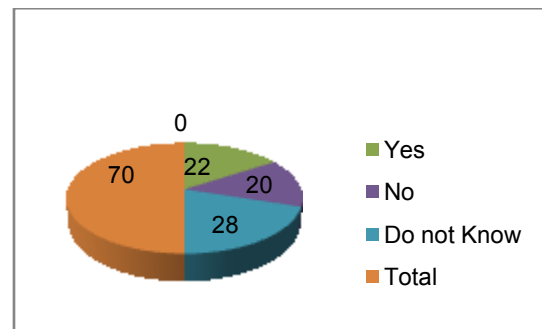
ST	9	12.85
Total	70	100.00



The caste wise distribution of our sample shows that children belonging to the SC category are the most sexually exploited followed by OBC and ST. Thus sexual exploitation is directly proportional to the caste status.

**Table-3**

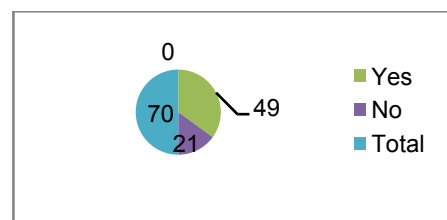
Knowing of Misbehave Before or After		
Type of Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	22	31.42
No	20	28.57
Do not Know	28	40.00
Total	70	100.00



Many children in our sample did not even know that sexual violence was perpetrated against them. This make the children all the more vulnerable to sexual violence.

**Table-4**

Financial Need Motivate Children To Go Outside Home and Work		
Type Of Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	49	70.00
No	21	30.00
Total	70	100.00

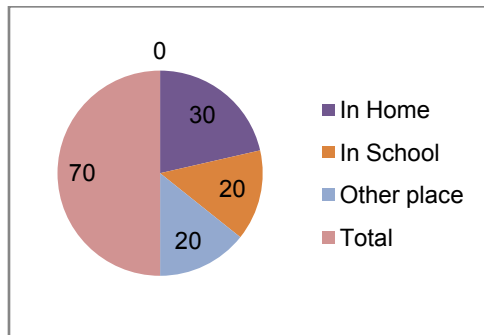


# Asian Resonance

Children are largely engaged as child labourers in various sectors of the economy. They thus become Vulnerable to various sexual exploitation by strangers/ known people. Around 40 % of the children work. They are mostly engaged as house helper. Child labour is considered a very normal phenomena in our society . Hence the physical labour of the child is taken for granted.

**Table-5**

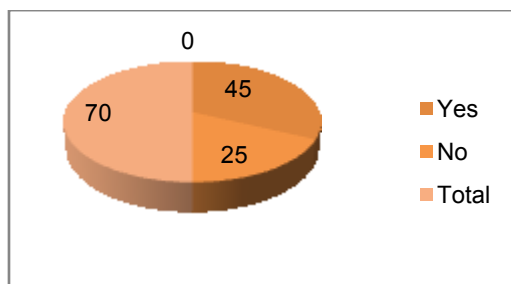
Place of the occurrence of Incident		
Type of Response	Frequency	Percentage
In Home	30	42.85
In School	20	28.57
Other place	20	28.57
Total	70	100.00



It is observed that mostly children are victims of sexual exploitation in their home itself . Home being the safest place for a child, it is surprising that they are molested and exploited in their homes. It shows gross violation of family norms.

**Table-6**

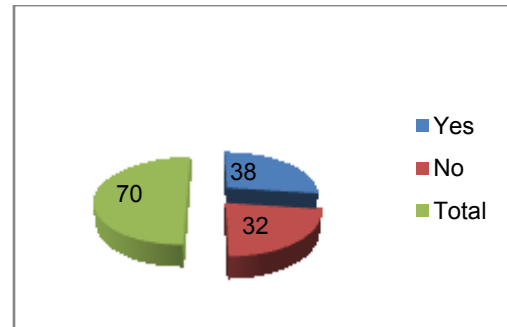
Touching of Private Body Part		
Type of Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	45	64.28
No	25	35.71
Total	70	100.00



Sometimes children are so innocent that they are unable to distinguish between the touch of a mother and that of a stranger. The children get exploited without even realizing that they are being exploited.

**Table-7**

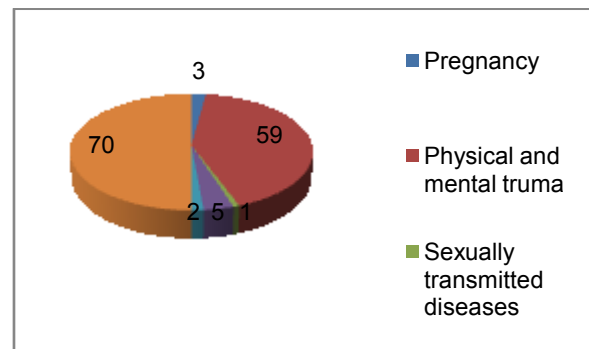
Threatened Against Reporting of Sexual Harassment		
Type of Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	38	54.00
No	32	45.71
Total	70	100.00



A sizeable proportion of the respondents answered that they were threatened against Sexual exploitation for fear of losing reputation.

**Table-8**

Evil consequences of sexual exploitation		
Type of Response	Frequency	Percentage
Pregnancy	3	4.28
Physical and mental trauma	59	84.28
Sexually transmitted diseases	1	1.42
loss of self-confidence	5	7.14
Any other	2	2.85
Total	70	100.00

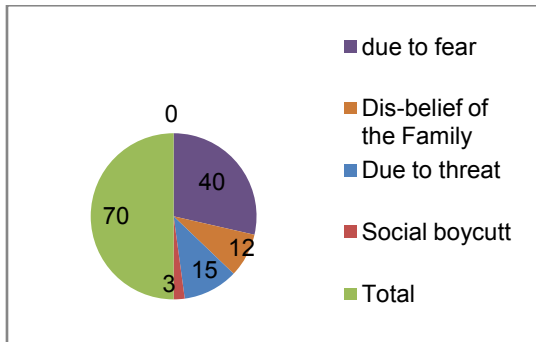


Later life becomes very complicated. The victim may withdraw or become too aggressive towards sexual life and that may result in distorted personalities.

**Table-9**

Incident That Not be Disclosed		
Type of Response	Frequency	Percentage
due to fear	40	57.14
Disbelief of the Family	12	17.14
Due to threat	15	21.42
Social boycott	3	4.28
Total	70	100.00

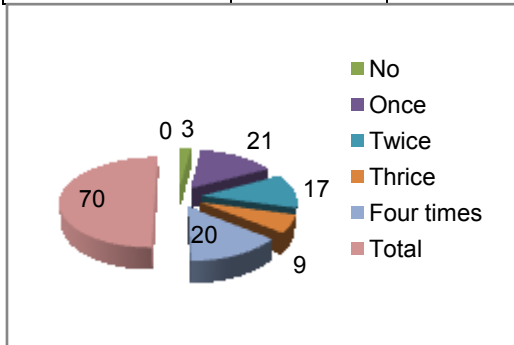
# Asian Resonance



Sexual exploitation is an issue which needs humanitarian intervention and constructive concern. Yet most of the children who are abused sexually are extremely scared to disclose any unpleasant incident to their family members. This fear is normal, natural and innate. Sometimes the attacker is a close family member hence the task of disclosing such a heinous crime is a taboo.

**Table-10**

Exploitation in Life Once or More No of Times		
Type of Response	Frequency	Percentage
No	3	4.28
Once	21	30.00
Twice	17	24.28
Thrice	9	12.85
Four times	20	28.57
Total	70	100.00



Most of the children are unaware of how sexual exploitation takes place. There is general observance of taboo in the families with regard to the discussions on sex related issues. Children's lack of knowledge on these issues germinates ignorance. They do not openly talk to their parents, even if they are abused sexually.

### Findings and Conclusion

Sexual violence against children is a very real problem in India, and the situation is aided by the absence of effective legislation and the silence that surrounds the offence. The definition of child abuse varies from country to country. Acts that result in physical, sexual or emotional abuse, or neglect of children fall under the purview of law in almost all developed nations. In India, child abuse exists in many forms, but the laws are still ambiguous and most children suffer in silence. In India, which places a high premium on chastity of women and yet has the

largest number of child sex workers in the world, there is no single, specific definition of child abuse. "Disbelief, denial and cover-up to preserve family reputation has made child sexual abuse an invisible crime in India. It seems there is an official denial of the existence of the problem. In fact, child abuse in India is as old as the joint family system and patriarchy. Though the problem is highly pervasive, there is pretence that it only inflicts the West. This also explains why there is no framework in India to prevent such abuse and there has not been much data collection and research, says Dr Kaur.

### Summary and Discussion

1. India has the largest number of children (375 million) in the world, nearly 40% of its population
2. 69% of Indian children are victims of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse (or read it as every 2 out of 3)
3. New Delhi, the nation's capital, has an abuse rate of over 83%
4. 89% of the crimes are perpetrated by family members
5. Boys face more abuse (>72%) than girls (65%)
6. More than 70% of cases go unreported and unshared even with parents/family

### Suggestions

1. Educate our children about sex. While state governments are on a spree to ban sex education in schools, we can make a difference ourselves. If you are parents, educate your child about appropriate/inappropriate behavior, when to trust whom and how much, how to speak their mind out, etc. This can be (and should be) much before the "birds and bees" education.
2. If you are not parents, but know and care about other families of friends and relatives, open up this topic for discussion and encourage the parents to do what is right.
3. If you leave your child at a creche, play-house, or baby-sitters screens such places and people. Talk to other parents who have used their services before. Be safe and sure rather than trust blindly. I know nurseries in India who use opium or other narcotic drugs to put babies and children to sleep so they can be managed (and usually abused) easily.
4. If you think this is not true, talk to any child counselor or child care social worker in any Indian metro, who will educate you about the truth.
5. If you think talking about sex is difficult for you, don't just be embarrassed, shrug it off, and give it up. Many parents don't know their children are victims, and live in a fantasy world of "nothing like that would ever happen to my child". Talk to your parents in order to understand what difficulties they had to face culturally when bringing you up. That may give clues to how to overcome cultural taboos.

# Asian Resonance

6. Change the “Elders are authority, always right, always to be respected” culture to “Elders are *always to be respected, unless they act wrongly*” culture. This attitude, for centuries, has encouraged the perpetrators of such crimes, and would be the most difficult to change. But it’s never too late to start.
7. Be sensitive to your friends, family, and acquaintances. Some of them may be victims of a dark past. Be a friend and counselor for them if they ever need your support.
8. Monitor, screen, and filter if necessary, the way your children use the Net. Teach them about the importance of privacy when using instant messaging, email, or social networking sites. As a corollary, if you know parents who are not Net-savvy, but have bought a PC and net access at home for their children, teach the parents about the dangers associated with pornography and the Net. Not being savvy themselves, they may be naive or not knowledgeable.
9. Talk and share your experiences with other parents. Let us learn from each other, and do our best to make society safer for our children.
10. Finally, spread the word. Spread the awareness. We owe it to the next generation.
11. With the knowledge that our children know the basic facts to safeguard themselves, we can at least hope to hold our heads high once again.

## References

1. David.A.Wolfe, 1987, Child Abuse : Implications for Child Development and Psychopathology, Sage Publications, New Delhi.
2. Gail Elizabeth Wyatt, Gloria Johnson Powell, 1988 lasting Effects of Child Sexual Abuse, Sage Publication, New Delhi.
3. Beeman, S.K., Hagemester, A.K. & Edelson, J.L. (2001). Case assessment and service receipt in families experiencing both child maltreatment and women battering. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 16, 437-458.
4. Belsky, J. (1993). Etiology of child maltreatment: a developmental–ecological analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 114(3), 413-434.
5. Birchall, E.M. (1989). The frequency of child abuse: what do we really know? In O. Stevenson (Ed.).
6. Brown, J., Cohen, P., Johnson, J. & Salzinger, S. (1998). A longitudinal analysis of risk factors for child maltreatment: Findings of a prospective study of officially recorded and self-reported child abuse and neglect. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 22, 1065-1079.
7. Brown, I. & Schormans A.F. (2004). Maltreatment rates in children with developmental delay. Centre of Excellence for Child Welfare. Retrieved 8 November 2004 from <http://cecw-cepb.ca>.
8. Cawson, P., Wattam, C., Brooker, S., & Kelly, G. (2000). *Child maltreatment in the United Kingdom: a study of the prevalence of abuse and neglect*. London: NSPCC.
9. Social Welfare, January, 2010
10. Samaj Kalyan, July, 2010
11. Outlook Weekly, January, 2010.