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VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN IN NEPAL

"No More Suffering"- Child Sexual Abuse in Nepal: Children's Perspectives

WITH REFERENCE TO STUDY IN FOUR DISTRICTS



SERIES 1

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Foreword

Child sexual abuse and exploitation is a serious challenge for any society. This is rather more serious for Nepal as cases are rarely reported and often kept undercover. But we all know it is widespread, far beyond what is conventionally acknowledged. Furthermore, studies and experience in this field have proved that child sexual abuse is not limited to any particular caste, gender, community or geographical location.

The attention given to child sexual abuse at the national level is still inadequate. The issue is still taboo; it is surrounded by a culture of silence. Stakeholders are reluctant to study it due to the associated stigma. Yet there is a need for proper information and knowledge, so that measures can be designed and implemented properly for preventing abuse and caring for victims.

This research builds on a pioneering study on child sexual abuse conducted by CWIN and Save the Children Norway - Nepal (SCNN) among school children and out-of-school children in the Kathmandu Valley in 2002. Since that study was limited to the valley, a second study was developed by CWIN and UNICEF, focusing on the districts outside Kathmandu. The aim was to increase the national knowledge base by gathering reliable data on the understanding

Gauri Pradhan
President
CWIN-Nepal

and experiences of child sexual abuse among school children and out-of-school children outside the valley. The areas chosen for the study were in Pokhara, Narayanghat, Biratnagar and Birendranagar municipalities and their immediate outskirts, representing four districts - namely Kaski, Chitwan, Morang and Surkhet respectively.

Because of the sensitivity of the issue, it is a challenging task to undertake comprehensive research such as this, using qualitative and quantitative data drawn from children. We appreciate the hard work done by the research team in all four districts. We would also like to thank the schools, organisations and all the other people who extended their cooperation. All the children who took part in this research deserve special mention for having the courage to express their views on a sensitive issue that is otherwise little talked about.

We hope that the findings and recommendations outlined here for different stakeholders will provide a good foundation for future strategies and interventions to improve services and support mechanisms.

It is time for all concerned, including children, to start taking action against all forms of child sexual abuse and so to put an end to the silent suffering of children.

Dr. Suomi Sakai
Representative
UNICEF Nepal

Executive Summary

In 2002 a pioneering study was conducted by CWIN and Save the Children Norway- Nepal (SCNN) among school children and out-of-school children in order to identify i) their level of understanding of child sexual abuse and, ii) the prevalence of child sexual abuse among them. Since the study was limited to the Kathmandu Valley, and since child sexual abuse cuts across class, caste, and geographic location, a second phase study was developed by CWIN and UNICEF. The aim of this second phase study was to achieve a fairly representative survey on the level of understanding of child sexual abuse and the prevalence of different forms of sexual abuse among children outside the capital. The study was conducted in four districts namely Surkhet, Kaski, Chitwan, and Morang - representing the four development regions. It gathered data from 4,100 students from grade five to ten in government and private schools from Pokhara, Narayanghat, Biratnagar and Birendranagar municipalities and their immediate outskirts. The research also included a qualitative part - mainly focus group discussions with children in difficult circumstances such as street children and squatter area children and children in non-governmental institutions from the same areas.

Level of understanding: The findings showed that the children's level of understanding was more skewed towards the lower level of rating in all major issues of child sexual abuse (CSA) such as what is child sexual abuse, who could be an abuser, where can it happen, how and why the abuser abuses a child. A smaller percentage of respondent children thought the use of obscene language and the writing of offending material as forms of child sexual abuse, while the majority of children thought 'letting a child show private parts' was child sexual abuse. The majority of children pointed out that an abuser could be drug or alcohol addicted and/or a stranger, while only a small percentage of children thought that abusers could be family members. Interestingly, out-of-school children, with reference to their own context, thought of child sexual abuse more broadly. Some of those children mentioned child marriage and the system of deuki (a practice in the far west where virgin girls are offered to god, whom she serves her whole life without getting married) as forms of sexual abuse. Children from Chitwan and Biratnagar also mentioned girl trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children as forms of child sexual abuse.

Out-of-school children also mentioned that abusers could be rickshaw pullers, drivers/ conductors, powerful people, and landlords. Some children mentioned that in-laws could sexually abuse their young daughter-in-laws and sister-in-laws and some children also pointed out that adult women

could abuse boys. Children mentioned various ways they could be abused such as by showing affection, or by luring with gifts or through intimidation. Some children mentioned that a girl could be tempted to have sexual relation under the false pretext of love and the promise of marriage.

Personal experience: Among those with personal experience of various forms of contact and non contact forms of sexual abuse, use of obscene language was found to be the most prevalent form of sexual abuse experienced by 33.5 percent out of a total number of 3,960 children. It was more common among boys than girls (35.8 percent boys vs. 31.1 percent girls). The majority of children mentioned strangers, friends and neighbours using obscene language to them.

Twenty six percent of children were found to have been exposed to obscene materials (with ill intent) by someone senior or knowledgeable than them. Most children reported seeing blue movies or reading pornographic magazines, books and novels and seeing obscene photographs. More than quarter of the sample children had also seen pornographic material through the Internet, although the percentage of boys was higher than that of girls (35.8 percent boys vs. 24.8 percent girls). The majority of children mentioned seeing obscene materials with friends, strangers and neighbours. Those who saw obscene materials with family members were relatively fewer in number (8.7 percent), suggesting that a conservative lifestyle outside of the Valley still prevails or that there is limited access to modern video material and equipment at home. Both in the case of obscene language as well as exposure to ob-

scene material the majority of girls mentioned strangers while the majority of boys mentioned friends as abusers.

Twenty two percent of the sample children experienced exhibitionism from adults. Of that 16.8 percent were boys and 28.2 percent were girls. Children also experienced exhibitionism by strangers, neighbours, relatives, care providers, family members and family friends. Girls were more likely to encounter exhibitionism in the street/bazaar, on public transport and in school while boys were more likely to encounter it in someone's house, grazing land and at picnics. Usually girls from schools outside of the Kathmandu Valley felt embarrassed by the lack of privacy in schools - few had separate toilet facilities for girls. Thus, girls did not attend school during menstruation and tried not to use the toilets during other times.

Nearly 18.0 percent of children have experienced contact form of sexual abuse such as fondling over or under clothes or kissing. Among girls, 22.3 percent compared to 13.5 percent of boys reported experiencing fondling. Girls identified their own house, public transport, the street and school as the places where they experienced fondling. More boys reported experiencing abuse of this type on grazing lands, in cinemas, at another person's house, and picnic spots. Cinemas seemed to be the place where abuse of this kind takes place most often.

Nine percent of children in the sample have experienced contact forms of abuse of a serious nature, including having their body kissed, oral sex and penetration. Out of those who have experienced this type of sexual abuse, 7.6 percent were boys

and 10.5 percent were girls. More girls than boys reported fondling and kissing only; a smaller percentage reported penetration. More boys reported penetrative sex of different types and oral sex. The majority of abused children identified strangers, friends and neighbours as the abusers. Both boys and girls were equally vulnerable to sexual abuse by neighbours and relatives. Nearly eight percent of girls and six percent of boys mentioned family members as abusers. The places where children were most vulnerable were cinemas, another person's house, grazing land and markets. Boys and girls were equally vulnerable in cinemas. But it was clear that girls were more vulnerable in markets and in their own homes than boys who seemed to be more vulnerable in grazing lands, woods or another person's house. The majority of both boys and girls said that they were 'taken advantage of trust' and were abused by 'an offer of friendship' - with girls being in the majority of those taken advantage of trust. More boys than girls mentioned the use of bribes and enticements, while more girls mentioned the use of physical force.

With children in difficult circumstances the most common form of sexual abuse was the use of obscene language in the streets, movie halls, grazing lands, woods, and local fairs. They have also experienced obscene language at home when a drunken father used such language to a mother or to children. Many children have also experienced exposure to obscene materials such as pornographic magazines, naked pictures and photos, obscene novels and videos shown by friends and neighbours. They mentioned seeing such materials with older boys from the neighbourhood. Girls also mentioned feeling uncomfortable when boys exposed themselves while taking a bath in public ponds in the villages. Among

boys, exposure of one's body is common while swimming in village ponds, and while grazing cattle in woods. With regards to contact forms of abuse, girls reported experiencing fondling by men in buses and in cinemas. Some girls also mentioned kissing by boys from the neighbourhood and having their breasts fondled; some boys also mentioned girls touching their private parts.

In Pokhara among the 10 male street children and 17 females from slum areas, eight of the street children and five girls from slum areas reported that they had been sexually abused more than once. Most of the street children have experienced multiple types of contact forms of abuse such as sexual activities in their group and abuse by adult males and females in the street. The girls from slum areas mentioned that they have experienced sexual abuse, including oral sex, by hotel and restaurant owners and also by people in other workplaces.

In Chitwan, street children reported being mostly abused by junkyard owners, older boys in their group, and sometimes by local people. Female street children were sexually abused by tractor drivers, boys working with them and by friends. They mentioned junkyards, streets, the workplace, bushes, under bridges, dumping sites and abuser's rooms as places where they were sexually abused. The case studies also showed that the risk of sexual abuse increased when children were left alone at home. Usually abusers in the neighbourhood took advantage of such situations.

Recommendations: A holistic intervention strategy should be launched to prevent child sexual abuse as well as to provide psycho-social and legal support to survivors of child sexual abuse. Prevention and support should include vari-

ous target groups such as children's groups, guardians, teachers, child rights organisations and the government.

The following are major recommendations by target groups:

For children

A prevention strategy should not only give information to children about child sexual abuse but also equip them with skills to protect themselves through building confidence and learning how to cope with risk situations. Children should be encouraged to break the 'culture of silence' in cases of abuse and exploitation. There should be a separate programme for school children and out-of-school children to deal with sexual abuse.

Existing networks of children's groups, forums and child clubs should be mobilised to increase the children's knowledge and strengthen their capacity to combat child sexual abuse. These groups can be provided with training and refresher training on peer counselling and dealing with child sexual abuse. They also can act as 'peer support groups' or 'pressure groups' in schools or out-of-school. Children's groups should also be consulted on action taken including policy formulation and implementation.

For parents/guardians/teachers/schools

A voluntary team of interested and committed teachers, students, guardians, school management committee members, and people's representatives should be formed mainly to initiate interactions on the issues of violence against children and child sexual abuse and thus raise awareness in the local community. The team could also act as a 'monitoring and reporting unit'. The Parent Teachers' Associa-

tions in schools and the District Child Welfare Boards should be mobilised for discussions on child sexual abuse.

A dialogue on sex and sexual abuse should be initiated between children and parents/guardians so that the silence surrounding sexual abuse can be broken and children's curiosity regarding sex can be addressed in a proper way. Parents/guardians should also be made aware of the consequences of using obscene language in front of children.

Children should be taught sex education by trained personnel in a firm, constructive way to protect them as necessary and warn them of the dangers of unwanted and unprotected sex.

The attitude of guardians, family and society towards survivors of child sexual abuse, which treats them as guilty, should be changed. Likewise, the culprits, no matter their social position, should be accordingly prosecuted and not given societal protection.

For national and international child rights organisations/ community organisations

Child rights organisations should work towards raising public awareness on prevention of child sexual abuse. They should also support children and families to file cases against child sexual abuse.

Helpline and hotline telephone services should be established in different parts of the country to combat child sexual abuse and to reach out to children at risk. In the areas where telephone services or hotline services are not yet available, community policing should be promoted.

Community policing should be promoted and should play a role in bringing about social awareness and social action against child sexual abuse. The community groups should also initiate a child-friendly community justice system and play a role in the mediation of conflicts surrounding this issue.

NGOs, through strong networks, should lobby and pressure the government and policy makers to formulate and implement strict laws to punish child abusers.

Child rights organisations and NGOs should promote 'professional psycho-social counselling' to child survivors of sexual abuse and ensure that trained human resources are dealing with the children. In some unsafe situations children should be temporarily rehabilitated in transit shelters with specifically trained staff.

There is also a need to monitor conflict related sexual abuse of children and deal with such cases from a human rights perspectives.

For the government

There should be strong political commitment to address the issue of child sexual abuse. There is still a lack of adequate laws and policies regarding prosecution of abus-

ers, especially in the case of those who abuse boys and/or abuse children through non-contact forms. The government should work towards the formulation of more progressive laws and policies and their effective implementation for intervention, prevention and a support system for the child survivors. The government should work in close cooperation with NGOs and/or or civil society for effective action against child sexual abuse.

Considering the rapid exposure of urban children to the Internet, the government should formulate laws to protect children from the negative effects from such exposure. There should also be a censor on blue films shown in video parlours and cinemas.

The government should take the initiative to formulate and put in to practice a Code of Conduct for all its employees, teachers, children's homes, organisations working with children, and the media to combat child sexual abuse.

The government should also create a policy to set up systems for a healthy school environment.

There is a need to sensitise the law enforcing agencies and work towards institutional and human resource development within the government system, in order to make child sexual abuse a pressing agenda to be dealt with at national level.

Background

Child sexual abuse (CSA) has been recognised as a critical issue in South Asia within and outside the home and among all socio-economic strata (ROSA, 2001). Child sexual abuse (CSA) has been recognized as a social malaise that is prevalent within and outside the home and among all socio-economic strata in the South Asia region (ROSA, 2001). Child sexual abuse exposes a child to severe mental, physical and psychological risks with consequences such as depression, fear, and low self-esteem. But, as a social problem it still remains an unexplored area. In the last few decades commercial sexual exploitation of children has received much attention but child sexual abuse is yet to receive due attention from the concerned authorities. While dealing with the issue of CSA, the lack of reliable information at national and regional levels has been one of the clear limitations. With reports often based on secondary information, an urgent need was felt to collect systematic quantitative and qualitative information on the issue. The Yokohama Global Commitments (2001) and

the South Asian Strategy Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Sexual Abuse (2001) endorsed by all South Asian countries also stressed the critical need for research and awareness raising on the issue of child sexual abuse in the region.

Study Rationale

Research study is a key requirement to understand the extent of child sexual abuse in an effort to improve the protective environment for children and young people in South Asia. Such a study is expected to shed light on the still hidden phenomenon of violence against, and sexual abuse of, children.

Increased technical knowledge, data and information on violence, in particular child sexual abuse will guide development of policies and programmes to ensure a protective environment for children in various contexts. It will encourage debate on the issue and provide a powerful advocacy tool against the problem.

In Nepal a pilot study on child sexual abuse was conducted in 2002 by CWIN and Save the Children Norway-Nepal (SCNN). The study showed that the prevalence of various

forms of child sexual abuse was considerable and that it affected boys as much as girls. The study also found that people known to the child committed child sexual abuse as much as strangers and that abuse took place in a wide range of locations. However, the study was geographically limited to the Kathmandu Valley; since child sexual abuse cuts across caste, class, ethnicity and geographic location, a second phase study was necessary in order to justly and fairly present the realities of children's experience and knowledge of child sexual abuse outside the capital.

Objectives

The goal of the present study is to contribute towards providing a safer learning environment in different localities where all girls and boys are able to exercise their right to protection against child sexual abuse along with their right to quality primary education. The specific objectives include:

- increase the national knowledge base through reliable quantitative and qualitative data on the level of understanding of CSA among school children and out-of-school children in the districts outside the Kathmandu Valley and to gauge the extent of the prevalence of different forms of child sexual abuse among them;
- raise awareness on the issue of child sexual abuse among different stakeholders in an effort to create a safer environment for children;
- identify the organisations working on the issue of child sexual abuse and identify the services they provide for the victims of CSA in the community, and
- recommend future strategies and interventions for improving the services and support mechanisms for

children including the identification of responsible stakeholders and their tasks.

Methods and Procedures

One of the purposes of this research was to replicate the first phase study held in the Kathmandu Valley in other parts of Nepal to achieve more representative information on the level of understanding children have about CSA and their experience of various forms of sexual abuse. Four districts representing all the development regions - Kaski, Morang, Chitwan and Surkhet - were purposively selected for the survey research. To gain better cooperation when conducting the research, districts where credible child rights organisations were functioning were selected. And, most importantly, this ensured proper response and follow-up services for children during and after the action research.

The selected districts have partners of CWIN, SCNN and UNICEF operating in them who have the capacity to address issues of child sexual abuse (see table 1). The study areas focused in and around the municipality areas of Pokhara, Biratnagar, Narayanghat and Birendranagar. Given the security situation in the country immediately after the breakdown of talks between Maoists and the government (October 2003), and in the absence of a ceasefire, conducting a survey in rural areas was out of the question; so schools mainly from municipality areas and their immediate outskirts were selected. Only very few schools were from the VDC areas. However, it should be noted that the urban areas and their outskirts in the districts resemble partly rural and partly urban areas.

Before conducting the actual research on child sexual abuse, an orientation workshop was organised jointly by CWIN and UNICEF Country Office with the representatives from governmental and non-governmental organisations in all four districts. This was done in order to build rapport and solicit their cooperation in carrying out the research itself. Moreover, as an action research, one objective was to raise both their awareness of the issue and their responsibility for prevention of child sexual abuse, thus contributing to create a safer environment for children. During the orientation participants were briefed on the findings of the first phase study (completed 2003) on sexual abuse of children and on the objectives of the second phase study, its methods and process.

Since the main objective of the research was to identify the children's level of understanding of child sexual abuse and the extent of sexual abuse among children, the unit of study was children in and out-of-school. A list of schools was collected from the District Education Office and from the Association of Boarding Schools. Even though schools were selected randomly from the available list, priority was given to schools having child clubs or child rights forums and with whom the local child rights organisations had good networks.

This was to ensure vulnerable children would have services available during and after the research. In an effort to build rapport with schools an official letter from the District Education Office along with a letter from CWIN was hand-carried by the survey team to each school selected in the sample.

To have a proper representation of children from different grades, age, sex and status was the main concern of the research. It was decided to have at least 500 cases from each district, totalling 2,000 cases. Because of concern for possible non-response the survey team decided to collect more than 500 cases from each district if possible. Altogether there were 62 schools selected for the study. Approximately 58 percent of the schools were government schools and the rest were private boarding schools; only about 20 schools were from semi-urban areas. Three schools refused to allow the survey while all the other selected schools cooperated very well.

Children from grade five to ten were selected for the questionnaire survey. The classes below grade five were left out due to the difficulty of administering the survey to younger children. It should be noted, however, that in the first phase study children in lower grades were given a

Table 1: Collaborating Organisations by District

Districts	Collaborating Organisation
Surkhet (Birendranagar)	AAWA) is a pioneer community based initiative working with victims of child sexual abuse, harassment and violence, providing counselling, moral support and helping file cases.
Chitwan (Narayanghat)	Narayanghat Youth Club works with street children and other underprivileged children. It also runs a socialisation programme in Narayanghat.
Kaski (Pokhara)	CWIN Socialisation Centre works with children at risk mainly street children, and children from slum areas in Pokhara. It also runs a health clinic for them.
Morang (Biratnagar)	Human Rights and Environment Forum, Biratnagar (FOHREN) runs literacy programmes for domestic workers and other working children in Biratnagar. CWIN Helpline also runs a hotline telephone service with emergency support and ambulance service for children at risk.

questionnaire with pictures. Ages ranged from nine to eighteen, with the majority between 12 and 16 years old. The sample consisted of approximately 51 percent boys and 49 percent girls (Table 2).

A questionnaire survey was administered to over 4,000 children; the majority from government schools and some private schools. The same questionnaire that was used in the first phase study was used for this survey with slight

Table 2: Number of Sample Students by Age and Gender

Age	Gender		Total
	Boys	Girls	
9	4	4	8
10	56	51	107
11	109	102	211
12	278	258	536
13	338	357	695
14	328	347	675
15	411	432	843
16	359	336	695
17	143	102	245
18	57	28	85
Total (number)	2,083	2,017	4,100
(%)	50.8	49.2	100

modifications. The questionnaire was designed to assess children's level of understanding of the different dimensions of child sexual abuse and their experience with different forms of sexual abuse in order that an action plan can be devised based on reality. Wherever possible girls and boys were seated separately during the survey so that the children felt comfortable filling in the questionnaire.

The field research team from each district was orientated on the issue of child sexual abuse and the survey tech-

nique. The research team consisted of a Research Coordinator from CWIN, a Research Team Leader, and four research assistants who were part of the previous study and thus had a good knowledge of the issue and good facilitation skills with children. In addition there were 12 enumerators (three for each district) in the team; each team being supervised in the field by the research assistant. The research assistants and the enumerators had good knowledge of child sexual abuse, having been trained by ECPAT/CWIN on 'Counselling with Sexually Abused and Exploited Children'. The questionnaires were pre-tested with a limited number of school children.

In each class where the survey was conducted the students were given a brief introduction on the purpose of the survey and also about the maintenance of confidentiality. After the survey children were given time to put their queries to the survey team on anything regarding child sexual abuse; the research assistants found children enthusiastic and curious to know about the issue. After the survey a one-page leaflet containing information on how to protect oneself from sexual abuse was provided to all children participating in the survey.

The qualitative part of the survey consisted of focus group discussions mainly with children in difficult circumstances such as street children and children in squatter areas in Pokhara and Chitwan. In Biratnagar children working as domestic workers, factory workers, children working in restaurants, garages and picking nutmeg took part in discussions, while in Surkhet it was mainly children enrolled in literacy classes. Altogether 237 children were involved

in focus group discussions. Before discussions out-of-school children were provided with a brief orientation on child sexual abuse through games. Discussions were carried out separately with girls and boys to make them feel comfortable. While conducting focus group discussions with out-of-school children their best interests were taken into account by maintaining strict confidentiality and applying other necessary measures. More than 10 individual case studies of abused children were also collected for an in-depth understanding.

Special sessions and orientations with governmental and non-governmental organisations were held to solicit information and raise awareness on the general situation of child sexual abuse in the districts, on available support mechanisms for the prevention and control of child sexual abuse, and also to gather their recommendations for the same. An inventory of non-governmental organisations working on the issue of child sexual abuse was also collected to establish who was doing what and to suggest what still needs to be done.

Limitations of the Study

Conducting a survey with children is not easy. There can be many sources of errors in the data; sensitivity of the issue adds to that problem. Out of fear children, especially girls, may not report any sexual abuse they might have suffered despite the assurance of confidentiality; boys, however, might report without fear. With some children, after reading the questions, they might be answering from their imagination. Other abused children simply may be ignorant of what was happening to them. All

these can lead to inaccurate data; however with large samples these errors can be avoided to a great extent. The sample consisted of slightly over 4,000 cases - considered as quite large; as children go on answering they might get tired. However, the questions were designed to make it easy for children and the survey team tried to make them understand, but still the possibility of not understanding questions was there.

Despite the effort to make the questions as easy as possible, some students in grades below nine did not understand the words used in the questionnaire and felt the questions repeated themselves, so were prompted not to fill in all the questions. In private schools students in grade five were found to be eight or below, thus children from this grade were excluded in the survey. Street children were found to be ignorant of the words 'bal youn durbyabhar' meaning child sexual abuse in Nepali. Although the words were strange to them, their understanding of the subject was much higher. They were familiar with different forms of child sexual abuse and had their own language for it. The survey team felt that a pictorial questionnaire would have made the survey with out-of-school children much easier since the children were mostly illiterate. It was also difficult to gather street children in one place and convince them to come for discussions. Domestic child workers did not have enough time to take part in the discussions.

Some girls blushed and felt embarrassed while filling out the questions while some girls ticked 'no' to first question on experience but then answered the following questions as if they had experienced sexual abuse. It can therefore

be assumed they were hesitant to share their experiences, even anonymously.

Although the survey was originally intended to include schools from rural areas, i.e. Village Development Committees (VDCs), due to security reasons, only a very small number of schools from VDCs were included. Thus, the survey concentrated on schools in municipalities and their immediate outskirts.

Review of Literature

Prevalence studies in the UK and USA suggested that less than 10 percent of child sexual abuse cases were reported to the police and less than one percent resulted in the arrest and conviction of the abuser (Russell 1984; Morrison et al 1996 quoted in Turid, p. 12). Reasons for not reporting cases of CSA was the social stigma and psychological trauma.

Available data suggests that the prevalence of child sexual abuse ranges from 3 percent to 70 percent in different countries and that rates may vary for boys and girls. In Nicaragua, family members commit 66 percent of abuse against girls and 33 percent against boys. The abusers are normally fathers, stepfathers, uncles, babysitters, friends, etc. In Zimbabwe, 30 percent of children were reported to be sexually abused, half of whom were boys. The prevalence in Europe lies between 7 percent to 20 percent for girls and 3 percent to 10 percent for boys. In South Africa 34 percent of girls and 29 percent of boys were reported to be sexually abused. In the USA 27 percent of girls were reported to be sexually abused compared to 16 percent of boys. Although these statistics suggest a wide prevalence of sexual abuse

of children in every kind of society they should be used with caution. Estimation is especially difficult since this is not an open issue. Moreover, child sexual abuse is defined differently in different contexts and estimated through various methods - so the results are not always comparable. Data in most cases has been collected from small groups located in one place and generalised for the whole country. Moreover the estimations are usually based on clinical reports and the reports filed with the police and are focused on girls. Additionally most studies are retrospectively administered to adults recalling their childhood abuses. Surveys are rarely administered to children themselves.

It is usually taken as a fact that girls run a higher risk of sexual abuse than boys do. For instance, in Marten's (1990) study of suspected sexual offences reported to the police in Sweden in 1984, girls constituted 77 percent of the victims and boys 23 percent (mentioned in Svedin, n.d.). Similarly, clinical surveys include considerably fewer boys than non-clinical surveys, which Finkelhor and others (1993) attribute to boys' greater reluctance to reveal abuse. As girls are more likely than boys to have physical injuries, girls feature more in clinical surveys. Boys were more often abused by someone outside the family, often an offender who had abused other children. Sexual abuse occurs at all ages but is considered most frequent in pre-puberty when the child is more vulnerable and has difficulty in defending him/herself. Finkelhor (1986) found that pre-adolescent children between the ages of eight and 12 were apparently at greater risk of sexual abuse.

According to Deuba and Rana, 2001, sexual exploitation of young girls and women is a chilling but common occur-

rence in Nepali society. Most of the victims of sexual abuse are barely out of their childhood. However, most rape victims were seen to belong to so-called lower class and 'dalit' caste families while incest was seen in financially better-off homes. This statement, however, should be taken with caution as it has been generalised from a small sample size.

One study shows that 56 percent of sexual violation cases against children take place within the home of the victim or the offender, with the victims cutting across all categories of class, caste, religion and educational background. The offender belongs to no particular age group (Kiran Bedi quoted by Virani, 2000, p. 15). A study of 146 boys between the ages of 16 and 20 has found that 15 percent of them have been abused by uncles, male cousins, family friends and neighbours. From the age of 12 onwards, eight percent of boys had their first sexual experience with older females; family friends, neighbouring aunts, female cousins or their mother's friends. The boys saw these experiences with older women as pleasurable initiation into the world of sex. Much of this sexual abuse of boy children happened at home. (A study conducted by Dr. Shekhar Seshadri, mentioned in Virani, 2000, p. 20)

A study carried out in Bangladesh by the Breaking the Silence Group (1997) reports that most of the abuse takes place inside the home by those who have ready access - trusted family members, relatives and friends of the family. According to that study, although both boys and girls are vulnerable, girls are considered more vulnerable than boys and the experience can be more traumatic for girls due to the attitudes and practices of society. A culture

that places a great importance on female virginity adds to the trauma of an abused girl. The study also found that the children in the 10-14 age group seemed to be most vulnerable in the case of both boys and girls while young girls were also vulnerable due to negligence on the part of parents/guardians.

In a qualitative study carried out in Nepal on the psychosocial impacts of violence against women and girls, out of 31 victims of incest, 29.0 percent belonged to the 10 - 19 age group, while out of 41 victims of rape, 39.0 percent were found to be less than 19 years of age (Deuba and Rana, 2001). With respect to incest, in the majority of cases the victim had initially kept quiet about the incident for a number of reasons including social stigma (39.0 percent), shame and fear of the perpetrator (36.0 percent), threatened by the abuser into keeping quiet (26.0 percent), and guilt (13.0 percent). What is most disturbing and depressing is the fact that in most of the studies, the rape and incest victims were found to be minors below 16 years of age. This pattern of rape of young children was also found in studies done in Bangladesh and India. Jahan and Islam (1997) report that among 5,738 survivors of rape, 16.3 percent were minors (mentioned in Deuba and Rana, 2001). Pradhan (1996) also reported that most of the victims of rape were girls under 16, and that they were raped by relatives.

According to CWIN's annual report on the "State of the Rights of the Child in Nepal 2002", out of 223 recorded cases of rape of women and children, 174 or 78.0 percent were children below 16 years of age. Ten percent of the total incidents were of brutal rape of children below 10 years of age and six of the

victims were boys. Even a girl of one and half years of age was cruelly raped. Ten percent of the incidents were of incest. Seven children were killed after being raped. These findings by CWIN suggest that child sexual abuse is a serious problem in Nepali society, meriting further study and action. According to the "State of the Rights of the Child 2003", of the 159 recorded rape cases, 91, or 57.0 percent, were children below 16 years of age and 33, or 20.7 percent, involved children below 10 years of age; five being boys. Of 159 cases, 11 cases or seven percent involved incest.

The findings from the CWIN-SCNN study (2003) showed that children have a high level of understanding on some items of child sexual abuse such as what is child sexual abuse (CSA) who are likely to be abused and where can it happen. However, school children lacked understanding on some critical aspects such as who could be an abuser, and how and why the abuser abuses a child. The use of obscene language was found to be the most prevalent form of sexual abuse experienced by children with nearly 45.0 percent of the sample children experiencing it. It is more common among boys than girls (58.0 percent of sample boys vs. 27.0 percent of sample girls). The majority of sample children mentioned friends, strangers, and neighbours as the persons using obscene language to them. Children mentioned mainly the street/market (40.4 percent) and school (30.2 percent) as the places where they heard obscene language.

The same survey showed that 29.0 percent of sample children have been exposed to obscene materials by others; 35.0 percent of the sample boys compared to 20.0 percent of the

sample girls mentioned seeing such materials with someone else. It should be noted that children mentioned seeing obscene materials mostly with 'friends'. Thirty percent of girls reported watching obscene material with family members while only 7.0 percent of the sample boys mentioned doing that. However, the majority of boys as well as girls mentioned seeing such materials with members of the opposite sex. More girls mentioned seeing obscene materials with persons in a higher age group. The majority of children mentioned watching obscene materials 'in own homes', 'in another's house', and 'in movie halls'. But they also mentioned seeing such materials in schools and markets.

The survey in the Kathmandu Valley found that 13.7 percent of sample children mentioned experiencing one or more contact forms of sexual abuse that included kissing, fondling private parts, oral and penetrative sex. Of those, 13 percent were boys and 14.5 percent were girls. Thus, the survey found that unlike the common myth, boys also face sexual abuse. Regarding the place of abuse, a higher percentage of girls mentioned 'own homes', 'schools' and 'markets' while a higher percentage of boys mentioned 'abuser's homes'. It should be noted that children are vulnerable not only in one place but in different places including schools and homes. A considerable number of children mentioned the age category of abusers to be below 16 years of age, thus suggesting some kind of abusive peer relation. But with respect to the query as to how were they abused, most children - both boys as well as girls - answered 'offered friendship' and 'took advantage of trust'. Thus, even though sexual ac-

tivities occurred within peer groups, it seemed that most of these were involuntary and the abused were taken advantage of trust by peers.

Conceptual Framework

This research study was not about the impact of child sexual abuse on children. It was to identify the level of understanding and the prevalence of child sexual abuse among school children and children in difficult circumstances. Nevertheless, those issues will reflect the impact felt by children. The research questions were modelled after 'four traumagenic dynamics' on the effects of child sexual abuse (Finkelhor and Associates, 1986). Those broad dynamics include 'traumatic sexualisation', 'betrayal', 'powerlessness' and 'stigmatisation'.

Traumatic sexualisation is shaping a child's sexual feelings and attitudes in an inappropriate way as a result of repeated sexual abuse and rewards through affection, attention, and gifts. Betrayal occurs especially when a child is sexually abused by someone trusted by the child. The abusers in this case are usually family members, relatives and friends - someone the child knows well. The child is considered powerless by the abuser who uses force, threat or intimidation and the child feels his or her attempts to halt the abuse frustrated. Thus, the abuser is able to gain 'forceful participation' of the child in the act.

Stigmatisation is the factor that makes a child keep the abuse secret. The child is made to feel it is his or her fault and that it would bring shame to him/her if

the abuse was disclosed. Society plays a greater role in stigmatisation especially when talking about sex is a taboo and the culture values a girl's virginity and so the abuse brings shame not only to the girl but also to the whole family.

With regard to the question why children are sexually abused no factor can be singled out. Although abusers were usually found to depict many characteristics such as being aroused by children, shyness, need for dominance, history of being victimised themselves, etc., most of the time abusers are indistinguishable from other people, thus making it difficult to single them out. In terms of risk factors, research has shown certain factors put children at greater risk of being abused. Girls are shown to be at higher risk than boys but we must be cautious of this conclusion since there are few studies that take both boys and girls as samples. Pre-adolescent children from age 8 to 12 appear to be more at risk than either younger or older children. The strongest and more consistent findings are related to the parents of abused children. Many studies show that girls who are in the following family situations are considered to be at increased risk:

- a) more likely to have lived without natural fathers;
- b) more likely to have mothers who are employed outside the home, or mothers who are disabled or ill;
- c) more likely to have a dysfunctional family with conflict or poor relationships with one another at home, and
- d) girls living with stepfathers.

However, these were based on the findings from studies conducted in Western societies. In our society there may be some additional risk factors: community where neighbours who are frequent visitors without restriction, and where girls are more likely left alone at

home when family members all go to work in the field, and girls and boys have to go to forests or to lonely places to graze cattle or collect fodder. These factors may also increase vulnerability of children in the rural context.

Findings

Level of Understanding

The first section of the survey consisted after identifying children's level of understanding different dimensions of child sexual abuse - what it is, who does it, to whom it happens and where, how and why it is done. The measures of level of understanding included the following questions each with multiple choices for respondents to select from:

- What is child sexual abuse?
- Who could be an abuser?
- Who could be abused - girls, boys or both?
- Children of what age are abused?
- Where could the abuse take place?
- Which types of children are likely to be abused?
- Why are children abused?
- How does it happen?

There was no single correct or incorrect answer for each question. So in order to present the survey results in a

comprehensive way, the respondents were categorised into three levels of understanding: those with a low level, with a medium level and those with a high level of understanding. The criteria was that those who picked one, two or three choices and those who said 'don't know' were categorised into a low level of understanding and those who picked four or five choices were categorised into a medium level of understanding and those who picked more than five choices were categorised into a high level of understanding. Some questions - three, four and eight - are exceptions to those criteria since these questions have fewer choices (Please see notes below Table 3 for the criteria used for these questions).

Children showed a low level of understanding in six out of eight questions(see Table 3). Regarding question one, 'what is child sexual abuse?' nearly 44 percent of respondents identified only one, two or three choices as sexual abuse thus having a low level of understanding while 36 percent picked more than five choices thus falling into the category of a high level of understanding. A lesser percentage of respondents thought the use of obscene lan-

Table 3: Percentage of School Children with Different Levels of Understanding on CSA

Level of under-standing	Q1 What is child sexual abuse?	Q2 Who could be an abuser?	Q3 Who could be abused - girls, boys or both? ¹	Q4 Children of what age are abused? ²	Q5 Where does it happen?	Q6 Which types of children are abused?	Q7 Why does it happen?	Q8 How does it happen? ³
High (%)	36.0	22.0	71.0	9.6	25.0	35.5	20.0	40.6
Medium (%)	20.4	22.5		36.4	21.5	25.1	27.2	24.0
Low (%)	43.6	55.6	29.1	54.0	53.5	39.4	53.0	35.4
Total (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Sample size	3,857	3,858	3,950	3,798	3,921	3,811	3,784	3,786

guage and writing offending material on the board or in copybooks as child sexual abuse. The majority of children (58.0 percent) picked the choice 'letting a child show private parts' as child sexual abuse. This indicates that children still lacked a clear understanding of different forms of child sexual abuse. Similarly, the majority of children (nearly 56 percent) have clearly a poor understanding of who could be an abuser. Only 22.0 percent of respondents pointed out that an abuser could have many faces by selecting more than five choices. Interestingly, 73 percent of respondents thought that abusers could be drug or alcohol addicts while 59 percent said that abusers could be strangers. Only a small percentage of children thought that family members or relatives could also sexually abuse children.

The majority of children (71.0 percent) rightly pointed out that both boys and girls could be sexually abused. This

was the only question where the majority of children have clearly a high level of understanding. But regarding the query as to children of what age could be abused, the majority (76.0 percent) thought that adolescents in the age group of 13-18 years of age were likely to be sexually abused, while 17.0 percent thought that small children of three years or below were also likely to be sexually abused. Thus, most children have a low level of understanding (54 percent) in this regard. Only 25 percent of children could think of more than five places, thus leaning towards the thinking that child sexual abuse could take place anywhere, while the majority of children (53.5 percent) could think of only limited places (three or less or said 'don't know') where children could be sexually abused. Fifty two percent of children thought that sexual abuse could take place in poor and slum areas while 66 percent thought that sexual abuse could take place in grazing land or forests. Only 36 percent thought that CSA could occur in

¹ Only 'high' and 'low' categories were specified because the question has only three choices. If children answered 'both boys and girls could be abused' or marked both the choices, (a) girls could be abused and (b) boys could be abused, they were categorised into 'high level of understanding'. On the other hand, if they marked either only (a) or (b), they were categorised into 'low level of understanding'.

² Since this question has only 3 choices, those who picked three choices were categorised into 'high', those who picked only two were categorised into 'medium' while those who picked only one choice including those who said 'don't know' were categorised into 'low level of understanding'.

³ Since this question has limited categories, those who picked four or more choices were categorised into 'high' while those who picked only three were categorised into 'medium' and those who picked one or two choices or said 'don't know' were categorised into 'low'.

their own homes while 20 percent thought it could happen children's shelter homes. Again in line with common thinking, the majority of children (64 percent) thought that children from poor and uneducated families were more likely to be sexually abused while 22.5 percent thought that children from rich and educated families were also likely to be sexually abused. Seventy one percent of respondents thought that weak and helpless children were likely to be sexually abused.

As expected, the majority of children have a low level of understanding as to why child sexual abuse takes place. Fifty three percent of children picked three or less choices as possible reasons for sexual abuse while only 20 percent picked more than five reasons. Most children (68 percent) thought abusers might sexually abuse children as a means of sexual gratification.

Fifty to 51 percent of children thought that abusers, being powerful, could easily lure children to such acts or use children as a way of taking revenge. Nearly 41 percent pointed out four or more ways abusers could use while 35 percent picked only one or two choices or said 'don't know'. Although many children could think of different ways children could be abused, it should be noted that there were considerable numbers of children with a low level of understanding of this, thus pointing out the need to inform and improve knowledge as part of a prevention programme. Nearly eighty five percent of children thought that abusers could use bribes, while 72 percent thought abusers could use fear and intimidation to sexually abuse children.

Comparison with Results from the Kathmandu Valley

Before making comparisons it should be made clear that there were slight differences between the questionnaire of the first phase study in the Kathmandu Valley and the questionnaire for this study in the districts. As per recommendations from the research assistants in the field who were familiar with the local context, some additions were made to the multiple choices in some questions such as what is child sexual abuse, who could abuse children, where it occurs, why it happens and which types of children are abused. Some choices were added according to the local context such as - writing obscene things on the board or copybook as a form of child sexual abuse, the fact CSA could take place in forests or grazing lands, etc. Unlike the first phase study, the choice 'all of the above' was dropped in this survey questionnaire because children might pick this choice for ease or out of confusion. Also because of additional choices the criteria for categorising children in low, medium and high levels of understanding was slightly modified, as mentioned above.

In general, children from the Kathmandu Valley were found to be slightly better informed of different issues of child sexual abuse than children from outside of the Valley. Regarding the question 'what is child sexual abuse?' children from the Kathmandu Valley seemed to have a better knowledge than the others. Children in both the surveys were found to have poor knowledge of who could be an abuser while the majority of them were aware that boys as well as girls could be victims

of sexual abuse. The majority in the Kathmandu Valley knew that children of any age could be abused. It should be noted that this could also be due to the inclusion of 'all of the above' as a choice of answer. Both the surveys showed that children have a low level of understanding as to why child sexual abuse occurs. Children from out of the Kathmandu Valley seemed to have a slightly better knowledge of the different ways abuser could sexually abuse children.

Level of Understanding by Gender and Age Group of Children

There is no significant difference in levels of understanding between boys and girls in any of the issues of child sexual abuse. However, there are some significant differences in levels of understanding by age groups of children. To look at differences by age groups, children were divided into three categories; those below 13 years of age, between 13 to 15 years of age and those above 15 years of age (Table 4)

Table 4: Percentage of Children with Different Levels of Understanding by Age Groups

Level of Understanding		Age Categories		
		Below 13 years (%)	13 -15 years (%)	16 years and above (%)
Q1: What is child sexual abuse?	High	35.4	37.4	33.5
	Medium	17.3	20.6	22.7
	Low	47.3	42.0	43.8
Q2: Who could be an abuser?	High	20.8	23.7	18.8
	Medium	20.2	22.4	24.6
	Low	59.0	53.9	56.6
Q3: Who could be abused - boys or girls or both?	High	69.7	71.7	70.4
	Low	30.3	28.3	29.6
Q4: Children of what age are abused?	High	7.5	11.0	8.4
	Medium	33.9	34.7	41.9
	Low	58.6	54.3	49.7
Q5: Where could the abuse take place?	High	21.6	26.5	24.4
	Medium	18.4	22.4	22.3
	Low	60.0	51.1	53.3
Q6: Which types of children are likely to be abused?	High	32.0	37.1	35.0
	Medium	20.5	26.0	27.0
	Low	47.5	36.9	38.0
Q7: Why children are abused?	High	21.8	20.6	16.7
	Medium	22.2	28.4	28.8
	Low	56.0	51.0	54.5
Q8: How does it happen?	High	34.0	40.4	43.7
	Medium	21.7	23.7	25.2
	Low	44.3	35.9	31.1

Within the pre-adolescent group, the majority of children have a lower level of understanding in almost all the issues of child sexual abuse with the exception of question three. Most children in adolescent groups also have a low level of understanding in most of the issues except questions three and eight. Adolescent children could think of more ways they might be abused. However, it should be noted that even within the adolescent groups there was not a noticeable majority who had a high level of understanding. On the whole the children's level of understanding was more skewed towards lower levels in all the major issues of child sexual abuse.

Experience of Sexual Abuse Among School Children

The second part of the questionnaire focused on the personal experience of children with various contact and non-contact forms of sexual abuse. Contact forms of abuse

Table 5: Percentage of Children Who Have Experienced Sexual Abuse by Type of Abuse

Type of Abuse	(%)	Experience by Sex (%)		Sample Size	
Obscene language	33.5	Boys	35.8	Boys	2,024
		Girls	31.1	Girls	1,936
		Total		Total	3,960
Exposure to obscene materials	25.8	Boys	25.8	Boys	1,883
		Girls	25.9	Girls	1,649
		Total		Total	3,532
Exhibitionism	22.2	Boys	16.8	Boys	1,706
		Girls	28.2	Girls	1,508
		Total		Total	3,214
Contact form of abuse - Type I - fondling and kissing	17.8	Boys	13.5	Boys	1,974
		Girls	22.3	Girls	1,870
		Total		Total	3,844
Contact form - Type II - oral sex and penetration	9.0	Boys	7.6	Boys	1,298
		Girls	10.5	Girls	1,100
		Total		Total	2,398

Table 6: Number of Children Who Have Experienced Obscene Language from Various Sources

Person/s using Obscene Language	Boys (n=725) %	Girls (n=602) %	Total (n=1,327)%
Strangers	49.5	73.0	60.1 (798)
Friends	65.2	31.4	50.0 (662)
Neighbours	50.6	44.7	48.0 (636)
Relatives	20.3	14.3	17.6 (233)
Family friend	18.5	14.3	16.6 (220)
Care provider	14.1	11.5	13.0 (171)
Family member	11.4	10.1	11.0 (144)
Others	10.0	8.5	9.2 (123)

Note: The percentages do not add up to 100 because children can pick more than one choice as an answer. This applies to all the tables that follow.

included kissing, fondling, oral sex and penetration while non-contact forms included use of obscene language, exposure to obscene materials, and exhibitionism.

Experience with Obscene Language

Thirty three point five percent out of the total respondents of 3,960 children have experienced obscene language once or more than once. More boys compared to girls - About 36 percent of boys and 31 percent of girls - have experienced the use of obscene language (Table 5). Twenty two percent of children mentioned that they have experienced obscene language only once; 33.0 percent have experienced it two to three times while 28.5 percent have experienced it more than five times.

Regarding the query 'who used obscene language to you?' the most common answers were 'strangers', 'friends' and 'neighbours', respectively (Table 6). Girls were more likely to experience obscene language from strangers (73 percent)

than boys while among boys usage seemed to be common among friends (65 percent). Children who experienced obscene language from equals but said that it was not with intent to offend were discounted from the analysis here. So only those children who were offended by the use of obscene language from friends were reported. It should be noted that two-thirds of the sample children reported experiencing obscene language but also said that it was not done intentionally to offend. This suggested that use of obscene language was taken as normal among friends, neighbours, and family members. More boys than girls experienced the use of obscene language from all sources except from 'strangers'. Family members, relatives and friends of family members also used obscene language but to a lesser extent than the persons in other categories. Eighty seven percent of girls and 81 percent of boys said they had experienced obscene language from men.

Consistent with the categories of persons using obscene language, the majority of children reported the most common places where obscene language was used were streets/bazaars (54.4 percent), cinema halls (46.6 percent), schools (36.5 percent), grazing lands (33.7 percent), and public transport (31.0 percent). The equal spread of the response in several places suggested that children were likely to encounter the use of obscene language everywhere. Compared to boys, girls were more likely to experience obscene language in the street/bazaar (51.7 percent boys vs. 57.6 percent girls) and on public transport (30.0 percent boys vs. 32.0 percent girls). In other places such as cinema halls (49.2 percent boys vs. 43.4 percent girls), schools (39.0 percent boys vs. 33.7 percent girls), and grazing lands (39

percent boys vs. 27.4 percent girls), boys were more likely to experience obscene language than girls.

Exposure to Obscene Material

Nearly 26 percent of children were found to have been exposed to obscene materials with ill intent by someone senior or knowledgeable to them. Almost quarter of the boys as well as girls were exposed to obscene material. In the first phase study in Kathmandu it was found that the majority of children had seen obscene material with friends of a similar age. Since it could be out of curiosity, an additional question was asked in this survey - whether the person who exposed him or her had done so with ill intent. Children by nature are curious to know new things, more so when things are forbidden to them. Talking about sex is still taboo in our society and looking at pornographic materials is also socially forbidden. So it was not surprising that without screening through the additional question as to whether or not it was with ill intent, a higher percentage of children in the sample (54 percent) reported seeing obscene material once or more. These cases were discounted from the reported experience as they were not necessarily sexual abuse.

Most of the children reported seeing blue movies (Table 7), or reading pornographic magazines, books and novels and seeing obscene photographs. Compared to boys a lesser percentage of girls were exposed to obscene material, suggesting that girls were still protected from these materials by their family. Since our sample came mostly from the urban areas of Pokhara, Biratnagar,

Table 7: Percentage of Children who have been Exposed to Obscene Material

Type of Material Seen or Read	Boys (n=486) %	Girls (n=427) %	Total (n=913)%
Seen blue movies	61.3	44.3	53.3 (487)
Read pornographic literature	47.7	41.7	45.0 (410)
Seen home-made porn videos ¹	20.4	13.6	17.2 (157)
Seen obscene photographs	55.8	39.0	48.0 (437)
Read porn magazines	51.4	45.2	48.5 (443)
Seen on the Internet	35.8	24.8	30.7 (280)
Seen obscene drawings	39.1	33.3	36.4 (332)
Others	7.8	8.0	7.9 (72)

¹ Home-made porn videos are those videos produced in small scale without being properly registered for open production.

and Chitwan or their immediate outskirts where Internet facilities were easily accessible in the markets, it was not surprising that children mentioned seeing pornographic materials on the Internet as well; with the percentage of boys being higher, suggesting that

Table 8: Person/s with Whom Children Mentioned Seeing Obscene Materials

Person/s with whom they have seen	Boys (n=486) %	Girls (n=427) %	Total (n=913)%
Stranger	38.0	55.7	46.2 (422)
Friends	68.0	38.2	54.0 (493)
Neighbours	38.5	30.2	34.6 (316)
Relatives	18.5	12.6	15.8 (144)
Family member	8.2	9.1	8.7 (79)
Family friend	16.0	13.1	14.7 (134)
Care provider	11.7	15.0	13.3 (121)
Others	6.8	5.9	6.4 (58)

girls were less outgoing than boys. Also noticeable was the mention of exposure to obscene drawings. It was still very common in schools outside the Kathmandu Valley to write obscene material on toilet walls, on blackboards and copybooks and this was a major source of harassment for girls.

The majority of children mentioned seeing obscene material with friends followed by strangers and neighbours (Table 8). But it is interesting to note that the majority of boys mentioned seeing material with friends while the majority of girls mentioned seeing with strangers. Again seeing with same sex friends could be out of curiosity, while seeing with strangers and with friends of the opposite sex might amount to abuse with ill intent. A considerable number of children also mentioned watching obscene materials with relatives, family friends and care providers. Those watching with family members were relatively fewer in number (only 8.7 percent), suggesting a conservative

Table 9: Place/s Where Children Have Seen Obscene Materials

Places where obscene material was seen	Boys (n=486) %	Girls (n=427) %	Total (n=913)%
Own house	12.8	14.8	13.7 (125)
In another person's house	55.6	33.3	45.1 (412)
In school	21.0	20.8	21.0 (191)
In street/market	28.0	44.0	35.5 (324)
At picnics	25.0	19.2	22.2 (203)
In cinemas	42.8	43.6	43.2 (394)
Forests or grazing land	26.0	19.4	23.0 (209)
Domestic or other work related place	15.2	13.1	14.2 (130)
Others	10.0	5.2	7.7 (70)

lifestyle outside of the Kathmandu Valley or limited accessibility of modern audio and video materials in homes there.

Most children mentioned seeing obscene material in another person's house, in cinemas, street/bazaars and in forests or grazing lands. The majority of girls mentioned seeing obscene material in the street/markets and in cinemas while the majority of boys mentioned seeing it in another person's house and in cinemas. The data clearly suggests accessibility of blue movies in the locality. Boys were more likely to see obscene materials in forests/grazing lands than girls. There was even considerable exposure to obscene materials in schools; the same percentage of boys as well as girls mentioned seeing obscene material in school.

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Although the majority of children (36.6 percent) mentioned seeing obscene materials only once, 34.0 percent reported having seen it two to three times while 15.0 percent saw it more than five times. Regarding the gender of the person who had exposed the children to obscene material, it was mainly men. Nearly 82.0 percent of children (80.0 percent of girls and 84.0 percent of boys) were exposed to obscene material by males. Again the majority of children (57.0 percent) in the sample identified the age category of the person who exposed them to be between 17 and 25 years. So it was obvious that someone older than them exposed the children. But 37.5 percent of respondents mentioned the age of the person to be below 16 years of age and this could again be out of curiosity, driving friends to look at obscene material together. A smaller percentage of children (14.5 percent) were also exposed by persons above 25 years of age.

Exhibitionism

Twenty two percent of the sample children have experienced the exposure of their private parts by adults. Of that, 16.8 percent were boys and 28.2 percent were girls. Obviously girls encountered more embarrassing exposure of bodies by persons with ill intent. It is possible that growing children, out of curiosity, may indulge in friendly exposure. Thus, 'friends' were excluded from the reported percentage of children experiencing exhibitionism. Nine percent of girls reported exhibitionism among friends, while among boys 30.0 percent reported exposing themselves to friends in a non-abusive way.

Table 10: Person/s Who Exhibited Private Parts of their Body to Children

Personal	Boys (n=287) %	Girls (n=425) %	Total (n=712)%
Stranger	57.1	71.8	66.0 (469)
Neighbours	27.2	24.7	25.7 (183)
Relatives	15.0	12.7	13.6 (97)
Family member	5.2	7.3	6.5 (46)
Family friend	5.6	8.0	7.0 (50)
Care provider	12.5	11.0	11.7 (83)
Others	11.5	12.0	11.8 (84)

Children experienced exhibitionism mostly from strangers (66.0 percent). Again girls were more likely to encounter exhibitionism from strangers than boys (Table 10). Children also experienced exhibitionism from neighbours, relatives, care providers, family members and family friends. The places where children experienced exhibitionism were mainly in the street/bazaar, cinema, grazing land, and in other people's houses. Girls were more likely to encounter exhibitionism in the street/bazaar, on public transport and

in school while boys were more likely to encounter it in another person's house, grazing land and on picnics. In informal discussions with girls from schools outside the Kathmandu Valley they said that they felt embarrassed by the lack of privacy in schools; there were few separate toilet facilities for boys and girls. To their further embarrassment girls mentioned that condoms were also thrown in the toilets. For those reasons girls tried not to use the toilets and did not attend schools during menstruation.

Regarding the person who exhibited themselves to children, the majority of boys as well as girls said that it was men. Eighty five percent of girls and 67.0 percent of boys experienced exhibitionism from men. Although more boys were likely to experience exhibitionism from women (33.0 percent), they also experienced it mostly from men. Nearly fifty three percent of children said that the person exhibiting their body fell in the age category of 17 to 25 years, while 19.4 percent put the age category of the exhibitor between 26 and 40 years. But 28.0 percent of children also mentioned exhibitionism by someone in the age category below 16 years of age. The respondent could be younger than this age and children might feel uncomfortable even among peers, more so if it was someone of the opposite sex.

Contact Forms of Abuse - Type I

Nearly 18 percent of children have experienced contact form of sexual abuse in contact form such as fondling over or under clothes and/or kissing. More girls reported experiencing this type of sexual abuse than boys. Twenty two (point three) percent of girls compared to 13.5 percent of boys reported experiencing fondling over or under clothes.

Table 11: Place Where Contact Forms of Abuse (Type I) Took Place Among School Children

Place	Boys (n=267) %	Girls (n=417) %	Total (n=684)%
Own home	14.0	21.0	18.1 (124)
Abuser's house	28.1	23.3	25.1 (172)
Market	20.2	26.6	24.1 (165)
School	12.4	13.4	13.0 (89)
Forest/grazing land	31.1	17.5	22.8 (156)
Picnic spot	20.0	13.2	15.8 (108)
Cinema	36.3	28.1	31.3 (214)
Public transport	16.1	23.3	20.5 (140)
Place related to domestic or other work	10.1	5.0	7.0 (48)
Others	9.7	5.5	7.2 (49)

There were more reports of fondling over clothes (42.4 percent) compared to fondling under clothes (21.1 percent) and kissing (40.0 percent). More boys reported kissing (43.8 percent boys vs. 37.2 percent girls) while more girls reported fondling over clothes (43.6 percent girls vs. 40.4 percent boys). Children mentioned mostly strangers (52.5 percent) as the persons who did such acts followed by persons known only to the child but not to their parents (22.7 percent), neighbours (22.5 percent) and relatives (17.0 percent). Compared to boys more girls identified strangers (57 percent girls vs. 45.3 percent boys), relatives (17.5 percent girls and 16 percent boys), family members (6 percent girls and 4.9 percent boys) and family friends (9.8 percent girls and 8 percent boys) as the persons fondling or kissing them. Consistent with this response again, more girls identified their own house, public transport, the streets, and school as the places where they experienced this type of sexual abuse. More boys reported

experiencing abuse of this type in grazing land, cinemas, another person's house, and in picnic spots (Table 11). Cinemas seemed to be the place where abuse of this type took place most often. These cinemas could also be video parlours where blue films were usually shown.

Table 12: Contact Forms of Sexual Abuse (Type II) Experienced by Boys and Girls by Type of Abuse

Type of Abuse	Boys (n=196) %	Girls (n=157) %	Total (n=353*)%
Made child fondle abuser's private parts	46.4	42.0	44.5 (157)
Kissed private parts	34.7	40.1	37.1 (131)
Involved child in oral sex	25.5	9.5	18.4 (65)
Penetrative sex on abuser	32.1	5.7	20.4 (72)
Penetrative sex on child	22.0	11.5	17.3 (61)
Penetrative sex using object	27.6	12.1	20.7 (73)

Note: The sample size in this table and following tables (13 and 14) is slightly higher because those who reported 'friends' were also included while 'friends' were not reflected in the percentage of children experiencing contact form of abuse of Type II in Table 5.

The majority of children identified the age of the abuser to be between 17 - 40 years. Interestingly, there were more boys who reported the age of the abuser in the category below 16 years of age (34.5 percent) but we have already discounted 'indulgence among friends' in the analysis. Still if children felt they were being taken advantage of and felt abused with ill intent, they could report it as sexual abuse. Overwhelmingly the majority of girls (88.3 percent) and 60.7 percent of boys reported the person who abused them as male. More boys reported women (39.3 percent) as the person who abused them. While 50.8 percent of girls reported this type of abuse happening only once, 6.2 percent reported it happening five times or more.

Among boys, nearly 42 percent said it happened only once but 10 percent said it happened five times or more.

Contact Forms of Abuse - Type II

Nine percent of children in the sample have experienced contact forms of abuse of a serious nature that includes kissing of private parts, oral sex and penetration. Out of those who have experienced this type of sexual abuse, 7.6 percent were boys and 10.5 percent were girls. The girls seemed to be careful in their answers. Although mobility and freedom was very much protected by family restrictions girls were still likely to be the victims of sexual abuse even in their own homes and neighbourhoods. Compared to boys more girls reported fondling and kissing only and a lesser percentage reported penetration. More boys reported penetrative sex of different natures including oral sex. But as a limitation of the study we have to accept that there was a possibility that girls did not disclose abuse of this nature despite assurance of confidentiality.

Table 13: Person Mentioned by Children as Abuser/s

Personal	Boys (n=197) %	Girls (n=157) %	Total (n=353)%
Stranger	38.8	54.1	45.6 (161)
Friends	49.5	26.1	39.1 (138)
Neighbours	28.6	24.2	26.6 (94)
Person known to you only	20.0	17.2	18.7 (66)
Relatives	17.3	16.6	17.0 (60)
Family member	5.6	7.6	6.5 (23)
Family friend	7.7	7.6	7.6 (27)
Care providers	12.8	7.6	10.5 (37)
Others	6.1	3.2	4.8 (17)

The majority of abused children identified 'strangers' as the persons who abused them (Table 13), while 'friends' and 'neighbours' came next. Considerable numbers of boys mentioned 'friends' as the person who abused them. This suggested that they were involved in sexual activities with friends whether of the same sex or opposite sex. Some of these activities could be abusive in the sense that they were taken advantage of within a friendship. The majority of girls mentioned strangers as the abusers. Both boys and girls were equally vulnerable from neighbours and relatives. Nearly eight percent of girls and six percent of boys mentioned family members as abusers. This clearly indicates incestuous sexual abuse.

Table 14: Places Where the Contact Forms of Abuse Took Place Against School Children

Place	Boys (n=196)%	Girls (n=157) %	Total (n=353)%
Own home	8.7	17.2	12.5 (44)
Abuser's house	39.3	24.2	32.6 (115)
Market	19.0	25.5	21.8 (77)
School	19.0	16.0	17.6 (62)
Forest/grazing land	37.8	18.5	29.2 (103)
Picnic spot	34.7	17.8	27.2 (96)
Cinema	34.2	31.8	33.1 (117)
Place related to domestic or other work	10.2	10.8	10.5 (37)
Others	7.1	5.1	6.2 (22)

The places where children were most vulnerable were cinemas, another person's house, grazing land and streets. Boys as well as girls were equally vulnerable to sexual abuse in cinemas. But it was clear that girls were more vulnerable in markets and in their own homes. Sev-

enteen percent of girls compared to 8.7 percent of boys mentioned being abused in their own homes. It was consistent with a higher percentage of girls reportedly being abused by family members compared to boys. Girls could be vulnerable even in their own homes from visitors. Nineteen percent of boys identified schools and markets as places of sexual abuse. Boys were clearly more vulnerable to sexual abuse in grazing lands or woods than girls.

While 46.5 percent of girls in the sample mentioned that this type of abuse occurred only once, 41.4 percent mentioned that it occurred two to three times, with five percent of respondent children saying that it occurred more than five times. Similarly nearly 37.0 percent of boys said that this type of abuse occurred only once while 44.4 percent said that it occurred two to three times and 6.6 percent said that it occurred more than five times. Ninety one percent of girls experienced this type of abuse from men while 61.3 percent of boys also identified men as the abuser. Since we have discounted sexual activity among friends it could be that younger boys were taken advantage of by older boys or that boys with more knowledge

Table 15: Means Used by an Abuser to Abuse Children

Means Used by an Abuser	Boys (n=196)%	Girls (n=157) %	Total (n=528)%
Took advantage of trust	37.8	40.1	38.8 (137)
Used bribes	31.1	24.8	28.3 (100)
Used seduction	39.3	18.5	30.0 (106)
Used intimidation	22.4	28.7	25.2 (89)
Threatened to harm family members	17.3	17.8	17.6 (62)
Used physical force	20.0	27.4	23.2 (82)
Offered friendship	34.7	32.5	33.7 (119)

took advantage of ignorant ones, so that the latter felt abused. But a significant proportion of boys (38.7 per cent) also identified females as abusers.

Regarding the age of the abuser, 53.5 percent of girls and 43.4 percent of boys put the age category of the abuser in the 17 to 25 age group. But 44.0 percent of girls identified the age of the abuser to be below 16 years of age. About 4 percent of girls pointed out the age of the abuser to be between 41 and 60.

Most abused children felt that they were abused for sexual gratification (37.7 percent), and because they were ignorant of what was happening (30.6 percent). There were more girls who reported power and revenge as the reasons for being sexually abused. With respect to the query as to how they were abused, the majority of boys as well as girls said that they were 'taken advantage of trust' (Table 15). To add strength to this point, 33.7 percent of respondents said that they were abused through 'offering friendship'. But there is an interesting comparison in the responses; more girls than boys said that they were taken advantage of trust. There were also more girls who said that the abuser used physical force. More boys than girls mentioned the use of bribes and enticement. However, it should be noted that the abuser could use more than one method to sexually abuse children.

Sixty eight percent of girls said that they were told not to tell anyone about the incident, while 59.7 percent of boys were told the same thing. The abuser threatened the child with different things such as causing trouble or even killing the victim's family members, telling parents that the

child was bad, and that the child would face police action if the abuse was disclosed.

In answer to the question 'how did you feel about the incident?' most of the children felt hurt (58.0 percent), ashamed (35.0 percent), and afraid (31.2 percent). Nearly 34 percent of children also said that they felt the need for protection in the future. It was very likely that as a result of the survey children might have realised that they were being sexually abused. Children also mentioned feeling disgusted, confused, and guilty. About 21 percent to 24 percent of the children mentioned more serious signs such as difficulty in sleeping, loss of appetite and withdrawal; relatively more girls mentioned those signs than boys. Also more girls said that they felt the need to protect themselves (42 percent girls vs. 27 percent boys), and were scared (33.8 percent girls vs. 29 percent boys).

Among those children who experienced contact forms of a serious nature, 66 percent said that they talked about it to someone, while the rest did not. Among those who talked about the incident to somebody, 80.0 percent mentioned talking to friends. Some talked to their parents (23.6

Table 16: Experience of Different Forms of Sexual Abuse by Age of Children

Type of abuse	Age group			Total
	Below 13 Years %	13-15 years %	16 and over %	
Use of obscene language	14.3	56.8	28.9	1327 (100%)
Exposure to obscene materials	12.2	57.6	30.2	913 (100%)
Exhibitionism	15.6	56.0	28.4	712 (100%)
Contact form Type I	15.7	53.2	31.1	684 (100%)
Contact form Type II	17.2	58.1	24.7	215 (100%)

percent), and social workers (20.0 percent) but all of them were likely to talk to friends first before they talked to anybody else. Seventy nine percent of those who told someone received help in various ways such as suggestions regarding how to protect themselves (68.4 percent), counselling (29.3 percent), and social support (25.3 percent). Fourteen percent of those who told others also said that they got punished. Again, the people from whom they got help was mostly friends (75.3 percent), social organisations (33.3 percent) and the police (26.0 percent).

Those who experienced serious contact forms of sexual abuse but did not tell anybody about the incident mentioned 'fear of family and society' or the 'family prestige' as the main reason. The other reasons mentioned were 'ashamed to talk', and 'fear of the abuser'. Eighty percent of children felt that the sexual abuse was not their fault and the majority of them put the blame on the abuser. Thirty one percent of those abused thought that they were at risk of being abused again.

Data showed that children in the age group of 13-15 were more likely to experience all types of sexual abuse than the other groups. Relatively smaller percentage of chil-

dren below 13 years of age experienced exposure to obscene language and to obscene materials but they were more likely to experience serious contact form of abuse. Children 16 years and above were likely to experience exposure to obscene materials, and contact form of abuse such as fondling and kissing but relatively lesser percentage of them were likely to experience more serious contact form of abuse such as penetration.

Discussion

Comparison with Findings from Kathmandu: Experience with Sexual Abuse

Before we compare findings from Kathmandu and outside it is necessary to draw attention to the slightly different environments with regards to the way children, especially girls, are raised. Although data was collected mostly from urban areas and the immediate outskirts, these urban areas are more like the rural areas of the country than urban Kathmandu. Parents/guardians in Kathmandu are more likely to be educated as opposed to those outside of the Kathmandu Valley, contributing to the difference in the way children are raised. Additionally, parents and guardians outside of the Kathmandu Valley have a more

Table 17. Percentage of boys and girls who have experienced sexual abuse by type of abuse in the Kathmandu valley and outside the valley

Type of sexual abuse	Total	Kathmandu valley		Out of Kathmandu valley		
		Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls
Contact form	13.7	13.1 (n=3036)	14.5 (n=2295)	14.4 ¹	11.2 ¹ (n=3277)	17.9 ¹ (n=2970)
Non-contact form						
Obscene language	44.5	57.6 (n=2666)	26.9 (n=1994)	33.5	35.8 (n=2024)	31.1(n=1936)
Exposure to obscene materials	28.8	35.1 (n=3043)	20.4 (n=2276)	25.8	25.8 (n=1883)	25.9 (n=1649)
Exhibitionism		35.0 (n=385)	29.0 (n=314)	22.2	16.8 (n=1706)	28.2 (n=1508)

¹ Calculated as weighted average of Type I and Type II contact forms of sexual abuse from Table 5 above.

traditional and conservative way of thinking and girls are raised in a more protective way and are restricted in their movements.

In the Kathmandu Valley more boys than girls have come across obscene language while the percentage difference among boys and girls experiencing obscene language outside of the Kathmandu Valley was not so big. In response to the question 'who used obscene language to you?' the same categories of people topped the list in the survey from the Kathmandu Valley and outside; family members were least mentioned by children in both the surveys. The percentage of family members using obscene language was somewhat lesser in the Kathmandu Valley (6.0 percent) than outside the valley with around 11.0 percent of children citing family members making them feel uncomfortable by the use of obscene language. It could be due to the fact that parents/guardians and other family members were more likely to be educated in Kathmandu, so they were least likely to use obscene language in front of their children. Compared to Kathmandu, the number of neighbours and relatives using obscene language was also higher in the sample from outside of the Kathmandu Valley. Again the reason could be that they were more educated within the Kathmandu Valley and so do not use such language.

The types of obscene material seen by children were the same in the Kathmandu Valley and outside - seeing porn movies topped the list, followed by reading porn magazines, seeing obscene photographs and reading porn literature. The types of materials seen or read by children

also suggested the easy accessibility of these materials - whether in Kathmandu or outside - in cinemas, video parlours, magazine stores, on television and now on the Internet as well. There is an interesting comparison between the findings from Kathmandu and the other areas. In Kathmandu the majority of children, both boys and girls, mentioned seeing obscene material with friends but in the other study areas the majority of girls mentioned seeing the material with strangers while only boys mentioned seeing with friends. In the the Kathmandu Valley more girls (30 percent) mentioned watching with family members senior to them and mentioned feeling shy and uncomfortable. Matching with this response more children in Kathmandu mentioned watching obscene movies in their own house whereas among the other samples, the places mentioned were mostly another person's house and cinemas. Less children outside of the Kathmandu Valley mentioned seeing obscene movies with family members, and this may be partially due to the unavailability of video material and other facilities at home. The percentage of children exposed to obscene materials through the Internet was similar in Kathmandu and outside (31.0 percent). But surprisingly, the percentage of girls seeing the Internet was much less in Kathmandu (15.0 percent) compared to outside the Valley (24.8 percent). This could be due to the fact that most girls in Kathmandu had computers at home where there were restrictions, while girls from outside the Kathmandu Valley used Internet cafes.

Regarding contact forms of abuse approximately 14 percent of sample children from the Kathmandu Valley and those from the outside the valley reported experiencing different contact forms of sexual abuse that included kissing, fon-

dling private parts, oral and penetrative sex (Table 17). However more girls (18 percent) from outside the valley reported experiencing contact forms of sexual abuse while the percentage of boys reporting contact forms of sexual abuse was slightly lower there (11 percent). Unlike the common belief that only girls are sexually abused, both the survey findings revealed considerable number of boys being sexually abused.

Furthermore, sexual abuse of boys may simply have been ignored since families tend to provide protection to girls while boys are ignored in that respect. In a way it also reflects gender discrimination - girls are denied free mobility in order to save the family from disgrace lest they lose their virginity before marriage. This issue does not arise for boys. This survey provided an opportunity for boys to express their experience anonymously. There is a need for further exploration.

Importance of Neighbourhood

Apart from strangers and friends, a considerable number of children mentioned neighbours as the persons sexually abusing them in all types of abuse. The neighbourhood is a locality where people know each other and live almost as a family; there is no restriction in visiting each other's house. Children in the neighbourhood play with each other; the neighbourhood gives a sense of security. As a neighbour is known to the child they can easily gain the trust of the child. In other words, abusers with familiar faces can also create a false sense of security which they capitalise on. If the child is ready to tell others about the abuse and the guardians are ready to listen to them, only then is the abuse disclosed; otherwise the child suffers in silence.

Even in the case of non-contact forms of abuse such as use of obscene language, 48.0 percent of children identified neighbours as abusers. Nearly thirty five percent of children cited neighbours as the people who exposed them to obscene materials. Slightly over a quarter of the sample children experienced exhibitionism and a contact form of abuse such as oral sex and penetrative sex with a neighbour as the abuser.

According to police records and media reports in 2003, out of the total 242 rape cases of children below 16 years, 33.3 percent of the cases featured neighbours as the accused. Over a six months period of 2004, 132 rape cases were reported, with 22.3 percent of the accused being neighbours.

Importance of Context

Level of understanding not only depicts children's knowledge of child sexual abuse but also the context in which they are vulnerable. For instance, during focus group discussions with out-of-school children they mentioned that abusers could also be security personnel, insurgents and traffickers. The existing conflict situation within the country may have prompted children to provide such responses. Also media reports of increasing out-migration of boys and girls from villages and their increasing vulnerability to trafficking may have made children mention it as a form of abuse. But this was not within the scope of the study. Likewise, the most frequently mentioned place of abuse for children outside the Kathmandu Valley - grazing land/ woods - was not relevant for children from the Kathmandu Valley. Often the possible places of abuse

mentioned by children such as woods, slum areas and factories reflect the immediate surrounding and the reality and experience faced by children.

During the focus group discussions some children especially from Surkhet mentioned child marriage and sexual relations early in life as robbing them of their childhood as a form of sexual abuse. However, we did not include this as sexual abuse in our definition. For children, especially from rural areas, it is certainly a valid issue.

The individual case studies seemed to suggest that child sexual abuse is common among children in difficult circumstances such as street children, rag pickers and children from poor families who are sent to work as domestic helpers or to work in cities. Of course, children in difficult circumstances lack both protection by family members and even physical protection; living in slum areas without proper doors and windows. Poverty, illiteracy and ignorance affect the way responsibility towards children is viewed. In poorer families children can be seen as a source of income; parents/guardians are ready to let under-aged children work as domestic workers or send them to cities without properly investigating the situation/living conditions that they will find at the destination points. In that sense children in difficult circumstances are in a more vulnerable situation. However, we should refrain from reaching the conclusion that children in difficult circumstances are more vulnerable to sexual abuse than children from other families or children attending schools. Children in difficult circumstances are in a smaller number and are more forthcoming in expressing their experiences than

children may be in other circumstances; the latter realising the immediate shame and guilt for their family may not open up. As the survey findings suggest, children in schools also encounter sexual abuse from neighbours, family members, and strangers. However, since the survey in schools was anonymous and confidential, it was not possible to get individual case studies of abused children unless they themselves came forward willingly to narrate their experiences to the survey team.

Vulnerability of Children

There is no single factor that increases children's vulnerability to child sexual abuse. Many factors such as gender and age, type of family, type of settlements and neighbourhoods, responsibility of parents etc. impact children's vulnerability. The findings suggest that girls are more vulnerable to different forms of sexual abuse. With the exception of obscene language, a larger percentage of girls experienced all forms of sexual abuse including exhibitionism, fondling, and penetration. Child domestic workers are more vulnerable to child sexual abuse. Children living in slums without secure doors and windows are also vulnerable; increasingly so if parents go out to work leaving the children alone. Other neighbourhoods also could be unsafe for children especially when they are left alone at home. Here the role of the parents/guardians becomes important. Parents/guardians should note any changes in the behaviour of children and should listen to them if a child tries to convey the message of abuse indirectly. Responsive behaviour by parents/guardians can greatly reduce risks for children.

Sexual Abuse or Sexual Activity Among Peers?

In the first phase study, as well as in this study, a considerable number of children mentioned experiencing different types of sexual abuse from friends. In Kathmandu, the majority of boys (63.5 percent) mentioned 'friends'. In this study 50.0 percent of children cited 'friends' as the people who used obscene language. More boys cited friends than girls.

In the case of exposure to obscene materials, the majority of children (80.0 percent boys and 61.7 percent girls) in Kathmandu mentioned seeing such materials with friends. In this study 68.0 percent of boys and 38.0 percent of girls mentioned exposure by friends. However, there is an interesting comparison in the findings between these two studies regarding the gender of the person who exposed them to obscene material. In Kathmandu the majority of children (88.0 percent boys and 65.0 percent girls) mentioned seeing obscene material with members of the opposite sex but of a similar age group. But in this sample from outside Kathmandu nearly 82.0 percent of children (80.0 percent girls and 84.0 percent boys) mentioned men as those who exposed them to obscene material.

With respect to contact forms of sexual abuse, a considerable number of children (24.0 percent boys and 20.0 percent girls) from the sample in Kathmandu mentioned 'friends' as the persons sexually abusing them and a considerable number put the age category of the abuser below 16. Because of this finding we added additional screening questions for this survey, asking if they were exposed to incidents of abuse with 'ill intent' or were they having 'relations with friends'? Still a considerable number of children in this survey, especially boys, (49.5 percent boys and

26.0 percent girls) mentioned friends as the ones who sexually abused them. This suggests that children are engaged in sexual activities with their peers from the same or the opposite sex, which may be forced or consensual. The results from both surveys point out a trend of teenage sexual relationships. The survey itself could have helped to make children realize that the relation they were having was one of abuse and the survey gave them the opportunity to express their feeling for the first time.

Studies abroad have also revealed that it is natural for adolescent children to be curious about their bodies. In a society where talking about sex is taboo, they become even more curious and out of curiosity watch pornographic materials alone or with friends, engage in exploration of their body, or engage in sexual activities. Such activities may or may not amount to sexual abuse. Moreover, they may fall prey to sexual abuse by somebody senior or more knowledgeable than them. As Kjellgren, et al. (n.d.) pointed out, *"In order to be able to judge whether situations are of an abusive character, one must be able to evaluate closely the conditions of interaction and the quality of events ... In order to distinguish normal sexual activities from those which are involuntary and thus abusive, we need to evaluate the existence of consent. Consent is made up of several elements. In order to consent an act, one must understand the proposal, the implications of the behaviour, and be aware of the possible consequences."*

When power relations play an important element in the interaction, "consent" should not be taken in its literal sense - it often entails a decision with "compulsion". There is a need for further exploration of a qualitative nature in this area.

Qualitative Analysis

Findings from Focus Group Discussions with Children in Difficult Circumstances

Focus group discussions were conducted mainly with out-of-school children to gauge their knowledge on different dimensions of child sexual abuse such as what is CSA, who could abuse, where could it happen etc., and whether or not they have experienced any forms of abuse. Since the conditions differed in all the four sample areas, different types of children were selected for focus group discussions. In Pokhara focus group discussions were conducted with a group of 10 male street children and another group of 17 female children from the slum areas of Sarangkot. In Chitwan focus group sessions were conducted mainly with children from squatter areas (57 children, 34 girls and 23 boys), street children (11 girls and 7 boys), and domestic workers (9 boys and 14 girls). Some of these children were attending school and some were

attending literacy classes. In Biratnagar, focus group discussions were conducted with 64 children (21 boys and 43 girls) representing domestic workers, factory workers, rag pickers, those working in restaurants and attending literacy classes run by NGOs.

The survey team from Chitwan wrote about their experience: "Before the focus group discussion we had to meet the children several times for rapport building and to familiarise them. To meet and gather them was not an easy task for us. As most of these children were rag pickers, they had to go to work in the morning, we had to reach their place by six a.m. We had to go to each and everyone's house, talk to their parents and request them to send their children to meet us. Each time we met them we had to give them something to eat. Just to eat there used to be a huge gathering including small kids. After meeting the children several times and becoming close to them, we gathered them for the group discussion. All the children were very curious and excited to learn about the

subject matter. The children were given a brief orientation on child sexual abuse through pictures, meta-cards and stories. To make the discussion more interesting and lively we made the children sing, dance and crack jokes. Overall the discussions was very interesting and fruitful."

Level of Understanding

Out-of-school children were found to have fairly good knowledge of child sexual abuse. They had a fair knowledge of vulnerability by age and gender, who was likely to sexually abuse children, and how and where it could take place.

What is child sexual abuse?

Children understood child sexual abuse as touching, fondling private parts of one's body, using obscene language, showing pornographic materials, taking naked pictures of children, exhibitionism, kissing the child's body, letting children expose their body to an adult, and rape. Some children also mentioned child marriage and divorce without any property as forms of sexual abuse.

In Chitwan and Biratnagar out-of-school children mentioned trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children as forms of child sexual abuse. They mentioned selling girl children, discrimination in terms of caste and religion, forced child labour and prostitution as forms of child sexual abuse. In Surkhet children mentioned child marriage and the system of deuki (system in the far west where virgin girls serve god for their whole life without getting married) also as forms of sexual abuse. The other forms of child sexual abuse mentioned by children in-

cluded use of abusive words, touching a girl's body, winking, kissing, and eve teasing. In Biratnagar children mentioned whistling by boys in the street, pushing, pinching in public transport, writing obscene things, and speaking obscene language or expressing obscenities through hand signals also as forms of child sexual abuse.

Who are abusers?

Children most often mentioned alcoholics, drug addicts, naughty boys, neighbours, and relatives as potential abusers. They also mentioned that abusers could be insurgents and security personnel, drivers/conductors, domestic helpers, and even teachers running tuition classes. Some thought that adolescent children could sexually abuse other children particularly when they see grown ups in sexual acts. Also mentioned as potential abusers were men not satisfied with their wife and those who deal in trafficking of children. Interestingly, some children thought that in-laws could sexually abuse young daughter-in-laws and sister-in-laws while some children also pointed out adult women could abuse boys. Some children from Chitwan said that parents sexually abuse their children after getting drunk.

Children mentioned that their own family members such as stepfather, uncle, grandfather, relatives, and well known people such as family friends could abuse children. Children also identified rickshaw pullers, people with power, and landlords as potential abusers.

Who could be abused?

Most children understood that child sexual abuse could happen to both boys and girls of any age while some

thought that it could happen only to girls. Some children did not think that very young children below five years could be abused; they thought that young and adolescent children were most likely to be sexually abused. Also according to them, children from poor families and from lower castes and those working as domestic helpers were more likely to be victims of sexual abuse. Interestingly, children also mentioned that girls who flirt with boys are likely to be abused, so also girls who were "fashionable" and wore short skirts. This was very commonly thought among boys and girls. Some children also mentioned that orphans, physically or mentally disabled children, those neglected by guardians, children who had to stay alone at home when parents go out to work and ignorant children who do not understand what was happening to them were also likely to be the victims of child sexual abuse.

Children from Chitwan pointed out that children from oppressed castes, working children especially those working in restaurants, street children, rag pickers and step children were more vulnerable to sexual abuse than other children. Some children mentioned that, due to the social norms in Nepal, girls who were married in childhood but were staying in their parent's house because they were separated from their husband were also likely to be sexually abused. There is a societal notion that during childhood girls are protected by their father, after marriage they are under their husband's protection and in old age they are protected by sons. This is reflected in the children's thinking - once a married girl is separated from her husband she is nobody's responsibility and is in a weak position, thus increasing her vulnerability.

Where can children be abused?

Places mentioned most often were grazing lands, woods, working places, cinema halls, class, streets, public transport and lonely places. Very few children mentioned home as a possible place of sexual abuse. Some children also said that they were vulnerable when travelling alone to visit distant relatives. Children also pointed out that abuse could occur in places of work and in slum areas.

Children in Chitwan also mentioned discos/restaurants, hostels, brothels, temples, and factories as places where children could be abused. Children in Biratnagar mentioned that children are vulnerable to sexual abuse on public transport, local fairs and in a landlord's house.

How are children abused?

Out-of-school children pointed out that children could be abused through the pretence of affection, by luring with gifts such as jewellery and clothes and through intimidation. Some children mentioned that a girl could be tempted to have sexual relations under the false pretext of love and the promise of marriage. Some have heard that girls were given drugs before being sexually abused.

Personal Experience

The most common form of sexual abuse children came across was the use of obscene language in streets, movie halls, grazing lands, woods, local fairs (mela) and even in class. They have also experienced obscene language at home, particularly by drunken fathers. This shows the type of family environment children in difficult circumstances have to endure and may be one of the reasons they leave

home. The use of obscene language and the showing of pornographic material is very common among street children.

Many children have also experienced exposure to obscene material such as pornographic magazines, naked pictures and photos, obscene novels and videos shown by friends and by neighbours. They mentioned seeing such materials with older boys from the neighbourhood. Some girls mentioned boys purposely throwing pornographic material at them in the streets. Some girls have experienced pinching by men on public transport. Girls also mentioned feeling uncomfortable when boys exposed themselves while taking a bath in public ponds in the villages. A boy in the focus group discussion also mentioned a girl revealing her body while taking a bath and inviting him to kiss her.

Among boys, exposure of one's body is common while swimming in village ponds, and while grazing cattle in woods. Regarding contact form of abuse, girls reported experiencing fondling by men in buses, and in cinema halls. Some girls also mentioned being kissed by boys from the neighbourhood and having their breasts fondled. Some boys mentioned girls touching their private parts.

In Pokhara eight out of ten male street children and five out of 17 girls from the slum areas reported that they had been sexually abused more than once. Most of the street children have experienced more than one or two types of contact forms of abuse such as sexual activities in a group, homosexual relationships with one another, and abuse by older girls and boys in the street. The girls from the slum area mentioned that they were sexually abused by

hotel and restaurant owners and also by other people in other workplace.

In Biratnagar a boy tearfully mentioned how he was stripped naked and fondled by older boys in the factory where he worked. Also a boy in a children's home disclosed that he was sexually abused. In focus group discussions usually children were very serious while talking about their experiences and also had a tendency to mention that it was a friend, not them, who was being sexually abused.

In Chitwan street children were mostly abused by junkyard owners, older boys, girl friends who were elder to them, and even sometimes by local people. Female street children were sexually abused by tractor drivers working in dumping sites, boys working with them and by friends. They mentioned that they were sexually abused in junkyards, streets, working place, bushes, under bridges, dumping sites and in the abuser's room.

Most children felt that they could not talk about CSA, mainly for fear of society and family. They very much feared that they would be held responsible and punished, and, typically, that it would cause disgrace to the family. If they did talk they said it would be with friends and siblings. Most of the abused children said that they shared the experience only among close friends and groups; they never disclosed the matter to others. The main reason to hide these experiences was because of warnings, pressure, shame, hatred and fear. Half of the children mentioned that remembering these incidents was painful for

them, they regretted it, tried to stay away from situations that may lead to it happening again and tried to forget what had happened. But many out-of-school children have no safe place and were afraid that such incidents would occur again. Most of the children who took part in the discussion blamed themselves for the abuse and felt guilty. Some children also said that even if they told their parents/guardians about the abuse, the parents/guardians preferred to keep it quiet for fear of inciting quarrel and enmity in the neighbourhood.

Children also discussed what parents should do if children want to talk about child sexual abuse. According to children, parents should listen to them instead of scolding them. They should not find fault with the children. Instead they should make children aware of the danger of sexual abuse and tell them of the possible ways of protection. Parents should also report the abuse to the police in order to have the abuser punished. They should also seek support from related non-governmental organisations. The children in non-formal education (NFE) classes also said that children should inform teachers if they experienced sexual abuse or feel they are at risk of being abused. As a way of protection, the children also mentioned that they should not trust strangers, not eat anything given to them by strangers, should scream for help in case of attempt to abuse and report the incident to the police. Some children also suggested leaving the neighbourhood if they were being abused.

As a part of prevention, out-of school children were clearly in favour of gaining knowledge about child sexual abuse

and learning possible ways to protect themselves. As sexual abuse is now increasingly being reported, they feel it is correct to report such incidents should they happen to them.

Further Analysis from Case Studies

The following case studies speak for themselves about the vulnerability of children -when, where, and how are they vulnerable? These case studies are mostly from children in difficult circumstances; their names have been changed to protect their identities. As the survey was done anonymously in schools, sexually abused children in school could not be interviewed unless they themselves came forward to tell of their ordeal.

Children are vulnerable in cinemas

Bishnu Nepali is a 15 years old girl from Latikoili VDC in Surkhet. About three months ago she went to see a movie with friends. While she was watching the movie a boy next to her started to touch her body. She pinched his hands and he withdrew. But after some time he again started to touch her breasts. Then she jumped from her seat and scolded the boy. People in the audience supported her and she was further encouraged: the boy and his friends were forced to leave their seats.

Girls living with stepfathers have an increased risk of being sexually abused

Menaka is from a poor family. Of ten children born to her mother, eight have died, with only herself and one brother remaining. When she was small she remembered quarrels between her parents; her father saying that Menaka was not his natural child; a charge that her mother de-

nied. She was first raped by her own father when she was 11 years old. A cousin found out and confronted Meneka's father who then did not abuse her for some time. When she was 13 she was married but left her husband because of his excessive sexual desires and went to live with an aunt. She married a second time at the age of 15 but that marriage too did not last long. She returned to her parent's house where her father again raped her after drinking alcohol. While trying to stop the rape, her mother was hurt. Meneka went to the police who did not believe her at first, but with the help from her neighbours her father was finally charged and kept in prison for three months. He is now free but she is no longer in contact with him as she now lives with her distant sister-in-law, supporting herself by selling sand from the nearby river. When asked, she said it is right that the guilty are punished but she was unsure of her future. Meneka is currently being counselled by Aawaj, an NGO in Surkhet.

Sexual abuse has a negative effect on boys also

This is a case of a 15-year old boy studying in a private school in Kaski District. When he was 14, he was sexually abused by his brother's friend, who he used to call 'dai' or big brother. Dai used to come to their house frequently and sleep overnight. He felt uncomfortable in dai's presence because he always took the chance when they were alone to show him nude pictures and pornographic material. One day, when everyone was asleep, dai insisted on having sex with him and when he refused, dai warned him that if he did not comply he would be harmed. Dai took off his clothes and started playing with 'his thing': the boy felt very strange and began to tremble. "*Dai did*

everything even though he was not supposed to ... hune nahune sabai garyo ... he went all the way."

Irresponsible behaviour of parents increases children's vulnerability

Anjali is a 13-years old girl attending literacy class. Her mother died 12 years ago when Anjali was born and she was brought up by her grandparents. She is currently working in the Narayanghat area. This is Anjali's story as she describes it:

"We stay in a rural area and most of the children in the village were brought to town for work because of the greed of their parents. My own grandparents were also greedy for money so gave a hotel owner permission to bring me to town. It was 10 months ago that the incident happened. In the beginning I worked as a construction worker. One day a sister from a nearby restaurant asked me if I want to work with her; I said yes. I started work by washing dishes. Gradually days went by and one day the restaurant owner locked me up in a room with a stranger who forced me to have sex with him. He repeatedly raped me. One of my friends was sexually abused by a customer at the hotel and she became pregnant. To prevent a similar thing happening to me, I left the restaurant. Although I am attending a literacy class right now, I have no safe environment and tomorrow I might return to restaurant work if I need to. I feel very scared and ashamed when I think about that incident."

Abusers who happen to be neighbours prey on children left alone at home

1. Sunita Pariyar is the 16 years old eldest daughter of Ram Bahadur Pariyar and Champadevi Pariyar.

Sunita presently lives in Bharatpur municipality but is originally from Parsa District. Her family consists of six members; her parents, herself, two brothers and a sister. The economic condition of her house is very weak. Sunita's parents make a living sewing clothes and working as farm labourers.

A year ago, she was staying alone in her home; her parents were away working in the fields while her brothers had gone out to play and to graze cattle. Jite Kumal, a neighbour came to her house to watch television. Jite was a frequent visitor to her house and used to come to watch TV even when her parents were at home, so Sunita was not concerned. Sunita said, "Jite then closed the door and started touching private parts of my body. I asked him to stop but he refused to listen. Then he raped me. It was very difficult for me and I was really scared. Jite threatened me; he told me that if I told anyone about the incident he would kill my mother and me. That's why I could not talk about it. I was especially frightened that he would do something to my mother or really kill her. I cried and suffered in silence."

She felt anger and sorrow and considered killing herself. She stopped going to school. Yet somehow she managed to tell her mother about it. Then she found that she was pregnant and that Jite had run away to India. With the help of her mother and a women's group she reported the incident to the police and filed a case in court. Everywhere she felt re-victimised by the questions asked. She then came to know that Jite's people had made their lawyer prolong the case by giving him a lot of money. Finally the case could not proceed due to the absence of the accused. She feels that she was powerless to do anything

because her family was poor and that she has remained a victim while the abuser has not been punished. Although her mother has been a source of strength to her, she needs counselling and frequently meets social workers who are motivating her to become independent.

She went to live with her uncle and aunt in the village but after giving birth to a daughter her uncle and aunt's behaviour changed: she was accused of having an illegitimate baby. She left her uncle's home and went to live with her parents. Now her parents are treating her well.

2. Ramita is a 10 years old girl from a small and poor family from Biratnagar. She is currently attending a literacy class. She was very good at her studies. Now she seems somewhat down and has lost interest in her studies. An attempt was made to find out the reasons for these changes. Only after deep probing, did she tell of her nightmare.

An adult neighbour used to frequent their house. Being her father's friend, she used to treat him with respect. He used to bring her food and she thought that the man really loved her. One evening about two months ago he came and told her that he had brought snacks for her and asked her to come with him. So she followed him. He took her to a lonely place, gagged her mouth and tied her feet in a pole. He tore her clothes and raped her. Her parents came searching for her but since her mouth was gagged, she could not shout. A police van came by and he ran away. When she told her parents what happened the person was caught in his house. Next day he came with Rs1,000

and the police let him go. The man came to her house and told her he would do same thing again. Since then she has seen him in her dreams many times and cannot sleep properly. He teases her in the street and still comes to the house when nobody is at home. When she told her mother that she was scared, her mother scolded her saying that she was foolish. She still feels threatened by the abuser.

Abuser wins the trust of children easily

1. Siddhi Regmi is a 12-year old boy studying in grade six in a public school. He is the only son. His father has been working abroad while his mother is a housewife. Siddhi told his story only after a long conversation on child sexual abuse:

Few months ago, an unknown man asked Siddhi to show him the place where people were buried. While walking the man started talking about sexual intercourse and asked him to have sex with him. Siddhi requested him not to talk about such things. There was no one nearby. The man took off his clothes. Siddhi asked the man what he was doing, and the man replied that everyone did it and took off Siddhi's clothes as well. The man forced Siddhi to have intercourse with him and also put a stick into his anus. Then Siddhi gathered his clothes and ran away from the man by throwing sand into his eyes. He told his mother the story and his mother reported the incident to police. But the man who abused him absconded.

Siddhi felt that he was in a way responsible for whatever happened to him. He believed the words of someone unknown and trusted him.

2. Rita Kumari B.K. is a 13 years old girl living in Anand Marg, Chitwan in a family of seven children. She has three sisters (two are married) and three brothers. Most members of her family are illiterate. Rita herself left school after the second grade and only one of her brothers is currently going to school, the other works in a garage. Her father is a butcher and her mother is a housewife.

Five years ago when Rita went to buy vegetable in the market a man of her father's age told her that Rita's father had asked him to pick her up. As Rita did not know the man, she first refused to go with him. Then the man lured her by saying he will buy her clothes and slippers. The man then took her to a forest and raped her. The man told her not to tell anyone. However, Rita went home and told her parents, who reported it to the police who then caught the man. This man, it was discovered, was not her father's friend.

Rita felt that this happened because she believed a man she did not know and became greedy. She is afraid that such an incident might happen to her again. But she further says that she will not make such mistakes again nor will she eat anything given by strangers. She also now would not go out far without letting her family know.

Working as a domestic helper is a risky job for girls

Samjhana is a 10-year old girl studying in grade three in a literacy class. For the last two years, she has been working as a domestic worker in one of her father's childhood friend's house. Since he did not have a daughter, he told her father that he would treat Samjhana like a daughter, and would send her to school.

The man started to rape her within three or four days of her arrival in his house. The abuse continued. He used to tell her that he would give her money and not to tell anybody. He also told her that he used to do the same to other girls he employed earlier, and if she told others it would bring shame on herself. At first he touched her private parts and went away telling her not to tell anybody. Next day when she went to sleep after work, he came back from singing religious hymns (Bhajan) and came with oil. He used oil on 'his part' and hers and penetrated her forcefully. She was bleeding. For four or five days she bled and had a hard time sitting and getting up. She also had a fever. The next day his wife beat her. He would rape her on a daily bases except when they had guests.

36 She told her mother but her mother asked her to stay quiet. Her mother told a social worker who then reported it to the police. The case is now in the district court. She said, *"I feel so angry and want to kill that person. I want your help to put him in jail."*

Lack of secure housing in slums also increases vulnerability of children

Anita is a girl from the slum area of a village in Morang District. She lived with her sister, brother and parents in a hut with only a roof and without a proper door or windows. Her parents run a small teashop, while neighbours around work quarrying stones. She was studying in grade six.

Her parents used to get up early in the morning and go to the teashop by 4 o'clock. leaving the children sleeping in the hut. One day when she opened her eyes, she saw a man

standing in the room - he went out without saying anything. Then after some days, when she woke up, she saw a naked man over her body. She tried to shout but he closed her mouth. Then she did not know what happened. He was a neighbour. Even though she did not tell anybody her sister told others and he asked for forgiveness. Instead Anita beat him. She says, "My mother shouts at me. Was it my fault? Others tease me when I go to school. I am afraid because my father cannot afford to build a proper house with a door."

(Note: These last three children are being housed in rehabilitation centres and being counselled by local organisations.)

Situation of Child Sexual Abuse in Districts: Perspectives from Various Stakeholders

In Chitwan and Surkhet Districts, further interaction programmes were organised to solicit information on the situation of child sexual abuse in the districts and the available services for tackling the problem. The meeting also gathered recommendations for preventing child sexual abuse. The participants were from a wide section of society that included the district administrative chief, teachers, guardians, NGO representatives, lawyers and police. There were about 20 participants in each interaction. In Biratnagar, questionnaires were distributed to 30 individuals from various governmental and non-governmental organisations and 21 were returned completed.

Participants were of the opinion that non-contact forms of child sexual abuse such as use of obscene language and harassment of girls in streets, public places, and on public transport was widespread in the districts they rep-

resented. Although contact forms of child sexual abuse was still hidden, they cited instances of highly publicised cases of child sexual abuse in the district. In Biratnagar the rape of a 10-year old domestic servant by a bank employee was cited by many while others cited other cases. For example, a 21 year old man from a Limbu community raped a four year old girl in Pathari VDC; a man raped a 10-year old Brahmin girl and a case was filed in the court; a 40-year old neighbour raped a 10-year old girl, and a man convicted of raping a 15-year old girl in a lodge was jailed after conviction. In Mrigaoulia VDC a girl was raped by three youths and a case was filed in the court, also a foreigner raped a six-year old girl and a case was also filed in the court. Participants mentioned security persons sexually abusing child labourers.

Similarly in Surkhet, participants cited the following cases of child sexual abuse: a 12-year old girl was raped by her own father and a case was filed in the district court but under family pressure the girl was forced to say the case was wrongly filed and thus helped to release the father. In Birendranagar a father raped his 12-year old step-daughter; a 9-year old girl was raped, and a girl studying in grade seven in Amarjyoti School told her parents about the harassment she faced from a boy and was beaten by her parents. A local NGO called Batabaran Sudhar Samaj then told the parents that the girl was innocent; they accepted this but by then the boy had run away.

The participants almost unanimously expressed poverty as the main reason for child sexual abuse. Poverty forces parents to send their children to work as domestic workers

in other households and work as labourers in unsafe conditions, or the parents have to go out for work leaving children behind in an unprotected environment. Thus, they thought that child sexual abuse was more common among poor families in slums and among illiterate and disadvantaged families. Some participants were of the opinion that the incidents of child sexual abuse that happened in rich and educated households were usually hidden while the cases that happened in poorer families were usually made public. One reason being that the richer households could keep it a secret by bending the law and not being punished, or by intimidating the victim to keep quiet. Some participants also blamed irresponsible behaviour of parents for the incidents of child sexual abuse.

The participants were also of the opinion that incidents of child sexual abuse were on the rise because of the increasing problem of drug abuse and alcoholism. Some opined that children without a biological mother or father or in dysfunctional families where quarrels and fights between family members were common were more prone to child sexual abuse. According to the participants, easy accessibility to pornographic material through the Internet, cinemas and in bazaars in the form of magazines and books were also the reasons for increasing child sexual abuse. Some participants believed that child sexual abuse was due to the male-dominant social structure or the superstition that having sexual relations with a young virgin girl cures sexually transmitted diseases.

Participants from Surkhet especially emphasised that child marriage was still common in the district. Partici-

pants also cited the conflict situation and the increasing out-migration of people from rural areas as contributing towards the increase in the vulnerability of children. In rural areas, due to lack of space, there is a

tendency for children and parents to sleep in the same room, thus exposing the former to the latter's sexual activities and making them curious to experiment with friends and others.

Child Sexual Abuse

Children's Perspectives on Child Sexual Abuse

Children were asked for their views on whether they were likely to tell someone if they were sexually abused and if not, what would be the reason for not talking. Children were given structured as well as open-ended questions on their perspectives and they have given thoughtful insights, helpful for formulating a child-friendly prevention strategy.

Many children mentioned that they would not talk about sexual abuse if they were abused. The majority of children mentioned 'disgrace for oneself and the family' and 'intimidation by an abuser' as the main reasons that they were less likely to talk about sexual abuse. Children have internalised that talking about sex is a taboo and that sexual activity, even though it was unintentional, brings shame to the family prestige. Children also mentioned that they might be ignorant of what was happening to them and that nobody would believe them. Again the children's views reflect the attitude of the family - either they would not believe the child and deny it or try to keep it a secret.

Table 18: Why Children Were Not Likely to Talk About Sexual Abuse

Reasons	Percent out of 4,100 Children
It is their own fault	33.7
Nobody believes them	44.1
Disgrace for oneself and one's family	71.6
They get punished	36.5
Intimidated by an abuser	67.7
Are told to keep it secret	52.3
Ignorant of what is happening to them	46.4
Participated willingly	22.6
They try to forget it	27.5
Others	4.9
Don't know	4.8

On prevention, the overwhelming majority of children thought that they should be provided with information on child sexual abuse and should be taught ways to protect themselves from such abuse. Most children thought that it was their right to know such things. They expressed that parents/guardians should listen to them and believe them when they tell them about sexual abuse. They also suggested that the victim should seek help from the police, doctor and social organisations. Through their response to open-ended question as to what should be done to prevent child sexual abuse, children gave suggestions for every quarter of society - guardians, teachers, NGOs and so on.

Childrens' views on what the families and children themselves should do or not do are gathered from their responses and presented here:

Suggestions for the family

Children emphasised the role of the family in preventing child sexual abuse thus:

- Every family must give their children enough care, attention and affection so that they do not seek attention and affection from others, thus making them vulnerable to sexual abuse.
- Children related the problem of child sexual abuse to alcohol and drugs. They said that most of the abusers were drug addicts and alcoholics so the government should control the production of drugs and alcohol while parents/guardians should not be allowed to drink at home.
- Society blames girls for sexual abuse since it is related to the prestige of the family. But society and family should end discrimination between sons and daughters to prevent sexual abuse and both should be provided with educational opportunities.
- In rural areas people are ignorant and conservative; they think that children should not be given sex education. Children then become more curious and may engage in 'bad things'. Children suggested that parents should be made aware of the negative consequences of such an attitude and they should not think that sex education was bad for children. Some children, however, suggested that parents should not give more freedom to their children.
- Children, parents and family should not hesitate to report cases of child sexual abuse to police and take action against the abuser.

- Parents should not leave their children alone at home. Children should not be sent alone in the jungle for firewood and fodder.
- Proper care, support and treatment should be given to children who were sexually abused. The psycho-social status of children who have been the victims of sexual abuse should be carefully assessed and they should be provided with psycho-social counselling to cope with the situation. However, he or she should not be isolated from society and humiliated for being a victim.

Suggestions for children themselves

- Children themselves should be careful while choosing various modes of entertainment and recreation.
- Children should not go alone with strangers anywhere. Especially they should not trust strangers immediately. Children should also not immediately trust people that they know.
- Children should know the locations where sexual abuse is more likely to happen and should be careful not to go to such places.
- Adolescent children should avoid getting involved in sexual activities.
- Children should wear proper clothing when they go out.
- Children should have the right to express their feelings and emotions, while parents and organisations should believe them.
- Children should contact the police and social organisations to get help and seek legal action in case of sexual abuse.
- Children should be made aware of different ways that abusers use to entice children such as various forms of sweeteners and bribes, for example, money and clothes.

- Children should know good and bad friends and avoid the latter.
- Children should be given training in self-defense skills such as throwing sands in the eyes of the abuser, shouting for help and even karate. Children should be taught to build their self-confidence.
- Children have difficulty sharing with parents but can talk to friends, so peer groups should be formed.

Existing Laws on Child Sexual Abuse in Nepal

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child ratified by Nepal in 1990 has made clear provisions for the state parties to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation in different articles. The state shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation including sexual abuse while in the care of parents, legal guardians or any other person who has the care of the child.

- Nepal Children's Act adopted in 1992 prohibits the use of children for pornography, drug and alcohol sale or distribution. Although the act is silent on the issue of sexual abuse of children, it prohibits the publication, exhibition, or distribution of photographs, personal events or descriptions of a child that could tarnish the character of the child. But the Civil Code of Nepal is little more explicit on the issues of rape and incest, though nothing has been mentioned re-

garding non-contact forms of sexual abuse such as harassment and exhibitionism. However, HMG/Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare has taken the initiative to draft a bill covering non-contact forms of child sexual abuse as well.

- Chapter 13 of the Civil Code on intent to rape mentions that if any man holds any part of the body from head to toe of a woman above 11 years of age, other than his own wife, with the intent to rape, that person shall be fined Rs. 500 or can be sentenced to jail for one year or is liable for both sentences. However, the code is silent regarding the intent of a rape of children below 11 years.
- Chapter 14, No. 1 on Forced Rape mentions: if a man rapes a woman below 16 years of age who is a virgin, widow or a wife of somebody else with or without her consent by using any means, or rapes a woman above 16 years of age without her consent by any means, by threatening, or using inappropriate influence, that will be called forced rape. The same chapter has a provision for different punishment depending on the age of the victim. If a girl below 10 years of age is forcefully raped, the rapist will be sentenced from 10 to 15 years in jail and if the girl between 10 to 15 years is raped, the rapist will be sentenced from seven to ten years in jail and if the woman is 16 years and above, the rapist will be sentenced from five to seven years in jail. But the case should be registered within 35 days of the incident.

The current provision in the law requiring to file child sexual abuse cases within 35 days of the incident is a real deterrent since abuse cases are usually reported late. Even collecting evidence within that period is

difficult. In most cases children cannot identify the abuser and even if the abuser is identified the police system is slow in investigating the case and collecting the evidence in time.

- Recently the Civil Code has added a provision relating to the sexual abuse of a child (that includes boy as well) and the punishment thereof. If a person indulges a child in unnatural sex including oral and anal sex, sodomy, masturbation, homosexuality or lesbianism it will be considered forced rape and the rapist will be punished under Forced Rape. Apart from that there will be one year additional imprisonment and depending on the age of the child and the harm done to the child, the court is liable to get compensation to the child from the rapist.
- Chapter 15, No. 1 on incest states that if a brother rapes own sister or if a father rapes his own daughter he will be sentenced to 10 years in prison.
- Chapter 15, No. 5 states that if a stepfather rapes a stepson or a stepdaughter he will get a maximum of one-year imprisonment on the top of the sentence he gets according to the provisions mentioned in Chapter 14 on Forced Rape.
- In the case of adopted children, Chapter 15, No. 6 states that if a man rapes his adopted daughter, or the daughter of an adopted son, he will be sentenced to one year additional imprisonment on top of the sen-

tence he gets according to the provisions mentioned in Chapter 14 on Forced Rape.

Support Mechanisms - Who is Doing What in Anti-CSA

In Nepal there are very few organisations working on the issue of child sexual abuse. Some are doing preventive work such as raising awareness of CSA among children and giving them information on do's and don'ts while others provide counselling and rehabilitation activities for survivors. Although most organisations provide counselling services the quality and professionalism of counselling seem to vary. Some organisations dealing with commercial sexual exploitation of women and children also deal with the issue of child sexual abuse. But there is a negligible number of organisations dealing with the issue of child sexual abuse only. There are no governmental organisations providing support to survivors of sexual abuse.

The following are some of the organisations directly or indirectly working on the issue of child sexual abuse in different parts of the country. Those organisations working on the issue of commercial exploitation of girls and women are also included in the list because of the close association between violence and abuse in the family and society.

Name of the Organisation	Type of Organisation	Type of Organisation
AAWAJ, Birendranagar	A Surkhet based NGO working on the issue of women and girls' abuse and exploitation.	Provides support to the victims of abuse and violence through counselling, legal support and formation of networks of survivors; also provides economic support through income generation activities, scholarships and advocates for girls' and women's rights.
ABC-Nepal, Kathmandu	Working for women and children mainly in trafficking.	Provides shelter, counselling and skills training to the victims of trafficking and abuse.
Alliance Against Trafficking in Women and Children in Nepal (AATWIN), Kathmandu	Network of 16 concerned NGOs working against trafficking.	Creates pressure and lobbying in SAARC countries for implementation of laws, policies, rules and regulations against trafficking, leads rights campaign against trafficking.
Bal Bikas Samaj, Biratnagar	Child-rights organisation.	Carries out rescue of children sexually abused and provides legal and counselling support, awareness raising programmes on child sexual abuse integrated with child rights through child clubs in rural areas, training on child sexual abuse to students.
Children at Risk Network (CAR-NWG), Kathmandu	Network of NGOs working for children at risk as well as concerned individuals.	Conducts research, and dissemination of information, capacity building of NGOs to cater to the increasing problem of abused and exploited children, operates two transit centres for children in acute need.
Community Legal Research Center (CLRC) Chitwan Nawalparasi Nepalgunj Parsa Sunsari Udayapur	Working in the issue of violence against women.	Works through paralegal committees formed by teachers, local leaders and women. It acts as a pressure group and provides a community-based protection system to prevent violence against women. In Nepalganj also has a hotline service and rehabilitation centre.
CWIN, Kathmandu	Child rights	Runs a transit home for girls (with a capacity of 25) from disadvantaged communities, and survivors of severe sexual abuse and exploitation; also has emergency help line services in Kathmandu, Biratnagar and Pokhara. It provides shelter, medical care, legal aid, counselling, adolescent education and skills training to survivor girls and boys and works for their empowerment.

Name of the Organisation	Type of Organisation	Type of Organisation
Human Rights and Environment Forum, Biratnagar (FOHREN)	Human rights organisation focusing on legal aid.	Counselling victims of child sexual abuse and provides sex education training.
INSEC	Human rights organisation.	Keeps records of child sexual abuse, raises awareness on child rights including abuse, in different districts.
Legal Aid Consultation Centre (LACC)	Free legal aid organisation for women and children.	Provides free legal aid to victims of child sexual abuse and exploitation.
Maiti-Nepal, Kathmandu	Women's organisation mainly working on the issue of trafficking.	Has a rehabilitation centre for 180 children in Kathmandu. It also provides education, health care, counselling and legal support for victims of abuse and violence. It raises awareness on trafficking through various pressure groups in schools and colleges.
National Network Against Girl Trafficking (NNAGT), Kathmandu	Network of journalists, lawyers, doctors, human rights activists and concerned individuals working for the prevention of trafficking.	Works through lobbying, awareness raising, information dissemination at national, regional and international levels.
Police Headquarter, Women's Cell	Special cell of Nepal Police for women and children.	Provides service for rescue and referral to protect children from abuse and exploitation.
SAATHI, Kathmandu	Works for domestic violence against women.	Works with women, children and youths designing research, advocacy and awareness raising, providing referral and counselling services, and rehabilitation of victims of violence.
Service for Unprivileged Section of Society (SUSS)	Working for legal aid of women and children.	Provides legal aid.
Shakti Samuha, Kathmandu	Working against trafficking.	Provides support to the victims of violence and sexual abuse; follows up survivors reintegrated with family, and helps survivors lead a normal life.
WOREC, Kathmandu	Women and child rights organisation. Mainly working against trafficking.	Works for prevention and intervention against trafficking and sexual exploitation of children in the Terai districts. It also works in the area of HIV/AIDS and integration of returnees/survivors of women and children. Provides sex education in schools, free legal aid to the victims of violence.
Youth Club, Narayangadh	Child rights organisation.	Works with child victims of sexual abuse. It provides night shelter for disadvantaged children and a contact point for them, also runs primary health care and emergency help.

Conclusion

School children from out of the Kathmandu Valley showed a lower level of understanding in most of the issues of CSA. They did not have a clear picture of what child sexual abuse is. Most of them thought of exhibiting parts of their body, fondling, kissing and penetration as sexual abuse. On the other hand, out-of-school children defined child sexual abuse much more broadly even to include child marriage, and trafficking. The unstructured questions helped them to think of CSA broadly in their own context. They also mentioned places which are vulnerable in their own context such as junkyards, under bridges, and woods where child sexual abuse can occur. Children were most likely to think of drug and alcohol addicts as abusers while they were least likely to think of persons they knew. Such lack of awareness among children encourages the abuser to take advantage of a child's trust. Thus, the survey showed the need to improve the level of understanding of children and

raise their awareness on various dimensions of sexual abuse as a first preventive measure.

There is a general tendency to think of only serious contact forms of abuse as sexual abuse. But non-contact forms of abuse such as exposure to pornographic material and exhibitionism can have equally negative psychological impacts on children. Such abuses can also lead to serious forms of sexual abuse especially if older and more knowledgeable individuals were involved in these activities with ill intent. This study tries to diffuse the general view and to show that even non-contact forms of sexual abuse are widely prevalent and these can be a source of major harassments for children. Moreover these non-contact forms of sexual abuse can be a prelude to contact forms of sexual abuse. It is very likely that a child who experienced exhibitionism or exposure to pornographic material can be the victim of contact forms of abuse as well. But unfortunately there is a tendency to take non-contact forms of abuse, such as use of obscene language in public, lightly and even take its use by family and society as normal.

The findings suggest that despite the common notion that only girls can be victims of sexual abuse, boys can also be

victims. Boys were sexually abused by women, by older men or by family friends. As the case studies shows, children are also lured and taken advantage of by abusers. Apart from strangers, children are vulnerable to sexual abuse from known persons - they are usually neighbours, family members or landlords. Abusers are often "normal looking and behaving" people whom children trust easily. The younger abusers pretend to be in love with the girl while older ones also try to gain confidence by pretending to show affection to children through bribes. Even the unknown abusers at first try to gain the child's confidence by luring them by giving money or goods. The case studies also show that the risk of sexual abuse increases when children are left alone without care givers. Abusers prey on them when they are alone and powerless.

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Recommendations

A holistic intervention strategy should be launched to prevent child sexual abuse and provide psycho-social and legal support to the survivors of CSA. The prevention and support should include various target groups such as children's groups, guardians, and teachers, child rights organisations and the government. Working with children, guardians, teachers and the community should be a short-term strategy, while working with the government for the formulation and modification of policies and laws should be a long-term strategy. Child sexual abuse is a common social problem. It cannot be prevented through unilateral approach. Therefore, it needs a joint action from different stakeholders.

For children

- A child-friendly prevention strategy should include not only giving information about child sexual abuse to both girls and boys but also equipping them with

skills to protect themselves. There should be separate programmes for school children and out-of-school children to deal with sexual abuse.

- There is a need to empower children by building their confidence, giving life-skills and training them on coping with risk situations. The prevention strategy should also encourage children to break the 'culture of silence' in cases of abuse and exploitation.
- Existing networks of children's groups, forums and child clubs should be mobilised to increase children's knowledge and strengthen their capacity to combat child sexual abuse. These groups can be provided, from time to time, with training and refresher training on peer counselling and dealing with child sexual abuse. They also can act as 'peer support group' or 'pressure groups' in schools and/or out-of-schools.
- Children's groups should also be consulted for any action taken on child sexual abuse including policy formulation and implementation.

For parents/guardians/teachers/school

- The prevention strategy should also include guardians and teachers mainly for raising awareness and monitoring the situation. A voluntary team of interested and committed teachers, students, parents/guardians, school management committee members, and people's representatives should be formed mainly to initiate awareness raising on the situation of violence against and sexual abuse of children in the local community and also to act as a 'monitoring and reporting unit'. The Parent Teachers Associations in schools, and the District Child Welfare Boards should also be mobilised for discussion and awareness about child sexual abuse.

- A dialogue between children and parents/guardians should be initiated on sex and sexual abuse, so that the silence surrounding sexual abuse can be broken and children's curiosity regarding sex can be addressed in a proper way. Parents/ guardians should also be made aware of the consequences of using obscene language in front of children.
- Teachers should be made aware of the problems of child sexual abuse and taught ways to prevent such abuse and how to deal with sexually abused children.
- Community, schools and children's homes should develop a code of conduct for community members, teachers and care givers regarding their behaviour with children.
- Children should be taught sex education by trained teachers in a constructive way so that children can properly address their curiosity regarding sex and are informed of the dangers of unwanted and unprotected sex.
- The attitude of parents/guardians, family and society towards survivors of child sexual abuse, which treats them as guilty, should be changed. Likewise, the culprits, no matter their social position, should be accordingly prosecuted and not given social protection.
- All schools should adopt a Code of Conduct for teachers so that no children are vulnerable to child sexual abuse within school.
- School managements should adopt a concept of "Child Friendly Schools" where children's feelings are cared for by teachers and where children are protected from all kind of abuse including corporal punishment

For national and international child rights organisations/community organisations

- Prevention programmes should be launched in rural areas so that people there can understand child sexual abuse and learn the ways to prevent it.
- NGOs should play a role in the conceptual clarity of child sexual abuse. There should also be further qualitative study on young sexual offenders and on sexual abuse of boys. There is a need for a separate strategy to deal with this issue.
- Child rights organisations should work towards raising wider public awareness for the prevention of child sexual abuse through television, and radio. They should also provide psycho-social counselling to survivors and legal support to children and families to file cases against abusers.
- Helpline and hotline telephone services should be established in different parts of the country to combat child sexual abuse and to reach out to children at risk. In the areas where telephone services or hotline services are not yet available, community policing should be promoted.
- Community policing should be promoted and should play a role in bringing about social awareness and social action against child sexual abuse. The community groups should also initiate child-friendly community justice systems and play a role in the mediation of conflicts surrounding this issue.
- Social organisations should adopt minimum standards to run child care centres. Staff and children should be made aware about such arrangements.
- Like-minded NGOs should build strong networks to combat child sexual abuse and violence against chil-

dren. They should lobby and pressurize the government and policy makers, when needed, to formulate and implement strict laws punish the culprits.

- Child rights organisations and NGOs should promote 'professional psycho-social counselling' to child survivors and ensure that trained human resources are dealing with children. There should be more efforts in training social workers and care givers to give better care to children and in developing skills to detect signs of child victims of abuse and violence and deal with them. In cases of unsafe conditions, children should be temporarily rehabilitated in transit shelters with trained staff to deal with such cases.
- There is also a need to monitor conflict related violence against and sexual abuse of children and deal with such cases from the perspective of human rights.

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For the government

- There should be strong political commitment to address the issue of child sexual abuse.
- The definition of child sexual abuse in the Civil Code should be clear. There is still a lack of adequate laws and policy regarding prosecuting abusers, especially those who abuse boys and who abuse children through non-contact forms. The government should work towards the formulation of more progressive laws and policies and their effective implementation for intervention, prevention and a support system for child survivors. The abusers should be publicly punished in order to minimise incidents.
- Considering the rapid exposure of urban children to the Internet and TV channels, the government should

formulate laws to protect children from the negative affects of such exposure. Besides this there should also be censorship on blue films shown in video parlours and cinemas.

- The government should take the initiative to formulate and put into practice a Code of Conduct for all its employees, teachers and the media to help combat child sexual abuse.
- The government should work in close cooperation with NGOs or civil society for effective action against child abuse. Together they should initiate to establish community level child protection unit to prevent all roots of child abuse and exploitation including CSA.
- The government should also create a policy to set up systems for a safer environment in schools and institutions through a strict Code of Conduct and monitoring.
- Children working in exploitative and difficult circumstances such as carpet factories, stone quarries, hotels and restaurants, as well as street children, should be removed from unsafe working conditions and should be supported for social reintegration.
- There is a need to sensitise the law enforcing agencies and work towards institutional and human resource development within the government system, in order to make child sexual abuse a pressing agenda to be dealt with at national level.
- The government should also provide enough training to the investigators of child sexual abuse to undertake proper investigation without revictimising children. Necessary efforts should be taken to make investigators, prosecutors, judges and medical professionals sensitive on child sexual abuse and child rights in general.

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