

# PREFACE

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is 10 years old. It is the most widely ratified human rights convention and the first international instrument, which covers the full rights of an individual. It was designed to create a common legal framework through which to increase governmental accountability, bring about legislative reforms and ultimately create a better world environment in which children can develop.

Pakistan has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and is also a signatory to the Stockholm Declaration and Agenda for Action against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children. Article 34 of the CRC focuses on Child Sexual Abuse and protective measures to be taken by the state parties.

Child sexual abuse is the lowest explored and least acknowledged form of Child Abuse in Pakistan. Though increasingly more cases are being reported in the newspapers - which means that more cases are being registered with the police - there is a tendency both to deny and conceal this form of violence.

In order to assess the magnitude, dynamics and forms of sexual exploitation and abuse of children in different areas and sectors of Pakistani society, Save the Children Sweden together with the Child Rights and Abuse Committee of Pakistan Paediatric Association commissioned a national survey leading to a situation analysis on sexual exploitation and abuse of children at the national level. The main objective of the study was to understand the issue and its dynamics in the Pakistani context. While conducting the surveys, the issue of both commercial sexual exploitation and sexual abuse were looked into because both these issues are closely inter-linked and cannot be separated from each other.

Although Save the Children Sweden and Child Rights and Abuse Committee of Pakistan Paediatric Association provided a common platform for the study, the research was a collaborative effort of several committed researchers and organizations from all four provinces of Pakistan.

We are hoping that this study can help in forming a base and assist the Government of Pakistan in developing a National Plan of Action, for protecting children, with active participation of different actors including the UNICEF, Save the Children Alliance, NGOs and individuals.

Save the Children Sweden and Child Rights and Abuse Committee of the Pakistan Paediatric Association acknowledge the hard work of several organizations and individuals who provided their support and services to this study. We are particularly grateful to Sahil, Sudhaar, WAR, Sach and Rozan for their valuable contributions. Mr. Fawad L'sman Khan (Sudhaar, Lahore) and Ms. Anusheh Hussain (Sahil, Islamabad) were of immense help from the conception of the study till the final report writing.

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# EXTENT OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IN PAKISTAN

*The CRC enunciates children rights pertaining to survival, development, protection, and participation.  
The main underlying principle of the Convention is that the best interests of the child shall  
always be a major consideration.*

## Overview

Several micro-studies have been conducted in Pakistan to determine the extent and nature of child sexual abuse. Obtaining reasonably accurate data on any social issue is the wishful dream of any researcher in Pakistan. Official studies on child sexual abuse are virtually non-existent except for a district level national study on child rights organized by the National Commission for Child Welfare and Development (NCCWD) which functions under the Federal Ministry of Social Welfare. Compiled almost two years ago, the study has yet to be released. Extracts from the data collected have been issued at different times by the NCCWD to a limited circle of people but comprehensive data analysis has neither been published nor distributed. In any case since data collection was done at the district level presumably by the official machinery, and its methodology and accuracy are questionable.

NGOs, academic researchers and consultants have employed various means to obtain and analyze data related to CSA in the last decade. The most obvious source of data is newspaper reports of sexual violence. Efforts have been made to relate this data with the police First Information Reports (FIRs) but unfortunately police data is not made accessible to organizations. FIR data is categorized and compiled by the police on a provincial level and released to the press twice a year. Though the data often does cover the incidence of rape it does not differentiate between rape of adults and rape of children. Also often CSA incidents are registered as ZINA (adultery) cases due to various alternating factors such as confusion regarding the age of a child and due to laws such as the HUDOOD Ordinance that equates puberty with adulthood, therefore implying that there was consent. Yet another major issue is the casual handling of abduction cases which according to most police officials, do not merit an FIR and are simply recorded as GUMSHUDGI (lost) reports implying that no action would be taken by the police to recover the kidnapped or lost child. It has been estimated by several micro-studies that much of abduction ultimately ends up in sexual violence and/or prostitution. Such incidents sometimes surface years after the abduction. For all the above reasons police data is incomplete in its representation of CSA cases.

Other possible official sources for data collection are the Chief Chemical Examiner's Office, Police Surgeon's Office and Court Records. None of them seems to have been accessed so far by researchers. This report has managed to obtain some data from the Chief Chemical Examiner's Office and Police Surgeon's Office, which is a pioneering effort. This was only made possible through the initiatives taken by PPA doctor-members who largely used their personal network of contacts to gain access to, data hitherto veiled from the general public.

In the private sector, doctors, pediatricians, psychiatrists and psychologists are primary sources of

CSA data. Many CSA cases are uncovered when children have been brought in for some disturbing symptom. Earlier micro-studies have carried observations and viewpoints of practitioners and case studies developed by them, but this report presents some new information revealed by , medical professionals. This information is by no means comprehensive but it is rich in content and shows numerous opportunities of tapping into these sources in a more detailed manner.

## **Extent of CSA**

Largely the incidence of CSA presented in this report is based on secondary data compiled from newspapers by Sahil, an NGO that works exclusively on CSA issues in Pakistan. Based on Sahil's analysis of this data and the observations of professionals and experienced human rights activists, some projections are made to arrive at rough estimates of the extent of the problem.

Sahil acknowledges that newspapers are not the most reliable forms of collecting information on child sexual abuse. During 1997 to 1999 the print media reported a total of 4078 men who have sexually assaulted 2309 children in Pakistan. However, Sahil believes that these numbers are only a fraction of the total number of such incidents that take place in Pakistan - because ours is a closed society, where such issues are taboo and any discussion on them is labeled as immoral. Moreover, since sexual abuse is always linked with family honor, most cases go unreported to the police and subsequently newspapers. Resultantly, any attempt to quantify the issue of child sexual abuse is bound to be limited in scope.

Although the print media as a tool does provide information from all over the country, this tool is fraught with problems. One area of concern for Sahil was the lack of investigative reporting by the journalists and the fear of wrong reporting vis-a-vis these crimes. Therefore, Sahil has made an effort to record only those news stories, which have been, registered with the police, or in absence of this where the authenticity of the news report could be established otherwise. Another limitation that was faced was that if the age of the victim was above 14 or 15 then at times it was not mentioned, especially by the Urdu media. Instead words like NAUJAWAN LARKI (young girl), DOSHEZA (beautiful girl) were used. Regardless of these limitations, the statistics do provide us with some insight into the nature and prevalence of this crime.

The analysis on the extent of CSA incidents during 1997-99 is based primarily on reporting by 11 national and 4 regional newspapers. This data was collected and compiled on a quarterly, six monthly and annual basis by Sahil. Micro-data compiled for the development of this report has been included with cross-references.

Although male children are regularly subjected to sexual assault but their number is still significantly low as compared to female children in the first two years, but in 1999, 44% of the total victims were male children. This was due to the Javed Iqbal case of 100 children who were sodomized and then murdered. *Out* of the total 2309 child victims, 1495 (65 percent) were female children and 814 (35 percent) were male children during the period of three years. This could be due to the fact that the female is seen more often than boys are as a sex object, as more vulnerable and resultantly can be taken advantage of more easily. Simultaneously the female gender is also "dishonored" by men as a means to settle outstanding scores with rivals. The print media has reported numerous incidents of rape and gang rape where men have raped girls *for* this very reason.

<b>Table 2.1.</b>	<b>1997</b>			<b>1998</b>		
<b>Crime</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Total</b>
CSA/Murder	38	20	58	43	26	69
Gang rape	115	27	142	172	87	259
Rape	133	-	133	226	-	226
Sodomy	-	53	53	-	118	118
Molestation	23	14	37	91	41	132
Abduction for sexual reasons	44	11	55	80	2	82
<b>Total</b>	<b>353</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>478</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>886</b>

<b>Crime</b>	<b>1999</b>			<b>Total</b>	<b>1997 - 1999</b>		
CSA/Murder	30	140	170	111	186	297	12.9%
Gang Rape	162	117	279	449	231	680	29.4%
Rape	169	-	169	528	-	528	22.9%
Sodomy	-	101	101	-	272	272	11.8%
Molestation	71	39	110	185	94	279	12.1%
Abduction for sexual reasons	98	18	116	222	31	253	10.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>530</b>	<b>415</b>	<b>945</b>	<b>1,495</b>	<b>814</b>	<b>2,309</b>	

*Data Source: Sahil*

Despite mobility restrictions, girls are abused more frequently. This could be due to the fact that the overwhelming majority of abusers are acquaintances who have access to the girl child. Also the majority of abuse takes place in locations the child is familiar with including her home. Proportionately, more boys are murdered after CSA than girls. Perhaps this is because it is easier for boys to disclose abuse than it is for girls and abusers *fear* that. Since boys are not stigmatized by the honor principal, they are more likely to disclose sexual abuse. Frequency of gang rapes is increasing and needs an in-depth analysis to identify the factors responsible *for* the existence of this brutal trend. The data provided by the Additional Police Surgeon, Sindh Government Hospital, Saudabad generally corroborates the newspaper reports. Girls run a greater risk of being sexually abused than boys. Among the 244 cases handled by the Additional Police Surgeon in 1998-99, 189 involved girls and 55 involved boy. Focus Group Discussion participants in Karachi comprising psychiatrists, pediatricians and police 'officials' estimated average annual reported cases of CSA in Karachi to be 300 in number. The members concluded that the reported numbers are extremely small for a city with a population of 10 million. The January-June 1999 data obtained from the Office of the Chief Chemical Examiner in Lahore also testifies that girls are at least twice as likely to be sexually abused than boys. The figure for girl victims is 369 against 206 boys.

## Very Young Victims of CSA

One of the CSA cases reported in Karachi during 1998-99 was that of the rape of a baby girl just over two years old. It is hard to imagine how painful the experience must have been for the toddler. It would take an expert to assess the psychological trauma but the physical injuries were serious enough for the parents to go to the police. Another case was that of a 6-year-old girl whom her PT teacher had raped thrice. She had a vaginal tear and was bleeding profusely when the case was reported after she, had been raped violently for the third time. Sexual violence against children seems to be getting worse. For instance, four cases of anal penetration of girls were reported in 1998 and two in 1999.

(Aftob Azizi. Additional Police Surgeon, Sindh Government Hospital, Saudabad)

The PPA Team in Lahore managed to salvage and compile data from the Chief Chemical Examiner's Office in Lahore for the Jan-Jun 1999 period. This data is presented in Table 2.2.

**Table 2.2.**

<b>1999 Jan-Jun</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Adults > 18 years	49	362	411
Children <= 18 years	206	369	575
<b>Total</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>731</b>	<b>986</b>

Data Source: Chief Chemical Examiner's Office, Lahore

The table shows that CSA comprises 58% of all cases of sexual abuse. Out of 575 CSA victims, 64% were girls and 36% boys, further corroborating the theory that the risk of CSA is twice as much for girls. Within males, boys under 18 make up 81% of the cases. Within females, girls under 18 make up just over 50% of the cases. For all ages, female cases are 74% i.e. almost three fourths of the total incidence.

Most organizations and individuals working on CSA issues agree that incidents reported by the press are hardly representative of actual incidents due to issues such as honor, limited disclosure from children, lack of trust regarding the law enforcement agencies etc. Also a large majority of the cases do not fall into the "heinous crimes" category and therefore never make it to the print media.

According to an estimate in a 1995 study by WAR-Lahore, incidents of CSA reported to the police are five times more than those reported by the press. Medical professionals, sociologists, lawyers and human rights activists quoted in the same study believe that actual incidents may be ten times or even higher than those reported in the press. Actual abduction cases are also thought to be far greater than those reported by the press. Abduction cases are dealt with trivially by police authorities. In case the abducted girl is over 12 years of age, the assumption is that she has absconded. In the case of boys, it is conveniently assumed that they have run away.

Unless the abducted child comes from an influential family, or ransom demands are made, abduction is treated casually. At the most the police registers what is called a GUMSHUDGi report. This

does not place any obligation on the police to make an effort to locate the child. If the family members wish to register a FIR, they must either name a suspect or exaggerate the facts to give the crime a "serious" tinge besides of course, ensuring that the police are adequately compensated for their effort.

On the positive side, the press is increasingly reporting molestation cases. Previously these were generally ignored, as they were not considered serious enough to report. This indicates also that such cases are now being reported to the police and the press, which in turn indicates an increased awareness of child sexual abuse on the part of the victim families.

## Abuser Categories

**Table 2.3.**

Category	Year 1997	Year 1998	Year 1999	1997- 99 Total	% Age
Acquaintance	544	1,219	1,246	3,009	74.1%
Relative	26	31	30	87	2.1%
Incest (immediate family)	21	28	21	70	1.7%
Teacher	10	3	33	46	1.1%
Religious Teacher	7	18	32	57	1.4%
Police	21	37	32	90	2.2%
Stranger	138	326	235	699	17.2%
<b>Total</b>					

Data Source: Sahil

A straightforward look at the data on abusers shatters the myth that strangers mostly commit sexual abuse. Table 2.2 shows that strangers account for less than one fifth of all perpetrators. Children know more than 82% of all abusers. These include acquaintances, relatives, immediate family members, teachers and religious teachers. In the case of incest that has the deepest and the most damaging psychological effect, they are mostly fathers.

Typically, Pakistani parents especially, mothers warn children against mixing with strangers or accepting eatables from them when going to school etc. Generally children are cautioned that strangers may abduct them and take them to "labor camps". Rarely are such warnings given for protection against those whom children know in different capacities. Children are thus left vulnerable to acquaintances.

Another important aspect of child sexual abuse is incest. Generally it is perceived that this phenomenon is non-existent in our society, or if it does happen then it is negligible. The data shows 70 cases of incest during 1997-99. In these 70 cases the predominant numbers of abusers were fathers. Interestingly, all the victims were female children and there was not a single reported case where a father or brother had sexually assaulted a male child. Even these cases were reported after the female child had gone through a long ordeal of sexual violence. Mostly, in these reported cases the mother was the one who mustered up enough courage to finally take

action and approach the police. In all the reported cases the crime was rape.

Our family structure is totally dependent economically and otherwise on the male head of the family, and the indisputable status that a husband enjoys makes it most unlikely that cases of incest will get reported; however, these statistics confirm the existence and regular occurrence of incest in our society. The actual cases are feared to be far more common than those reported in the print media.

## Age Groups of Victims

Data compiled by Sahil clearly depicts that the age bracket of 10 to 15 years is the most vulnerable age group of children from both genders. A total of 2309 children were sexually abused during 1997-99, and out of the total 1169 belonged to the age bracket of 10 to 15 years - thus making it 51 percent of the total reported child victims.

The age analysis on the basis of gender also identifies that this age group is the most vulnerable for both girls and boys. 48 percent of the total reported female victims and 55 percent of the total male victims during 1997-99 fell between the age group of 10 to 15 years. One of the reasons for the higher ratio of male and female victims in the age group of 10 to 15 years could be the fact that this is the phase where a child reaches puberty and needs information about new biological changes and feelings. Since, parents, teachers and guardians generally tend to ignore this very vital aspect of child development; i.e. providing information on puberty and associated emotional development, children are left vulnerable to all sorts of exploitation by adults, who because they have ulterior motives give children distorted information or cash in on their natural curiosity.

The data reveals, during 1997-99, that the vulnerability of female children continues to persist significantly even when they cross the age of 15 years, however, the incidence of male children falls dramatically as soon as they enter this age group 15 to 18. The female victims in the age group form 32 percent at the total cases of female child sexual abuse, where as the incidence of male child sexual abuse falls to 9 percent.

This could be due to the fact that most male children generally manage to defend themselves against any unwanted advance as at this age they are taller and stronger and may display "manly" attributes such as beard, moustaches etc.

Another possible explanation for the sharp drop in boy victims in this age group is the overpowering feelings of shame and risk of public humiliation which forces boys (youth in transition from adolescence to adulthood) to keep the incidents to them, selves and hence the under-reporting.

**Sex with boys is more common in rural Sindh and in small towns. It is considered safe and less of an offense than sexual abuse of girls. Males in Sindh are also known to have sexual gratification watching sex acts between women or girls. In prisons, young boys are said to be a risk of sexual abuse by inmates or officials.** (Dr. Amin Gadit, Psychiatrist. PPA Member, Karachi)

The perpetrators of child sexual abuse have also targeted children below 5 years of age. Out of the total child victims, 4 percent of the victims belong to this age group. During 1997, 19 female children and 7 male children, in 1998 12 female children and 12 male children and in 1999, 20 female children and 14 male children below the age of five were sexually assaulted - thus making

a total figure 84 for such incidents during the period of three years.

**Table 2.4.**

		Year 1997										
		Girls	Boys	Total								
Below	5 Years	19	7	26								
5 to	<10 Years	63	60	123								
10 to	<15 Years	182	45	227								
15 to	<18 Years	89	13	102								
<b>Totals</b>		<b>353</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>478</b>								

  

	Year 1998			Year 1999			Total		1997- 98			
	Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	%Age	Boys	%Age	Total	%Age
Below 5 years	12	12	24	20	14	34	51	3.4%	33	4.1%	84	3.6%
5 to 10 years	90	93	183	97	14234	209	250	16.7%	265	32.5%	515	22.3%
10 to 15 years	297	148	445	244	253	497	723	48.3%	446	54.8%	1169	50.6%
15 to 18 years	213	21	234	169	36	205	471	31.5%	70	8.6%	541	23.4%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>886</b>	<b>530</b>	<b>415</b>	<b>945</b>	<b>1,495</b>		<b>814</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2309</b>	

Data Source: Sahil

The data provided by the Additional Police Surgeon, Sindh Government Hospital, Saudabad on victims' age group ties in neatly with the newspaper data analysis. The data shows (Table 2.3) that boys are more vulnerable in the less than 12 age group whilst girls are clearly more vulnerable in the 12-18 age group. Overall however girls are more vulnerable to CSA than boys as discussed earlier in this chapter.

**Table 2.5.**

	1998			1999			01-08		Total		1998 -99	
Age Group	Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	Boys	Total	Girls	%Age	Boys	%Age	Total	%Age
<10 Years	3	17	20	4	3	7	7	3.6%	20	36.4%	27	11.1%
10-12 Years	5	7	12	4	5	9	9	4.8%	12	21.8%	21	8.6%
12-16 Years	50	11	61	38	7	45	88	46.6%	18	32.7%	106	43.4%
16-18 Years	46	4	50	39	1	40	85	45.0%	5	9.1%	90	36.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>189</b>		<b>55</b>		<b>244</b>	

Data Source: Aftab Azizi, Additional Police Surgeon, Sindh Government Hospital, Saudabad

It is critical to bear in mind that the data provided by the Additional Police Surgeon comprises the most heinous incidents of CSA, mostly rape and others where penetration has occurred and the condition of victims was serious enough to be referred to the police. Fondling, touching and

other forms of abuse virtually never reach the Police Surgeon's office. Azizi states that in his experience in the cases of under 10 year old boys, almost all perpetrators are relatives or neighbors, while older boys usually become the victims of older friends or adults at work places.

The gender-age group trend is further verified by the data provided by the Assistant Chemical Examiner in Lahore. The data compiled in Table 2.6 shows that boys are more at risk in the younger age bracket. Just over 55% of the boy victims are under 12 years of age compared to about 19% of the girl victims in the same age group. As in the newspaper data analysis, girl victims outnumber boys by a considerable margin in the 12-18 age group.

**Table 2.6**

Age Group	Boys	%Age	Girls	%Age	Total	%Age
<=12 Years	114	55.3%	69	18.7%	183	31.8%
12 to 18 Years	92	44.7%	300	81.3%	392	68.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>206</b>		<b>369</b>		<b>575</b>	

Data Source: Chief Chemical Examiner Office, Lahore

## PERCEPTIONS AND CONCERNS

*A child is recognized as a person under 18, unless national laws recognize the age of majority earlier.  
CRC, Article 1*

### The Dilemma of Being a Child

The apparently innocuous question on definition of a child is contentious enough to open a Pandora's box in the Pakistani context. Generally, children are seen, judged and categorized according to a wide variety of social prejudices and innate biases. Working and street children for instance, are considered worldly wise and smart (in a negative sense) because it is assumed that they have lost their "innocence" as compared to children enjoying protection and material comforts. Children going to English medium schools are categorized as definitely more intelligent and "smart" (in a positive sense) than those going to Urdu medium or government schools, and if they happen to speak English, the discrimination is all the more visible. Apparently, girls suddenly seem to acquire wisdom and maturity at puberty regardless of their age. Since children in commercial sex racket are expected to be perfectly capable of giving

"consent", they are "habitual offenders". Most people seem to believe that stealing and cheating comes naturally to poor children since they are deprived of basic amenities and they should be arrested and prosecuted as juveniles at a tender age. Children's behavior is usually judged on the basis of their social status and they are accordingly accepted, tolerated, disapproved of or outright condemned. On top of these social prejudices, discrimination on the basis of religion, sect, ethnicity, and nationality is fairly common. In short, our social attitudes completely violate the spirit of the CRC.

The net result of our jaundiced outlook is that we end up blaming children for most of the problems that they face. These attitudes result in a wide range of outcomes. For example, runaway children are "ungrateful, disobedient and rebels" - mostly victims of "bad company" - and the most the state and civil society has considered itself capable of doing is hunting them down and sending them back to the same home they ran away from. This is of course done without bothering to find out what the cause of running away in the first place was.

Working children are only doing their duty by supporting their families regardless of how old they are. Street children are a liability because they indulge in petty theft and dirty our streets with their foul language and bad manners. At the same time it is acceptable for children to work but bad for them to converge at snooker clubs, video shops and cinema halls. Children working as domestic servants are the prime suspects and put under immediate interrogation if any article of value or money is missing in the house. Mentally and physically handicapped children are to be pitied, but any attempt at their social integration will be seen with dismay and suspicion as if the afflictions are contagious and could be passed on to "healthy" children. Village children are generally considered less capable and intelligent than their urban counterparts, but when it comes to sexual growth, most people classify rural children as more aware and attaining sexual maturity at an early age. Again, the use of the vernacular and local metaphor in comparison to the more restrained and restricted urban verbal expression is seen as an indicator of sexual maturity. These attitudes contribute in alienating children and empowering sexual offenders and pedophiles.

## **What is the Age Limit of a Child?**

The confusion on the maximum age limit of a child prevails across social boundaries, urban and rural sectors and the educated and the uneducated alike. It is in fact a reflection of the conflicting age limits prescribed in different laws to describe a child. It is extremely important to determine a universal age and then treat all people below that age as children regardless of their vocation, social status, geographical location and numerous other variables. Unless we start doing that, we will not be able to treat all children equally. Equity cannot be brought about without adopting a non-discriminating attitude. Once an upper age limit has been decided and fixed, everyone below that age must be considered incapable of consent. By definition then we will not be able to hold children responsible for criminal acts, prostitution, sex with consent or any other violation of law. Children cannot be seen as criminals, and the responsibilities for their "antisocial" activities must be pinned on adults.

Presented below are factors that various groups feel contribute to determining the age of a child

## Some factors that Determine the Age Limit of a Child

### Viewpoint of teachers

FACTORS	INTERPRETATIONS
Can differentiate between right and wrong	This is the most reliable indicator of mental maturity and a very difficult one considering there are many adults who are unable to do this
Communication influence on children	Access to communication outlets, satellite TV, video, & literature makes urban children mature early
Social restrictions on girls	When girls cover themselves properly and their mobility is restricted
Outside influences	Working & street children tease girls at an early age and due to this they mature sexually earlier than other children.
Early childhood	Children are innocent until the age of 8 years before they get exposed to outside influence
Company	Children who spend a lot of time with women mature earlier

### Viewpoint of Journalists

FACTORS	INTERPRETATIONS
Social environment	Company, schooling, social circles. Rural children are exposed to sexual acts between animals & humans so they become mature early
Exposure to the outside world	Street, independence
Western influence on urban children	Access to communication outlets, dish, video, internet, schooling
Level of responsibilities	Child labor / working children who earn money are adults because they are mentally mature
Mental maturity	Come from early responsibilities
Sexual maturity	European area "cold" therefore sexual maturity comes late, Asian countries are warmer therefore sexual maturity comes earlier
Giving consent	Children who have sex regularly are "habitual" and do it with consent
Economic conditions	Children who live in poverty mature earlier
Level of dependency on parents	If children are protected they mature later and vice versa
Level of influence	The company children keep
Puberty	Physical physiological changes
Awareness of surroundings	Ability to distinguish between right and wrong

### Viewpoint of officials

FACTORS	INTERPRETATIONS
Can differentiate between right and wrong	Pakistan Penal Code fixes the ceiling at 12 years
Mental maturity	Puberty alone is not enough
Sexual maturity	Awareness & understanding of implications of sexual act
Dependency on others up to 12-13 years	Financially dependent children mature late
Financially independent	Working children mature earlier because of exposure to outside world

**Village children are more exposed to sexual acts between animals and humans and therefore get matured early. In cities there is no sex education so children take longer to be mentally mature about sex. Rural children therefore become mature 2-3 years earlier than urban children.**

Journalist, Focus Group Discussion

implying that sexual and physical maturity is equivalent to emotional maturity. Whereas the views of teachers of a non-formal school in a Punjab village are diametrically opposite to this. They believe that urban children have greater access to satellite dish channels and cable TV and therefore they mature earlier than rural children.

Some of the respondents suggest puberty as a sign of adulthood but most of them seem to agree that mental and sexual maturity together is the right indicator. Journalists, NFE teachers and Police Officials all emphasize on a person's ability to distinguish between right and wrong as a sure sign of adulthood but vary widely as to the upper age limit of a child. Police officials would like to consider anyone over 12 years of age as an adult fully responsible for his or her actions. One reason for this is perhaps that the Pakistan Penal Code prescribes that age limit. Journalists believe that all persons up to the age of 14 years should be considered children. The NFE teachers differ with both and recommend 16 years as the upper age limit of children. However given the factors the various groups cite that determine the age of a child contradicts the upper age limit that they prescribe. For example if they believe that children are innocent only until the age of eight then surely they also believe that after eight they are capable of understanding the consequences of their actions. Therefore the age limit that they prescribe is perhaps what they think is politically correct and in fact has nothing to do with their beliefs or understanding regarding children.

## **Incest**

Incest is one of the least reported crimes because of the double stigma attached to it.

**A young man who is our relative committed incest with his real sister over a period of time. He would force her to take intoxicating drinks and then would have sex with her. Once she tried to escape and the family came to know of the problem. By that time the 14-yearold girl was pregnant. Her mother quietly got her an abortion and asked her daughters to keep their mouths shut. She said that the offender was her only son and that she was dependent on him.**

FGD: A teacher in an NFE center in Kasur

The respondents in various discussion groups across the country clearly reflect the confusion regarding the age of a child that prevails in Pakistani laws and society. For example most of the journalists in one group discussion believe that since working children have more exposure they are smarter and more knowledgeable and therefore cross the childhood barrier earlier than non-working children. They also think that rural children are more exposed to sexual acts between animals and humans and therefore become mature earlier than urban children. Thus

For most Pakistanis, incidents of incest are virtually unbelievable. During the eighties when the HUDOOD Ordinance was being strictly enforced, even the honorable members of the judiciary at times refused to acknowledge that incest could take place in Pakistan's "pure" society. For a society that strongly believes in keeping up the pretense of being morally pure and pristine, incest is a crippling blow and

therefore there is an increased tendency to hush up the issue or alternatively to be in denial about it. Despite the denial and shock that incest incidents raise, some of them do manage to get reported to the police and in newspapers. Table 2.3 lists 70 incest cases involving child victims reported by the press in the 1997-99 period.

In an FGD with members of the Child Abuse Network, the participants came up with rough estimates of incest incidents based on their professional experience as psychiatrists and doctors. The consensus was that an over whelming majority of incest victims (about 80%) were between 10-18 years. Fathers were identified as the offender in 80% of the cases followed by uncles, brother and grandfathers. Curiously the perpetrators, identified by members of the Child Abuse Network also included a very small number of mothers. Mothers have never been identified as perpetrators in any news item, or study previously conducted in Pakistan. The number of such cases was not revealed during the FGD. In order to substantiate this claim further research would be necessary.

**In one case a man willfully ruptured his daughter's hymen to implicate someone in a false case. Our office gets few cases of incest but the trend is increasing. Many cases of stepfathers and young girls have been reported. Lately real fathers have also been reported for abusing their daughters.**

Assistant Chemical Examiner, Lahore

Pediatricians, psychiatrists, and police officials cited several incest cases in one of the FGDs held in Karachi. The participants felt that in incest cases, stepfathers were often the perpetrators. At this point the Additional Police Surgeon Aftab Azizi referred to a case when the offender who was the real father of the victim was caught when his daughter gave birth to their third child, Sarosh Salman, VMO Special Prison for Women, narrated the case of an 18 year old girl who had borne five children in a sexual

relationship with her father. Her father subsequently sold each child. A case was registered on the complaint of a maternal uncle and as a result both father and daughter were sent to jail. Sarosh Salman quoted another case of a 15-year-old girl who gave birth to a child after being sexually abused by her brother. Both brother and sister were arrested and sent to jail. It is tragic that despite being victims of incest the two girls languish with the offenders in prison. Most child victims of incest are unaware of the nature and gravity of abuse. They are made to believe that providing sexual gratification is in fact a part of their duty towards their father (grandfather, brother etc.) and is a natural way of being.

## **Child Prostitution and Pornography**

Considering we are a society that preaches and revolves around morality, we in Pakistan are surprisingly tolerant of some forms of child sexual abuse. Whereas social values and norms shun prostitution as an institution, male child prostitution is not only tolerated but also seen to be a status symbol in some parts of the country. Many children working in restaurants, hotels, workshops, factories and especially in the transport industry are expected to have fallen prey to prostitution.

**“I am a runaway. When I came to Pir Wadhai, I had no shelter or food; I was very hungry. When a hotel manager offered me food and shelter in exchange for work, I agreed. He ended up sexually exploiting me. I was given food and shelter and Rs. 20/- per day, whereas I would earn up to Rs. 500/- per day by having sex with clients.**

**The hotel manager organizes the clients and keeps most of the money I make."**

**Another boy said that when he was working in an auto-workshop at a very young age, his employer exploited him sexually. He says that he later became "used to" sexual activities, and it has now become his profession. He believes in exploiting people just as he believes he was exploited by them.**

CSA Victim Boys, Pir Wadhai

Pakistan's worsening economic situation has resulted in rising unemployment. Another consequence of this economic deterioration has been an increase in child labor, and yet another, an increase in the number of child prostitutes. Working children who are vulnerable to all sorts of exploitation are often trapped into prostitution. Street children often get picked up by men and are sexually exploited for paltry sums of money. Children are also seen hitching rides in the early evening in Lahore. Allegedly, sexual services like fellatio are performed in the car whilst driving around. Contrary to popular myth, many of the children have other sources of income and are out to make additional money. Cases have also been heard of school going children having sex for money to meet personal expenses. The Assistant Chemical Examiner Lahore believes that some nomads and beggars sell their young girls into prostitution and then blackmail people by threatening to file a case of child sexual abuse against them. This involves girls as young as 12 years old. There is a possibility that this view is part of the same societal belief that people like beggars and nomads are deprived of all moral and social values and therefore have no moral issues about selling their daughters and then blackmailing their clients. Though the NGO sector is well aware of the practice of selling daughters, sisters etc into the prostitution trade we are all also aware of the fact that this is not only done by nomads and beggars.

The decision to move into prostitution is not a conscious one. The use of violence, love, blackmail, threat, false promises and dreams of a better future are used to trap children into prostitution.

**Young girls and boys are involved in prostitution. Surprisingly even well to do children are involved in prostitution. Children are known to be bunking schools and looking for clients. Some of the abusers who are very old get sexual gratification from touching, fondling and kissing. They like to show off their "possessions", that is the boys they have exploited or hired as prostitutes. Passive sex is another possibility with people of this age.**

FGD: Police Officials, Quetta

Students in a government high school in Karachi describe how adults lure children into sexual relationships. "Children who are taken away for that purpose are badly treated and often return with visible bruises. Most of them are in the 12-14 age group. Most of the abusers first build a relationship with the boys. They use both persuasion and threats to force children into sexual relationships. Initially children are lured or threatened into the relationship but later they become willing partners.

Most 12-14 year children are threatened and blackmailed so they fall into the trap. One inside, it is very difficult to get out. Children younger than 12 are usually avoided by abusers because they are more likely to tell their family members about the abuse. Children are taken out of school during school hours on some pretext and they return after school hours. The abusers do "wrong things" to them. One of the students said that the abusers indulged in "immoral acts" whilst keeping up a pretense of normalcy and even joking about what they were doing."

In an FGD conducted in Lahore, young men frequenting video shops and pool tables narrated several incidents of child prostitution in Lahore and Faisalabad indicating that such incidents are common place and are in the knowledge of most people.

### **Young Men Frequenting Video Shops & Pool Tables in Lahore**

- I know some children in my locality who go with older men for money.
- A boy in Faisalabad would have sex for money in the verandah of the market when the market was closed on Fridays.
- Many young maids in our locality have sexual relationships with boys of the same area. They usually do it for money.
- A house in our locality is notorious for CSA I have seen young boys going in there for prostitution.
- I know a boy who is given free burgers and kite string by the owner of the burger shop. He prostitutes himself because his parents cannot afford to get him things that he likes.

Young boys in the 11-14 age group in Kasur identified tanneries that have a reputation for child prostitution. One of the tanneries named by one participant was well known to the children, as the owner never refused boys employment. Another child worker said that some of the boys going there become "addicted" and then they are willing to provide any service for just one cigarette. This could be a reference to drugs, as children are also lured into prostitution by making them dependent on heroin etc. It was also stated that older boys take new boys to tanneries and initiate them into such activities. When asked whether these children's parents knew about what was happening, children said that parents did not usually believe the boys when they told them such things. "They think that children are making excuses for not going to work," confided one child worker, "When parents and tannery owners both physically abuse children then some children also begin to offer services at their workplace so that they can save themselves from the beatings."

In addition to the above researchers also performed walk through surveys at cinema houses. It is common knowledge that certain cinema halls, all over the country, screen X-rated films illegally. It is also common knowledge that adults often take children along to such movies for their sexual gratification. Two walk through surveys were conducted in cinema houses in Peshawar.

The walk through surveys were conducted with boys at the cinema houses. Most of the respondents said they knew that some men brought teenage boys with them to watch movies. One of them added that the practice of bringing boys to cinema halls was common in cinemas where pornographic clips were being shown. Boys also said that some children who sold potato chips, candies or were begging in the vicinity were also prostitutes. They said that almost everyone knew that about them and those who wanted to hire their services would negotiate with them in the premises of the cinema halls. "The prostitute boys usually go with their clients after the show".

In 1996 WAR-Lahore discovered a pornographic video made in Pakistan involving a 13-14 year old girl. On inquiry it was suggested that the film had probably been made in Karachi. The film was available in video shops in Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi. It showed explicit scenes of a young girl

involved in sexual activity with two adult men. The film had been carefully shot so as to hide the faces of the abusers. The young girl seemed to be intoxicated. There are no estimates currently available of how many such films are being made and rented out. Locally made child pornography is a newly discovered phenomenon in Pakistan and needs further investigation.

## **High Risk Places**

It has been established that CSA cuts across economic boundaries and is not limited to certain social classes of people as in the case of say child labor that is pervasive in low and lower middle sections of society. It has also been established that it is virtually impossible to come up with a standard profile of an abuser. Wherever there is a power imbalance and an opportunity any adult or older child can be an abuser. Despite incest being taboo, cases continue to take place, making even the closest blood relatives potential abusers and the traditional sanctuary - the home- unsafe.

### **Impressions of Cinema Going Children in Peshawar**

"Whenever I go to see an X-rated movie, I see 4 to 5 young boys selling candies. They also beg for money and say that they will do anything for money. All of them vanish during the interval break."

"There are some men who do not buy cinema tickets but keep looking at the posters. They start chatting with boys selling candies. They move to a corner of the cinema hall and talk in whispers with these boys. Then the man leaves the cinema house, and the boy also leaves after a few minutes leaving his packets of candy with the tea stall owner or with a fellow hawker."

"Once I saw two men talking to two 13-14 year old boys in the cinema house premises after the 6-9 pm show. After about 5 minutes all of them left the cinema house. I with a couple of friends followed them to a house in the interior of the city. Some days later I again saw a man talking to a 12-13 year old boy and they too left together. I did not follow them because it was past midnight and I was all by myself."

"I went to see an English porn movie a few months back. I saw a 12-13 year old blue-eyed Afghan boy with a man of about 35-40. I was suspicious because it is odd to find a young boy at the last show. Secondly I was the last to enter the hall and I did not see them enter the hall. I saw them in the interval. Apparently they had entered the hall well before anyone, else to avoid embarrassment. When the film finished, the man hired a taxi, put the boy in it and paid for his fare. He then went off in a different direction."

As discussed earlier data collected from primary sources for this report suggests that certain public places are increasingly becoming high risk for children, especially boys. Video shops are identified as one of the most high risk places. During primary data collection several incidents were narrated of video shops owners who offer free showings of X-rated movies to young boys. Using this means boys are then lured into the racket and forced or persuaded to provide sexual

favours to the video shop owners. It has also been stated that children who prostitute themselves often hang out around video shops. Video game arcades and game rooms where pool is played are also notorious for being favorite haunts of adults who abuse children. Sooner or later children run out of money to play and it is then that they are approached by men who offer to pay for them and gradually develop a relationship with the boy that ends up in asking for sex in return for their favors. A method employed by owners of the video games arcade is to let children play on credit. After children have been placed under a considerable amount of debt they are blackmailed into sexual relationships by the owner, with himself or with other men.

Cinema halls especially those exhibiting pornographic films have also been identified in this report as places where child prostitution is flourishing. In small cities and towns, restaurants exhibiting X-rated movies are notorious for involving children in sexual activities. Some restaurant owners entice children by charging them highly, discounted rates for viewing X-rated movies. Railway stations, bus stations and shrines are other public places where children especially those who run away from home for various compelling reasons are at high risk. This was amply demonstrated in the macabre case of the alleged mass murderer and child sex abuser Javed Iqbal in Lahore. Pir Wadhai in Rawalpindi is also notorious for providing boys for sex. In all probability the practice is common at most bus stands in the country. A more serious but unexplored form of CSA is the institutionalized prostitution of boys in the transport industry. Young boys are often employed as assistants by truckers who then expect them to provide them with sexual services.

Several micro studies have also shown that Madrassahs (places of religious education) are also high risk places for children. Older students and sometimes, even instructors have been accused of sexual excesses against children. One of the teachers at a religious education institute in Lahore says. "People expect very high moral standards from institutes such as ours, and a small blemish in religious schools appears like a big black mark."

**"The only problem (for a perpetrator) is how to convince a boy and take him to a room. This is most easily done in a place where you can spend some time with the boy. Such places include cinema halls, snooker clubs, mini-cinema halls, hotels, video clubs etc. From these places they can be lured into experimentation and they can be taken away."** Interview with Crime Reporter, Lahore

## VOICES OF CHILDREN

### **Poverty forces boy into prostitution**

"My home was like hell. My mother was sick and my father was jobless. Many a times, we would go without meals. My father would beat everyone at home, including my mother. I had no option but to run away from home. I work as a helper at a small restaurant in Peshawar, but my real job is to prostitute for money." 15 year old boy prostitute in Peshawar-PPA Research

### **CSA in transport industry**

"I came to Peshawar to work in transport industry. I want to be a driver in future. Other boys told me that the only way to learn driving is to enter into a sexual relationship with my teacher. All of

them do it. Most of the long distance bus and truck drivers keep boys for sexual services. The drivers tell us that it is essential for them to have sex every day. If they don't, they claim, it is bad for their mind and health." 16 year old boy in Peshawar-PPA Research

### **Exploitation at video games shop**

“That was the most wretched day of my life. I was playing at a video games shop in our neighborhood. I ran out of money. A man gave me some money to play more games. After I finished, he invited me to a cup of tea. He took me inside a small room within the shop. He locked the door and assaulted me by force. I was severely hurt. The next day, I went to a nearby hospital where a doctor examined me. I told him everything. He gave me a lot of assurance and free drugs. This unfortunate incident happened some two years ago, but it haunts me day and night - even in my dreams, I have very bad dreams, almost every night. Ferocious men, holding long knives in their hands, are chasing me. I always wake up sweating and gasping.” 14 year old boy in Peshawar-PPA Research

## **Confessions of a Child Abuser**

I have a video game shop, and I trap boys by giving them free game tokens. Mostly I sodomize boys of the age group 11-17. It is very enjoyable. Boys of this age also enjoy the act themselves. I use cream or oil while penetrating. We are a group of 4 or 5 friends who sodomize boys collectively, but I also have a few boys who are just mine. Whenever I see a pretty boy, I want to sodomize him. I am ready to spend time, money and anything else to fulfill that desire.

In the beginning, I develop a friendship with the boys. Then, I become more frank and try to solve any problems they might have since boys are more likely to become friends like this. Then I portray myself as a macho and my strength and connections impress them a lot. I use bad language in front of them and then by different maneuvers I show them pornographic movies. After that, I tell them to suck bananas and later take off my clothes and sodomize them.

If the boy or child is not allowing me to sodomize him I use force or, if needed, blackmail the boy. Once I trapped a boy by showing him a pornographic movie and then called upon fake police officers. Later I sodomized the boy. I also pay some boys towards this purpose as these boys receive no money from home and this makes things easier for me. Usually after sodomizing a boy I immediately wish to do so with another one.

My friends and I often discuss our respective sexual incidents and sometimes exchange boys or ask a friend to allow us to sodomize his boy.

I trapped girls once or twice and had sex with them, but whenever I wanted to anally penetrate them they refused so. It was not much fun. In addition, one needs to have a safe place in case of a girl. Boys are easier as no one objects if I am taking a boy somewhere. I have a motorbike for this purpose. I give lessons to the neighborhood boys who want to learn how to ride a motorbike and thus bring them on my track.

After sodomizing a boy I feel guilty and ask for God's forgiveness but when I see another boy, I just can't resist.