

## **Sexual Abuse Among Adolescent School Girls In Tirunelveli District**

D. Amy Pavithra<sup>1</sup>, Dr. A. Relton<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor of Social Work, Department of Social Sciences, Lady Doak College, Madurai)

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor and Head, Department of Social Work, Bishop Heber College, Trichy).

---

**Abstract:** God given gift, the Children are the inheritance of the world. Childhood a golden period and a blue print of an adult is the bridge between birth and adulthood. So it has to be taken care of well, with the fulfilment of emotional, psychological and physical needs. "Childhood" generally signifies happy living, healthy nutrition, love, warmth, support and overall affectionate environment. The attitudinal behaviour of children should be hale and hearty. The rights of children which include the right to live, the right to health care, and the right to protection from economic and sexual exploitation, but nowadays children are being abuse and exploited in many ways which lead to many physical, social and psychological problem. The increasing sexual abuse with children being exposed with mere protection at home and outside has urged this research, statistically increasing among girl child. The researcher has used mixed method of Explanatory Sequential Design to conduct the study. A sample 135 respondents have been selected using Stratified Proportionate Sampling for the Quantitative Design and 3 respondent where selected through Judgemental Sampling to conduct Case Study for Qualitative Design. The researcher has designed a self-prepared questionnaire for the collection of data among the respondents. Salient feature and Results will be discussed further.

**Keywords:** Adolescent, Sexual Abuse, Sexual Assault, Sexual Harassment.

---

### **I. Introduction**

Childhood and adolescence which is from 2-19 years of age are the integral period in the development human cycle. The life situation such as joys, sorrows, problems, traumas, violations of their rights, abuse they experiences and so on, occurring during this period reflects in adulthood. Attitudinal behaviour in adulthood has its roots deeply in childhood and adolescent. Therefore the person hood of adults is usually the reflection of their adolescent and childhood. Happy adulthood reflects a happy adolescent and childhood period and vice versa. Hence this golden and precious period should be cared and protected from violence, abuse and exploitation. They are to be kept happy and allowed to play and enjoy in a secure environment and provide growth in strong confidence meted with love and encouragement. The resulting attitudinal behaviour of children should be hale and hearty. On the contrary, children around the world are abused and exploited in ways causing various taunting physical, psychological and social problems. These problems are usually permanent leading to dire consequence in their entire life cycle.

The word 'Abuse' is based on a Latin word "*abusus*" means misused. United Nation has defined "Child sexual abuse is contact or interaction between children or interaction between a child and an older one more knowledgeable or child and adult when the child is being used as an object of gratification for the older child's or adults sexual needs". The increasing sexual abuse with children being exposed with no protection at home and outside has urged this study on sexual abuse. India with 1.21 billion people constitute as the second, most populous country in the world while children represent 40% of the whole population. Surprisingly India has the largest number of children (375 million) in the world, nearly 40% of its population. It is estimated by the government that 40% of Indian children are susceptible to threats and homeless, trafficking, drug abuse, forced labour and crime 69% of Indian children are victims to physical, emotional and sexual abuse. In New Delhi the National's Capitol has an over 83% abuse rates. 89% of crimes are perpetrated by family members. Boys (>72%) face more abuse than girls (65%). More than 70% of cases go unreported and unshared even with family members. Mattebo et al (2014) in his research article "Pornography and sexual violence experience among high school students in Sweden" concluded that a higher proportion of girls 15 % than boys of 6% had experienced sexual abuse. According to Carson et al (2013) in his research " Child Sexual Abuse in India Current Issue and Research" the detection of new case lie high in India. 1/5 to half of the country population might be faced some form of sexual abuse at least once in their life. This may not include 1-5 years as they do not reveal sexual abuse. David Finkelhor et al(2012) in his research "Violence, Abuse, and Crime Exposure in a National Sample of Children and Youth". The objective of this research was to obtain potential estimated exposure of the full spectrum of childhood violence, abuse, crime victimization relevant to both clinical practice

and public policy approaches to the problem. Based on a cross sectional national telephone survey that involved a target sample of 4549 children aged 0-17 years. A clear majority 60.6% of the children and youth in this nationally representative sample had experienced atleast, direct or witness victimisation in the previous years. Almost half 46.3% experienced a physical assault, 1 in 4 24.6% had experienced a property offense, 1 in 10 10.2% had experience a form of child maltreatment, 6.1% experienced sexual victimisation, 9.8% has witness interfamily assault, 1 in 4, 25.3% had been a witness to violence experienced. More than one third 38.7% have been exposed to direct victimisation, 10.9% have experienced five direct victimisation and 2.4% have experienced direct victimisation to multiple victimisation. Hall & Hall (2011) in his research "The long term effects of childhood sexual abuse counselling implication" revealed that, the majority of sexual abuse happens in childhood, with incest being the most common form. The impact of childhood sexual abuse varies from case to case. Childhood sexual abuse has been correlated with higher levels of depression, guilt, shame, self-blame, eating disorder, somatic concerns, anxiety, dissociative pattern, repression, denial, sexual problem and relationship problem. Survivors often experience guilt, shame and self-blame. It has been shown that survivors frequently take personal responsible for the abuse. When the sexual abuse is done by an esteemed trusted adult it may be hard for the children to view the perpetrator in a negative light, thus leaving them incapable of seeing what happened as not their fault. Survivor often blames themselves and internalise negative messages about themselves. Survivor tend display more self-destructive behaviour and experience more suicidal ideation than those who have not been abused

## **II. Methodology**

The present study aims in identifying, assessing the magnitude of various forms of sexual abuse towards a child and to study on the entire profile, psychological well-being of sexually abused child of Sarah Tucker Higher Secondary School, Tirunelveli. Hence, the present study has adopted a Mixed method of Explanatory Sequential Design. According to Creswell et al (2003) the design starts with the collection and analysis of quantitative data. This first phase is followed by the subsequent collection and analysis of qualitative data. The second, qualitative phase of the study is designed so that it follows from (or connects to) the results of the first quantitative phase. Because this design begins quantitatively, investigators typically place greater emphasis on the quantitative methods than the qualitative methods. The design is divided into 3 phase.

1. Quantitative data collection- Quantitative data is collected by giving a self-prepared questionnaire to identify the children who have been sexually abused.
2. Qualitative Data Collection- Case study is conducted where sexually abused child entire profile is collected.
3. Interpretation- Interpretation is done

The researcher had prepared questionnaire for the quantitative data with the objectives to identify the children who have been sexually abused, to assess the magnitude and various form of child sexual abuse, to characterize sexual abuser and the degree of disclosure of sexual abuse, to recommend various strategies and intervention programmes for addressing the issues of sexual abuse. Case study was conducted to illicit on the psycho-social wellbeing of the respondents. In order to collect data, the researcher has adopted two types of sampling method.

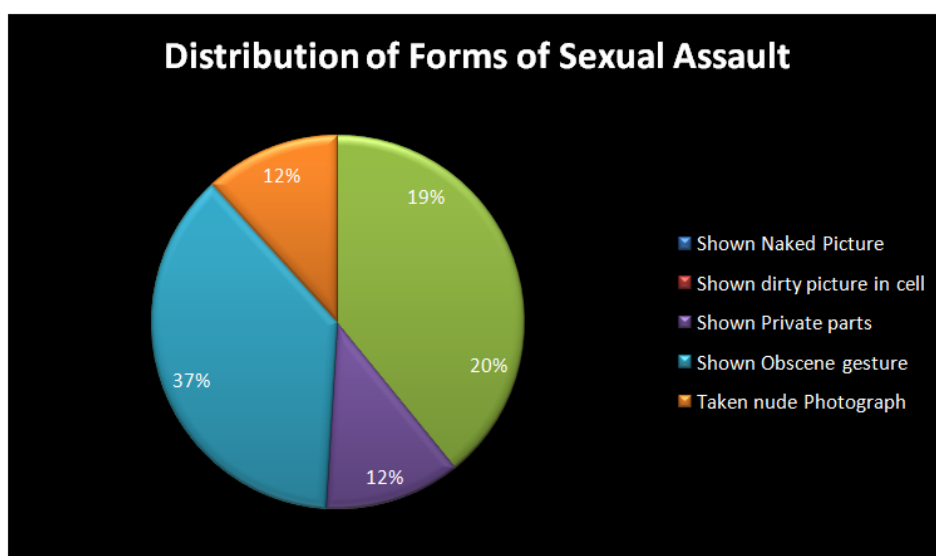
1. Stratified Random Sampling Method for the quantitative data collection to identify the students who have been sexually abused.
2. Judgement Sampling Method for the Qualitative data collection where the researcher judged the respondents based on the experience with sexual abuse and conducted case study with them.

Stratified Proportionate sampling is a probability sampling technique wherein the researcher has divided the entire class XI students into different 10 sections with total 1500 students, then randomly selected 13 students proportionately from each section. Finally 130 respondents were selected of class XI students of Sarah Tucker Girls Higher Secondary School Tirunelveli. Judgement sampling is a non-probability sampling wherein the researcher judged the results of the above respondents, divided them into sexually abused respondents and non-sexually abused children. The researcher judged on the sexually abused respondents and selected on 3 respondents to conduct case study. Tool of Data Collection: The Questionnaire was formulated partly from the study of Child Abuse (2007) by the Indian Ministry of women and child development Government of India 2007, in which the questions were added and modified in accordance to the present research and its objectives. The sections present in questionnaire were personal details of the respondent, Emotional abuse of the respondent, sexual abuse to the respondents and also sharing their experience if they were abused. Students who had shared their experience about sexual abuse were selected to conduct the case study.

### III. Results

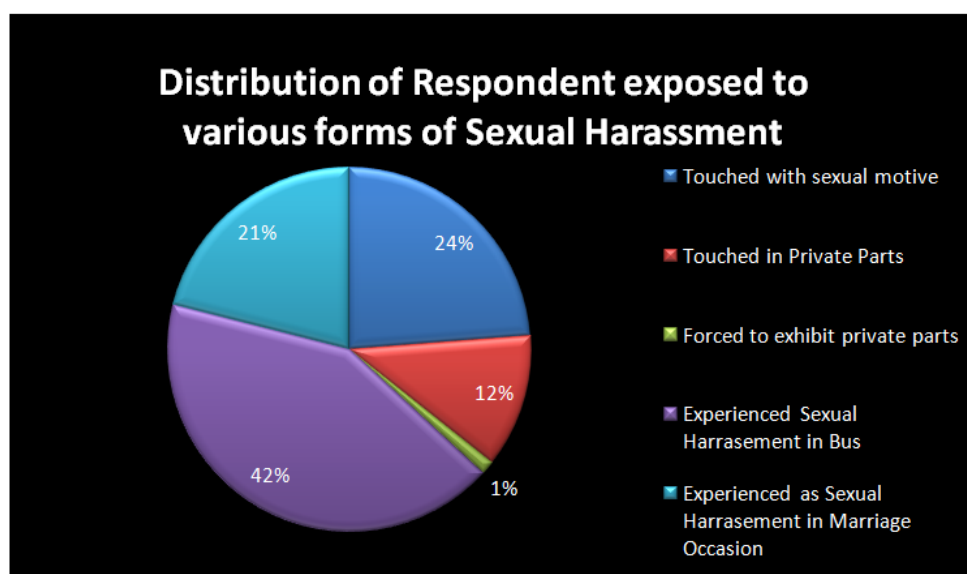
The data provided by the respondent are discussed below.

- ❖ The respondents' majority were 16 years of age.
- ❖ The majority of respondents were of the religion Hindu.
- ❖ The research revealed that Child Sexual Abuse as the present major problem present in these days.
- ❖ The respondents responded that if they were sexually abused majority of the respondents would seek help from their parent, their friends, and only a least percentage responded they would seek help from their teacher.
- ❖ The respondents disclosed that majority of them were not aware of the POCSO Act (Prevention of Children against Sexual Offense Act).
- ❖ The research unveiled the reason why the children never disclosed when they were touched with sexual motive in which majority felt that they were guilty, some were fearful and very least felt shameful, to tell their parents.



#### Distribution of Respondents exposed to various forms of Sexual Assault

The above figure infers the various forms of sexual abuse the respondents have been exposed. (37%) were shown obscene gesture by the abuser, (20%) were shown dirty picture in cell, (19%) were shown naked picture by the abuser, and (12%) had been exposed to be take nude photograph by the abuser and were shown the private parts of the abuser.



### **Distribution of Respondent exposed to various forms of Sexual Harassment**

The above figure illustrates the overall Respondents who had been experience to various forms of Sexual Harassment. (42%) had experienced the same situation as in Story-1, (24%) had been touched with sexual motive, (21%) had been experienced as in story-2, (12%) had been touched in private parts by the abuser and (1%) had been forced to exhibit their private parts.

**Degree of Disclosure:** The research revealed that the child's disclosure rate depends upon the relationship with the abuser. The disclosure rate is high when the abuser is a stranger. The disclosure rate is low when the abuser is related to the child. Hence

*Degree of Disclosure < Degree of Relationship of abuser is 'Related' to child.*

*Degree of Disclosure > Degree of Relation of abuser is 'Stranger' to child.*

It is implied from my research is, there are two types of abuser who abuse a child they are **stranger** and **relative**. The educated and brain powered abusers persistently execute organized injustice and violate the rights of children, particularly to girl children and become innocent and escape punishment using legal loopholes. The worst outcome is, the victim is mostly blamed and sometimes branded as the prime accused.

The Researcher has deduced that, sexual abuse such as groping, exhibitionism, voyeurism, are done by strangers. As these type of sexual abuse doesn't need a scheme to accomplish the abuser's sexual gratification. The abusers do not selectively select the child. They pick on any children which are obtainable to them. Relatives perform sexual abuse such as incest, sexting, taking nude photograph. These types of sexual abuse need a prominent scheme, to accomplish the abuse. The abuser needs to know every aspect of the child to abuse the child. The abuser picks on child selectively and conducts the sexual abuse. Hence,

**Degree of Scheming > The Abuser is "Related" to the child.**

**Degree of Scheming < The Abuser is "Stranger" to the child.**

## **IV. Discussion**

### **1. Suggestion for the Education System:**

- The educational system should include on (LSBE) Life Skills Based Education system and conduct classes on moral values and principles. Life Skill such as self-awareness, creative thinking, critical thinking, empathy, problem solving, decision making, effective communication, interpersonal relationship, coping with stress and coping with emotion should be taught to the children in the school.
- Each and every child in school should be taught about abuse, types of abuse, types of sexual abuse, preventive measure to defence against the abuser, and the children should be given awareness on whom to contact if sexually abused and the legal measure which should be taken against the abuser should be taught to the child.
- The importance of relationship between parents and teachers for the cause and wellbeing of the child has made the parents teachers association a mandatory for every institution.

### **2. Suggestion for Government Child Protection Service:**

- The government has the duty to protect each and every child. The government has to take measures in creating awareness about CSA among public.
- Banners, Poster, Placards can be put up in public places where people gather more about CSA thereby awareness can be created. Advertisement in Television channels about CSA and its legal implication can be created.
- The public should know about what child sexual abuse is and its legal implication. Unless and until the public people are given awareness there would be increase in CSA every days and years. By this mean the sexual abusers would know the implication about CSA and would not continue the sexual abuse.

### **3. Suggestion for Social Workers:**

- Social Worker can be appointed in every school. To help the well-being of the child. The social workers are trained people in conducting case work and group work. The Sexually abused child can be given counselling by the social worker.

#### **4. Suggestion for Voluntary Organisation**

- The voluntary organisation for children needs to concentrate on the fulfilment of child's psychological need rather than physical and economical needs.
- Sexual abuse should be emphasised mostly due to the increase rate.

#### **V. Conclusion**

Childhood and adolescent period is a period span where the entire life of a person is moulded for his or her future. Since this period is shattered by the mishandling and abuse by older ones and adults, the research has been posed to establish the depth of the abusive problems of this age period.

The present Study is a candid study on the part of the researcher to know about various type of sexual abuse and the various aspects such as the relationship of abuser with the child, Abuser as Schemer, Psychological wellbeing of an abused child. The researcher has also suggested to the educational system, Parents, Teachers, Voluntary Organisation.

#### **Reference**

- [1]. Finkelhor, D., Sahtuck, A., Turner, H. A., Hambly, S.L. (2014). The Lifetime Prevalence of Child Sexual Abuse and Sexual Assault assessed in Late Adolescence. *Journal of Adolescent Health*. Vol: 55(3). pp: 329-33.
- [2]. Mattebo, M., Tyden, T., Haggstrom- Nordin, E., Nilsson, K.W., Larsson, M.(2014). Pornography and Sexual Experience among High School Students in Sweden. *Journal of Development Behaviour Paediatrics*. Vol: 35(3). pp: 178-88.
- [3]. Hall.M., and Hall .J. (2011). The long term effects of childhood sexual abuse counselling implication.
- [4]. Study on Child Abuse India 2007. India Ministry of women and child development Government of India 2007.
- [5]. Carson. D.K., Foster. J.M., Tripathi. N. (2013) Child Sexual Abuse in India Current Issue and research. Psychological Study. *Journal Child Abuse and Neglect*. Vol. 58, pp. 318-325.S
- [6]. Putnam. F. W. (2003). Ten year Research Update review. Child Sexual Abuse.
- [7]. Retrieved from [http:// counselling outfitters.com/vistas/vistas II/ Article 19 pdf](http://counselling.outfitters.com/vistas/vistas II/ Article 19 pdf).