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Child Sexual Abuse in India: An Analysis

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ABSTRACT

All children can be vulnerable by virtue of their young age and evolving capacities. They can be 'open to' harm, injury, violence, and abuse. When a case of sexual abuse happened with a child goes unreported and child is then not given protective or therapeutic assistance which they need, they are then left to suffer in silence. The rising complexities of life and the dramatic changes brought about by socio-economic transitions in India have played a major role in growing the vulnerability of children to various and newer forms of abuse. In most of the cases, the abusers are often a family member or a person trusted with care and custody of the child. In such cases, the child would abstain from speaking up because of constant threat of the family members. The pandemic and consequential lockdown have had a deep impact on mental health and well-being, especially amongst the youth. Besides the brutal happenings and incidents have been done against the girls, various reports state it is not hard to believe that abuses are not done against boys these days. Besides the physical threat and trauma that the pandemic has caused, the commotion of way of life as we all know it's had harsh effects on psychological state, notably for youngsters. This paper deals with the sensitive issue of Child abuse in India with respect to how CoVID- Pandemic has lead to increase in child abuse in India. This paper also discusses the various types of abuses, the impact of such abuse on child and steps that can be taken to curb with this problem.

Keywords: Public Policy, Child Sexual Abuse, Law

1 INTRODUCTION

All children can be vulnerable by virtue of their young age and evolving capacities. They can be 'open to' harm, injury, violence, and abuse. Due to different circumstances and/or factors children can also be vulnerable to adverse influences and 'at risk' behaviour. Marginalization further exacerbates vulnerability. In developing country like India, the burden of risk as well as vulnerability falls disproportionately on children. Depending on the extent, nature and severity, and other factors, the impact of child vulnerability and marginalization can be short term or long term

2 WHAT IS AN ABUSE?

Abuse is any type of behaviour or act that's intentional to own authority over, intimidate, force, or hurt another person. It's a mishandling of associate authority that uses the connections of closeness, religion and reliance to create the sufferer vulnerable. Abuse is and may affect emotional, mental, monetary, sexual, and bodily, however abuse isn't restricted to anyone of those. Any exploitation, mishandling, or misuse of management for the intention of conniving the behaviours, events, opinions, or thoughts of another person is abuse.

3 WHAT IS CHILD ABUSE?

According to WHO: "Child abuse or maltreatment constitutes all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power."¹

Child abuse isn't simply physical violence directed at a child. It's any sort of maltreatment by an adult, that is violent or threatening for the kid. This includes neglect. "Once abuse happens within the home and also the offender is, for instance, the child's parent or care-giver, this is often a sort of domestic violence. However kids are at times abused by alternative adults on whom they're dependent, like baby's room employees, academics and sports coaches."²

The Indian Judiciary plays a lively role in the enactment of existing laws and keeps on developing additional for the expansion of child rights in subcontinent. It encourages each state and centre government to supply essential facilities to kids of each age group, and in **Goodricke cluster Ltd v Center of West Bengal**, the superior court of the nation ruled that it is the responsibility of the federal government to arrange all the necessary resources required to provide free education.³

4 WHO IS AT RISK?

Along with street children, it is children unsupervised in schools and homes, as well as the special-needs children and those completely taken care of by professional caretakers e.g. the house-help who are at risk of being abused sexually. Abuse is not only rape – it also is expressed in the form of sexual games, exposing a child to pornography, inappropriate touching, etc.⁴

TYPES OF CHILD ABUSE

Child abuse can be of several kinds according to the World Health Organisation (WHO) – physical, mental, emotional, psychological or in the form of neglect or exploitation. It bring about situation causing harm to a child's health, welfare, and safety. The rising complexities of life and the dramatic changes brought about by socio-economic transitions in India have played a major role in growing the vulnerability of children to various and newer forms of abuse. There are five general types of child abuse:

Physical abuse: all forms of physical violence; Physical abuse should be supposed when the child is seen to have injuries in un-exposed areas and posterior areas. Examination of skin is of prime importance since it is the most frequently affected and visible organ. Unexplained injury marks on private parts such as buttocks, thighs, torso, fraenum, ears should raise red flags while we examine children. Similarly, babies who have not achieved the milestones of cruising or crawling cannot have bruises or abrasion on their skin unless purposely harmed. A visible shape or imprint on the skin could be a tell-tale sign of abuse, such as handprints, belt buckles, cord loops. Other forms of physical abuse like that of shaking, drowning, poisoning do not demonstrate any external skin manifestation, and hence a vigilant history taking and examination is mandated.

Emotional or psychological abuse: an adult often berates the child, acts in a dismissive and hostile manner towards the child or intentionally scares the child. Any persistent act or conversation transmitting the messages of worthlessness cause emotional trauma to these children. However, imposing unsuitable expectations, overprotection, and abnormal social interaction also could be considered emotional abuse, although these acts are well intentioned.

Physical neglect: the child has not been given the care and nurturing that it needs.

Sexual abuse: it is a sexual contact which an adult forces upon a child. Sexual abuse involves forcing, leading, or enticing anyone below the age of 18 years to take part in sexual activity of any kind, irrespective of the awareness of the consequences. Activities could range from contact actions—such as intercourse, buggery, oral sex, or could be non-contact activities—such as watching pornographic materials.

In most cases, children do not complain about such events openly and comes to light when they are recognized in pornographic materials, be pregnant, or have a sexually transmitted disease with no clear explanation.

Child Sexual Tourism: This is a type where the offender travels from one place to another for initiating sexual relations with a child. This can be either domestic or international as well. It involves resources like the use of accommodation and transportation and any tourism-related forces. Child sex tourism

¹World Health Organization (1999): Report Of the Consultation On Child Abuse Prevention; Geneva, http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/neglect/en/

² <https://www.government.nl/topics/child-abuse/what-is-child-abuse#:~:text=Child%20abuse%20is%20not%20just,a%20form%20of%20domestic%20violence%20>

³ <https://indiankanoon.org/doc/1308614/>

⁴ <https://www.savethechildren.in/news/how-to-prevent-child-sexual-abuse-in-india/>

contains the trade of basic amenities like cash, food, clothes, and sometimes remuneration in cash. These tourists can be married or single, male or female, foreign or local. Mostly they contain men of wealthy families.

5 PREVALENCE OF CHILD SEX ABUSE IN INDIA

National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) data reveals that a minor is sexually abused every 30 minutes in India. Indian children are frequently sexually abused by known persons, including their own family members, neighbours, classmates, teachers and school authorities, and staff at residential facilities for vulnerable children. Just like rape, cases of sexual assault to children often go unreported due to a lifetime of the stigma connected with it.⁵

For example, “a government survey of over 12 lakh children across 13 states found that over 53% claimed to have been subjected to sexual abuse, which was ‘severe’ in 20% of these cases. Child sexual assault isn’t gender-specific – 57% of the victims were boys.”⁶

It has been more worrying is the abject apathy in the direction of shocking realities i.e. India has one of the highest rates of child abuse, depression and suicide between children and youth in the world.

Needless to say, the pandemic and consequential lockdown have had a deep impact on mental health and well-being, especially amongst the youth. Adults across the world, counting India, are reporting a four-fold increase in anxiety and depressive symptoms. Adolescents and young adults in the age range of 18 to 25 are exhibiting even higher rates of emotional distress, as well as a marked amplifying in substance misuse, suicidal thoughts and behaviours.

A WHO in its survey has found that the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted or halted critical mental health services in 93 per cent of countries worldwide. The scenario has been no different in India, with its limited facilities; child mental health services came to a grinding halt when the first lockdown was announced unexpectedly, in March 2020. After the initial lull, when people were jolted by the physical as well as financial implications of the lockdown, tens of thousands of families and young people in state of panic or confusion have started reaching out for help.

6 THE LOCKDOWN AND ITS ECONOMIC IMPACT ON POOR AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

“According to the UN policy brief on COVID-19 and need for action on mental health concerns, the pandemic has led to widespread psychological distress due to the consequences of social and physical isolation, and of (the fear of) loss of income and livelihoods; children and adolescents are faced with new emotional difficulties. of social isolation and disrupted education. These troubles are exacerbated by family stress, probable increases in abuse, and the unpredictability of their future lives.”⁷

The Covid-19 pandemic, like everywhere else in the world, has had an unfavourable impact on the Indian economy. “With the long-lasting country-wide lockdown, global economic downturn, and attendant disruption of demand and supply chains, the Indian economy is likely to face a long period of slowdown. As the data shows, in India the unemployment rose in Mid-March from 6.7% to 26% on April 19, 2020.” More than half of the nation’s households report a major drop in their income. The enforcement of the lockdown had a depressing impact on vulnerable populations. There has been rising hunger specifically among those who work in the informal economy. Many migrant workers and their families have been left without food and jobs, and forced to arrival to their homes in the rural areas. “Currentlv. data from some countries such as the UK. France. US. and Australia support the notion that the rate of child abuse and neglect has increased due to COVID-19: They have recorded amplified rates of child abuse, ranging from 20% to 40%.”⁸

In India, the national children’s helpline, CHILDLINE, received 92,000⁹ calls on child abuse and violence, within duration of in 11 days, during the lockdown, which was 30% of the total calls received for that time period.

At constant time, speech act and identification of kid abuse are wedged by quarantine and social isolation measures place in situ to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. Such has occurred because of bound reason with restricted group action, and withdrawal from educational institution, school, community and youth programs, at the side of lack of contact with wider social networks of family and friends, the first warning systems (for abuse) that such activities serve to supply, are lost. In times of COVID-19, with imprisonment and social isolation, ill-usage can and has continue however behind closed doors, and

⁵ <https://www.savethechildren.in/news/how-to-prevent-child-sexual-abuse-in-india/>

⁶ <https://www.savethechildren.in/news/how-to-prevent-child-sexual-abuse-in-india/>

⁷ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7659798/>

⁸ Murphy K. Out of Sight, Child abuse in Texas Thought to be on the Rise; 2020. The Texas Tribune. Available from: <https://www.texastribune.org/2020/03/27/texas-coronavirus-child-abuse-likely-rise-risk/>. Published March 27, 2020. <https://www.texastribune.org/2020/03/27/texas-coronavirus-child-abuse-likely-rise-risk/>. Published March 27, 2020. %].

⁹ Afzal N. Coronavirus: ‘Domestic abuse Pandemic Likely Due to Shutdown. Available from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-52076789>. Published March 30, 2020. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-52076789>. Published March 30, 2020. %].

because of poorer access to (mental) health care and alternative social services, youngsters become a lot of and a lot of at risk of abuse and its consequences.

It is ironic that we frequently acknowledge and appreciate the worth of one thing just one occasion it's broken. Besides the physical threat and trauma that the pandemic has caused, the commotion of way of life as we all know it's had harsh effects on psychological state, notably for youngsters. The daily rituals of college, playground, hobbies and mealtimes with constant folks and activities might show mundane and repetitive, however they kind the platform for emotional safety and stability that square measure fundamentals for any child's healthy growth and development.

7 RECENT CASES OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IN INDIA

Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) has mostly been ignored in public discourse and not often taken critically by the criminal justice system. Nearly 19% of the world's children locate home in India. As a party to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1992, the Indian Government promise to guard all children from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. The Convention puts the responsibility on state machinery to stop the coercion or inducement of a child to engage in sexual activity of the unlawful kind.

While children belonging to all genders are highly vulnerable to CSA, it is frequently the girls who are more vulnerable to sexual abuse. Sexual exploitation and abuse of children is strongly simultaneous related to the rampant poverty in India. Majority of the CSA cases in India are often perpetrated by someone identified to the child or in a position of trust and responsibility. This means most children do not report the abuse to any person due to social stigma and family honour.

UTTAR PRADESH CSA CASE : In a recent case, "The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has identified those 10 more victims who were allegedly sexually abused by Uttar Pradesh-based engineer Ram Bhuwan. Bhuwan had served in the state's irrigation department before he was suspended and arrested on charges of sexual abuse. His wife is a suspected accomplice, in the case. The 50-year-old engineer has been accused of abusing around 50 children in the age group of 4-16 years in three adjoining districts of Uttar Pradesh --Hamirpur, Banda, Chitrakoot -- for over a decade. He has also been accused of selling videos of the crime on the dark web. The CBI had earlier arrested another accused from the national capital. The accused, whose identity is being kept as a secret by the CBI, is understood to be an important link in unravelling the mystery behind how Bhuwan used the dark web to sell child sexual abuse material."¹⁰

"The agency has so far identified around 35 victims and is in the process of identifying others, officials said adding that the CBI is also working on deciphering digital evidence recovered from Bhuwan's residence. He is a resident of Chitrakoot district in Uttar Pradesh, was arrested from Banda by the Special Unit of the CBI specialising in 'Online Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Prevention/ Investigation (OCSAE). He is currently in judicial custody. The agency has charged Bhuwan and his wife under IPC sections related to criminal conspiracy (120-B) and homosexuality (377) along with provisions of The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and Information Technology Act. It was also found that the accused had allegedly created and shared a huge quantity of child sexually abusive material, over the years, through the internet using various social media platforms and websites over the darknet etc."¹¹

HARYANA'S YAMUNANAGAR CASE : recently in April,2021; Police arrested a couple and a woman in connection with the alleged rape of a 13-year-old girl in Haryana's Yamunanagar who was found to be pregnant. The minor girl was purportedly drugged and was raped by different people. The accused couple and the woman who is the prime accused in the case were arrested in Yamunanagar after the girl narrated her ordeal to the police.

The key accused lived in the girl's neighbourhood and was addicted to drugs. "The police have said she earned money by taking the girl to a rented accommodation provided by the accused couple. The teenager was allegedly drugged and raped by different people in the rented house. After the teenager was counselled, she told the police that the key accused used to take her to the rented accommodation when her parents were away from home. The incident came to light a few days ago when the girl complained of stomach pain and was taken to a hospital where she was found to be six months pregnant. Police were informed when the girl spoke about how she was sexually exploited. Police are investigating if the accused persons could have used more such children subjecting them to sexual abuse."¹²

Besides the brutal happenings and incidents have been done against the girls, it is not hard to believe that abuses are not done against boys. A recent study conducted in Kerala (**Thiruvananthapuram**) has revealed that "boys are victims of sexual abuse in 17 per cent of the cases. In several such cases, the modesty of boys is outraged by women. According to an analysis of the data on sexual abuse of children in the last 5 years, boys have been subjected to

¹⁰ <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/up-child-abuse-case-cbi-hints-main-accuse-was-not-working-alone/story-NoxRv0wXQk2et295HWq9IL.html>

¹¹ <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/up-child-abuse-case-cbi-hints-main-accuse-was-not-working-alone/story-NoxRv0wXQk2et295HWq9IL.html>

¹² <https://www.indiatoday.in/crime/story/minor-girl-rape-haryana-drugged-child-abuse-1791490-2021-04-16>

several sexual offences by perpetrators. From 2015 to 2019, 13,184 cases were registered under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. Out of these, 2,213 cases pertained to the sexual abuse of 2,250 boys.”¹³

8 STIGMA FORCES VICTIMS TO STAY MUM

The patriarchal character of Indian society has led to very different expectations from boys and girls. Boys are usually expected to be “men” hence not cry or complain when abused. Many incidents of corporal punishment are meted out to boys till they learn not to cry, and the abuser saying that he has trained the boy to be a man. The same study conducted in Kerala also stated that boys did not open up about their dilemma due to stigmatisation and lack of faith. The analysis exposed that penetrative physical attack of younger children was reported more than that of the other two age groups, *The Times of India* reported.¹⁴

“Arun B Nair, assistant professor of psychiatry, Thiruvananthapuram Medical College said, Boys may be reluctant in reporting such matters fearing that their parents could not hold them responsible for the incident or that the issue could be trivialised. It may end up in complications in future, like showing hyper-sexual behaviour or depression.”¹⁵

Many male sexual abuse survivors are left only to survive – living without justice for something that they never went ahead. We don’t even realise the magnitude of it. Fortunately, the country is initiated to talk about this problem now.

In a study of gender-based violence against men in Haryana, 52.4 per cent of men said they had experienced violence. Most likely, this is a low estimate since it doesn’t include non-contact experiences, which can also have long-term negative effects, and these are just the ‘reported’ cases. The social stigma and silence with respect to male sexual abuse and assault result can be related to lack of awareness about the effects of such experiences.

In 2007, Ministry of Women and Child Welfare, supported by United Nations Children’s Fund, Save the Children and Prayas, conducted a study to understand the magnitude of child abuse in India, they found that 53.22% children faced one or more forms of sexual abuse; among them, the number of boys abused was 52.94%. This is an appalling statistic for a country that does not consider male rape and sexual abuse, child or otherwise, as an actual crime. Not just children, but there are many adult survivors of rape and abuse as well. There have been numerous cases that go unreported.¹⁶

To make this world safer for our children, we need to protect our sons and daughters equally. Patriarchy is not just protecting our boys more than our girls in childhood. The very low rates of reporting as well as help seeking among victims of sexually abused boys in India could be due to the hegemony of patriarchy.

9 EFFECTS OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

- CSA and Nervous system: - sexual abuse has been called as a “chronic neurologic disease” and discusses how the effects create decades of negative consequences for victims. The consequences of child sexual abuse may take account of depression, eating disorders, post-traumatic stress and may be an impaired ability to cope with stress or emotions. Child sexual abuse can have a more fundamental consequence on brain functioning, where a child’s brain becomes injured by the abuse they have suffered. The effects of sexual abuse can include dissociation, memory impairment and reduced social functioning.

- Self harm: - aggression with respect to self as in self-blame, self-harm and suicide are common consequences of sexual abuse. A study found participants sexually abused in childhood were more than twice as likely to consider committing suicide in later life.

- Emotional and Physical damage: - Sexual abuse can also have physical negative impacts for children, from sexually transmitted diseases and might lead up to pregnancy. Such type of physical effects might add on to the significant emotional and psychological damage inflicted by the abuse.

- Guilt \ shame: - Children who are sexually abused are been easily manipulated by the abuser and at times they tend to believe that the abuse is their fault. The feelings of shame along with guilt that come from the abuse can lessen the likelihood of that child telling anyone about the abuse.

- Post Traumatic stress disorder: - at times the child doesn’t even remember parts of their childhood. It can also lead to symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder. If a child doesn’t disclose with anyone about the abuse, if it isn’t discovered or else when children don’t receive the right kind of help with support, the damage can last for lifetime.¹⁷

¹³ <https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/kerala/2020/may/15/child-sexual-abuse-in-thiruvananthapuram-alarming-kids-unsafe-even-in-their-homes-2143756.html>

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¹⁵ <https://www.timesnownews.com/india/article/abuse-of-male-child-not-a-myth-17-per-cent-child-sexual-abuse-cases-from-kerala-pertain-to-boys-pocso-act/679570>

¹⁶ Ministry of Law and Justice, Government of India. Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012. New Delhi: Ministry of Law and Justice, Government of India; 2012. Available from: <http://www.wcd.nic.in/childact/childprotection>

¹⁷ Children’s Bureau. (2011). Child maltreatment 2011, 1–251. Retrieved from <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/cm11.pdf#page=28>

10 THE FLAWS IN THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

It is very important to say anything about what happens to a child has been sexually abused which holds implication not only for his/her comfort but also for the protection of other children as there might be further chances of abuse. At times it has been observed that the complaints of the children are simply discarded by the family members, Police and the medical experts.

In most of the cases, the abusers are often a family member or a person trusted with care and custody of the child. In such cases, the child would abstain from speaking up because of constant threat of the family members. On the other hand in few other cases, the family members fright of being ostracized from the society.

11 CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

The Constitution of India recognizes the vulnerable position of children and their right to protection. Following the doctrine of protective discrimination, it guarantees in Article 15 special attention to children through necessary and special laws and policies that safeguard their rights. The right to equality, protection of life and personal liberty and the right against exploitation are enshrined in Articles 14, 15, 15(3), 19(1) (a), 21, 21(A), 23, 24, 39(e) 39(f) and reiterate India's commitment to the protection, safety, security and well-being of all it's people, including children.

- “Article 14: The State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India;
- Article 15: The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them;
- Article 15 (3): Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for women and children;
- Article 19(1) (a): All citizens shall have the right (a) to freedom of speech and expression;
- Article 21: Protection of life and personal liberty-No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law;
- Article 21A: Free and compulsory education for all children of the age of 6 to 14 years;
- Article 23: Prohibition of traffic in human beings and forced labour-(1) Traffic in human beings and beggars and other similar forms of forced labour are prohibited and any contravention of this provision shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law.”¹⁸

12 NATIONAL POLICY FOR CHILDREN 1974

“The major objectives of this policy are:- →

- Comprehensive health and nutrition
- Free and compulsory education until the age of fourteen years
- Education should include physical education, and recreational time.
- Special attention for children from marginalised backgrounds or children with disabilities.
- Protection from abuse, neglect, cruelty and exploitation.
- Laws need to be amended to take into account “the best interest of the child”.¹⁹

13 CHILD WELFARE COMMITTEE:

Child in need of care and protection (CNCP) (Sec. 2(14). “According to CNCP who is in need of child care and protection?:Who is at imminent risk of marriage before attaining the age of marriage, homeless, abandoned, street child, forced labour, beggar, abused, tortured, neglected, exploited, mentally or physically challenged/mentally or physically ill, Having incapacitated parents or no parent, missing or run away child, whose parents are not traceable, abused, tortured or exploited for the purpose of sexual abuse or illegal act, vulnerable and is likely to be inducted into drug abuse or trafficking, abused for unconscionable gains and Victim of natural or man-made calamity.”²⁰

Who can produce CNCP before the Committee (Sec. 31) :-“ Any CNCP may be produced before the Committee by any of the following-

Any Police Officer or SJPU (Special Juvenile Police Unit).

Any Officer of DCPU (District Child Protection Unit) or inspector appointed under labour law.

Any Public Servant.

¹⁸<https://legislative.gov.in/constitution-of-india>

¹⁹ <https://wcd.nic.in>

²⁰ <https://blog.ipleaders.in/powers-and-functions-of-child-welfare-committee/>

Child line services or any voluntary or non-governmental organization. • Child welfare officer or Probation Officer.”²¹

14 THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN FROM SEXUAL OFFENCES ACT, 2015, (POCSO, 2015)

“Purpose of the Act is to:-

- Provide protection to all children from the offences of sexual assault, sexual harassment and pornography
- Child defined as any person below the age of 18 years.
- An offence is treated as "aggravated" when committed by a person in a position of trust or authority of child such as a member of security forces, police officer, public servant, etc.”²²

In spite of these provisions, India, like the rest of the world continues to battle the problem of child abuse. The worst part is of course the fact that even now a significant number of child abuse cases are not reported because of taboos around child sex abuse and mistrust of authorities. At times, even doctors have failed to diagnose signs of abuse, and injuries are often thought to be accidental. When reported, the weakness of our criminal justice system has ensured that the perpetrators of the crime are not punished and go scot-free. If we want to encourage more people to report it then there is need to create a well-oiled system so that victims are not forced to re-visit their trauma. It is time we look at this Bill with optimism and support the policy makers in coming up with a sound justice system for the survivors of child abuse.

15 CONCLUSION

Child Sexual Abuse is a bane of Indian society and hence the POSCO Act was brought in 2012. However, as we know that no law can be implemented successfully and efficiently in the society, without the committed as well as coordinated hard work of the investigating and implementing agencies. A multi lateral approach is necessary in this regard, along with the onus lies with the state governments, police department, judicial system, and medical fraternity to implement the act with urgency as well as to approach these cases with importance; empathy, and compassion.

Speedy trials are attainable only if the judges, their staff along with the police department co-ordinate with each other, failing which concept of special courts will be defeated. Further, it can also be said that up to a certain extent the doctors are need to be trained to in order to get the intricacies as well as help in proper scientific collection of various evidences while examining the child victim of sexual abuse. In recent years, it has been found that there is an increase in the number of cases being reported in addition to which can be said due to the alertness which was able to be created through various awareness programs by with NGOs and Friends of the Police.

Primary prevention can play an important role in helping children to understand child abuse. Some of the Primary defensive measures are:-

- **Educating children about abuse:** - In order to educate the children about child abuse, family and school plays an important role.
- **Responsibility of family:** - As we know that family is the first educational institute for child. Parents or primary caregiver plays a significant role in the life of children. It is also the duty of the parents to make their children attentive of various forms of abuse.
- **Responsibility of Schools:** - The duty of the schools cannot be ignored. School based avoidance programmes must also deal upon child abuse, make children aware about, Good touch Bad touch, Assertive training (Assertive enough to say “No” to any form of abuse) etc which can really help in preventing child abuse.
- **Management of child abuse:** - those children who have been abused needs attention from Medical and mental health professionals.

²¹ <https://blog.ipleaders.in/powers-and-functions-of-child-welfare-committee/>

²² <https://www.indiacode.nic.in>

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- **Responsibility of Paediatrician and Hospital management:** -As the first point of contact, the emergency department has a crucial role in the detection and management of the abused child. Few points must be noted which are as follows:
 - a. The timescale between injury and attendance
 - b. The compatibility and consistency between injury and history given
 - c. The parent–child, parent–staff and child–staff interactions
 - d. Relevant previous attendances and those of siblings

 - **Ensuring the child’s safety and well-being:-** It’s very important that the child should feel safe in the family.

It can be said that awareness is one of the most dominant weapons which can be used against child abuse, a social evil that is extensive in every class of society, every state, city, and religion. There’s no single enemy – from children’s teachers to their parents, abusers come in diverse forms. Steps like training modules concerning different children can be formulated which can be used by teachers to pass on awareness on these issues to children in school.