

**Child Sexual Abuse: Awareness and Perceptions among Police Personnel  
(Women) in Vadodara City**

A Dissertation

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Vadodara, April 2023

## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation titled “**Child Sexual Abuse: Awareness and Perceptions among Police Personnel (Women) in Vadodara City**” has been carried out independently by Ms. Shaziya Refai under the guidance of Dr. Namita Bhatt, in partial fulfillment for the degree of Masters in Child Development and Education for Sustainable Development from the Department of Human Development and Family Studies. This research is her original bonafide work carried out from April 2022 to May 2023.

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This is to certify that Shaziya Refai's study titled, "Child Sexual Abuse: Awareness And Perceptions Among Police Personnel (Women) In Vadodara City" has been approved by the Institutional Ethics Committee for Human Research (IECHR), Faculty of Family and Community Science, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda. The study has been allotted the ethical approval number IECHR/FCSc/M.Sc./2022/47.

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**List of Abbreviations**

HC	Head Constable
WLRD	Woman Lok Rakshak Dal
WASI	Women Assitant Police Sub Inspector
IPC	Indian Penal Court
NCRB	National Crime Record Bureau
IPS	Indian Police Service
PI	Police Inspector
WPC	Women Police Sub Inspector
ACP	Assistant Commissioner of Police
PSI	Police Sub- Inspector
CP	Commissioner of Police

## **Abstract**

This study aimed to investigate the awareness and perceptions of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) among female police officers in Vadodara City, India, using a mixed-methods approach. A self-reporting questionnaire, adapted from The Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation, was used to assess the police officers' perceptions of CSA, their awareness of it, and their personal experiences with it and a semi-structured interview schedule were used to gather detailed information about various aspects related to CSA, such as its different forms, perpetrators, societal attitudes, educational interventions, advocacy and awareness campaigns, and community role in addressing it. The study's participants included 100 female police officers from Vadodara City, selected purposively. The findings reveal that the most prevalent forms of CSA were found to be rape, child labor as a precursor to sexual abuse, and force or violence or threats. Most participants believed that children can experience CSA at any age, regardless of their social background, and that schools need to educate children about it to reduce its incidence. Despite the increasing number of CSA cases, some people still find discussing sexual offenses or abuse with people of different genders uncomfortable and socially unacceptable. In conclusion, the study revealed that female police officers in Vadodara City are well-versed in CSA and its related laws. The second part of the study involved creating a module, which consists of themes such as Child Rights, Do's and Don'ts for police officers when working with children and their families and guidelines on interviewing a child.

*Keywords:* Child Sexual Abuse, Police personnel

## **Introduction and Review of Literature**

### **Child Sexual Abuse**

Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) is a very broad term and is used to describe Sexual Offences against children. World Health Organization (WHO 1999) defines Child Sexual Abuse as the violation of the basic human rights of a child. It includes all forms of physical, emotional, ill treatment, sexual harm, neglect or negligent treatment, commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual harm or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power.

Child abuse can be traced in ancient history and time immemorial, to what all treatments children have undergone in the name of God, cultural practice, how children are only the property of patriarchy and the father has the authority to decide if the child should be alive or dead or abandoned. (Gallagher, 1997)

CSA means 'contacts or interactions between a child and an older or more knowledgeable child or adult (stranger, sibling, parent or caretaker) when the child is being used as an object of gratification for the older child's or adult's need. Such contacts or interactions are carried out against the child using force, trickery, bribes, and threats' (UNICEF-2018).

### **Types of Child Abuse**

Seth (2015) classified abuse into five types, namely physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect and negligent treatment, emotional abuse, and exploitation. Physical abuse refers to any physical harm inflicted on the child by an interaction with another person. Sexual abuse, on the other hand, occurs when a child is engaged in a sexual activity by someone who holds a position of power or trust over them and the child is unable to comprehend the situation or give informed consent. Emotional abuse involves a caregiver's failure to provide a supportive

environment for the child. Neglect and negligent treatment happen when caregivers are inattentive and provide a neglectful environment and are emotionally detached from the child. Lastly, exploitation refers to situations where a child is used for any form of commercial or non-commercial gain. Seth's classification provides a framework for understanding the different forms of abuse and their impact on children.

Seth (2015) defines physical, sexual, neglectful, or negligent treatment of children, as well as exploitation (commercial or other types), which actually or potentially harms the child's health, survival, development, or dignity, is considered child abuse. Abuse occurs in a setting where there is a power, trust, or responsibility relationship. Naturally, some forms of child abuse—like cases of child neglect—are more prevalent than others, like sexual abuse. Furthermore, compared to other types of abuse that are immediately obvious in a number of ways, some types of abuse are frequently difficult to document or characterize.

Physical abuse: Child physical abuse is the term used to describe the intentional use of physical force against a child that causes them harm. Pushing, kicking, shaking, throwing, pushing, biting, burning, strangling, and poisoning are examples of physical abusive behaviors. It is not necessary for a parent to have violent intent in order to physically abuse their child. Physical punishment, for instance, that leaves bruising would typically be regarded as physical abuse. Physical force that is likely to result in physical harm to the child may also be regarded as abusive, depending on the child's age and the nature of the behavior. For example, shaking a baby but leaving him unharmed would still be regarded as physical abuse. The fabrication or induction of an illness by a parent or care giver (previously known as Munchausen syndrome by proxy) is also considered physically abusive behavior (Bromfield, 2005)

Emotional abuse: Also known as emotional maltreatment, psychological maltreatment, or psychological abuse, emotional abuse describes a parent's or caregiver's inappropriate words or actions towards a child and/or a pattern of persistently failing to give the child enough non-physical care and emotional availability over time. Such behaviors, whether they are acts of commission or omission, are likely to harm a child's sense of self or social skills. (Garbarino, et al., 1986).

According to Garbarino, et al. (1986), Emotional maltreatment has five primary behavioral manifestations. When an adult rejects a child, they decline to recognize their value and the legitimacy of their needs. When an adult isolates a child, they deny them access to typical social interactions, stop them from making friends, and convince them that they are the only person in the world. It is terrifying when an adult verbally abuses a child, fosters a climate of fear, bullies and frightens the child, and leaves them with the impression that the world is unpredictable and hostile. The child loses vital stimulation and responsiveness when the adult ignores them, which stunts their emotional and intellectual development. Last but not least, corrupting entails the adult "mis-socializing" the child, encouraging them to engage in harmful antisocial behavior, supporting that deviance, and rendering them unfit for normal social experiences.

Neglect: When a care giver fails to give a child the conditions that are necessary for their physical and emotional development and wellbeing, and where they are in a position to do so, neglect has occurred. (Broadbent & Bentley, 1997).

There are numerous subcategories of irresponsible behavior. The failure of the parent or carer to provide a child with the most basic physical needs, such as adequate, safe, and clean clothing, housing, food, and medical attention, is known as physical neglect. Lack of warmth, nourishment, encouragement, and support from parents or other carers is indicative

of emotional or psychological neglect; it should be noted that emotional neglect is occasionally viewed as a form of emotional abuse or maltreatment. The failure of a parent or other caretaker to give the child supportive educational opportunities are what is known as educational neglect. Last but not least, environmental neglect is defined as the parent or carer failing to provide for the child's safety, opportunities, and resources in the environment. (Dubowitz, et. al., 2004).

Sexual abuse: It can be challenging to define sexual abuse. Almost everyone agrees that certain actions qualify as sexual abuse, such as when a parent rapes an 11-year-old child. Other behaviors, like consensual sex between people aged 9 and 15, are much more ambiguous, at least among some socio cultural groups. A sensitive understanding of a number of definitional issues specific to child sexual abuse is necessary to determine whether actions like the latter example constitute abuse or not. A general definition of child sexual abuse proposes that child sexual abuse involves "the use of a child for sexual gratification by an adult or significantly older child/adolescent" (Tomison, 2000).

Broadbent and Bentley (1997) define child sexual abuse as "any act which exposes a child to, or involves a child in, sexual processes beyond his or her understanding or contrary to accepted community standards". Masturbation, oral sex, vaginal or anal penetration by a penis, finger, or any other object, fondling of breasts, voyeurism, exhibitionism, and exposing the child to or involving the child in pornography are all examples of sexually abusive behaviors.

(Bromfield, 2005) Unlike other forms of abuse, child sexual abuse is defined differently depending on the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator. For instance, sexual activity involving two adolescents may or may not be deemed abusive depending on whether it was consensual, whether there was any coercion involved, or

whether the two teenagers had an equal relationship. Sexual activity involving a child and a family member, such as a parent or an uncle, would always be regarded as abusive

A cross-cultural analysis of child abuse concepts takes into account issues with religion and societal norms where all extramarital sex is forbidden or criminalized. In societies like those in many Muslim nations, the issue is not whether or not sexual activity is consensual; rather, it is whether or not the activity is taking place between married individuals. In some cultures, like Australia, consenting sexual activity between a 20-year-old and a 15-year-old is regarded as abusive, but consenting sexual activity between an unmarried 20-year-old and a 17-year-old is not regarded as abusive. There does not appear to be a minimum age for females in traditional societies where a marriage between an adult man and a girl under the age of 18 can be legalized. In some cases, women may even be forced to consent to marriage when they are only 16 years old or younger. Even within these societies themselves, the views on child abuse in relation to such incidents are very divisive (Ryan, 1997).

Other forms of child abuse: There are additional forms of child maltreatment or abuse that have been identified by (Ryan, 1997). He includes fetal abuse, which refers to actions taken by pregnant women that could endanger the unborn child, such as abusing alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs excessively. Bullying or peer abuse and sibling abuse are some additional examples of child abuse. One might contend that all of these more recent forms can be reclassified under the main categories of child abuse mentioned above. The same argument holds true for organizational exploitation (such as child sex rings, child pornography, child prostitution), so-called institutional abuse (which includes abuse that occurs in institutions like foster homes, group homes, voluntary or charity organizations, and child care centre), and state-sanctioned abuse. The so-called female genital mutilation, also

known as the practice of circumcision, is one of the examples given for state-sanctioned abuse. For cultural reasons, the latter example is particularly contentious (Ryan, 1997).

### **Statistics on CSA Worldwide**

According to a study carried out by Carson (2013) to comprehend the pervasiveness of child sexual exploitation and abuse in the Indian context. 93% of girls who are abused before the age of 18 are dropouts and come from low socioeconomic groups. The sexually abused girls in Western Madhya Pradesh were compelled to keep quiet in order to preserve the reputation of their families. In Kolkata, 14.6% of children who had experienced sexual abuse had been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS. In Delhi, 38.1% of children reported experiencing sexual abuse, of which 23.8% had visible physical damage and 16.3% had emotional and behavioral issues Carson (2013).

Child Sexual Abuse: Awareness and Perceptions among Young Adults in India (2017) a report, nationwide march known as the Bharat Yatra with the motive to make India safe for children. This movement had spread throughout 22 Indian states and union territories, urging people to speak out against the daily occurrences of sexual exploitation, abuse, and trafficking. To map participants' perceptions and awareness of CSA, 10 universities and 100 students from each were chosen at random. As the respondents chosen were highly educated young adults, it was concerning that 3 out of 4 young adults lacked a fundamental understanding of CSA. 35% females and 25% male respondents had experienced CSA themselves, rating to 41% in West zone followed by 31% in North and South zones, 26% in East and 28% cases in Central India (Choudhry et al., 2018).

Child Sexual Abuse in India: A systematic review (2018) had published an intensively statistical and elaborated review on the status of CSA in India. This review incorporated qualitative as well as quantitative methods of data collection, aimed to understand the pattern of child sexual abuse in the past one decade in India and study the distribution of the

prevalence estimates for both genders, to improve understanding of the determinants and consequences of CSA and identify the gaps in the current state of research. With this study, 4-41% girls and 10-55% boys of school age have experienced sexual abuse. Figures are higher in cases of commercial sex workers, street adolescents, women and children with mental health disturbance (Choudhry et al., 2018).

In a 2013 article on the criminal justice system's flaws, Human Rights Watch noted that only 3% of CSA cases were reported to the police. According to the same report, this percentage is not surprising given the social norms of shame, fear, and name that are made for all people; if a girl child falls victim to these, who will marry her?

According to National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB, 2017), the number of crimes committed against children in India is rising every year. In major metropolitan cities, there were a total of 18247 cases in 2015, 19081 cases in 2016, and 19544 cases in 20179. Additionally, according to NCRB India records from 2018, crimes covered by the POCSO Act ranked among the top crimes against children and made up 34% of those crimes.

(NCRB, 2017) The Indian government conducted a survey in 2006, and the results showed that more than 53.22 percent of children had experienced one or more types of sexual abuse. According to the United Nations Commission on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), one case of child sexual abuse occurs out of every three cases of rape. In a study titled "Breaking the Silences - Child Sexual Abuse in India" conducted in 2013, Human Rights Watch found that between the years 2001 and 2011, the number of CSA cases increased by 336% annually. The same report also states that the CSA is not based on factors such as gender, caste, economic status, religion, or age. Cases of CSA are rising worldwide, not just in India.

According to Iravani's (2011) approximately 30% of men and 40% of women recall having experienced sexual molestation as children, according to studies of CSA in India

based on in-depth interviews with adults; "molestation" is defined as actual genital contact and not just exposure. According to this study's findings, about half of these incidents involved direct incest with family members (although at least 80% of them also involved other carers' knowledge or complicity), and the other half involved perpetrators who were not members of the victim's immediate or extended family. These high CSA incidences are supported by other studies that were looked at in this article.

### **Impact of social media**

Halder (2015) reiterates although information technology benefits children, it also has negative aspects, and the majority of kids today are victims of cyberbullying and cybercrime. The prevalence of child pornography, child-targeted cybercrime, and online bullying are examples of child abuse. Perpetrators frequently come from the trust circle. In the age of the internet, it is important to educate people on how to use technology so that they can protect their children from threats online.

In study on the media coverage of CSA prevention strategies, Kitzinger & Skidmore (1995) emphasized that the public's attitude towards developing and implementing child protection policies is influenced by the media's portrayal of child abuse cases. This encourages the need for appropriate approaches to address the issue within social and legal frameworks. Indian advocates for children's rights note that in addition to raising awareness of child abuse, the media also establishes what constitutes "normal" and "deviant" behavior in a society, which aids in the detection of abuse (Carson et al., 2013) In India, the majority of people only learn about child abuse incidents after they are reported in a newspaper or on television. In addition to shaping how society views child abuse, the media also aids in shaping public perceptions of it (McDevitt, 1996).

When a child is used for sexual stimulation using a variety of media, such as photographs, writing, recording film, videos, etc., CSA moves to a new level. It's referred to as child

pornography. The likelihood of committing CSA increases when someone views child porn and it has been discovered that some offenders of child porn on the internet may actually be covert molesters. Child pornography is prohibited, and a significant movement is working to make it soon a global scale. (Subramaniyan et. al.,2007)

Indian statistic that every 155 minutes a child under the age of 16 is sexually assaulted, every 13 hours a child under the age of 10, and every tenth child is a victim of some kind of sexual abuse. (Singh et. al., 2014)

### **Impact of CSA**

Children who experienced abuse or neglect as children are more likely to experience physical or mental health issues as adults, which has a significant impact on both the individual and society (Cohen et al., 2018).

It's possible that early exposure to stress or trauma plays a significant role in the development of mental health issues later in life (Gonil et al., 2021). People who have experienced trauma are more likely to develop PTSD and other trauma-related disorders (Kendall et al., 1993). Although it is clear that early trauma contributes to the development of mental illnesses like depression and anxiety (Chapman et al., 2004). Additionally, adolescence can be a time of anxiety and sadness, especially for those who witnessed or experienced abuse as children. According to a previous study, our early experiences have a significant impact on our long-term health and wellbeing (Hertzman, 1994). A child's mental and emotional health may be negatively impacted for years after experiencing sexual abuse as a child.

CSA is a sensitive topic in society; it goes beyond simple sexual abuse and has both immediate and long-term effects on children's psyches. Regardless of a child's gender, caste, class, ability, or socioeconomic status, child sexual abuse occurs (Bhuvanewari et al., 2016).

The Ministry of Women and Child Development implemented the Protection of Children from Sexual Offence Act, 2012 into Indian law in order to safeguard children from abuse and exploitation of all kinds. Before 2012, the Indian Penal Code lacked sufficient provisions for children against sexual offences. As a result, this act was put into effect.

In both rural and urban areas, crime rates against children were high, as noted by Carson et al (2013). Boys also had to deal with the CSA, in addition to the girls. Although boys experience sexual abuse and are more likely to report it than girls, there are many other factors that are visible or unnoticed that also contribute to child abuse. These include poverty, overpopulation, large families, a lack of facilities, and a host of others. Belur & Singh (2015)

Hidden causes of CSA have been identified by Brown and Anderson (1991) and others as a communication gap between parent-child relationships, a lack of understanding of roles, fear of embarrassment, social stigma, mistrust of the justice system, untrained health care professionals, perpetrators from the known circle, and the higher risk of disabled children. Childhood maltreatment was studied by Singh, Parsekar, and Nair (2014) they found that children experienced physical trauma or abuse (33.1%), psychological trauma or abuse (46.8%), and sexual violence (20.2%) during this time. People need to be aware of and educated about the different types of CSA in order to assist and comprehend them. The Indian government must take action for children and families and promote these causes. For example, a child helpline that has been in operation for 20 years but is still unknown to most people needs to receive more publicity (Brown et. al.,1991).

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offence (POCSO Act, 2012) which was created specifically to support and prevent India's future, needs to be acknowledged by Indian citizens. Faith in the legal system is lacking, necessitating communication between the government and the populace. It is necessary to train medical staff, counselors, and police officers. The child needs to receive self-defense instruction. Victims require a supportive

environment from society as a whole, not just from their families; children would be accepted in society without being stigmatized. (Singh et. al., 2014)

### **Socio-Cultural and Family Factors Involved in Child Sexual Abuse**

In India, there are many significant barriers that must be overcome in order to address child abuse and neglect (CAN). The inability of families to provide their children with adequate shelter, healthcare, and nutrition is a major contributing factor to child abandonment in some cases. Low literacy rates are a result of poverty's adverse effects on access to education. CAN and CSA incidents are frequently underreported, which is in part because most child abuse is carried out by family members. (Deb & Mukherjee, 2009). Cultural attitudes towards parental rights are another reason for the low reported rates of CAN. There is a pervasive idea that children have no rights and are the property of their parents. (Deb & Mukherjee, 2009). In some cases of sexual abuse, children may also be held responsible for "enticing" the parent or other adult who abused them (Priyabadini, 2007); this is known as "blaming the victim." Children who report abuse risk having their accounts discounted because adult testimony frequently trumps that of children. Last but not least, because of their lower social status and sometimes treatment as a burden in some families, female children are particularly vulnerable to abuse and less likely to receive education, nutrition, and medical care (Chawla, 2004)

The practice of family secrecy is another cultural norm in India that hinders disclosure of and intervention into CAN, including child sexual abuse. Sharing private family matters is considered taboo upon, and the family is expected to conduct its business in private. Families must safeguard their standing in the community and their reputation in order to avoid embarrassment (Choudhury, 2018). Since children's identities are rooted in family identities, anything that might compromise the reputation of their family is sometimes kept a secret, even from other family members. (Priyabadini, 2007). The abuse can go on because of the

CSA's secrecy, which shields abusers rather than protecting the victims (Patnaik, 2007).

Children suffer greatly when parents or other adults fail to believe in or take action to protect them. It worsens their level of distress and keeps kids from receiving the critical mental health care they may require (Priyabadini, 2007).

(Behereet. al., 2013) the protective factors of community social control and collective efficacy must be present in order to prevent violence, including various forms of child maltreatment. These researchers counter that close relationships with others are not the only factor in group effectiveness and violence prevention. Organizational ties and other connections outside the community are also essential. Programs to prevent violence and child abuse should be designed in a way that strengthens the community's capacity to do so. Additionally, both governmental and non-governmental organization (NGO) efforts need to put a strong emphasis on public education campaigns that address different types of child sexual abuse and exploitation. Additionally, local residents, families, and schools must take responsibility for playing a significant role in the education and prevention efforts. Some methods that might help lower the occurrence of sexual abuse include:

- Moral and sex education should be made compulsory in schools and colleges.
- Pornographic literature and blue films should be banned.
- Sexual predators should be treated using psychological or medical techniques.
- Separate tribunals/courts should be constituted specifically for cases of sexual abuse. Penalties should be severe to discourage those who might be contemplating such an act.
- Awareness of sexual abuse could be created through mass media.
- School officials could learn about signs and symptoms of childhood sexual abuse for identification purposes. Further, specific action in reporting such cases should be outlined.

## **Prevalence of Child Sexual Abuse in India**

India's current population of 44.4% is made up of people under the age of 18, and 50% of them lack access to basic services like healthcare, nutrition, and education (Indian National Family Health Survey 2005-2006). Additionally, the large number of children in India makes them vulnerable to different types of child abuse (Carson et al., 2013). In particular, the issue of child sexual abuse (CSA) dates back to ancient India and is regarded as a pressing social issue (Iravani, 2011). Given the increased public awareness of child sex trafficking, policymakers now consider it to be a crucial human rights issue.

Although CSA is a major concern in India, there is an inadequate amount of research that has specially examined CSA in Indian children and the relevant cultural factors. The few existing studies indicate crimes against children in India (as in other parts of the world), are vastly underreported. Current estimates assert that between 18% and 50% of the country's children have experienced some form of CSA. Girls report higher incidences of CSA; whereas, boys report more physical and psychological abuse (Deb and Walsh, 2012). In one study that utilized in-depth interviews, 30% of men and 40% of women reported childhood sexual molestation which included genital contact (Iravani, 2011). Half of the perpetrators were family members, and in 80% of the cases other family members had knowledge of the abuse.

According to (Deb et. al., 2009) many children do not report being abused, and those who do run the risk of not being protected or taken seriously. Therefore, there is widespread agreement that child abuse, including CSA, is much more common than what is typically reported or acknowledged (Chawla, 2004; Deb and Mukherjee, 2009).

## **Policies and programs for children's protection in India**

New National Policy for Children (2013) establishes 18 years as the ceiling age of childhood and details many of the 1974 policy commitments, adding an affirmation of India's acceptance of the UN CRC, thus recognizing the UN Convention at policy level.

National Policy for Persons with Disabilities (2006) the policy recognizes that a majority of persons with disabilities can have a better quality of life if they have access to equal opportunities and effective rehabilitation measures.

Policy Framework for Children and AIDS in India (2007) this policy seeks to address needs of children affected by HIV/AIDS, by integrating services for them within the existing development and poverty reduction programs.

National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy (2007) under this policy, no project involving displacement of families can be undertaken without detailed assessment of social impact on lives of children.

National Urban Housing and Habitat Policy (2007) the policy seeks to promote sustainable development of habitat and services at affordable prices in the country and thereby provide shelter to children from disadvantaged families.

National Plan of Action for Children (2005) the action plan was adopted in response to the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children (2002). It lacked specific activities, and implementation fell short of most stated goals and targets. A new national plan is presently being drafted.

The legislative framework for children's rights is being strengthened with the formulations of new laws and amendments to existing laws. These include the Food Security Act (2013), The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012, Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act (2009), Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (2006), the Commissions for Protection of Child Rights Act (2005), Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection

of Children) Act 2000, amended in 2006, Right to Information Act (RTI) 2005, the Goa Children's (amendment) Act 2005, the Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act, 1986 (two notifications in 2006 & 2008), expanded the list of banned and hazardous processes and occupation) and the Information and Technology (Amendment) Act 2008. In addition, there are new legislations are on anvil, such as HIV/AIDS bill. The two most important legislations meant to exclusively protect children are the following; The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection) Act 2000 (amended in 2006) was a key national legislation. It established a framework for both children in need of care and protection and for children in conflict with the law. This law is presently being reviewed for substantive changes, and may be replaced by a new law. Harmonization is needed with other existing laws, such as the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act 2006, the Child Labour Prohibition and Regulation Act 1986 or the Right to Education Act 2009. Important contradictions exist among these laws, starting with the definition and age of the child. Conflict with personal laws should also be addressed, ensuring universal protection of children, regardless of the community they belong to.

Chinmayee (2012) The Government of India is implementing several programmes on social inclusion, gender sensitivity, child rights, participation and protection. The approach is based on UN CRC and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These programmes include:

- Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS),
- SABLA Scheme for Adolescent Girls, and Saksham project for adolescent boys;
- Rajiv Gandhi Crèche Scheme for children of working mothers,
- scheme of assistance to home for children (SishuGreh) to promote in-country adoption,
- Dhanalakshmi-conditional cash transfer schemes for girl child,
- Programme for Juvenile Justice,
- Child Line (24-hour toll-free telephone helpline (No.1098),

- Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS),
- Integrated program for street children,
- Ujjawala (scheme for prevention of trafficking and rescue, rehabilitation, reintegration and repatriation),
- Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan National programme for school education,
- National Rural Health Mission (NRHM),
- Mid Day Meal Scheme,
- Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM),
- Universal Immunization Programme (UIP)
- Integrated Management of Neonatal & Childhood illness (IMNCI)

### **Protection of Children from Sexual Offence Act, 2012**

Children's safety, security, and protection from sexual exploitation are the goals of the Protection of Children from the Sexual Offence (POCSO) Act, which was put into effect in 2012 Belur & Singh (2015). There was no specific law in the Indian Constitution prior to the POCSO Act of 2012. If something happened to a child, it would fall under IPC sections 375, 354 and 377 if it was discriminatory in nature and excluded a boy child. A 6-year-old girl who was experiencing sexual abuse in her home was the subject of "Jaaku Case," which was filed in the Delhi High Court in 1996. At this point, the government understood that, in accordance with the Indian Penal Code (IPC), the incident qualified as child sexual abuse rather than a rape, and that Section 375 only provided protection from rape, not child sexual abuse. The POCSO Act, 2012 is a comprehensive law that safeguards children's interests throughout the legal process by incorporating a child-friendly system for reporting, recording evidence, investigating, and expeditious trial of offences through designated Special Courts. It protects children from crimes such as sexual assault, sexual harassment, and pornography.

According to the (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2011) the most widely ratified treaty on children's rights in the world; it defines a child as any person under the age of eighteen without regard to gender.

Sirohi and Junaid (2017) observed that the laws were different in different countries. UK(child under 16 years) - Sexual Offences Act -2003, Germany ( child under 14 Years) German Criminal Code, Sweden ( child under 15 year) – Swedish penal Code, France ( child under 15 year) – French Criminal Code, Malaysia ( child under 16 year) – Malaysian Penal Code Child Act 2001, China ( child under 14 year) – Criminal Law of China -1997, Canada (child under 16 year) – Criminal Code of Canada, Brazil ( child under 14 year) – Brazilian Penal Code – 2009 and India ( child under 18 year) – POCSO act- 2012.

UNICEF (2018) conducted survey in the year 2005 to 2013 in which they found that 10% of Indian girls are facing sexual violence between the age of 10-14 years, and 30% during 15-19 years. A National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) (2017) report reveals that Maharashtra which is one of the most developed states in India has highest recorded cases of CSA in the year 2001to 2013. The POCSO Act 2012 did not use the term 'Rape' which is a more commonly used term and used the term Child Sexual Abuse instead. The POCSO Act covers aspects of CSA such as

- Penetrative sexual assault - (Section -3),
- Aggravated penetrative sexual assault - (Section -5),
- Sexual assault - (Section -7),
- Aggravated sexual assault (Section - 9),
- Sexual harassment (Section - 11),
- Abetment (Section -16),
- Punishment for attempt to commit an offence (Section – 18).

### **Provisions of POCSO Act – 2012**

- Age is defined as “child: as any person below the age of 18 years”.
- Act includes Penetrative sexual assault - (Section -3), Aggravated penetrative sexual assault - (Section -5), Sexual assault - (Section -7), Aggravated sexual assault (Section -9), Sexual harassment (Section – 11), Use of child for pornographic purposes (Section –13)
- Establishment of a special court for the speedy trial in each district (Section – 28), any offence committed under this is to be reported to the local police or the special juvenile police unit who has to report to the special court within 24 hours, police also is required to make special arrangements for the child’s care, also the trial should be completed as far as possible within a period of one year.
- Mandatory reporting of sexual offences (Section – 21)
- According to this act in case of a victim being female child, a female doctor will examine her ( Section – 27)Ensuring child’s comfort while investigating the crime, The statement of child to be recorded at child’s place or at child’s home (Section- 24)
- Maintaining dignity of the child and not disclosing child’s identity without permission of the special court ( Section – 33)

(Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2012)

## Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse:

**Figure 1**

*Control and Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA)*



*Singh, Parsekar and Nair (2014)*

To help and understand CSA, there is a need of awareness and educating people about types of CSA. Government of India must take initiatives for the child, family and needs to promote these things, child helpline which runs from last two decades but still citizen are not

aware about it, it should be promoted more often. POCSO act which is specially made to help and prevent the future of India is to be recognized by the Indian citizens, faith on judicial system is somewhere missing which needs a communication between the government bodies and the citizen. Training of health care professionals, counselors, police person is needed. Self defense training should be given to the child. Victims need a supportive environment not only from the family but from the society; child would be acceptable normally and not labeled by the society. (Singh et al., 2014)

(Kellogg et al., 2020) states that communication between the child and parents should be more often and the relationship should be of healthy kind where child does not feel fear to share anything. Children need emotional and psychosocial support from the family, friends and society. Sex education should be promoted.

Halder (2015) reaffirms that while technology benefits children, it also has negative aspects, with the majority of children becoming victims of cyberbullying and cybercrime. The prevalence of child pornography, child-targeted cybercrime, and online bullying are examples of child abuse. Perpetrators frequently come from the trust circle. In the age of the internet, it is important to educate people on how to use technology so that they can protect their children from threats online.

### **Law Enforcement (Role of Police Personnel)**

The police officer's primary duty and concern should always be the victim's physical and mental health. An officer's excessive response to the assault or his or her harsh treatment of the perpetrator may re-traumatize the victim and worsen the abuse's long-term psychological effects. The fact that most people who come into contact with child sexual abuse struggle greatly with their own strong emotions towards the abusers and what they did to the child. These emotions may get in the way of the officer's ability to conduct an impartial

investigation and handle cases if they become too intense (Elkind et al., 1977). As a result, the case might be dismissed if the evidence was obtained dishonestly or with an incomplete record. The victim's doctor was forced to embellish the truth. It may be the difference between removing the offender from the scene and allowing him to continue abusing the child's sexually if the police officer's reactions are properly understood, managed, and trained (Elkind et al., 1977).

Elkind (1977) conducted a study on the attitudes of police officers towards child sex abuse. The purpose of the study was to ascertain whether police officers' beliefs were consistent with their duties in child sexual abuse investigations, which include both caring for the victim and pursuing the perpetrator. The majority of the officers in a sample of 49 officers responded to the child victims with sensitivity and accepted the child's credibility, the author discovered. However, it can be seen from looking at the range of mean scale scores on the victim credibility and victim culpability measures that some officers did have unfavorable, possibly harmful, beliefs about victims. The author's suggestion in this study is, "officers who are found by their comments or actions to engage in victimblaming should be transferred to other units which demand less sensitivity" (Saunders, 1987).

(Saunders, 1987) reports "the lack of coordination and cooperation between and among responsible agencies is the source of the trouble when systems fail the victim of child sexual abuse." (Erenset., al 2020) points out "that most police and prosecutors have no training in non-damaging ways to interview children, lack understanding of the child's psychosexual stage of development, and tend to use adversary approaches appropriate for adults."

In his study, Fontana (1978) noted that this is unfortunately also true of child protective agencies: the staff members who look into sexual abuse cases typically lack the specialized knowledge, experience, and oversight necessary to deal with complex, challenging, and high-stakes child protective issues that have not yet been identified.

An early proponent of young victims and witnesses, DeFrancis (1969), identified a portion of the issue. Unfortunately, we still face the same issues today. The very real and pressing goal of criminal law—the immediate prosecution of the adult offender—complicates the situation. Police and prosecutors are under pressure to build a strong case against "degenerates" who prey on children, and they are occasionally the target of criticism for failing to do so. The logical result is that in the desire and haste to satisfy the clamor of public demands for retribution, what happens to children during the process seems of lesser importance or is lost sight of DeFrancis (1969),

According to McTear (1986) law enforcement officials have a duty to specify and establish safeguards to keep children safe from tactics developed to deal with adults but which cause serious harm when used on a child. This is not a simple task because it requires overcoming tried-and-true techniques that reflect accepted norms that have developed from dealing with witnesses and defendants who are adults. An investigation into child sexual abuse consists of several elements. The investigators' overall process includes the child interview as one component. Denver, Colorado defense lawyer Craig Truman claims that he will evaluate the police interview of the child as he gets ready for the trial. The interviews, in Be's opinion, are either "Beauty or a Beast." They are either fantastic or terrible, and poorly conducted interviews make the officer's lack of training clear. Truman responds, "Without medical evidence, it is the MOST important," when asked how significant the child interview is in the trial proceedings.

(Sunshine et al., 2003) also speaks to the "attitude" of law enforcement officials towards inquiries into child sexual abuse. They believe that many administrators, in general, do not recognize the importance of specialized training in the field of child sexual abuse.

Social services used to be in charge of carrying out these inquiries. Police departments did not start carrying out their duties in these situations until the late 1970s and early 1980s.

The crime of sexually abusing a child has lasting consequences, making it of utmost importance. According to (Sunshine & Tyler, 2003) law enforcement administrators are unaware of the volume of cases or the length of time required conducting thorough investigations into allegations of child sexual abuse. He claims that in his department, the officers calculate a case takes 27 hours. In San Bernardino County, there are 1500 officers, but only five of them are assigned to investigate child abuse cases. In contrast, the drug intervention force has 100 officers on staff. Tyler says that priority rather than budget is the explanation (Sunshine et al., 2003).

### **Highlights from the Review of Literature**

The review of literature provides key insights into the most important research studies and data related to the topic. It serves as a summary of the significant findings and contributes to a better understanding of the subject matter.

- Limited research has been conducted on law enforcement's awareness of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA).
- Gender, class, and age do not appear to influence the incidence of CSA.
- Police personnel have a good awareness of physical, behavioral, and emotional indicators of CSA.
- CSA encompasses not only physical abuse but also psychological, emotional, and sexual abuse.
- There has been a significant increase in reported cases of CSA in India, and children are considered easy targets for abuse and exploitation.
- Social media has had a significant impact on the rise in CSA cases.
- CSA victims experience both short-term and long-term impacts on their health and lives, as do their families and society at large.
- The Indian government has implemented various initiatives to prevent CSA.
- Reports indicate that boys face more sexual abuse than girls, and a significant proportion of girls who are victims of sexual abuse drop out of school, increasing their chances of entering prostitution.
- There is a lack of awareness among the general population regarding the Protection of Child from Sexual Offence (POCSO) Act, which is specifically designed for the safety and well-being of children.
- The POCSO Act has been a significant breakthrough in enforcing the Indian Penal Code to educate the public that sexual abuse is a punishable offense, and reporting

CSA is mandatory. The Act also provides for speedy justice for abused children or any child that requires medical and psychological intervention.

## **Rationale**

Child Abuse is one of the major problems faced by communities on various locations in India. According to national reports the rates of child abuse have tripled in four years since 2017. Abuse is a form of maltreatment toward the child by an adult which leaves unpleasant impressions and experiences on the child's mind, which in-turn hinders further mental and at times physical development.

The review of literature supports us with a lot of history of child sexual abuse, evidences of how child sexual abuse is pertinent not only in India but worldwide, even though after implementation of laws and strict structures to stop the crime of child sexual abuse and neglect, the nations are not progressing enough to achieve prevention and protection against child sexual abuse (UNCRC, 2011).

There has been relatively less researches in the Indian context on awareness and perceptions regarding CSA among police personnel, but with the available material it can be concluded that as first responders to crimes against women and children, it is crucial to gather this information as it can reduce the risk of CSA in communities and larger civil society to a large extent.

Therefore, this study has been undertaken to gauge the police personnel (females) awareness and perception on child sexual abuse.

## **Objectives**

### **Broad Objective**

- To map the Awareness and Perceptions among Police Personnel (Female) in Vadodara City regarding Child Sexual Abuse

### **Specific Objectives**

- To map awareness and perceptions of Police Personnel on CSA.
- Design an awareness module on CSA and POCSO Act, 2012

## **Theoretical Framework**

To support this research, a theory by Urie Bronfenbrenner, Ecological Systems Theory was selected. This theory explains how a child is interrelated to the entire complex layers in his/her environment and each layer has a significant effect on the child's overall development. Any change or conflict has an immediate ripple reaction to the other layers of the child's ecosystem. Hence, to trace a child's development, one must not only consider the first layer, rather study the impact through interactions of other larger environments.

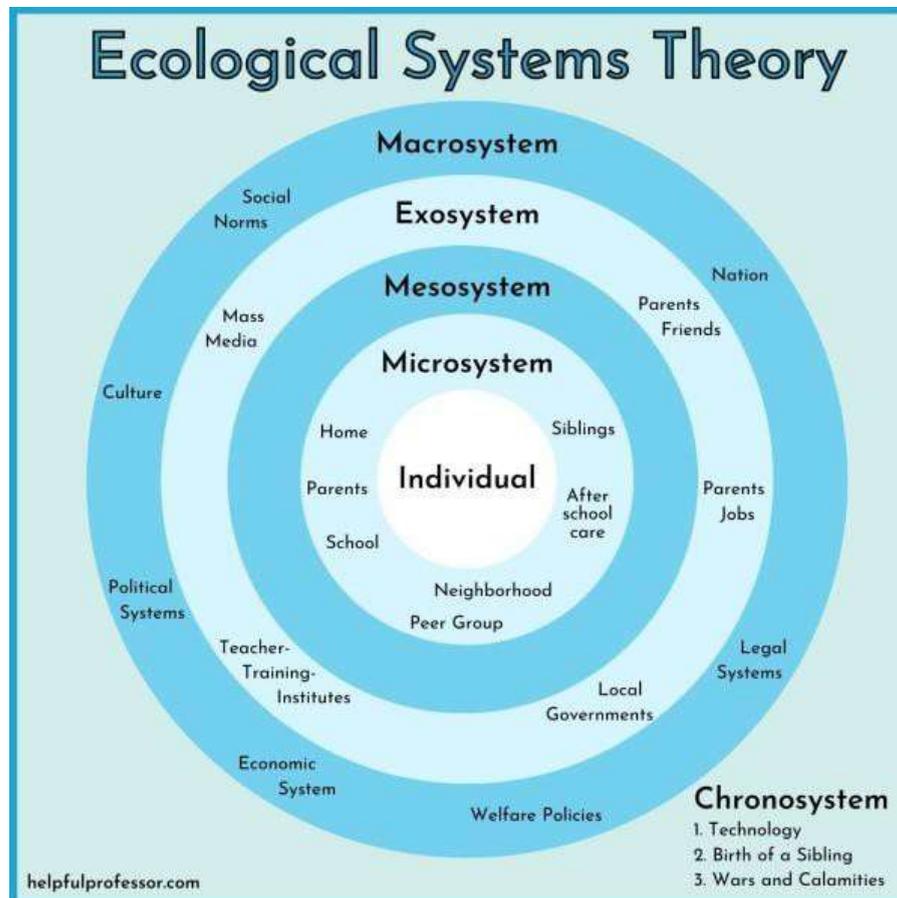
### **Ecological Systems Theory**

Bronfenbrenner stated that everything in a person's surroundings had an impact on their growth. This theory explains the influence of social environment on human development.

He categorized the surroundings of a person into five levels: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem.

**Figure 2**

*Theoretical Framework of Ecological Systems Theory*



*Drew, C (2023)*

An ecological perspective encourages one to consider the holistic environment for an individual. The ecological model draws heavily on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model of ecology of human development, suggesting that violence is the result of the complex interplay of individual, relationship, social, cultural and environmental factors, and that to understand and treat an individual, these factors must be considered in terms of their existence at each level, as well as their interaction across each level. The four levels surround the core of the model, that is, the individual. The first level is that of the microsystem, incorporating the immediate environments surrounding the individual and those people with

whom the individual interacts, for example, family members, school and peers. The second level is named the mesosystem, and incorporates the interactions that occur within the microsystem, so for example, relationships between the family and Children's Services, the family and support networks, or the family and the school. The third system, known as the exosystem describes the systems that do not directly affect the individual, but still influence the individual's life, for example, neighborhoods and school departments. Finally, the macrosystem refers to the larger social and cultural environment under which all the systems exist, so for example, social and political norms and the legal system.

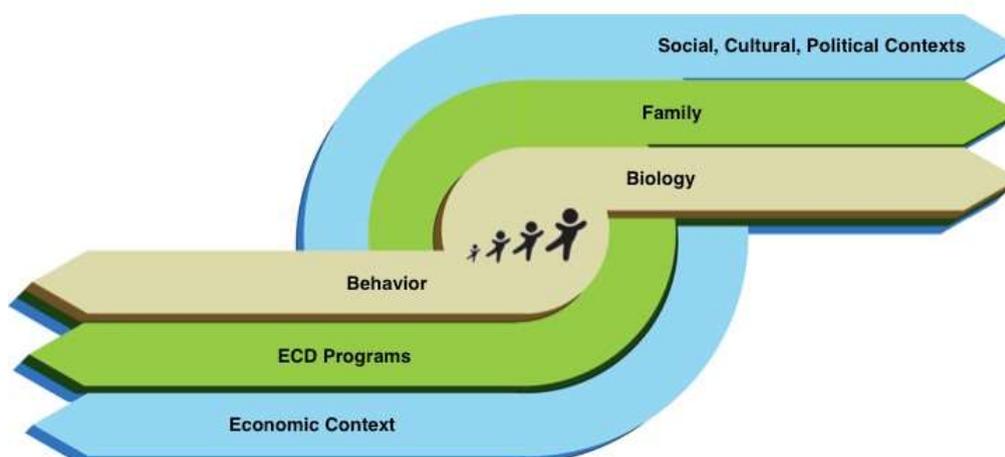
Every person tries to protect children at their level of the system because children are a part of the system. From the micro to the macro levels, where family, neighbors, peers, and the school level, as well as the community at large, police, and law enforcement are macro levels, all put their efforts towards the safety and well-being of children. However, research and data revealed that there is systemic mistrust. Everyone tries to protect their children within the system, but because of misunderstandings about laws, individuals hesitate to approach police, the legal system, and other forces. People are unaware of the CSA and POCSO Act 2012, a government initiative that covers most aspects and protects children. Very few people are prepared to file reports against the CSA due to a lack of trust.

### ***The Ecology of Peace***

The study is located in the Peace Ecology Framework (Kyrou, C. 2007) the framework describes a proposed theoretical framework that is intended to provide "better understanding of the inherent capacities of the environment to inform and sustain peace" situating the police personnel as an integral part of the Environment, the study intends to understand how the police personnel contributes to peace building within the families and communities at large.

### Figure 3

#### *Theoretical Framework of the Ecology of Peace Theory*



#### *The Ecology of peace: Formative Childhood and Peace Building (2012)*

The research topic is relevant to the theory that as violence increases in homes, schools, and communities, police officers play a crucial role in promoting peace and ensuring the safety of children and families. The process of handling reports, from registration to completion, is important for understanding how policy can improve society and prioritize the needs of children. It is essential to have a comprehensive understanding of the roles, issues, and training levels of various categories within the police community in order to effectively address the problem of violence and ensure the safety of children and families.

The Ecology of Peace is a conceptual framework for examining the various connections between peacebuilding and early childhood development. These constructs all have individual, family, and community expressions. The framework offers a theoretical and

empirical basis for comprehending the mediated and bi-directional relationship between the model's various levels.

The Peace Ecology Framework is a theoretical framework proposed by (Christos Kyrou in 2007) that aims to provide a better understanding of the relationship between environmental sustainability and peace. According to the framework, the health and well-being of the natural environment are inextricably linked to human security and peaceful relations.

Achieving sustainable peace, therefore, requires not only addressing the root causes of conflict but also addressing the underlying environmental issues that contribute to conflict.

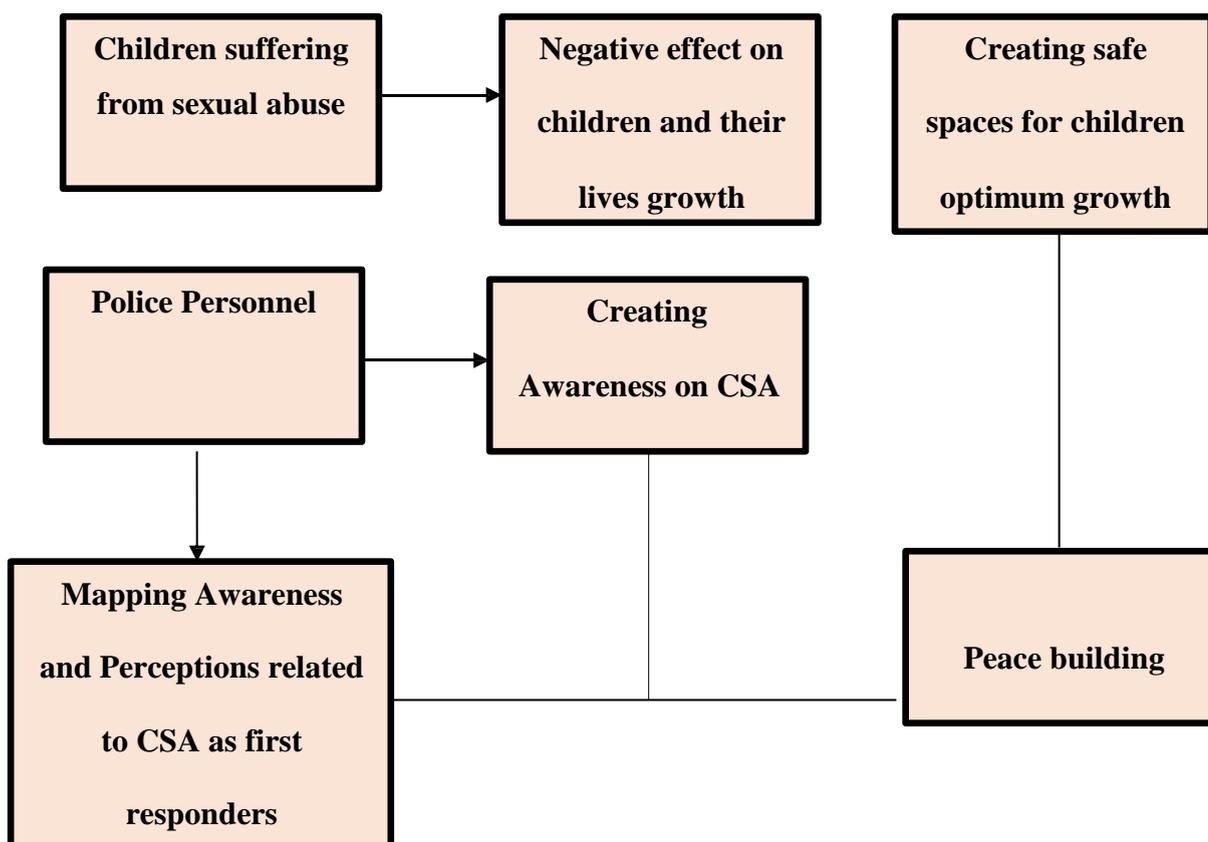
The framework emphasizes the importance of holistic thinking and cross-sectoral collaboration in addressing environmental and peace issues. It encourages stakeholders to work together to find solutions that promote sustainable development, environmental conservation, and peaceful relations. The framework also emphasizes the importance of recognizing and respecting the rights and knowledge of local communities and indigenous peoples in environmental decision-making processes.

## Conceptual Framework

Children are viewed as the centre of Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological system, which includes micro, meso, exo, and macro levels. There has been research on the effects of CSA awareness on an individual at the meso level—their teachers and school—and the micro level—their family. Because police officers are more conscious of the vulnerability of children who have experienced sexual offences and because they play a critical role in protecting children from such offences, it is also important to understand how they view and understand child sexual abuse (which falls under the macro level).

**Figure 4**

*Conceptual Framework*



This study will ascertain how much knowledge and awareness they currently have regarding CSA in order to improve understanding of CSA and POCSO Act 2012 among them.

As a result, our society may take significant steps to establish a place where children can feel protected.

The conceptual framework of the study was designed to provide a clear understanding of the research and its connection with the theoretical framework. In India, children are at high risk of experiencing CSA, which can have detrimental effects on their lives. Therefore, it is essential for first responders, such as police personnel, to be aware of the issue and for awareness to be raised among them. This can help in creating a safer and better environment for children to grow and flourish.

## **Methodology**

The chapter outlines the methods that were used in collecting the data and analysis. This includes research design, tool of the study, sample size and distribution, content validation of tool, procedure of data collection, procedure of data analysis and ethical considerations.

### **Research Design**

A mixed-methods study was used, which included both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The survey tools were used to map the awareness and perception of police personnel (Women) in Vadodara city regarding Child Sexual Abuse. The semi structured interviews were carried out to know about their perceptions and Understanding about Child Sexual Abuse.

### **Tools for Data Collection**

The survey tool utilized for data collection in the research was adopted from the Child Sexual Abuse: Data Collection tool developed by Praharaj et al. (2017) which was originally used by Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation, New Delhi.

The tool was translated into Gujarati language (Shah, 2020). Both the versions were kept ready; all participants preferred the Gujarati language tool.

The tool is a self-reporting questionnaire and covers the following areas:

- Background information of the respondents,
- Awareness on CSA,

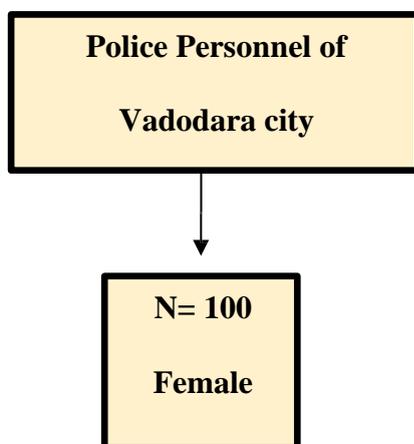
- Perceptions on CSA,
- Any prior personal experience of sexual abuse below the age of 18 years faced by the respondent.

### **Domains of Semi Structured Interview Schedule**

1. Forms of abuse
2. Perpetrators of abuse
3. Societal perceptions of abuse
4. Educational interventions for prevention of abuse
5. Advocacy and awareness generation in communities
6. Role of communities
7. Challenges encountered

### **Sample**

- The samples was selected without any discrimination on the basis of caste, religion, SES, age
- Purposive sampling technique was used.

**Figure 5***Sample Size***Sample Distribution**

The distribution of sample size for the quantitative and qualitative inquiry are depicted in the figure below.

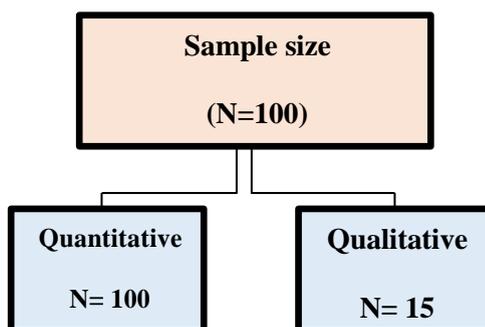
**Figure 6***Sample Size Distribution.*

Figure 2 represents the sample distribution. The total sample size was 100 women Police Personnel of Vadodara City. 100 participants were administered the questionnaire and 15 participants among them who gave their consent were personally interviewed.

## Sample Location

**Figure 7**

*Locations for the Data Collection*

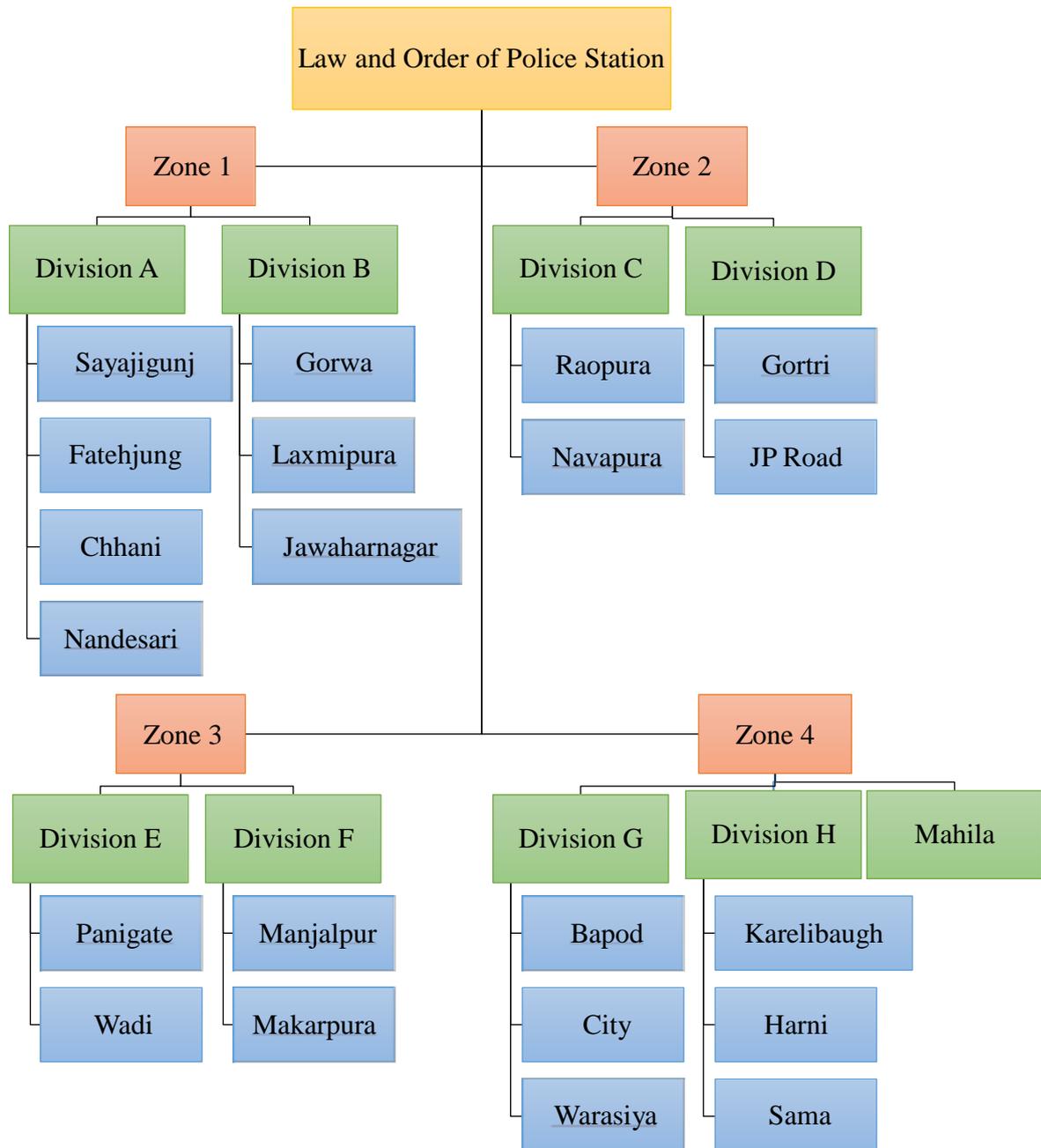


Figure 7 depicts the structure of the Police Stations in Vadodara City. The city has 22 police stations in total, grouped into four zones and eight divisions from A to H, each having a different number of police stations.

### **Content Validation of Tool**

The tool underwent a thorough validation process conducted by Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP) of SHE Team Vadodara, Radhika Bharai, and PSI Vaishali Parmar. Following this, a permission letter was submitted by Radhika Bharai, the ACP of the SHE Team, to ensure access to each police station. The tool's design and its alignment with the study's objectives were highly appreciated by the authorities in Police Bhavan Head Office during the approval process, resulting in no further adjustments.

### **Procedure for Data Collection**

Researchers visited each police station to collect data, and the Police Inspector sir of each station granted permission. After reading the study's purpose on the consent form, participants filled out the forms voluntarily. The participant was given either English or a Gujarati questionnaire depending on the language they chose. All the participants preferred the Gujarati version. Total of 100 questionnaires were fulfilled by female Vadodara City police officers. And out of those, 15 interviews were conducted, recorded on the researcher's devices and later transcribed.

The data was collected from each Division of Vadodara City which is divided into 4 zones and Zones are further divided into 8 divisions: A,B, C, D, E, F, G, H having 22 Police Stations under it

### **Procedure for Data Analysis**

The Data collected through questionnaire and interview was analyzed separately. The responses collected through questionnaires were computed into frequencies and graphically represented along with interpretation. For the qualitative data analysis, the interviews were transcribed and trends and patterns of responses were ascertained.

### **Ethical Considerations**

- A consent form from each participant was taken before conducting the study.
- No harm was caused to them while conducting the study.
- Participation in the study was purely voluntary.
- Participants were free to withdraw from the study at any point.
- Participant data was kept strictly confidential and used only for the purpose of research.
- Appropriate permissions was sought at all levels as required for successful conduct of the study.
- The study was approved by the Institutional Ethics Committee for Human Research (IECHR) at the Faculty of Family and Community Sciences, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Vadodara. The ethics clearance number for this study is IECHR/FCSc/M.Sc./2022/47.

## **Results and Discussion**

This chapter discussed the results of this study. The results are arranged as per the study objectives.

### **Objectives of the study:**

- To map the Awareness and Perceptions among Police Personnel in Vadodara City regarding Child Sexual Abuse

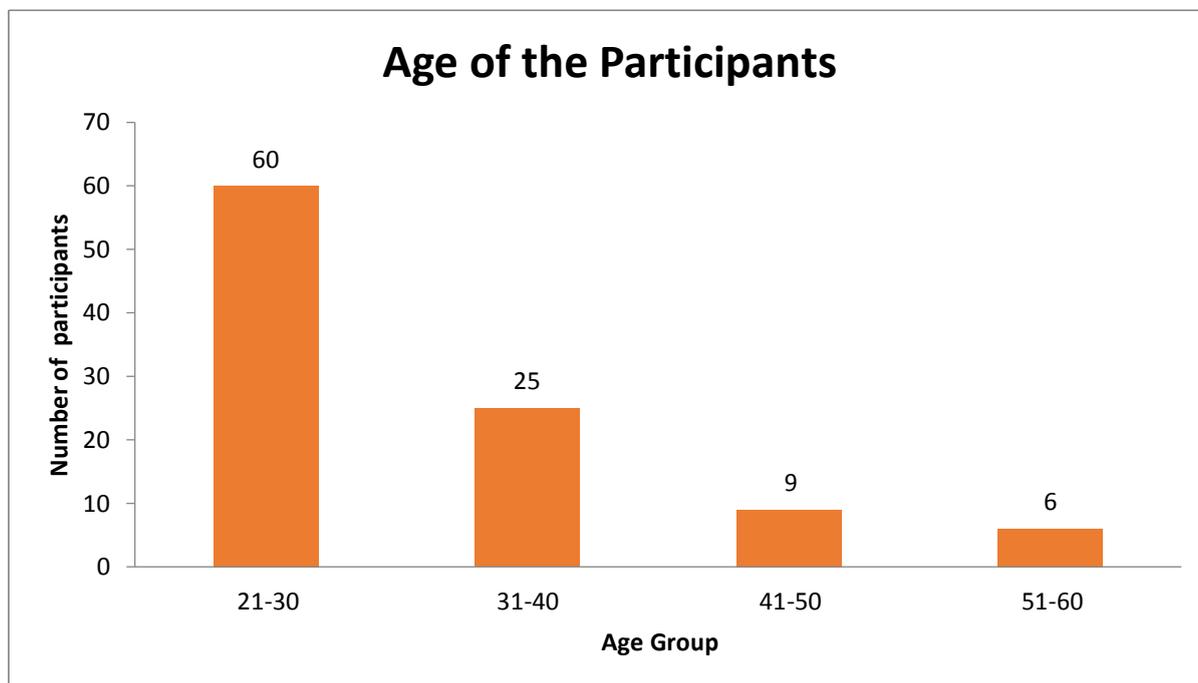
### **Quantitative Results**

The results have been presented and described under the following in sub sections-

1. Background Characteristics
2. Awareness on Child Sexual Abuse
3. Perceptions on Child Sexual Abuse
4. Experience of Sexual Abuse during childhood

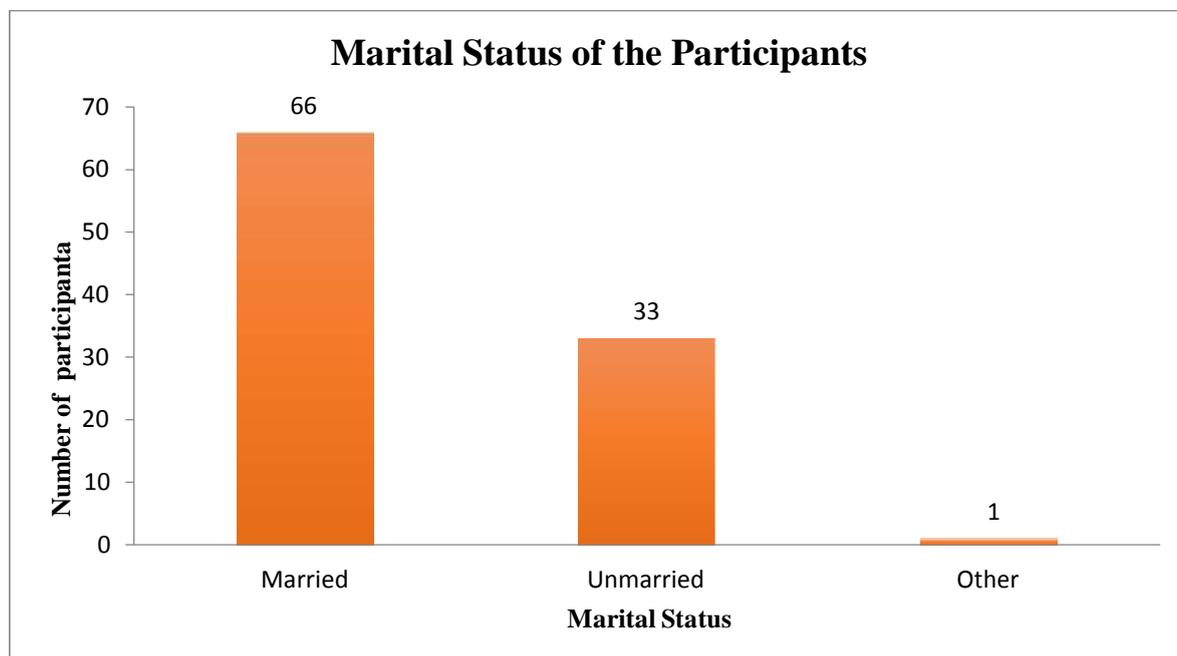
### **Demographic Details**

Questions about name, age, sex, marital status, and education level were included in the demographic information. There were 100 female participants in total. All of the participants were Vadodara City Police officers.

**Figure 8***Age Group*

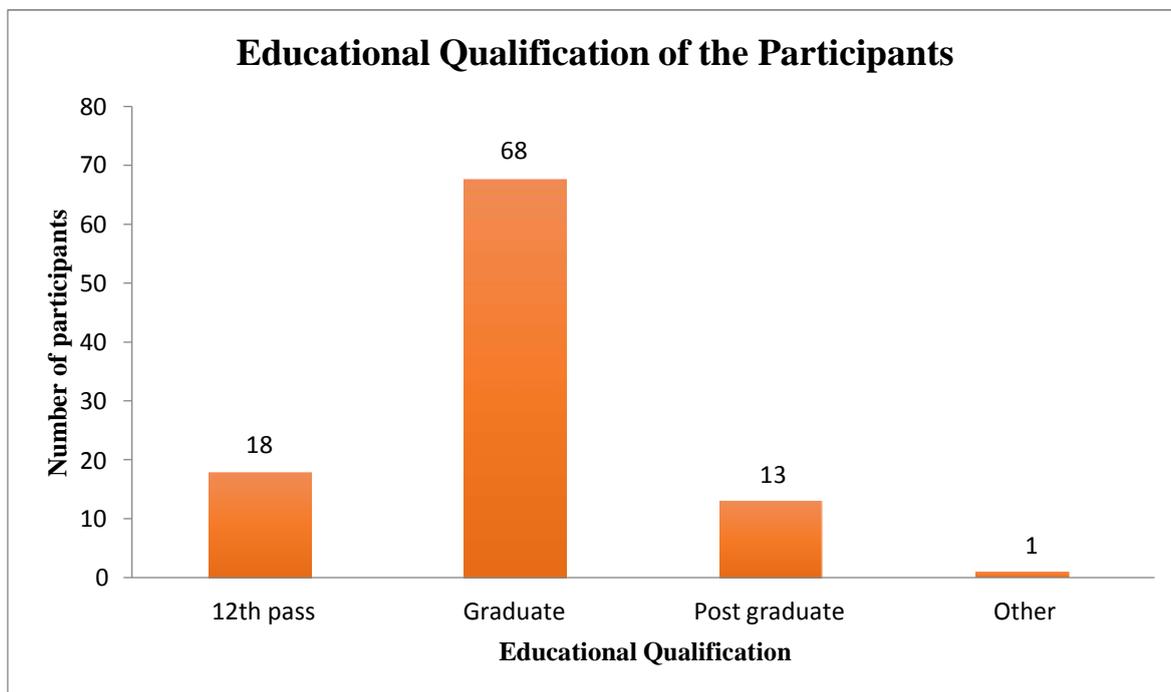
N= 100

Figure 8, represents the Age group of the participants. The majority of participants (60%) were between the age ranges from 21-30, followed by (25%), who were between the age group of 31-40, (9 %) of respondents were between their 40's. Lastly, (6 %) of respondents were between the ages of 51-60. which indicates that the majority of police officers were in their 20s and were young.

**Figure 9***Marital Status*

N= 100

Figure 9 shows the marital status of the participants, out of 100 participants, though majority of the participants were between the age of 20-30, 66 were married, 33 were unmarried, and 1 was a widow

**Figure 10***Educational Qualification*

N= 100

Figure 10 describes the educational qualification of the participants. 68 participants were undergraduate students, 13 were postgraduate students, 18 had completed the 12th grade, and only 1 had graduated but had taken a certification course. This indicates that the majority of police officers hold bachelor's degrees, while fewer hold masters degrees. A significant number of them have registered for computer exams in addition to their work responsibilities.

## Awareness on Child Sexual Abuse

This portion covers awareness about child sexual abuse among police personnel (females).

**Figure 11**

*Awareness about Children Subjected to Sexual Abuse*

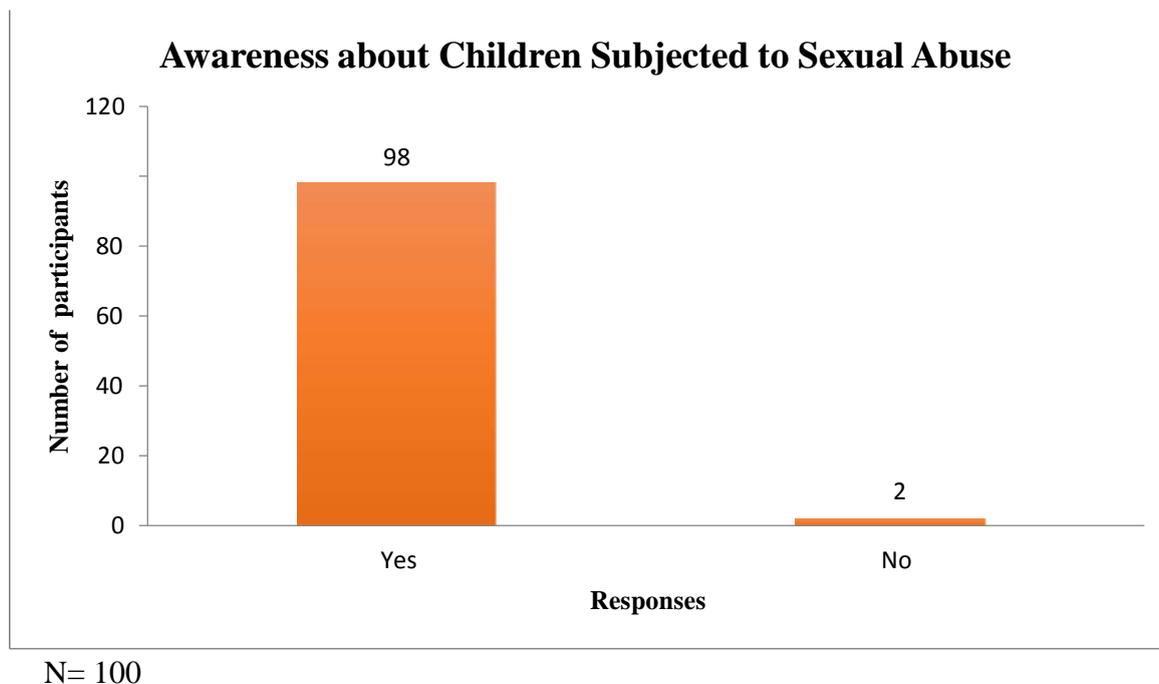
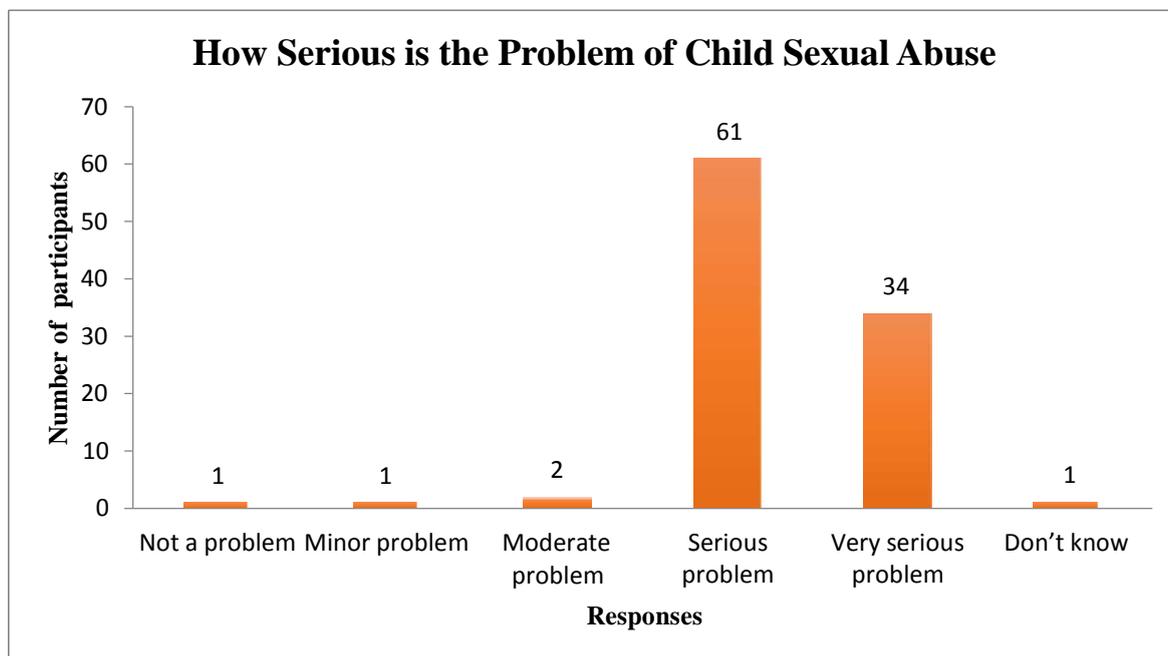


Figure 11 highlights the participants' awareness about children subjected to sexual abuse. 98% of participants fully agreed that children experience various forms of sexual abuse. Some of the participants who agreed that sexual abuse of children occurs also mentioned some common types of child abuse, such as bed touching, rape, child labor, child trafficking, kidnapping, harassment, etc. Only 2% of respondents dispute the idea that different types of sexual abuse are not committed against children.

**Figure 12**

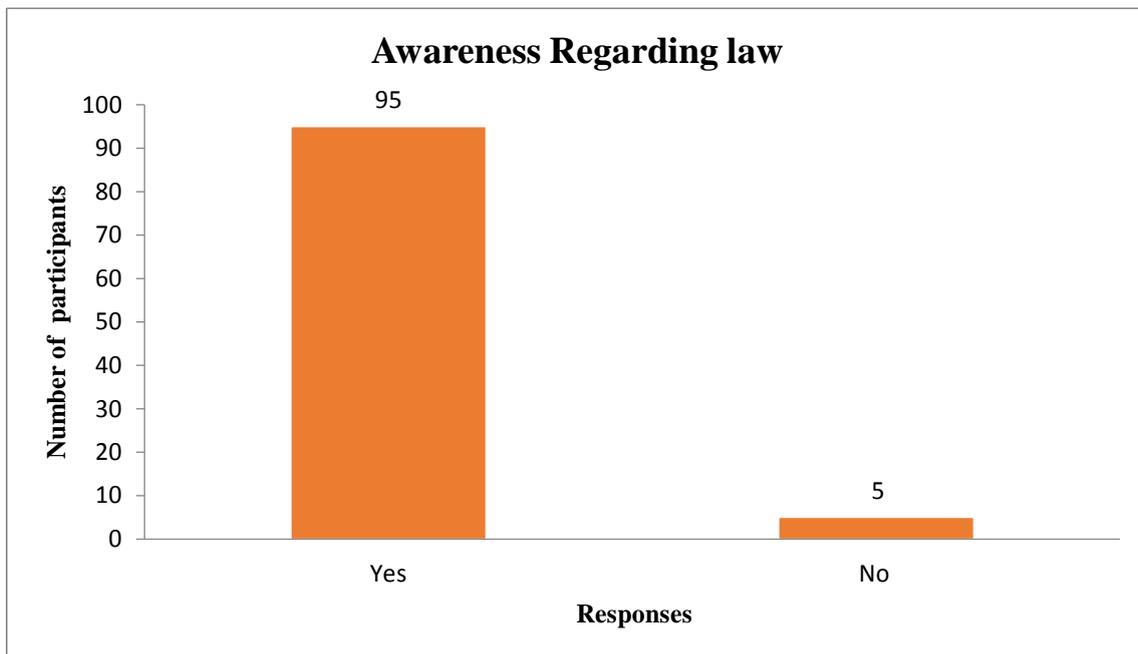
*How Serious is the Problem of Child Sexual Abuse*



N= 100

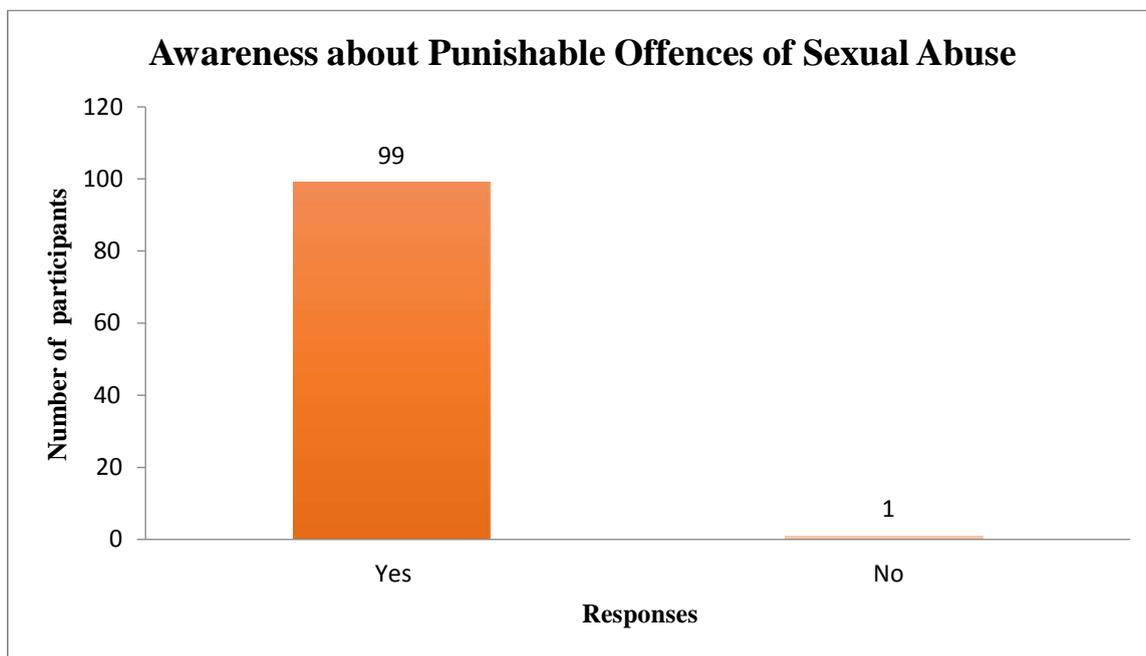
Figure 12 represents the opinion of police personnel on the seriousness of child sexual abuse as a problem, out of 100 participants, 34 stated that CSA is a very serious problem, 61 participants stated that CSA is a serious problem, 2 participants rated CSA as a moderate issue, only 1 participant assigned CSA to be a minor problem, 1 responded as don't know and 1 participant responded that CSA is not a problem in India.

Overall, majority of participants considered the problem of CSA as serious.

**Figure 13***Awareness Regarding Law*

N= 100

Figure 13 illustrates how much participants were aware about the law prohibiting child sexual abuse. 95% participants reported that they were aware of the existence of a law protecting children from CSA and 5% of participants were unaware of it. The POCSO Act was also mentioned by some who tick yes in the answer.

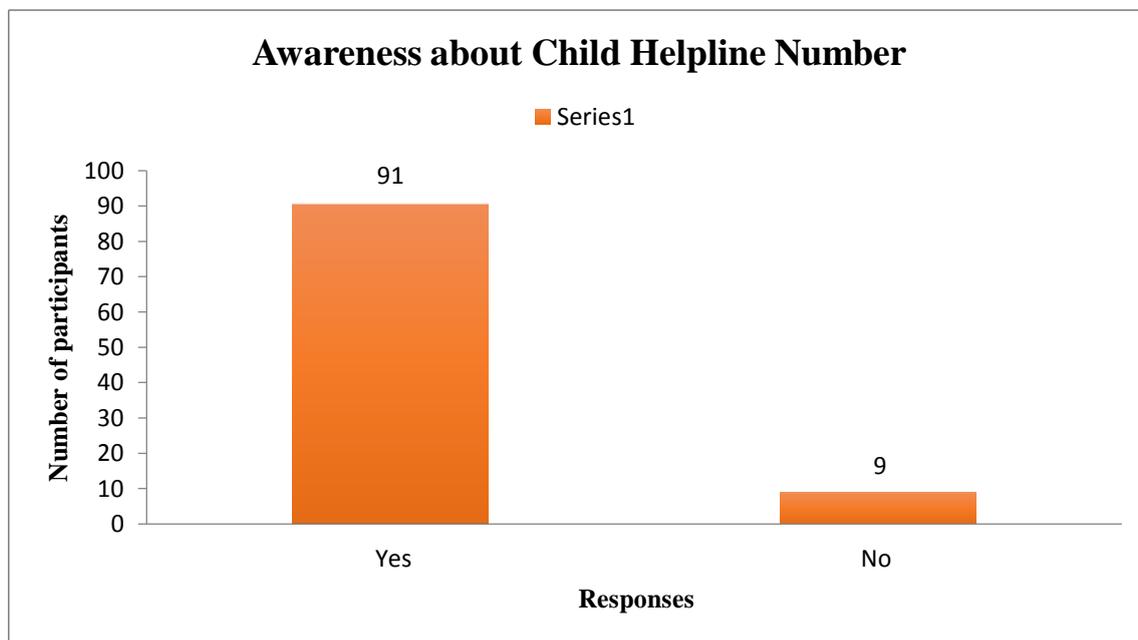
**Figure 14***Awareness about Punishable Offences of Sexual Abuse*

N= 100

Figure 14 demonstrates awareness about punishable offence for child sexual abuse. 99% of participants were aware about punishable offences of sexual abuse and 1% of participants out of 100 in total were unaware of the offences of child sexual abuse that are punishable by law. some of them have also mentioned about the acts like Juvenile Justice Act, by saying “*aa Vishay mate to Juvenile justice act pen che ne.*” while one mentioned about Child Labor Act by saying “*baljatiyeshoshan mate Child Labor Act pan che ne eh pan aa ma j aayo ne.*”

**Figure 15**

*Awareness about Child Helpline Number*



N= 100

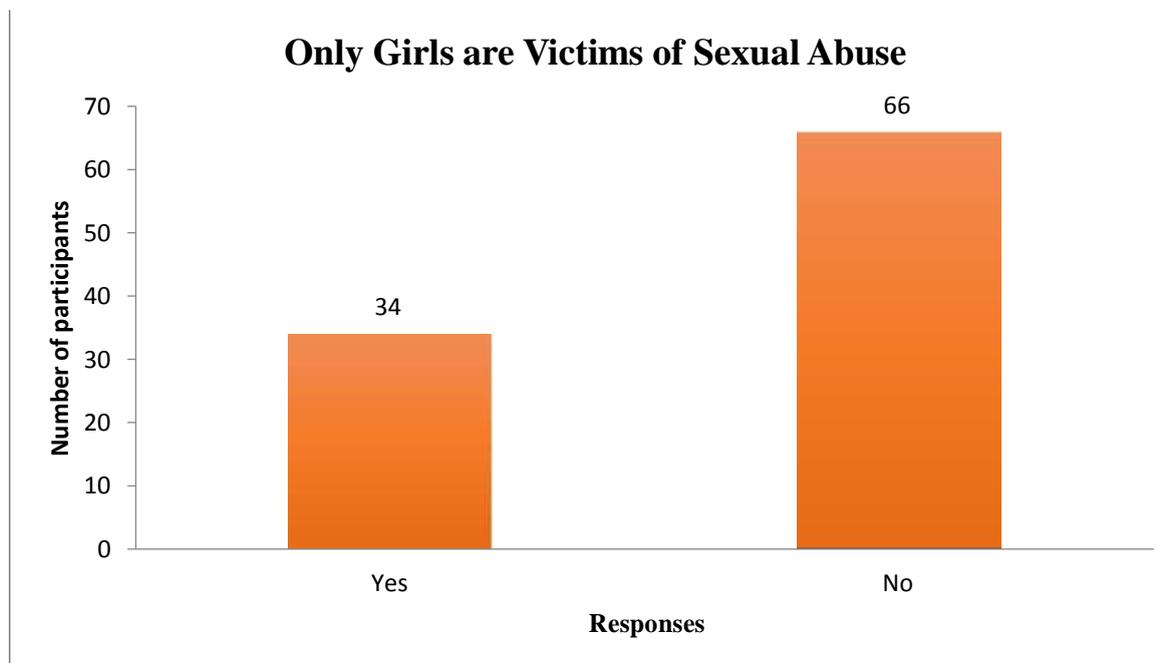
Figure 15 shows participants awareness regarding child helpline number. 91% of participants knew the child helpline number (1098) and 9 of them had also written it in the box. Many of them recalled it as well.

## Perceptions on Child Sexual Abuse

This portion covers the perceptions of participants about Child Sexual Abuse.

**Figure 16**

*Only Girls are Victims of Sexual Abuse*

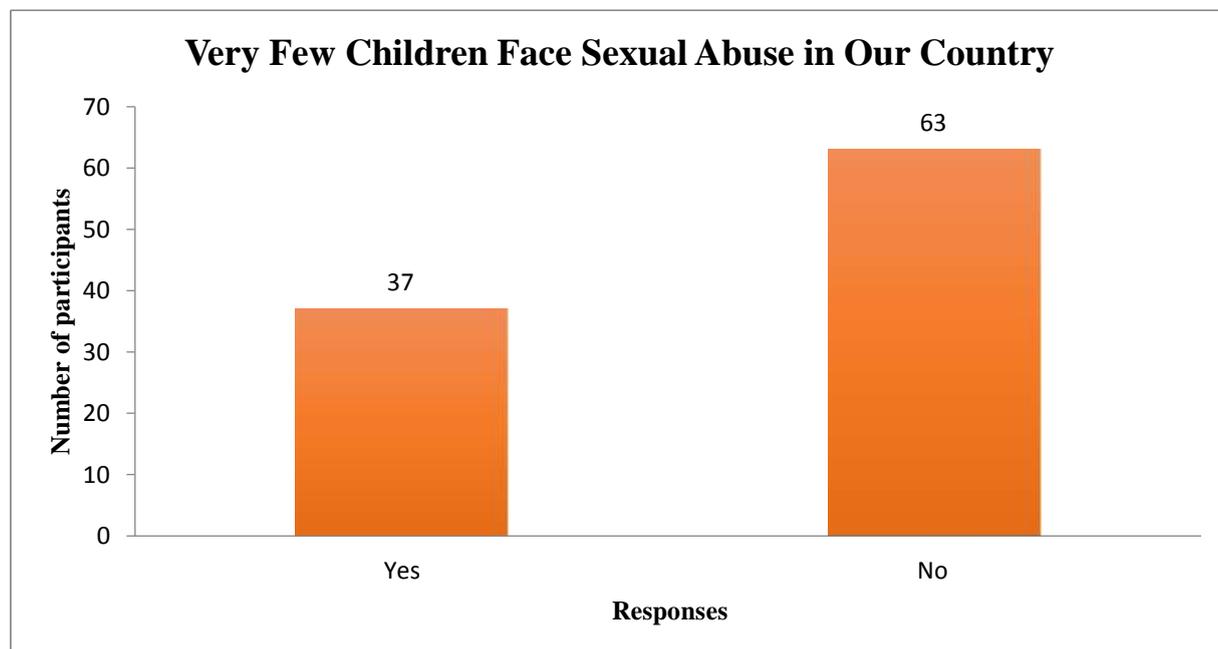


N= 100

Figure 16 demonstrates how much participants agreed to the statement that only girls are victims of CSA. (66) agreed that girls are the only ones who experience sexual abuse. By saying that "*chokariyowadharebaljatiye nu shoshan bane che.*" Fewer participants (34) disagreed and said "no" to the idea and said that "*ghani war chokrao pan ana shikar thae che khalichokrio j eklinathithati.*"

**Figure 17**

*Very Few Children Face Sexual Abuse in Our Country*

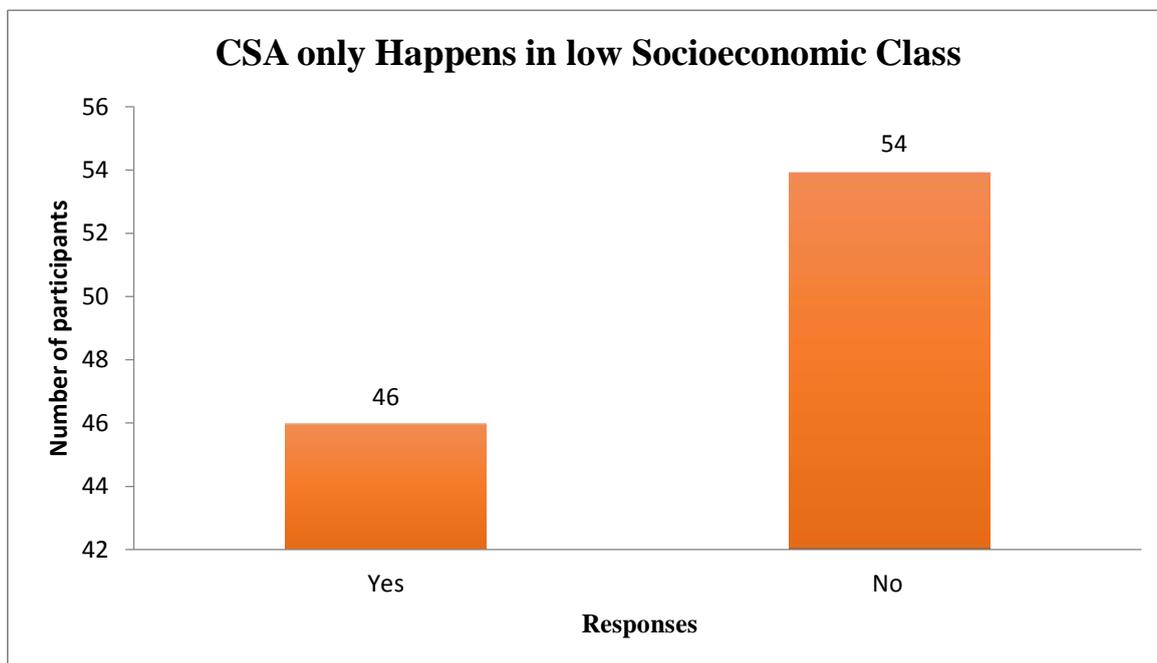


N= 100

Figure 17 demonstrates how much participants agreed to the statement that very few children faces sexual abuse in our county. 63 out of 100 participants agreed that very few children in our country experience sexual abuse. Some said the “*naapnadesh ma to bahu ocha bal jatiye shoshan hoe che.*” and 37 participants disagreed with the statement.

**Figure 18**

*Sexual Abuse of Children only Happens in Low Socio-Economic Class*

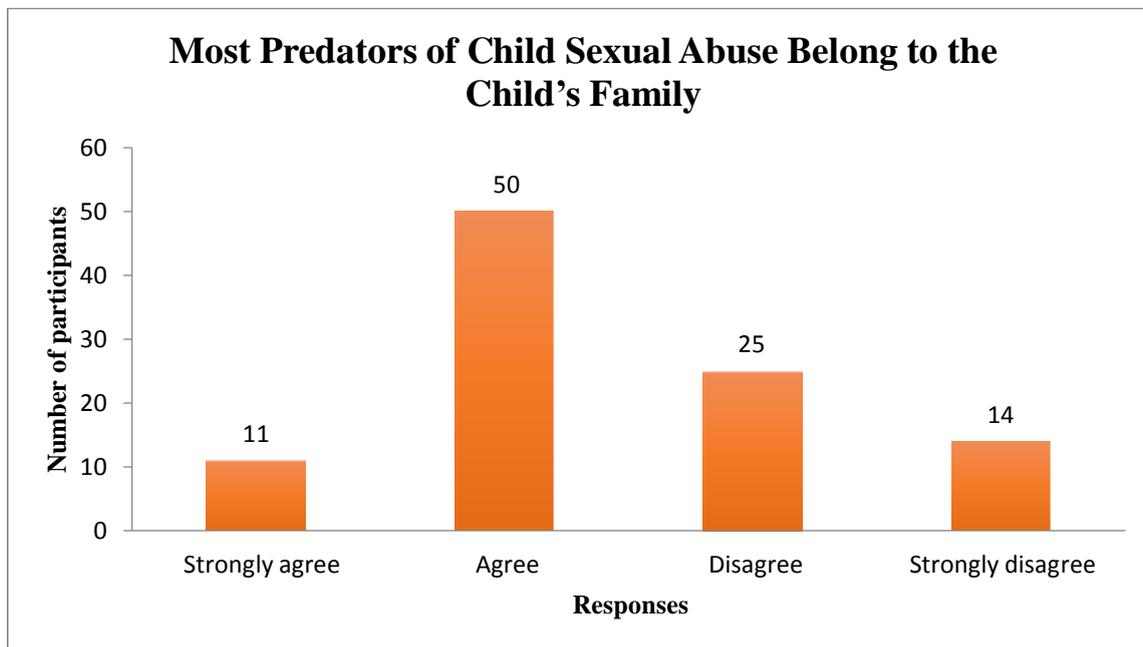


N= 100

Figure 18 demonstrates how much participants agreed to the statement that CSA only happens in low socio economic class. Majority of participants (54%) agreed that, only children from low-income backgrounds suffer sexual abuse. While (46%) stated that any child can be the victim of sexual abuse.

**Figure 19**

*Most Predators of Child Sexual Abuse Belong to the Child's Family*



N= 100

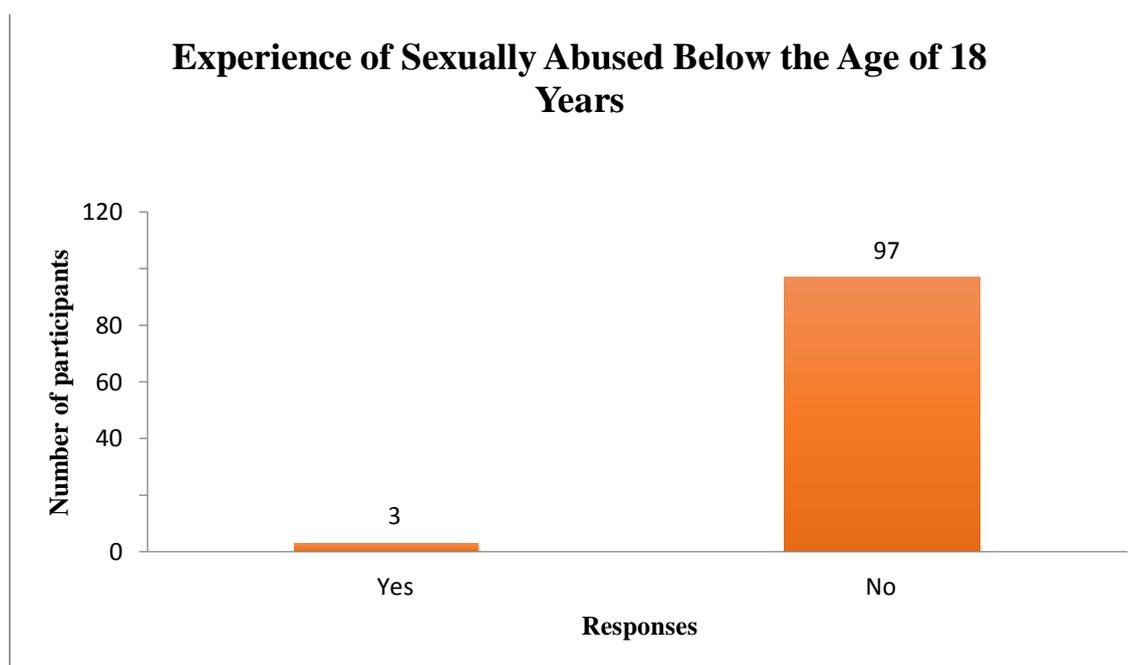
Figure 19 demonstrates how much participants agreed to the statement that most predators of child sexual abuse belong to the child's family. 50% of participants agreed, 25% disagreed, 14% strongly disagreed and 11% participants strongly agreed with the statement that most child sexual abuse predators are members of the child's family.

### Experience of Sexual Abuse during Childhood

This section discusses the participants' experiences with childhood sexual abuse, including with whom they shared it with and whether or not any predators were subjected to legal action.

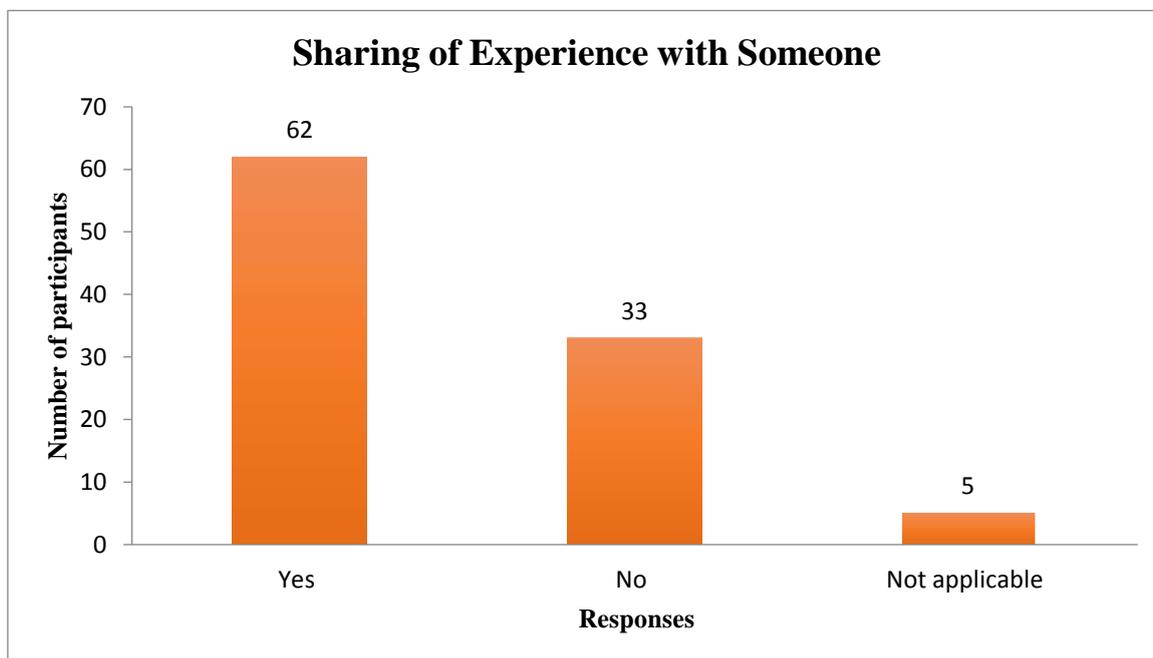
**Figure 20**

*Experience of sexually Abused Below the Age of 18 years*



N= 100

Figure 20 describes about participants experience of sexual abused below the age of 18 years. Only 3 out of 100 participants reported that they were sexually abused before the age of 18. One of the participant said that *“jyare hu school ma jati hati tiyarea mara gharma darroj ek pandit aavtahata eh pandite mara saatheshoshankriyohatumari private jagiyaone touch kriyuhatu. Jyra pen eh mara ghareavta ta tiyre hu chupijatiti mane aauna khabar hati k koi aavuaapnasaathekere to apn ne mota ne kevujoie.”* And 97% of people did not experience any form of sexual abuse during their childhood.

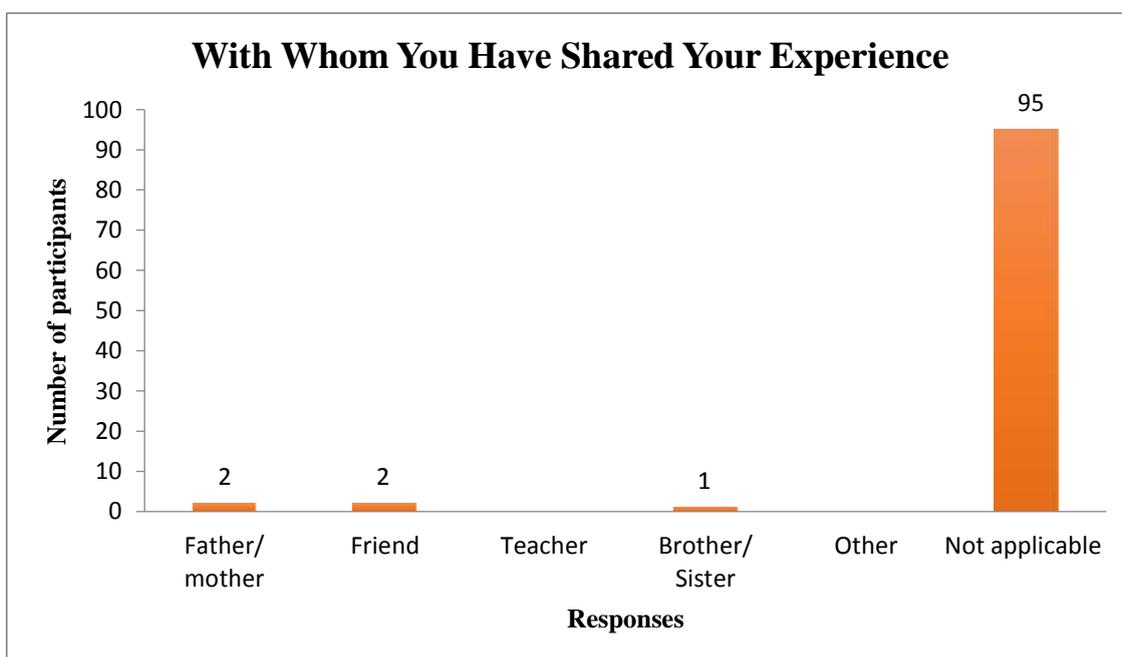
**Figure 21***Sharing of Experience with Someone*

N= 100

Figure 21 illustrates about sharing the experience of sexual abused with someone. Out of 100 participants, 62 people shared their experiences with others, 33 people did not share their experiences, and 5 people did not answer because the question was not relevant to them. The people who answered "yes" to the question assumed that it was asking if they had ever shared experiences they had seen or heard with someone else.

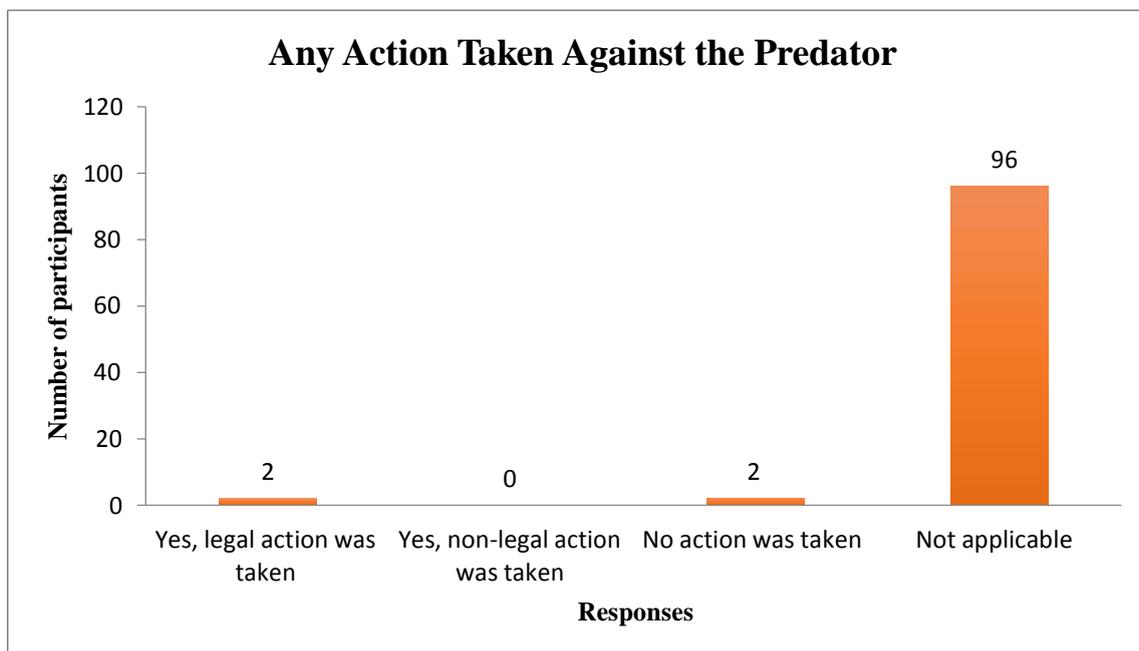
**Figure 22**

*With Whom You Have Shared your Experience*



N= 100

Figure 22 describe about with whom participants have shared their experience with. The majority of the participants did not have any experience with sexual abuse as children, so the question did not apply to them. While 3 participants shared it to their parents, 2 to friends and 1 to sibling.

**Figure 23***Any Action Taken Against the Predator*

N= 100

Figure 23 demonstrate the actions taken against predators. For the majority of participants, which is 96, the question was not applicable for them, while 2 participants mentioned that they had taken legal action against the predator, and 2 participants said that no action had been taken. In other words, only a small percentage of participants provided information on the actions taken against the predator, with most of them not responding to the question.

### **Summary of Quantitative Results**

Summary of the Results obtained from the self-reflective questionnaire:

- The results shows that majority of the participants were married and under the age of 30 years.
- The results found that 68% of participants were graduated and have their degrees.
- Participants were highly aware about children subjected to sexual abuse.
- Majority (61%) of the participants considered CSA as a serious problem.
- All the participants except (5%) were unaware about laws regarding CSA.
- Only 1% of participants were not aware about punishable offences of CSA.
- Majority of the participants were aware about child helpline number.
- Most participants (66%) strongly disagree with the statement that only girls are the victims of CSA.
- 54% out of 100 participants disagreed with the statement that only children from low socio economic background become the victims of CSA.
- 50% participants agreed that most common predators of CSA belong to the child's family.
- Majority of the participants did not experience any form of abuse during their childhood.

## **Results of Semi Structured Interviews**

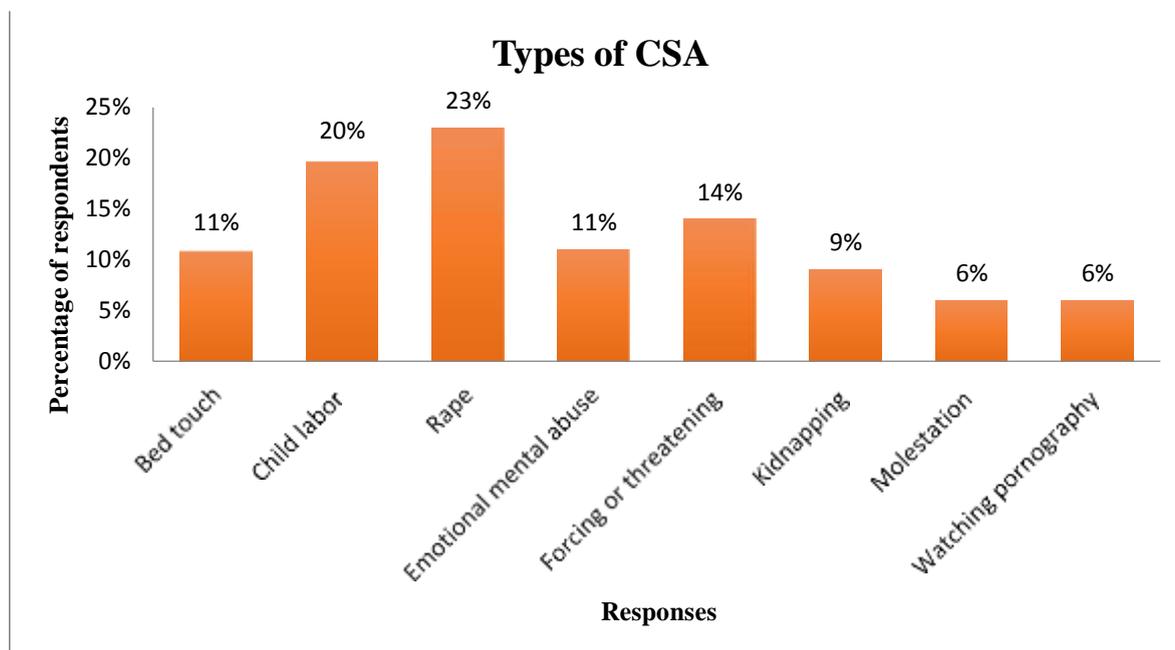
The results of interviews are further categorized into:

1. Forms of abuse
2. Age group of the vulnerable children
3. Societal perceptions of abuse
4. Perpetrators of abuse
5. Role of communities
6. Educational interventions for prevention of abuse
7. CSA prevention as a part of school curriculum
8. Advocacy and awareness generation in communities
9. Challenges encountered

## Forms of Abuse

**Figure 24**

*Types of CSA*



N=15

Figure 24 depicted the different types of CSA that the participants are aware of. Their responses fell into the general categories shown in the graph above. The researcher had the chance to interact with the participants during the data collection process, and it was noted that not all of them had the proper vocabulary to describe the various forms of CSA. Rape and child labour were cited by the majority of participants as the most frequently encountered CSAs.

One participant responded “*Jemke koi naanubadak hoe che tenenaaniumarathi koi jagiyajemkelari upper kaamkarave, pachiemnaghar ma koi saga walatrasaapeanejorjabarjastikare k physically shoshankar.*”

Here, the participant claimed that the majority of child abuse that occurs is either forcing a child to work instead of sending them to school or physically abusing or raping children, especially girls.

A participant stated that other forms of child abuse include pressuring, threatening, or emotionally abusing children, as well as touching them in their private areas.

*"Jaite satamani badakane badkini balatkar, badakne nagamti jagiya eh adakvu, lalachaapinejatiyesatamnikarvi, dabanaapi ne enetrasaapvu."*

And other examples of child sexual abuse that have been documented include kidnapping, molesting, and watching porn with children.

*"Badak nu apharan, jatiyesatamni, k rape jeva shoshan kare athva Alapdathae, chocholate aapi kharb kaam karae k kharab wastu dekhade"*

Large number of participants responded that child labor is the most common type of CSA. Although child labour is perceived to be the precursor and ground for child sexual abuse.

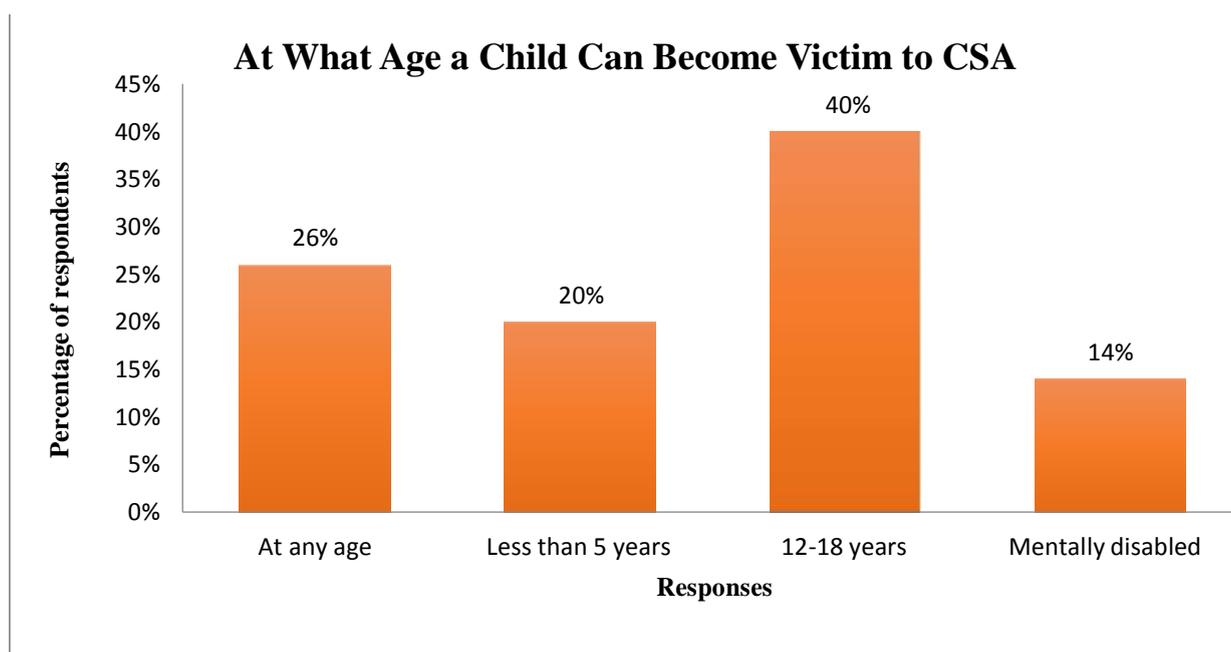
(The World Health Organization, 2006) defines CSA as: "The involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent, or that violate the laws or social taboos of society. Child sexual abuse is evidenced by this activity between a child and an adult or another child who by age or development is in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power, the activity being intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person. This may include but is not limited to: the inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity; the exploitative use of child in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices; the exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials."

This indicates that participants did have some knowledge of various forms of child sexual abuse and all participants had a different, but related perspective on it.

### Age Group of the Children

**Figure 25**

*At what Age a Child can Become Victim to CSA*



N= 15

Figure 25 depicts the approximate age at which a child is most likely to experience sexual abuse. The participants suggested the age range for the question; the researcher did not set the age category in advance. According to 26% of respondents, a child can experience sexual abuse at any age. 20% of participants said that a child can experience sexual abuse before the age of five.

Participant response *“Emni koi umar nahi hoti kamke amara paase to eva pan case aave che k 3 k 4 warasna hoe che chokra jemne kasu khabar nathipadti eh pen emna bhog banela hoe che.”*

Similar to quantitative data, the results indicate that the majority of people in India view CSA as a serious issue. The implication of this is that a child can be vulnerable to CSA at any age. One-fourth of the participants (14%) also brought up the possibility that CSA can affect children who are physically or mentally disabled. *"Je badak mansik rite kamzor hoe, je badak teni umar karta hard kaam kare te badak eh baljatiye shoshan thi pidai shake che."* one participant concluded her statement.

This means that a child who is physically or mentally disabled and whose life depends on his or her caretaker can still become a victim of CSA.

Finally, children between the ages of 12 and 18 are the most likely to experience CSA. The majority of participants (40%) stated that children between the ages of 12 and 18 are the most vulnerable group.

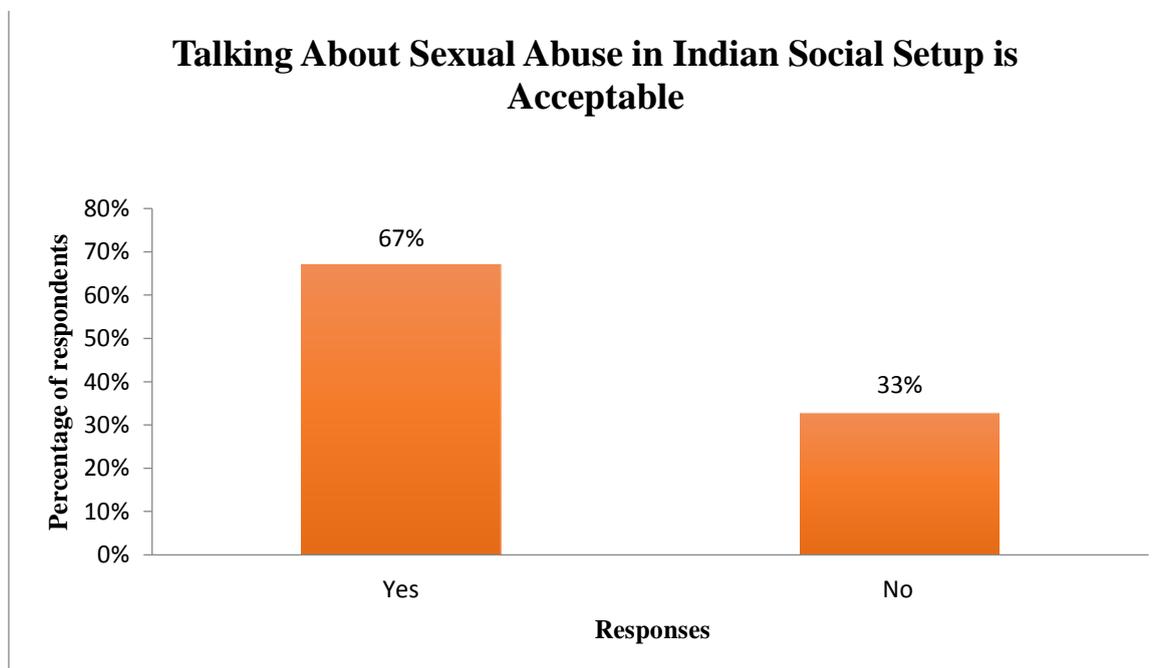
*"Amara mate 12 wars thi 18 waras ni umar eh jatiye shoshan thi pidai shake che."* as said by one of the participant."

Our research found that all age of children can be the victims of child sexual abuse. One of the studies stated that about the Risk for CSA rises with age (Finkelhor, 1993; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1998). Data from 1996 indicate that approximately 10% of victims are between ages 0 and 3 years. Between ages 4 and 7 years, the percentage almost triples (28.4%). Ages 8 to 11 years account for a quarter (25.5%) of cases, with children 12 years and older accounting for the remaining third (35.9%) of cases (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1998). Some authorities believe that, as a risk factor, age operates differentially for girls and boys, with high risk starting earlier and lasting longer for girls (Finkelhor, 1993).

## Societal Perceptions of Abuse

**Figure 26**

*Is Talking about Sexual Abuse in Indian Social Setup Acceptable*



N= 15

Figure 26 shows that talking about sexual abuse in Indian social setup. 67% of participants said that discussing sexual abuse is not embarrassing for them and can be done in social settings. However, some of them mentioned the gender of the people they spoke with.

*“Ha bharatiye samaj ma jatiye shoshan ne charcha swikariye che.”*

33% participants said that they feel embarrassed when they talk about sex or sexual offenses in social setting.

*“Na nathi amna pen bahu ocha loko aani baat kareche.”*

This indicates that, for a various reasons, not everyone feels confident discussing sexual abuse in public or in social situations.

Even though the literature on culture and disclosures is still in its infancy, some studies, research, and clinical work strongly suggest that cultural values and families' standing in society influence disclosure likelihood as well as the actions professionals must

take to support disclosures. The choice to reveal or report CSA is not a solely personal one. Decisions are made in relation to social contexts (Cromer & Goldsmith, 2010). The knowledge that people, both within and outside of their culture and social networks, are observing, evaluating, encouraging, and demanding particular responses has an impact on children and their families.

Fontes (1992) talked about how important shame is in many cultures and how it prevents CSA disclosures. This is crucial because shame may also be a powerful predictor of post-abuse adjustment (Feiring et. al., 2002). Feelings of shame can be influenced by a variety of factors, including the subject, the involvement of the authorities, and potential perceptions of neighbors and friends. Religious taboos surrounding sex can prevent disclosures as children attempt to describe what's going on "down there" without using forbidden words.

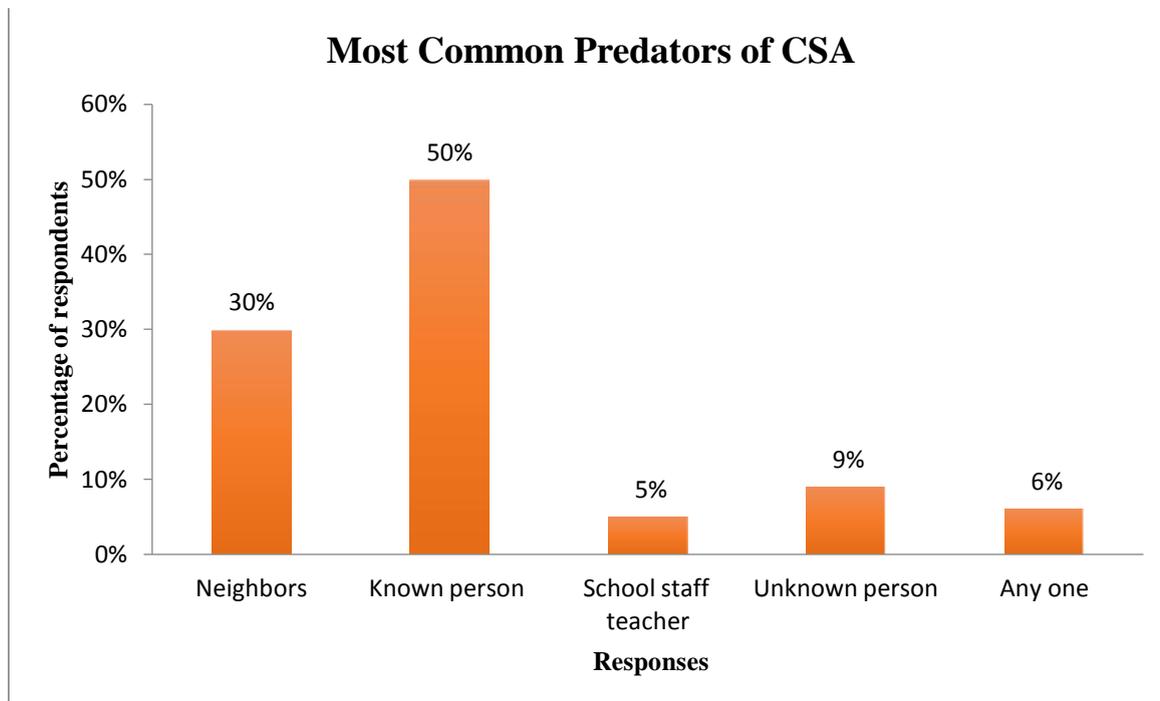
According to Gilligan and Akhtar (2006), the Arab values of *haya* (modesty) and *sharam* (shame/embarrassment) and *pudor* (shame, modesty) in Spanish silence both sex education and disclosures. When a girl in India told her mother that her neighbour had taken her into a park and "done something to her," she was called "a dirty girl with a vivid imagination" and told that she was lying (Gupta & Ailawadi, 2005).

Starting with the most frequent excuses given by girls in India, here are the reasons why they chose not to come forward: wanting to forget, fearing what others would think, self-blame, distrust, downplaying its significance, feeling guilty for enjoying herself, fearing being disbelieved, believing she had been a willing participant, threats and bribes, and feeling lost or unsure of whom to tell (Gupta & Ailawadi, 2005).

## Perpetrators of Abuse

**Figure 27**

*Most Common Predators of CSA*



N= 15

Figure 27 describes about the most common predators of CSA. The interviews also revealed that 50% of the participants believed that a known adult who is frequently a trusted adult was the most typical predator of CSA. Specially an adult with whom child spends most time.

*“Jeni saathe badak wadhare samay pasar kare teva loko badak ne bhodvi lab uthave che.”*

This indicates that the most trusted adult with whom the child spends the most time abuses the child the most. Usually, children are abused by being offered toys or chocolates as reimbursement.

A good sized percentage of participants (30%) said that neighbours are the most typical CSA predators. While others claimed that it could be a member of the community that the child knows or doesn't know.

*"Eh pan koi nakki nahi hotu kem k ghani war to saga pan hoi shake che aaju baaju padosh ma rehta pan hoi shake che ne koi bahar nu viyakti pan hoi shake che."*

*"Eva loko jenu koi kaam dhandana hoe k lafanga loko je fariya kare che, ane family members, neighbors pen hoi shake che daaru je lokopiye eh loko pan."*

Lastly some participants also mentioned about teachers and school staff as a common predators or CSA.

*"tatha shadao ma abhiyas karta badakone teacher dwara (khas to mobile, t.v, social media) dwara badako joine badakoma shoshant havani sambhavana che."*

A child can experience CSA at anytime and anywhere. Therefore, it is crucial to teach kids about some types of abuse, actions that are inappropriate, and who to tell if such things happen to them.

It's interesting to note that one interviewee stated that if the predator is a known individual or a family member, the case is not reported to the police station because of the individual's status, worth, or respect in society, and the issue is resolved between them. However, if the predator is an unidentified outsider, the victim's parents will have reported it.

*"Badhaaai shake wadhare baarna manaso karan ke apradhi kutum na andrna hoe to eh complain police station ma naaave eh loko under under j patai naakhe k ijjat kharab nathae pen jo baharna manas hoe to complain thae."*

(Bogaerts et al., 2005) discovered a Based on 331 independent samples and close to 10 million people, the prevalence rate was 13% overall, with the rate for girls being more than twice as high as that for boys (18% vs. 8%, respectively). The perpetrators of up to one-third of child sexual abuse are family members. In these interfamilial cases, fathers and

stepfathers are the most prevalent types of family members, and they frequently make up the majority of intra familial offenders who have been found guilty (Gibbens et al., 1978)

Interfamilial child sexual abuse is indeed puzzling from a biological and sociological perspective, given the strong societal norms against incest and the known negative effects of inbreeding. It is important to note that the vast majority of family members do not engage in this behavior, and that there are complex psychological, social, and cultural factors that contribute to the occurrence of such abuse. Some researchers have proposed theories related to power dynamics within families, the effects of trauma and abuse on victims and perpetrators, and the normalization of abusive behavior within families. More research is needed to fully understand the factors that contribute to interfamilial child sexual abuse and to develop effective prevention and intervention strategies (Thornhill, 1990)

The explanations of interfamilial child sexual abuse can differ significantly depending on the perspective. Clinically derived explanations often focus on individual psychological factors and may not emphasize family dynamics or structure as major contributing factors. However, other theories, such as those related to incestuous families, do place emphasis on family dynamics. For example, these theories suggest that mothers may be financially or otherwise dependent on the father, and some daughters may be pushed into a surrogate partner role, which includes not only intimacy and sexuality but also household tasks such as supervision and care of younger children. Additionally, offending fathers or stepfathers may take on an authoritarian and patriarchal role within the family (Thornhill, 1990).

## **Role of Communities**

### *What would you do if a Child you Know Confesses About Experiencing Child Sexual Abuse*

When asked what they would do if a child came forward and admitted to having been the victim of abuse, the majority of the participants (70%) said that they would take the child to the hospital first, if necessary, and then contact the child's parents to begin an investigation. The trusted adult will inquire as to how and who abused you as a child. The details will be kept private, and counselling should be conducted to learn more about the situation. Legal action against the predator can be taken after gaining the parents' trust.

*“Dharo k koi badakamne khabar kare che the jjiyeshoshan no bhogbanel che to pehlateniekant ma rakhi counseling krni, pachiaagadnelariyawahikrvi.”*

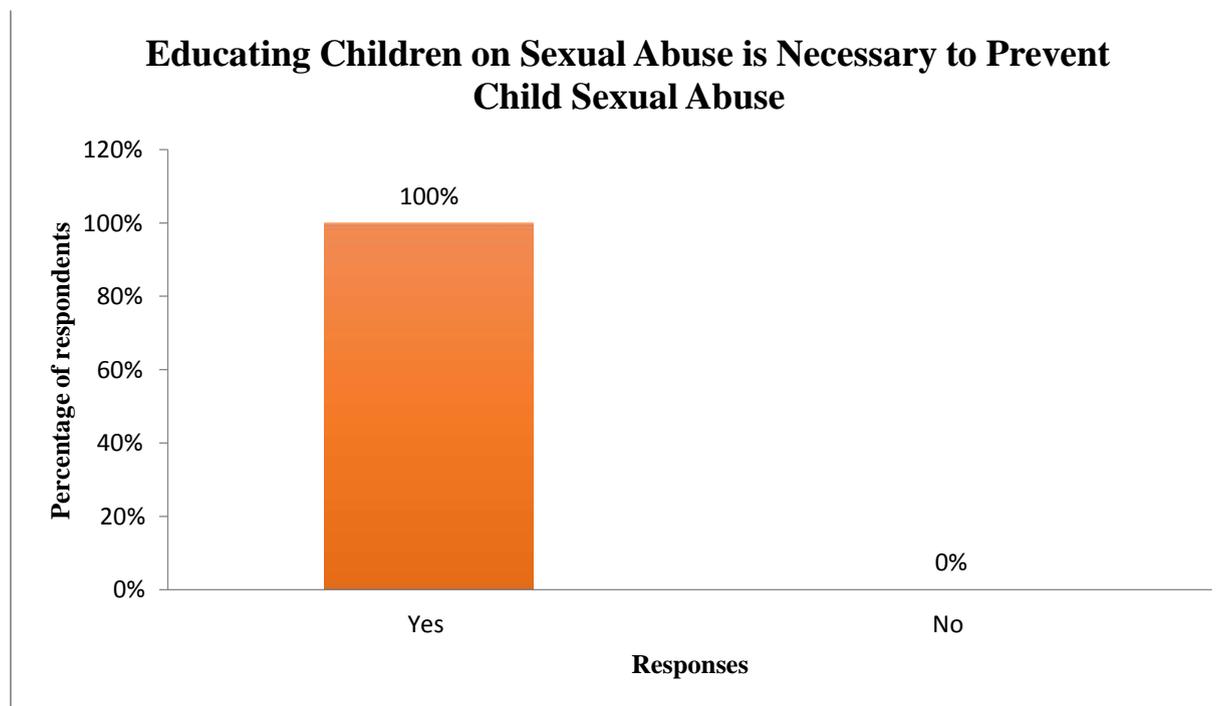
*“Aa badakona mata pita ne madine temne puchparach karvi jaroori che temaj badako ne kaamna boja ma thi muqt karavva joiye ane badakone yogye shikshan aapvu joiye tethi badaksaarunarsuvichari shake and badakoni aa samasiya wishe wicharvu atiyant jaroori che.”*

Most of the participants (60%) agreed that child counselling should be conducted as well as filing a complaint against the predator. The biggest challenge is winning the parents' trust that it won't diminish their dignity or respect and persuading them to move forward with the legal process.

## Educational Interventions for Prevention of Abuse

**Figure 28**

*Educating Children on Sexual Abuse is Necessary to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse*



N= 15

Figure 28 depicts the viewpoint of a police officer regarding the importance of educating children about sexual abuse in order to stop it. All of the participants agreed that teaching children about CSA can be preventative. And that will assist children in understanding what is healthy for them and what is not.

*“Badakone school ma jatiye shoshan upper athwadiya ma ek diwas seminar rakhi badakone practical sarir nis parshvis he jan kari apvi joiye.”*

*“Ha eh vishae nu bhantara apvu joiye ane jagrut krvu joiye badakonej emke aa badhu amna to SHE team kaam kare che badhi school ma jai awareness program karine.”*

*“Ha enathi emne dhynaave k koi aavukare to mummy ne kevujoiyee papa ne kevujoiyek ena paasee klona javu joiye.”*

In most instances, evaluations looked at children’s knowledge either with a pre- and posttest design or in comparison with children who did not receive the training. Programs that

explicitly focused on self protection skills training with sufficient time to integrate this material into a behavioral repertoire were most effective.

While there are benefits to school-based sexual abuse prevention programs, some evaluations have noted negative effects as well. For example, younger children may experience increased anxiety and a feeling of less control, while older children may feel discomfort with normal touch. One long-term evaluation surveyed 825 female undergraduates and found that those who had participated in a school-based sexual abuse prevention program were significantly less likely to have experienced sexual abuse (Gibbens, 1978).

Despite challenges with access, there have been promising findings and successful prevention models in other areas of youth safety, indicating that educational strategies to prevent child sexual abuse should continue to be pursued. However, the main challenge is gaining access to schools that may already be overwhelmed with academic programs and appeals to add various safety topics such as sexuality education, dating and domestic violence, bullying, suicide prevention, and internet safety to their curriculum. This raises the question of whether sexual abuse prevention can be effective as part of a more comprehensive prevention curriculum. There is certainly overlap in the skills that these programs teach, which suggests that integration may be possible (Gibbens, 1978).

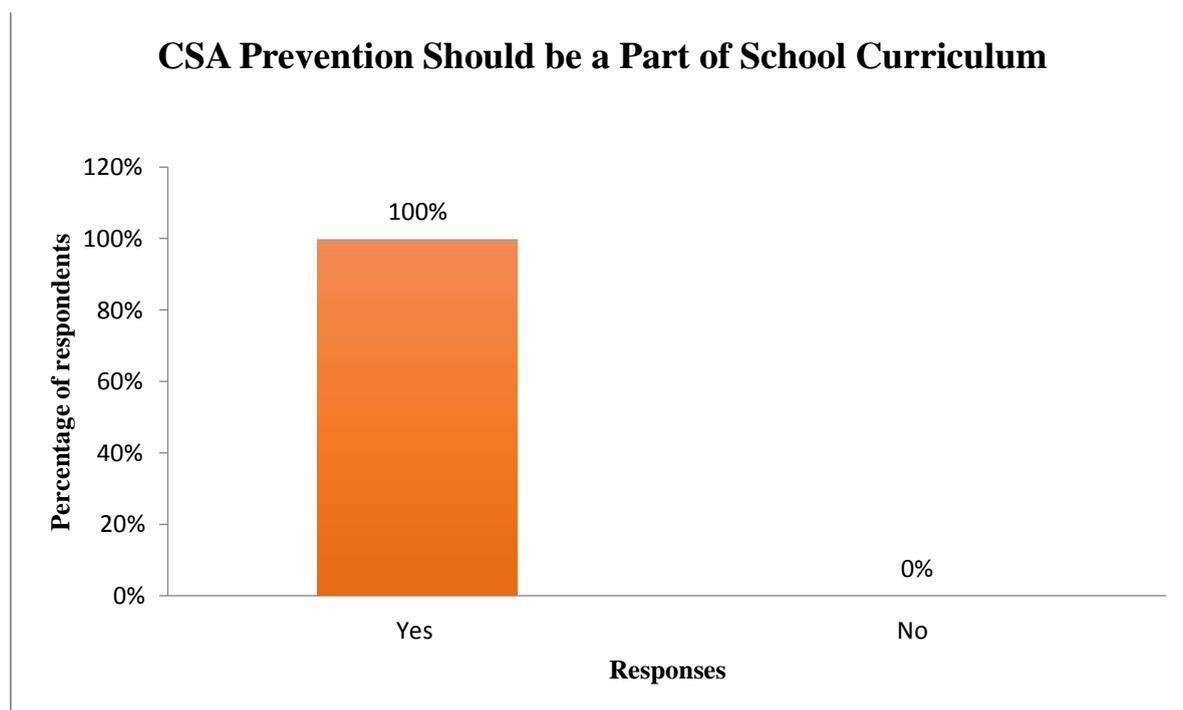
To effectively prevent child sexual abuse, it would be beneficial to develop and implement more comprehensive prevention programs that address key domains such as refusal, help-seeking, emotion management, and decision-making. These programs should be evaluated to determine their effectiveness in preventing abuse in each domain. Furthermore, educational approaches should expand to cover all forms of sexual abuse and sex crimes against children, including peer sexual assault in dating relationships, statutory sex crimes

involving teens and considerably older adults, as well as emerging types of sex offenses facilitated by the internet (Zwi et. al., 2007)

### CSA should be a Part of School Curriculum

**Figure 29**

*CSA Prevention Should be a Part of School Curriculum*



N= 15

Figure 29 shows about police officer's perspective regarding CSA prevention should be a part of school curriculum. All respondents (100%) agreed that CSA prevention instruction should be included in the curriculum. Additionally, the concern over the right age for children to learn about it was raised.

*"Badakone yogye shikshana apvu joiy etethi badak saarunar suvichari shake and badakoni aa samasiya wishe wicharvu atiyant jaroori che."*

*“Ha karan ne nan pan ma j badak ne khabrpadavidevujoie k susacho che ne sukhotohoe che. Pen haju aa sawal che k kai umar badakoma ateyogy che aavi wastuo sikhavva.”*

It indicates that everyone reflected was in agreement that CSA prevention instruction ought to be covered in the curriculum. Additionally, it will lessen the amount of CSA occurring globally. Children will be informed of the situation and what to do in it. It should have a suitable curriculum where children can study everything about it in line with their age group.

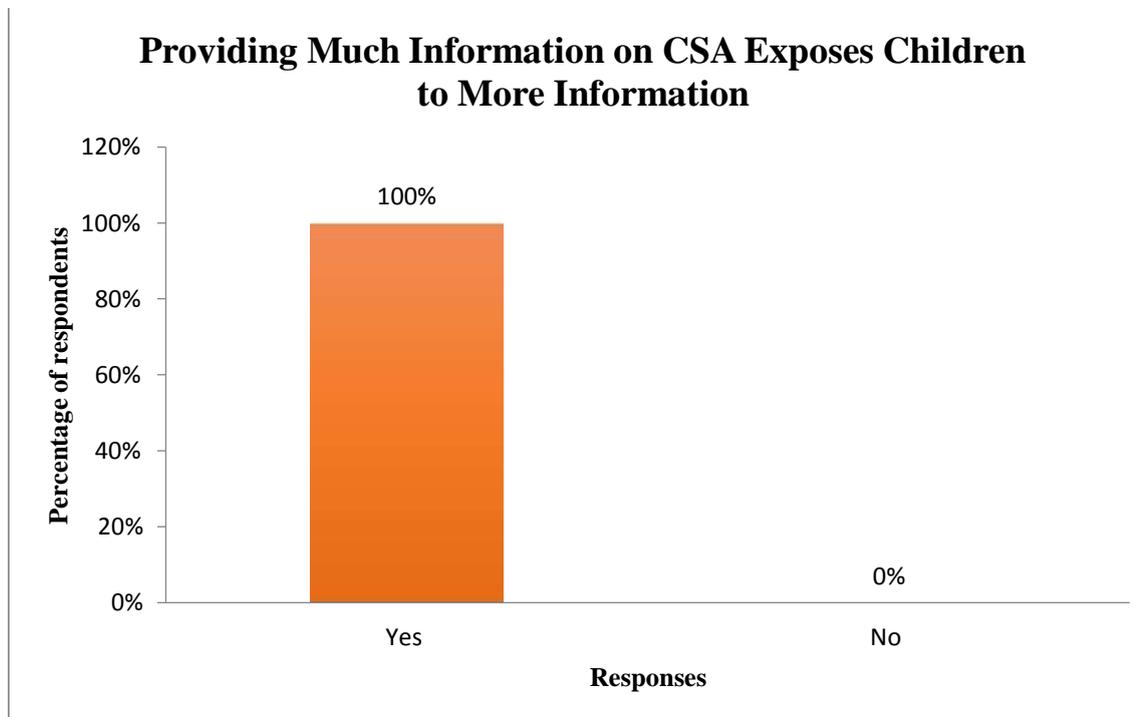
There is ongoing discussion in the field of child sexual abuse prevention regarding the most effective approach. Many school-based education programs focus on teaching children to recognize potential abuse situations, respond in a self-protective manner, and inform a trusted adult. These programs are commonly used and have been evaluated in 16 studies through a meta-analysis. The analysis found that school-based education programs are generally effective in teaching children about CSA concepts and self-protection skills (Rispen et al., 1997).

The results of the study identified that providing training to children or adding education on CSA in school curriculum will reduce the amount of case related to it.

## Challenges Encountered

**Figure 30**

*Providing much information on CSA Exposes Children to More Information*



N= 15

Figure 30 shows about police officer's perspective on providing much information on CSA exposes children to more information. 100% of respondents claimed that CSA prevention education might enlighten children to excess information about it. which will enable them to comprehend it and learn what is acceptable and what is not. This will also lower the number of CSA cases. Additionally, offering them counselling sessions will lessen CSA.

*"Ha tethi banta banaoo chathaijeshaneghar ma koi ne boli pan sake evukasuthae to enasaathe eh pan khuli ne boli shake."*

*"Amara mate badakonejatiyeshoshan per sikshitkarwathibadakomajagrutiaavi shake che anejatiyeshoshanthibachwanomarmadi shake che."*

It implies that empowering parents with knowledge will encourage children to openly discuss these situations with them so that, as needed, immediate action can be taken.

Studies have suggested that exposing children to prevention education programs does not increase their anxiety levels. Additionally, negative feedback from children regarding these programs is rarely reported by parents or teachers. In fact, participating in these programs has been found to improve parent-child communication, according to research. These programs do not appear to increase children's likelihood of misinterpreting appropriate physical contact or making false accusations. Although concerns have been raised about potential negative effects on sexual development, research has not fully addressed this issue. However, some studies have shown that children who have participated in specific programs exhibit more polite behavior and have positive attitudes towards their genitalia. Another study found that adults who had taken part in prevention programs as children did not experience an increase in sexual problems (Finkelhor, 1993).

### **Summary of the Semi Structured Interviews**

- The results of the study revealed that there was high awareness among police personnel regarding CSA.
- Child labour and rape are the most common type of CSA mentioned by the participants.
- The result of the study shows that 12 to 18 of age children are the most vulnerable group to become a victim CSA.
- Talking about sexual abuse in Indian social setups is acceptable. But still the female police personnel reiterated that even today, it can be uncomfortable for women to discuss CSA cases or incidents with any man.
- The results shows that the most common predators of CSA are the know person of the child.
- Participants further reflected that if the predators are known to the family or any family members, the victim's family does not report the cases.
- Most participants reported that most of the victims in the cases reported to police stations are females.
- However, some studies have indicated that boys are just as vulnerable as girls to becoming victims of child sexual abuse. However, very few boys who are CSA victims have their cases filed.
- The result shows that participants strongly feel that providing education about sexual offence to children in schools will help in reducing the cases of CSA.
- However, participants had differing opinions on which is the correct age of child to provide information about CSA.
- During their shifts, female police officers reported that also took care of their children by feeding them or getting them ready for school.

- In the city of Vadodara, out of 22 police stations, only two provided specialized counseling sessions to victims of CSA, it is recommended that each police station could take up these services.
- The female police personnel reiterated that even today, it can be uncomfortable for women to discuss CSA cases or incidents with any man.
- Some police stations were located outside of the city limits. Their officers expressed concerns about their own safety and added that sometimes it becomes challenging for them to return from an industrial area without street lights. As researchers it was interesting for us to reflect on the issue of safety for not only women and children but also males.

### **Key Findings of the Study**

- Law enforcement personnel need to be regularly trained on laws related to CSA to effectively respond to such cases.
- Awareness campaigns about CSA should be targeted towards communities and towards families, as perpetrators are often known to the victim's family.
- More specialized counseling sessions should be provided to victims of CSA in police stations, and police officers should be trained to handle such cases with sensitivity and care.
- Education about sexual offense in schools could be an effective preventive measure to reduce the incidence of CSA.
- The safety of police officers, including women and children, should be considered while assigning them to duty locations.
- The fact that some participants were not aware of the laws and the seriousness of CSA indicates a need for more awareness-raising campaigns and dissemination of information.
- Since children aged 12 to 18 are the most vulnerable group to become victims of CSA, preventive measures should be targeted towards this age group.
- Finally, there is a need for more research on the impact of CSA on boys and the reasons for the under-reporting of cases involving boys as victims.

## Discussion

This study aimed to assess the level of awareness and attitudes regarding child sexual abuse (CSA) among female police officers in Vadodara City. Previous research has shown a lack of studies on this topic among police personnel. The results indicate that Vadodara's police force has a good understanding of CSA laws, policies, programs, and initiatives, and they receive training on the topic. Marriage and parenthood may also serve as sources of information about CSA among police personnel. However, the data revealed conflicting responses, with most participants feeling uncomfortable discussing CSA in social situations, but also believing that discussing the issue is acceptable and necessary. This suggests that gender dynamics still exist at the professional level in Indian society.

1. Promote awareness: Given that the study found a high level of awareness about CSA among police personnel, it is important to promote awareness campaigns and initiatives aimed at increasing public awareness about CSA, especially among vulnerable groups like children, parents, and caregivers.

2. Increase training opportunities: While the police force in Vadodara City appears to have a high level of awareness about CSA, it is important to provide ongoing training opportunities to officers to ensure that they remain up-to-date with best practices and latest research in the field.

3. Improve victim support: The study found that only two police stations in Vadodara City had specialized counseling services for victims of CSA. It is recommended that all police stations should provide such services to victims and their families to help them cope with the trauma of abuse and facilitate their recovery.

4. Collaborate with other stakeholders: Finally, to make the discussion more effective, it is recommended that the police force in Vadodara City collaborate with other stakeholders such as NGOs, child welfare organizations, and mental health professionals to develop and implement comprehensive strategies to prevent and address CSA in the community. Such collaborations can help ensure a more coordinated and effective response to CSA in the city.

It is crucial to offer counseling sessions to victims or victims' families. Only 2 of the 22 police stations in Vadodara City were found to have special counselors who offer victim counseling sessions during the entire data collection process.

There is growing evidence that sexual abuse victims, who are children and adolescents, as well as their non-offending parents and siblings, require mental health services (e.g., Baker et al., 2001). In the wake of CSA, families frequently deal with a variety of difficulties (such as loss of income, loss of a caregiver, relocation, and limited community support), many of which are accompanied by psychological distress like depression, guilt, embarrassment, grief symptomatology, and secondary trauma. Given these challenges, it is critical that both CSA victims and their non-offending family members have access to a variety of interventions (Deblinger et al., 1993).

### **Implications of the Study**

The study aimed to understand Vadodara City police officers' awareness and perception of child sexual abuse (CSA).

- The police officers in Vadodara City have a high level of knowledge about CSA, laws and policies related to children, and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act of 2012.
- The study revealed minor differences in the police officers' perceptions of the different types of CSA, but overall, they are committed to protecting children and ensuring their safety.
- Public perception of police personnel is an essential factor to consider in examining the role and impact of the police in a democratic society. The way in which the public views the police can have significant consequences for the legitimacy of police authority, citizen compliance with the law, and the quality of citizen cooperation and interaction with the police. Public images of the police are formed through both objective and subjective means, and it is crucial for the public to have an accurate understanding of police functions to effectively check police authority.
- Gender roles and responsibilities were noted in how female police officers managed their duties alongside personal responsibilities.
- Participants reiterated that even today discussing sexual abuse and sex in social settings is considered to be inappropriate in the larger civil society.
- Mental health workshops or training can help alleviate the stress that police officers encounter from handling numerous cases on a daily basis.
- The study of Vadodara City's police officers revealed that they were viewed positively by the public as being approachable, coherent, liberal, and supportive during the data collection process.

- Police can play a significant role in building peace for children by ensuring their safety and protection from harm. They are often the first responders to incidents involving children, and their actions can have a significant impact on children's well-being and sense of security. By enforcing laws and policies related to child protection and supporting initiatives aimed at preventing and addressing child abuse, police officers can help create a safer environment for children.
- Additionally, by building positive relationships with children and their families through community engagement and education programs, police officers can help promote trust and cooperation between law enforcement and the community. This can ultimately contribute to building a more peaceful and just society for children to grow and thrive in.

#### **Changes can be done at Micro Level, Policy Level and State Level**

- At the micro level, changes can be made in police training programs to include more comprehensive training on child protection and handling cases of child sexual abuse. This could include specific modules on identifying and responding to child sexual abuse, as well as training on counseling and support services for victims and their families. Police departments can also work to improve community engagement and trust through outreach programs and community policing initiatives.
- At the policy level, governments can work to strengthen laws and policies related to child protection and child sexual abuse. This could include increasing penalties for offenders, providing better support services for victims, and improving reporting mechanisms for cases of abuse. Governments can also work to increase funding for child protection programs and support services.

- At the state level, efforts can be made to improve the overall status of children in society through education, healthcare, and social welfare programs. This can include initiatives to improve access to education and healthcare services, reduce poverty and inequality, and promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Additionally, governments can work to address cultural norms and beliefs that may contribute to child sexual abuse, and work to promote a culture of child protection and safety.

**The benefits of changes at micro, policy, and state levels would be numerous, some of it can be:**

- Improved child protection: The changes would lead to better policies and practices for the protection of children from sexual abuse, exploitation, and other forms of violence.
- Increased awareness: The changes would increase awareness among police officers, policymakers, and the general public about the issue of child sexual abuse and its impact on children's lives.
- Enhanced cooperation: The changes would encourage better cooperation between police officers and other stakeholders, such as social workers, healthcare professionals, and community organizations, in addressing the issue of child sexual abuse.
- Strengthened law enforcement: The changes would lead to stronger law enforcement efforts to combat child sexual abuse, including better investigation and prosecution of offenders.
- Improved public trust: The changes would increase public trust in the police and other authorities, as they take proactive measures to protect children and prevent child sexual abuse.

- Better mental health: The changes would help in promoting the mental health and well-being of victims of child sexual abuse, as they receive better support and counseling services.
- The module developed by the researcher can be the first step towards future implementation with police officers, including guidelines for working with children and families and awareness of Child Rights.

## Conclusion

The results of this study demonstrate the awareness and perception of Vadodara City's female police officers. This evidence is crucial because it clarifies the viewpoint of police officers. Particularly if one were to consider how critical of a situation it is with the number of CSA cases rising daily. The study's findings have mapped out how and what police officers presume about CSA, and how they will be useful in developing future strategies and programs to lower CSA in India.

This study was intended to understand the perception and awareness of female police personnel regarding child sexual abuse. The prevalence of CSA was found to be high in India as well as throughout the world. CSA is an extensive problem and even the lowest prevalence includes a huge number of victims. Three main points have been identified about CSA. Firstly, the way abuse is defined plays an important role. Secondly, the cases reported by the official organizations usually underrate the number of victims as many cases never get reported to them. Thirdly, most common predators of child sexual abuse are the known person of child

The overall prevalence is seen to be high among both genders though studies suggest girls are more prone than boys. In most (90%) of the cases, the perpetrator is known to the child (relatives, neighbors, step parents, highly trusted people). Physical debilities like deafness, blindness, and mental retardation have found to be associated with increased risk of being sexually abused. The results of this studies shows that children from any socioeconomic background can become victims of CSA. The absence of one or both biological parents, marital conflicts, and/or parental substance abuse increases the vulnerability.

The prevalence of CSA is alarming; hence, stringent measures should be taken for its prevention and control.

## **Recommendations**

### **Further researches can focus on:**

- In-depth qualitative inquiry on factors preventing reporting of CSA cases in the larger civil society.
- Evolving training programs for police personnel on effective guidance and counseling of CSA victims and their families.

## **Limitations of the Study**

- Smaller sample size as we have not interviewed all police officers of Vadodara city
- Limited qualitative data as the police officers were very busy with their duties we were not able to probe more questions. However, we gained lot of insights from the data that we collected.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM (ENGLISH)**  
**LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT**

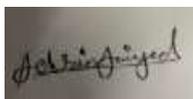
We are master's students Shaziya Refai and Sehrin Saiyed from the Department of Human Development and Family Studies, Faculty of Family and Community Sciences, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara. As a part of our Masters' dissertation under the guidance of Dr. Namita Bhatt, We are conducting a research titled **“Child Sexual Abuse: Awareness and Perceptions among Police Personnel in Vadodara City”**

The duration of the research study is April 2022 to May 2023.

We need to analyse the data of the police personnel on their awareness and perception regarding Child Sexual Abuse (CSA).

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You are free to deny if you wish. All information collected will be kept confidential and will be used strictly for academic purposes. We also seek your consent to record your interviews and digitally document it. The records will be strictly accessed only by the teachers and researchers of Department of HDFs for academic purposes only.

A summary of the results of the study will be communicated via email after the research is completed and documented.


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Department of HDFs

Faculty of Family and Community Sciences

The Maharaja Sayajirao University of  
Baroda

**INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

**Date and Signature-\_\_\_\_\_**

**APPENDIX B**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE (ENGLISH)**

Child Sexual Abuse Survey

This survey is aimed at gathering information and awareness among Police Personnel (Male/Female) of Vadodara city on the topic of Child Sexual Abuse. This tool is adapted from a study conducted by The Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation (2017).

**Part 1- Background Characteristics**

How old are you?	
What is your sex?	Female Male
What is your marital status?	Married Unmarried
What is your Educational qualification? (completed)	Under Graduate (12th Completed) Graduate (3 Yr degree course completed) Post Graduate Other

**Part 2- Awareness on Child Sexual Abuse**

Are you aware that children are subjected to various forms of sexual abuse?	Yes No
---	-----------

In your opinion, in India, how serious is the problem of child sexual abuse?	Not a problem Minor problem Moderate problem Serious problem Very serious problem Don't know
Are you aware that there are is a law on protection of children from sexual offence?	Yes No
Are you aware that sexual abuse of children is a punishable offence?	Yes No
Are you aware that there is a helpline number for children in our country?	Yes No

### Part 3- Perceptions on Child Sexual Abuse

Only girls are victim of sexual abuse.	Yes No
Very few children face sexual abuse in our country.	Yes No
Sexual abuse of children only happens in low socio-economic class.	Yes No
Most predators of child sexual abuse do belong to the child's family.	Strongly Agree Agree

	Disagree
	Strongly Disagree

#### Part 4- Experience of Sexual abuse during Childhood

Have you ever experienced any form of sexual abuse when you were below the age of 18?	Yes No
Did you share the experience with someone?	Yes No Not applicable
With whom did you share the experience?	Father/ Mother Friend Teacher Brother/Sister Other Not applicable
Was there any action taken against the predator/s?	Yes, legal action was taken Yes, non-legal action was taken No, action was taken Not applicable

## **APPENDIX C INTERVIEW**

### **QUESTIONS**

1. What according to you are the different forms of child sexual abuse?
2. At what age do you think a child is most likely to be sexually abused?
3. In your opinion, is talking about sexual abuse in the Indian social setup acceptable?
4. Who are the most common perpetrators of child sexual abuse?
5. What would you do if a child you know confesses about experiencing child sexual abuse?
6. Do you think educating children on sexual abuse is necessary to prevent child sexual abuse?
7. Do you think child sexual abuse prevention should be a part of school curriculum?
8. In your opinion, will providing much information on child sexual abuse expose children to too much information?

## APPENDIX D

## PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM (GUJARATI)

અમે શાંઝિયા રફાઈ અન સેહરોન સૈયદ, ઝિપાર્મોનર્ ઓફ હુમન િવલપમેનર્ એન્ફિ  
ફમલી સ્કિસ ના માસ્ટ્રના ઝવધ્યારથીઓ છીએ,

ફકલ્લીઓફફમલીએન્ફિકોમ્પ્યુનર્સીસાયન્સ, ધ મહારાજા સયાજીરાવ યુનવર્સિટર્ ઓફ

બરોઢિ, વરોઢરા. િ. નમતા ભટ્ટ ના માર્ટેશન હઠળ અમારા M.Sc. ઝનબંધના

ભાર્પ, અમે"બાળ જાતી યશોષણ:વડોઢરા શહરમા પોલીસ કમયારીઓ મા

જાગૃત અને ધારણાઓ" શીર્ટક હઠળ

સંશોધન હાર્થ ધરોરહ્યા છી એ. સંશોધન અભ્યાસ નો સમયર્ ગો એઝિલ 2022 થી મે 2023  
છે. અમે બાળ

જાતીય શોર્ણ (CSA) અર્ને જારૂત અને ધારણા પર પોલીસ કમયારીઓ ના િરના  
ઝવશ્વેર્ણ કરવાના છી એ.

આ અભ્યાસ મા તમારી સહભાગર્તા સંપૂણ પણ સ્વૈચ્છક છે. જો તમે ઈછો તો તમે ના  
મજર કરવા માર

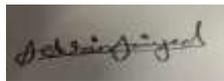
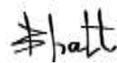
સ્વતંત્ર છો. એકઝત કરવામા આવેલી તમામ માહતી રુસ રાખવામા આવશ અને તનો ફક્ત

શૈક્ષણક હતુઓ માર ઉપયો કરવામા આવશ. અમે તમારા ઇનર્વ્ય ને રકોઢિ કરવા અને

તેન ઝિજર્લી રકોઢિસટ કરવા માર તમારી સંમઝત પણ મારીએ છીએ. માત્ર શૈક્ષણક

હતુઓ માર જ રકોઢિસટ એક્સેસ કરવામા આવશ. સંશોધન

પૂણ અને દસ્તાવજીકરણ થયા પછી અભ્યાસના પઝણામો પોલીસ ભવન ખાત ઝરપોર્ જમા  
કરવામા આવશ.

શાંઝિયા રફાઈ સેહરોન સૈયદ િ  
(M) 8141934442 (M)7016310681  
ઝઝનયર એમ. એસ.સી ઝવધારથી (2022-23)  
િપાર્મોનર્ ઓફ એય. િ. એફ.એસ  
ફકલ્લી ઓફ ફમલી એન્ફિકોમ્પ્યુનર્સી  
સાયન્સ ધ મહારાજા સયાજીરાઓ  
યુનવર્સિટર્, બરોઢિ

નમતાભટ્ટ  
(M) 8140097434  
એસીસર્નર્ િોફસર & ઝસેયટ રાઈ  
િપાર્મોનર્ ઓફ એય. િ. એફ.એસ  
ફકલ્લી ઓફ ફમલી એન્ફિકોમ્પ્યુનર્સી  
સાયન્સ ધ મહારાજા સયાજીરાઓ  
યુનવર્સિટર્, બરોઢિ

તારીખ અને હસ્તાક્ષર- \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX E QUESTIONNAIRE

(GUJARATI) સંશોધન સંબંધન

બાળજાતી યશોર્ણ પર સંશોધન

આ સંશોધન નો ઉદ્દેશ બાળ જાતીય શોર્ણ અંર્ને ની મંજૂરી અને જારૂંત મેળવવા નો છે.

આ કાયટ અવધ વિદરા શહરના પોલીસ કમટયારીઓ (પુરુો અને સ્ત્રીઓ)

આ િશ્નોત્તરી કલાશ સત્યાર્થી અવર્િન્સ ફોઉન્િશન (નવી અધ્હી, 2017)

નામની સંસ્થા સાર્થ સંકળાયેલ છે.

સૂચના: નીચે આપેલા દરક સવાલમાં અવકર્પ આપેલ છે. જમંર્થી તમાર કોઈ એક

ને પસંદ કરવા નું રહેશે.

તવભાગ: 1 વ્યતિગત માહતી

તમારી ઉમર કર્વી છે? (પૂણ વર્ટ)	
તમારી ઝર્ શું છે?	પુરુ સ્ત્રી અર્
શું તમ પઝઝાત છો?	હા ના અર્
તમારી અશક્ષણ લાયકાત શું છે? (પૂણ)	ગૂજ્યુએર્ (12 પૂણ) સ્નાતક

	પોસ્ટ ગ્રજ્યુએટ અન્ય
--	-------------------------

**તવભાગ:2 બાળ જાતીય શોષણ અંગ જાગૃત**

શું તમને ખબર છે કે બાળકો ઝવઝવઘ િકારના જાતીય શોષણ ના ભોર બને	હા ના
તમારા મત બાળ જાતીય શોષણ આપણાં દશનો રૂભીર મુદો છે?	કોઈ સમસ્યા નથી સરીર સમસ્યા છે મધ્યમ સમસ્યા છે રૂભીર સમસ્યા છે
શું તમને ખબર છે કે આ ઝવરે આપણાં દશમાં કાયદો ઘિંયેલો છે?	હા ના
શું તમને ખબર છે કે બાળ જાતીય શોષણ સજાકીય રૂનો છે?	હા ના
શું તમને ખબર છે કે બાળકો માર હપ્લવાઈ નનંબર આપણા દશમાં ફાળ વેલો છે?	હા ના

**તવભાગ:3 બાળ જાતીય દરવ્યવહાર પર ની સમજ**

એકલ્લી છોકરીયો બાળ જાતીય શોર્ણ ના ભોર્ બનેછ?	હા ના
તમને લાર્ છે કે આપણા દશ માં બહ ઓછા બાળકો ભોર્ બને છે?	હા ના
શું તમને લાર્ છે કે જાતીય શોર્ણનો ભોર્ નીયા વર્ટના બાળકો બને છે?	હા ના
શું બાળ જાતીય શોર્ણ કરનાર બાળક ના કર્બ સંબંધી હોય છે?	પુરી રીત સહમત સહમત અસહમત પુરી રીત અસહમત

**તવભાગ: 4 બાળ જાતીય શોષણપ્રતતસાદ**

શું તમ બાળ જાતીય શોર્ણ ના ભોર્ બન્ન્યા છો?	હા ના
તમ અનુભવ કોઈક સાર્થ શેર કયો છે?	હા ના લાર્નર્ થી

<p>તમ ઘરના નો અનુભવ કોને કહી હતું?</p>	<p>મમ્મી /પપ્પા          ઝમ્મ          ઝશક્ષક          ભાઈ/બહેન          અન્ય          લારુનરથ</p>
<p>ઉપર ની મોકલતી આપ્યા બાદ શોર્ણ કરનારની ઝવરઘ કોઈ િઝિયા કરવા માં આવી હતી?</p>	<p>હા , કાયદાકીય કાયટવાહી          હા, ઝબનકાયદાકીય કાયટવાહી          કોઈ કાયટવાહી કરવા માં          આવી ન હતી લારુ નરથી</p>

## APPENDIX F

### SEMI- INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (GUJARATI)

1. તમંારા મત, ઝવઝવઘ િકંાર ના બાળ જઝતય શોર્ણ કયા છે?
2. તમંારા મત, કઈ ઉમર ઁક બાળક બાળ જઝતય શોર્ણ થી પીિંઈ શક છે?
3. તમંારા અઝભિાંય મંાં, જઝતય શોર્ણની ચયાટ ભારતીય સમંાજમંાં સ્વીકાંયટ છે?
4. તમંારા ઝહસાબે, બાળ જઝતય શોર્ણ ના સામંાન્ય ંપે રુહ્નરંારો કોણ હોય છે?
5. ઘંારો કં, ઁક બાળક તમને ખંત્રી આપે છે કં ઁ બાળ જઝતય શોર્ણ નો ભોર્ બની/બનયો છે,  
     ઁવી ઝસ્તરથી મંાં તમ શું કરશો?
6. શું તમને લંારં છે કં બાળકોનજઝતયશોર્ણ પર ઝશઝષત કરવારથી જઝતય શોર્ણનું  
     ઝનવંારણ આવી શક?
7. બાળ જઝતય શોર્ણ નું ઝશઝષણ શંાળંમંાં ભણંવ જોઈઁ?
8. તમંારા મત,બાળકોન જઝતય શોર્ણ પર ઝશઝષત કરવા થી ઁમને વઘંાર મંાઝહતી મળી જશે?

## APPENDIX G

## Permission Letter from University

## Department of Human Development and Family Studies

1-aeully or family and Community s.-.,nccs  
 ThMah.Irajo Sayajitao Univetsity Of Baroda  
 Un.wrsoty Rood. V ra - 390 002.Incf.a.  
 Ph: C/o. (+91.0265) 279SS22

September 2, 2022

TO,

Mr. Sh. Im' -x-r 'in);h. IrS

Commissioner of Police.

\,3Jo..br:l Cit

Subject: Permission to Conduct a Survey Research on Child Sexual Abuse and POCSO Act (2012).

Respected Sir,

Greetings from the Department of Human Development and Family Studies, Faculty of Family and Community Sciences, Institute of Sayajirao University of Baroda.

As part of their coursework leading towards M.Sc. Degree, our students undertake research studies on various themes related to Human Development.

For this academic year (2022-23), one of my research student **will be** conducting a Survey Research on Awareness and Perceptions of Police Personnel on Child Sexual Abuse and POCSO Act (2012). There is a dearth of researches in this field and we believe that this research will contribute towards increasing awareness and furthering the cause of Protection of Women and Children in our society.

We sincerely request you to grant us the permission to conduct the Survey Research with Police Personnel in your City.

We are enclosing with a brief conceptual note and methodology of the study for your kind perusal.

We extend our humble and sincere gratitude to you and your entire team for the hard work and toil you all put in for keeping our city safe!

Sincerely,

**il:J BL-ft**

Dr. Namiu Ohlht  
 Assistant Professor and Research Guide  
 Department of HDFS

Through,

**.&.c**  
 Prof. Anjali Karolia  
 IC Head  
 Dean, FFCS

APPENDIX H

Permission Letter from Police Bhavan



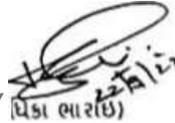

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