

Child Sexual Abuse in India: A Situational Analysis

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ABSTRACT

India is the home of the largest number of children in the world, and Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) is one of her big frame problems, like several other problems of poor health conditions and school dropouts that come under the issues of violation of child rights and their protection. However, CSA is very much rampant not only in India but across the globe. Consequently, this is one of the most serious problems against children and is discussed among all development professionals to curb the rates of incidents of CSA. The victims of CSA encounter several problems, such as psychological and emotional disorders, for their entire lifetime. This form of child rights exploitation is usually unreported as it is still a sort of stigma in Indian society. But in recent years, there have been cases reported, and several steps have been taken to check the rates of such incidents. Thus, this paper attempts to look into this form of child rights exploitation through several case studies, their effects, and the role played by NGOs and will also look into the social work interventions with suitable suggestions.

Keywords: *Children, Child Sexual Abuse, Psychological and Emotional Disorders*

INTRODUCTION

India is the home to the largest number of children in the world and Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) is one of the prevalent current-day problems like several other problems such as poor health conditions, school dropouts, early marriages, child labour, etc. Hence providing a better

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life and protection to the future generation of the country is the prime responsibility of any country or state (UNICEF, 2011).

According to the Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003, Child sexual abuse (CSA) is defined by and involves (a) the employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct or simulation of such conduct to produce a visual depiction of such conduct; or the rape, and in cases of the caretaker or interfamilial relationships, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, or other forms of sexual exploitation of children, or incest with children (Joshi, 2018). World Health Organization also defines Child sexual abuse (CSA) as “the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend and is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared, or else that violate the laws or social taboos of society.” This term CSA includes a wide range of activities like “intercourse, attempted intercourse, oral-genital contact, fondling of genitals directly or through clothing, exhibitionism or exposing children to adult sexual activity or pornography, and the use of the child for prostitution or pornography.” Thus, CSA is a universal problem both in India and the world and also have varied form of several disorders and outcomes affecting children throughout their lives (Singh et al., 2014).

Several efforts have been made by the Government in India and globally by enforcing laws and policies to protect children from such engraved crimes but still, the problem is widespread across the country and the world. To address this situation an impactful mindset change is required, with proper stringent laws and punishments for the perpetrators, with proper child-friendly proceedings, trails with a fast and speedy process to ensure a proper child-friendly system for the victims (Tata Trusts, 2018). Thus, this paper explores to look into the present scenario and the factors associated with the incidence of child sexual abuse (CSA) in India and the problems faced by the CSA survivors or victims through case studies.

MAGNITUDE OF THE PROBLEM

It is reported that Africa (34.4%), Europe (9.2%), America (10.1%), and Asia (23.9%) have a prevalence of sexual abuse among children. The extent of CSA is also among females, which shows that more than one-fifth of them are victims of CSA and are in countries like Australia (37.8%),

Costa Rica (32.2%), Tanzania (31%), Israel (30.7%), in Sweden (28.1%), US (25.3%), Switzerland (24.2%). Lack of reporting of CSA among males is another important issue, as reported in the study (Singh et al., 2014). South Africa has been reported as the topmost vulnerable country with the highest rate of CSA, where one child every three minutes is raped in South Africa. In addition to this United Kingdom also witnesses a very high rate of child sexual abuse. Netherlands is the country among the other two countries having only 4% of cases of CSA with a proper reporting system of sexual abuse due to the presence of stringent laws in Netherlands (Chandar & Kannappan, 2018). 18-50% of the children in India are victims of some form of child sexual abuse. The study also highlighted that girls are largely much more victims of CSA than boys, though boys are also victims of physical and psychological abuse. Men and women were exposed to childhood molestation, and half of the perpetrators were from the family itself, and most of the cases concerning crimes against children are underreported in India (Joshi, 2018). New Delhi, India, has reported about 83% of cases of child sexual abuse.

Consequently, in most cases, the perpetrators are family members. Boys are mostly the victims than girls, and the majority of the cases are not reported (not even the children share with their parents or family members also) (Pavithra & Relton, 2012). Belliappa and Ghosh, 2015 stated that in the year 2007, 12447 children and 2324 youths between the age group of 5-18 years and 18-24 years were victims of several cases of abuse such as (physical, emotional and sexual). Again, out of them, about 53% of the boys and 47% of the girls reported being sexually abused; these cases of abuse are not reported to the police, and only 12% of the cases are reported to their parents.

Hence, in the present-day context, CSA is one of the most serious, prevalent violence against children in India, which occurs both within a family and outside the family, and millions of children are victims of such crimes. Currently, thousands of children, both boys and girls, are sexually abused and are not safe in their so-called “safe places”, such as in their homes, playgrounds, schools, public spaces, etc. This form of child rights exploitation affects the children in having negative outcomes on them, which leads to several disorders and also impacts the development of the child throughout their life. The victims of CSA face abnormalities and restrictions during their childhood, adolescence, and also the human development system (Carson et al., 2013).

Several forms of sexual abuse range from psychological, mental, and emotional disorders, among these victims of CSA, which they may

experience throughout their lifetime. These disorders include anxiety such as panic disorder, Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD); depression, anger, cognitive distortions, post-traumatic stress, dissociation; identity disturbance that affects interpersonal problems; substance abuse, self-mutilation, bulimia, unsafe or dysfunctional sexual behaviour; somatization, and aggression, suicidality, and personality disorders, domestic violence, increased risk for sexual assault, etc. (Joshi, 2018). The problems faced by these victims of CSA vary from case to case, and these effects include depression, guilt, shame, self-blame, eating disorder, somatic concerns, anxiety, dissociative pattern, repression, denial, etc. The survivors of CSA often blame themselves for the abuse and hence encounter several problems, such as experiencing guilt and shame. Therefore, in addition to this, if the child is sexually abused by the most trusted family members or the most acquainted person, then it becomes much more difficult for the child to report it and rather take it on the negative aspect, which leads to the self-blaming and negative notion about themselves. Suicidal attempts and self-destruction behaviour lead to the obstruction in the development of the child among these victims of sexual abuse (Pavithra & Relton, 2012).

Factors Contributing to the Incidences of Several Cases of Child Sexual Abuse in India

The most challenging factors involved in CSA and neglect include the social, cultural, and family factors which create hindrances in the process of addressing all forms of CSA and neglect in India. These factors include the cultural beliefs and practices among parents (parental rights and styles), which highlights that the parents have the sole right to take any decision concerning their children's benefit and future. Moreover, girl children in Indian society are always placed at the lower strata, and they are mostly the victims and more vulnerable to sexual abuse than boys. The most common perpetrators are the parents and close relatives. Maintaining family secrecy is another important contributing factor to the incidences of child sexual abuse. In Indian culture, maintaining family secrecy is one of the most important parts of the socio-cultural issue. This is due to the fact that any kind of action defaming the family would be kept secret as it may hamper the family's name or fame, and hence the family would be stigmatized or considered taboo. This is done to protect the cultural, social status, and reputation of the family and thus, secrecy is maintained in the family and also in the community, to some extent among the extended

family members. Furthermore, the family tries to refuse the incident -“that she/he is being sexually abused” and also takes measures to cover it. Poverty, illiteracy, the poor form of several service delivery systems (health, education) for children and families, abandonment of children, under-reporting of the cases, overpopulation, etc., are also responsible for the incidences of child sexual abuse (CSA) cases (Carson et al., 2013).

METHODOLOGY

For the present study, literature databases for articles on Child Sexual Abuse have been reviewed. However, the case study method has been used for the study. Three case studies have been collected from several journals, reports, articles, etc., and have been taken into consideration for the study. Data has been extracted from the published articles only. However, apart from the database from several articles and journals, the researcher has also incorporated two case studies from the different slums of Kolkata where the children are victims of sexual abuse and violence, which were collected in the year 2019. Hence the present paper highlights the effects of child sexual abuse on these young children and the methods that have been adopted to overcome its effects.

CASE STUDIES

Case Study No. 1: This is a story of a 12-year-old girl named Jyoti, who lived with her extended family along with her parents in a small town in the Western part of Uttar Pradesh, India. This girl was sexually abused by a private tutor, which started at the tender age of 6 years. Since the tutor was well acquainted with the child’s family members, she was unable to disclose the crimes which were being conducted against her. The abuse started during the teaching time-this would include beating the child and also touching the private parts of the child’s body. Consequently, she suffered from several traumatic sessions, was scared of the teaching sessions, and also deteriorated in her studies. This made her parents continue to take tuition classes from the young tutor. Her parents also started beating her as well. However, the parents did not take any further steps to analyse the situation from getting too worse. The child started thinking that the abuse she was facing was normal as she had no one to share her problems with. This form of crime against the child leads to the deterioration of the health condition, a higher temperature throughout

the day, and a problem with private body parts. Consequently, the child was taken to the doctor for her treatment, but there was no identification of the problem the girl was facing. This continued for years, and the consequences were terrible for the child: She was unable to talk to anyone, had low confidence, was very scared, and was afraid. Consequently, this crime of sexual abuse stopped when the tutor went to foreign with his job. Years went by, and when the girl studied in her college at the age of 19 or 20 years, she took the help of a psychiatrist. Though the visit did not turn out to be a fruitful one. A few years later, Jyoti came across an NGO named RAHI (Recovery and Healing from Incest), which helped her and gave counselling to abuse survivors. She was given support through several counselling sessions and therapy to overcome the problems. The therapies helped the young woman to overcome her childhood problems, and then Jyoti disclosed her story of abuse to her parents, which was very much surprising for the family though they accepted it wholeheartedly (Human Rights Watch, 2013).

Case Study No. 2: This is another case study of a mother (Aditi) and a daughter named Ria, a four years old child who is also a victim of child sexual abuse. The perpetrator was Aditi's brother-in-law. Aditi was also a victim of early child marriage and a young mother. She, along with her daughter, was rescued by an NGO working with distressed women after she was abandoned by the person who got her pregnant. She was even given a job, and later, she married a friend of her employer. Later on, one day, when Aditi was busy preparing dinner, her brother-in-law was playing with her four-year-old daughter. Consequently, she discovered that her daughter was abused by her brother-in-law. This crime of sexual abuse was continued for a few days by her brother-in-law whenever Aditi left the house for work. To avoid this situation, Aditi started staying at home to prevent such activity by her brother-in-law. However, one day, when she went to fetch water, leaving her daughter at home, who was fast asleep, later coming back, she noticed that her daughter was again sexually abused and molested. Consequently, she informed her husband. Ria also said that she was abused, and then Aditi went to the police station to report the incident of molestation and sexual abuse. The police interrogated the man along with Aditi's husband, but somehow the man was released with the help of Aditi. Aditi instructed her brother-in-law to move away from her house, and thus her husband also told her that she was not at all trustworthy to believe that the wounds had been made by his brother on Ria's body parts. He also told Aditi that he would only believe if he had been the eye-witness of the incident. Thus, this made Aditi leave her house

and start living with her daughter elsewhere (Human Rights Watch, 2013).

Case Study No. 3: This is another case study where the family was excluded by the community. A 12-year-old girl named Abida, living with her parents in Varanasi, was gang-raped by three men. Further, when the child's father tried to report the case to the police with the fear that other girls would also be the victim of the same crime, it was the family which, in turn, did not support the father. The community started rejecting the family as well as the girl because she was a rape victim, and thus, she was a disgraceful person. The engagement ceremony of the elder daughter was cancelled after the incident took place, which came to their knowledge. The impact of this case made the child stay home, with no interaction with anyone, completely silent. She started losing her appetite, along with no desire to eat properly. Consequently, an NGO started providing counselling sessions for the young girl without any support from the government services for rehabilitation and support (Human Rights Watch, 2013).

Case Study No. 4: This is a case study of a 16-year-old adolescent girl named Baishali Ghosh staying in a slum area of Dakshindari, North Kolkata. Presently, she is staying with her maternal grandmother, maternal uncle, and her siblings. This young girl is very much neglected by her mother. Her mother wants her daughter to work and earn money for the family. Thus, she always keeps forcing her to earn money.

Baishali's mother, Rumpa Rajak and her father, Tapash Rajak have three children. Rumpa Rajak, the mother of Baishali Rajak, is her child with her second husband. Baishali Rajak is very fond of dancing and also has the desire to make it a profession, as she knows that she dances very well. Baishali was a student of class IX and would be appearing in her examinations; unfortunately, she could not appear in her class IX examinations as she was taken to Bihar by her mother for dancing in a troupe and would be earning money by giving her dance performances and also to entertain the guests during the marriage party, birthday parties, etc. She, along with one of her neighbourhood friends and her mother, went to the remote village in Bihar with the desire to earn a lot of money for the family and also to fulfil her dream of dancing. She was very much swayed away and motivated by her mother to go with her and work without wasting time studying. The young girl stated that she was the victim of exploitation and violation of her rights there in the centre. The girl, along with the other young girls, had been trafficked away with the view of getting a large amount of money and a luxurious life after dancing in such ceremonial festivities at several parties in different

villages. Thereafter the girl also stated that she used to stay with the other girls in a house where they cooked food for themselves, and sometimes, they also had fights with each other on several issues. After having food and getting themselves dressed, these young girls were taken to entertain the parties with their dance performances. They went to attend the parties from noon and were allowed to come back only the next morning at about 8 am. These young girls used to dance the whole night and entertain the guests, and consequently, they were paid every month with some food and dresses. This continued for the next 6 months, and along with the other girls, Baishali was also a victim of physical and mental torture with several abuse and exploitations. Thereafter she was very much afraid of the present situation of physical torture and mental abuse, which she was facing daily. Unable to face the torture and abuse, she called her father and narrated the whole story and asked him to take her away to her home, and thereafter she would not repeat such incidents in the future. Consequently, the girl came back with her father to Kolkata. Presently, she is pursuing her vocational training in stitching and sewing at a Government organized training centre. She was a victim of mental and physical abuse. She wished she could finish her studies and have a better life in the future, but unfortunately, her decision to earn money at this tender age has ruined her future completely. Presently, she stays with her grandmother, and she is taking proper care of her. Her mother has eloped with someone along with her other children and is staying away from her as she has been strictly told not to meet Baishali by her father. She also narrated that her father had saved her life, and this would not be possible if he would not bring her back from Bihar. Fortunately, the NGO working in these slums has been providing counselling sessions, and things are changing; consequently, at present, she is attending her training sessions on stitching and tailoring, and this could help her to rebuild her future once again. Though they have been trying to enrol her in the school, she is very reluctant and shy enough to join back the school. This case study highlights that there are cases of trafficking and abuse prevalent among children in the slum areas. The families, along with the children, are lured with earning a lot of money, their desirable items and are sent to work as child labours and are also engaged in several other jobs in different parts of India. The reasons children working in different professions have a life risk is majorly due to the poor financial conditions of their families, lack of awareness of the ill effects of child trafficking, and abuse (Fieldwork experience).

Case Study No. 5: This is a case study of a young girl named Kohinoor Khatun (name changed), 7 years old, a resident of a slum in Tangra, East

Kolkata, with her parents. The girl was sexually abused by a driver, 18 years old, in the slum. It was during one afternoon when Kohinoor Khatun went to a shop in the slum area to buy a packet of chips. Then, a youth attempted to sexually abuse the girl. This little girl had completely no knowledge about what was being intended to be done. The girl felt that something was wrong and thus she ran away shouting back to her home. This was noticed by the community worker, Sahinoor Bibi (name changed), and thus she took community action and caught hold of the boy and threatened him not to repeat any such nuisances any further. On the other hand, the girl was blamed when she reported the incident to her parents, with the reason why she went to the shop to buy a packet of chips. Further, when the community worker tried to take the necessary steps, the victim's family stepped out, stating that Sahinoor Bibi was trying to ruin the status of their family as well as their daughter's status by taking action, where the community also participated. Consequently, a few slum dwellers and community members tried to make the family understand that reporting the incident to the police would deliver a lesson to those persons who try to defame daughters. But the victim's family stated that they are least interested in taking any action and has asked the community not to highlight any such problems which would hamper their daughter's life and status. But when the researcher interacted with Sahinoor Bibi, she was very reluctant to share and discuss the case, being a sensitive issue in the slum. Thus it was very much difficult for the researcher to interact with the child and the family as well on this issue as it was very sensitive, and the NGO worker also communicated that the family would not at all entertain the researcher to discuss related to any such issue. Further, the NGO worker helped the researcher to interact with the community worker regarding the case study. Child Sexual Abuse is one of the worst forms of child protection issues which is rampant in the slums presently. It can also be observed that there has not been any reporting of the case to the police authorities; the family was also very reluctant to take further steps to protect their daughter, highlighting that the problem of child sexual abuse will continue to prevail and impose severe threats to the children (Chatterjee & Sanyal, 2020).

FINDINGS

These cases from the different reviews of literature and two from the fieldwork experiences highlight that children in India and across the globe are the victims of sexual abuse. The two case studies also highlight that

the children residing in the slums are very much exposed to sexual abuse. Hence, from these case studies, one can conclude that female children are the worst victims of sexual abuse. Furthermore, these case studies also state that children have a disturbed and neglected childhood. Lack of education among the parents as well as among the children is the major setback for these children when they experience any such sexual abuse. The parents also come from neglected and distressed family-related violence, which is another important factor for children not having a conducive environment for growth. Finally, the case studies discussed above show that poor awareness among society and change in mind set-up related to sexual abuse against children need to be taken care of to provide a better environment for children. Thus, through these case studies, it appears that even though there are services available, still then no initiative is taken up by the community to provide justice to the child. Rather, the family is excluded from their community, considering her disgraceful, and therefore, this requires vigorous awareness among these communities on the issues related to sexual abuse against children so that the victims and their families are not excluded from society. Moreover, it also requires the formation and strengthening of children's groups in slums and villages to address the cases related to child sexual abuse to the respective authorities to support them.

Social Work Interventions: The following techniques can be used by the social work profession to intervene in the cases of CSA to provide them with therapy and with other support systems.

Case Management: This is one of the major strategies to look for in the social work profession. The safety and well-being of the child are one of the major goals to be looked into, and the problem will be looked into as per the severity of the cases from time to time. Furthermore, depending on the situation of the cases, further decisions will be taken whether to reunite the child with the family or terminate the rights of the parents or go for adoption of the child to promote and ensure proper security of the child (Faller, 2017).

Risk Screening and Assessment: This strategy ensures the identification of the victims of CSA with high risks and provides them with an enabling environment so that they are well protected by the caregivers and their parents. The social work intervention strategy would be used where children will be identified so that they are not again exposed to the risk of sexual abuse, have an in-depth dialogue with the families and the children

to understand and assess the dynamics present at their homes and the behavioural approach of the parents. This will help to extract information from the child about the perpetrators, the risk exposure for the child, and also other factors to curb further attempts to exploit the child again (Ntwampe, 2013).

Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (TF-CBT): Is a therapy or a treatment used for children and young people within the age group of 3-21 years who are the victims of sexual abuse. This therapy provides treatment for about 25 sessions to treat the victims of sexual abuse and addresses several problems such as depression, anxiety, externalizing behaviours, problems related to relationships and attachment problems, problems in schools, and other cognitive problems, related to sexual abuse (Faller, 2017).

Crisis Intervention. The victims of child sexual abuse are the utmost clients of crisis interventions and the need of the hour to provide proper intervention to the children during this crisis. Thus, the child, as well as the family, needs proper support and counselling to handle the situation. Finally, the role of the social worker is to conduct an initial assessment to ensure the proper safety of the child so that he or she is once again not exposed to the vulnerable situation of sexual abuse. Consequently, crisis intervention attempts to make necessary arrangements for filing the case and carrying out the proceedings to provide justice to the child (Ntwampe, 2013).

RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTION

Following these above-mentioned social work interventions, there are a few other measures which can be taken to address this maltreatment and violence against children, such as:

Proper Awareness about Child Sexual Abuse: As the problem is very sensitive and intense several awareness programs about CSA should also be in a proper way to address the problem. On the very poor knowledge front, it needs attention to make the concept very clear among the children, family members, and community (Singh et al., 2014).

Usage of Mass Media: While awareness generation among children, families, and communities, several media sources could be used to understand the concept of CSA. As the dialect varies from place to place, so mass media (electronic and print media) could be used to serve the purpose. Several banners, posters, and placards should be put up in

important public places to create awareness among people. Documentary films on CSA should also be put up on television channels and also on the internet so that they can be used to create awareness among the common mass (Joshi, 2018).

Proper Awareness about Response and Support Mechanism: A study conducted by TATA Trusts stated that 90% of young adults are aware of CSA being a punishable and non-bailable offence, but only 72% of them are aware of the new five-year-old law named as POCSO Protection of Children against Sexual Offences Act (POCSO). This states that, however, young adults are aware of the various forms of sexual abuse and also aware of the POCSO mechanism system, but still, they lack overall legal literacy. Consequently, it is also important to create proper legal literacy camps to address proper awareness, and a support mechanism system should be initiated at each level- children's group, community, village child protection committee and other villages, block and district level committees working for curbing the rates of CSA (Tata Trusts, 2018).

The role of professional social workers in the support mechanism can be the gathering of preliminary information about the child, initial assessment and the circumstances which led to the sexual abuse of the child, the experience of the abuse, including (where the child is, age of the child, what kind of abuse was it, gathering information about what happened to the child, assessing the safety of the child and the whereabouts of the perpetrator-how far is he/she living from the child and his/her accessibility to the child), time frame and assessing the child's wellbeing and risks. Hence the role of social workers in the support mechanism is to gather information to evaluate the situation of the child, the circumstance which led to child sexual abuse, concern about the child's safety and the ability of the caregiver to protect and care for the child and evaluating the process of support mechanism would help to draft an intervention plan for the social workers (Ntwampe, 2013).

Proper Reporting System: ChildLine is working 24 x 7 provides a toll-free number-1098 which addresses children in distress conditions. However, still, then there are numerous cases of CSA. Therefore, ChildLine should organize several awareness programs on CSA. They should also emphasize the effects of CSA, survey to identify the cases of CSA and provide counselling and therapeutic sessions for the children. This is because most of the cases of CSA are underreported. As such, initiatives should be taken to ensure the reporting system strong enough

so that no cases are kept underreported and, thus, the perpetrators are restricted from continuing the process of abuse (Tata Trusts, 2018).

Education among Children on CSA: Lack of adequate awareness related to CSA among children and adolescents is one of the common prevalent factors. As a result, children are ignorant about any sort of maltreatment done against them. There is also a belief that educating children on CSA, sexuality or sex is not very well accepted in Indian society; the issue of CSA is still considered a taboo and social stigma in Indian society. Thus, a call is needed to be taken on the part of the community and society to educate their children on CSA so that they can protect themselves from such a form of violence (Singh et al., 2014).

The role of a professional social worker is to help introduce school-based educational programmes which will help to teach the students to learn the skills of identifying dangerous situations, being able to refuse an approach by the perpetrators, breaking off interactions and calling for help during any dangerous situations. Consequently, these programmes will help to promote exposure, help in raising self-esteem, create awareness among the students, reduce self-blame, and help in mobilizing observers. The goals of these programmes help in the prevention of sexual abuse of the children, and hence awareness about this concept of sexual violence can help them to have the knowledge and be oriented in the schools (Amandi & Karani, 2021).

Counselling Sessions for the Survivors of Sexual Abuse: CSA in India has been increasing at a high rate which states that the effects of CSA among the survivors are distress conditions, making themselves blame others for the conduct, making negative notions for themselves and suicidal attempts also. Several effects, such as mental health problems and psychological and physiological problems, make the situation even worse. So, initiatives can be taken by the Government to address these problems by establishing several counselling centres for these children; and also strengthening the community mechanisms strong enough to mainstream the survivors of CSA rather than stigmatizing the family and the child (Singh et al., 2014). The role of a professional social worker requires enhanced communication and networking skills which should be well coordinated and communicated so that there is an improved outcome of the cases of child sexual abuse. Moreover, improved communication within the team can help in the improved results for child sexual abuse cases. Hence, enhanced communication and networking would help to reach the goal (Franken, 2019).

Prohibiting Pornographic and blues films should be initiated, and strict action should be taken against the perpetrators who engage in such activities (Joshi, 2018).

Training among Teachers and School Officials on CSA: To prevent the high rates of CSA in India and across the world. Another important factor that should be addressed is imparting training on CSA should be made compulsory among the teachers and school officials. Consequently, this would help the teachers and other school officials to understand or identify any symptoms of CSA among children or the victims (Bellappa & Ghosh, 2015). Social workers play an important role in awareness creation, education and intervention.

The role of Social Workers in special education awareness creation and intervention is helpful for children while placed in school settings. School is one of the best places to engage students and identify their strengths and interests, providing them with skills to achieve success in life for children in difficult situations. Consequently, school social workers can collaborate, provide consultations, develop behaviour plans and also involve in training and resource building of the staff and teachers and educate them (Mavole, Mutisya & Wambulwa, 2017). Furthermore, the promotion of gender equitable norms to prevent gender-based violence and counselling for reducing the symptoms of CSA survivors in the rehabilitation homes set up by the government and NGOs. Another important intervention, as suggested, was a selection of Yuva Mitra, imparting training and information in educational institutions for peers and teachers to decrease the cases of sexual abuse among urban youths (Choudhry et al., 2018).

The importance of appointing school social workers would help the well-being of the children in the schools as they are trained personnel who are efficient in conducting casework and group work activity. Furthermore, they can also provide counselling for the sexually abused child and provide necessary interventions whenever necessary (Pavithra & Relton, 2012). The role of school social workers is to collaborate with the board of management of the various schools and the Ministry of Education to have sufficient information about teachers before recruiting them for schools. Moreover, if the teachers are found with evidence of sexually abusing children, their registration should be cancelled by the teacher's service commission, and they should be charged as per the laws and norms. Furthermore, it is also suggested that the role of school social workers is to impart awareness among children in the schools, which will help them to identify unsafe situations and act accordingly to protect themselves from any sexual abuse (Amadi & Karani, 2021).

Implementation of Prevention Programme of CSA: Social Workers must be appointed to implement the prevention programme. In a study conducted in South Africa, the suggestive measure to mitigate the problem of child abuse was suggested that policymakers should make prevention a priority which needs evidence-based policies and solutions. Hence, the implementation of the solutions helped to prevent abuse among children and was able to provide improved services to the affected children. Furthermore, improved collaboration between different sectors that provides preventative, rehabilitative and legal services is also required in South Africa, as suggested. Therefore, implementation of child protection strategies needs to be implemented in South African countries as well as in countries throughout the world with the view that prevention programmes, if implemented by social workers, would help to prevent cases of child sexual abuse (Framken, 2019). Moreover, the introduction of sex education in schools will help to enhance the learning about sexual abuse among children and its effects. Finally, the family should also play an important role in protecting their children so they are not abused by the perpetrators (Amadi & Karani, 2021).

Role of Civil Society Organizations (CSO): Another important factor contributing is the important role to be played by the CSOs that in-depth awareness of CSA among their implementing areas should be initiated on a large scale. Several sessions on good touch and bad touch should be displayed among the children through documentary films. Proper training among the community workers, Village Level Child Protection Committees, health professionals, counsellors, and police personnel should be initiated to address the child protection issues, including CSA. In continuation of this, the CSOs should impart knowledge on abuse, types of abuse, types of sexual abuse, and the preventive measures to defend against the abuser. They should also take the initiative on the child's psychological needs and be aware of them related to several legal measures. Thus, the CSOs should initiate several awareness programs for parents, which should focus on strengthening the relationship or their association between the parents and their children. Therefore, this would help to strengthen the primary group of the child to address any sort of sexual abuse conducted against them (Pavithra & Relton, 2012).

Civil society Organisations' role in countering sexual abuse against children is promoting advocacy, awareness programmes on human rights, child right, girl-child education, social justice, intervention in sexual abuse cases to advocate justice for the victims, collaboration with local civil society organisations to ensure prevention of sexual abuse, also to

collaborate with a partner to provide funding, training and sponsorship programmes for the victims (if helpless), and finally taking action against the cases of sexual violence (Sule & Sambo, 2021).

Social Workers play an important role in society to combat the issues of child sexual abuse. They engage children and help them to assess the challenges in social functioning, process information in ways that enables them to enhance their ability to discover solutions, develop skills to resolve problems in living, and also create support for change. The role of professional social workers is to link resources and services in the change strategy furthermore. They should connect people with services, advocate optimum benefits, also develop strong networks and communication among civil society organisations or service delivery networks and help to access resources. The social worker also needs to access resources for the children who are at risk of sexual abuse to a safer place and, as a whole, help to create new opportunities, programmes, and services and find resources (both internal and external) for them to ensure that the children at risk are taken care. The role of social workers is also to play the role of advocating on behalf of the children to the authorities. This will help to provide safety to children and awareness among the authorities about the abuse. As a result, necessary steps can be taken to guarantee the safety of the children (arrest the offenders) before the cases are not reported or solved in the community itself (Amadi & Karani, 2021).

Stringent Laws in India: Though several laws have been framed and thus implemented but still, then several cases of CSA are increasing daily. Therefore, the laws implemented are not enough and are inefficient in dealing with the cases of CSA and punish the perpetrators. In certain countries, to curb the rates of CSA in certain countries death punishment is applicable and thus should also apply to India. Though POCSO has been framed and implemented, due to its increased rates of CSA, further changes should be initiated. In certain cases of CSA with extremities, the death penalty should be made compulsory to ensure the protection of children against sexual abuse, rape cases, molestation, and violence (Kumar et al., 2012).

CONCLUSION

India's huge population comprising about 37% of the country's population, and every fifth child lives in India, states that children are vulnerable and susceptible to various forms of child maltreatment (Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation, 2018). Thus, the protection of children against

sexual abuse and neglect is one of the pivotal issues in providing them with proper development in their life. To ensure the protection of children against such violence, several policy frameworks at the national level in India were framed to address this problem of child sexual abuse and also to provide a strong remedy and framework to criminalize the same. However, still, there are several cases of such violence and exploitation among children. Therefore, to fight out the situation, we need to build up a strong, safe mechanism for children and ensure their safety for them. Thus, the paper concludes by stating that there are several measures from the social work spectrum to provide a support mechanism for the victims of CSA, and further support can be provided to them to ensure children's safety at different levels of society.

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