CHAPTER IV

CASE STUDIES AND INTERVIEWS
WITH KEY INFORMANTS
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The girl child sexual abuse is emerging as one of the most horrified offence in Beed district. So the aim of the present study is to understand the nature, causes and consequences of girl child sexual abuse and also to suggest remedial measures and coping strategies.

Extensive numbers of cases of girl child sexual abuse are selected by the researcher because after study in depth using appropriate methods, they can provide more valid portrayals of the person under study, better bases of personal understanding of what is going on and solid grounds for considering action. The case studies are highly appropriate when the goal is individualized outcome. It helps for fuller understanding of the phenomenon and processes. It provides great details that help the researcher to understand the complexity of human behavior. Case studies are particularly useful where one needs to understand a particular problem, a unique situation or a special person in great depth. It is useful in capturing emotive aspect of human behavior. It can be defined as ‘Case Study is a type of research method. The general objective of the case study is to develop as full an understanding of the subject of the research as possible’. According to Goode and Hatt the case study is not a specific technique. It is a way of organizing social data so as to present the unitary character of social object being studied.¹

Thus case study method is flexible and can deal with a wide spectrum of evidence. Documents, systematic interviews, direct
observations and even traditional surveys can be incorporated in case study.

Thirty cases are selected in the present study. Among them school going girl children were identified through group discussion in schools, 10 cases reported to police station and 10 cases from information available from key informants were selected for the case studies.

These cases under study include the cases of incest, rape, sodomy, intercourse, molestation, prostitution, pornography and exhibitionism. These are the different forms of sexual abuse which are included in the definition of sexual abuse of girl children. Thus the selected case studies in the present study are representing the above mentioned different forms of sexual abuse.

The family is the first building block of the society. The size and structure of the family and its capacity to sustain itself has played a important role in how children are raised. Institution of family is under stress and strain for various reasons and child, specially a girl child, is the victim of this breakdown of family structure. A girl child is exploited and abused within and outside the family. The following case studies are proves this statement.

**Case studies**

(Names of all girls are changed)

1. **Sexual Abuse By Grand Father**

   The status of a grandfather in an Indian family is that of a grand old man. The girl child holds the old man in high esteem as she has seen her parents and other people in the family almost worshipping him. The child looks at the patriarch with awe and respect. The child does not feel
anything wrong when the loving old man caresses her. But the girl child is shocked and bewildered when the same old man makes the girl an object of his lust.

“My grandfather tells me to sit in his laps and asks me to touch his ‘parrot’. He always loves me more and tells me not to tell this to others. I feel uncomfortable, but he forces me to do so, tells Ashwini. Ashwini, a twelve years old girl lives in a joint family with her father, mother, brother, grandfather, uncle and aunt. There was always quarrel between Ashwini’s grandfather and grandmother as her grandfather was having a sexual relationship with another woman, a poor widow from the village. Finally Ashwini’s grandmother left her home and went to her father’s house leaving her two grown up sons to the care of the old man.

Ashwini’s father is a driver and mother is an agricultural labourer. Both of them quarreled very often. Ashwini’s father is alcoholic. Even her grandfather also is addicted to alcohol. Ashwini’s mother does not like this. After the quarrel every now and then she goes to her father’s house. There is no one to look after Ashwini as everyone is busy in their work. Her grandfather used to ask her not to go with her mother and promised to look after Ashwini. Her grandfather usually took her to farm. There he exposed his private parts and asked the child to fondle them. This had started from the age of four for Ashwini. This continued until she reached the age of twelve years. She kept mum as he loves her very much and looks after her in the absence of her parents, as her father visits the village two or three times in a month due to his work as a driver.

One day as usual Ashwini’s grandfather took her to farm and raped her. By chance some people saw this act and beat him, as he and his family are known for their misconduct.
The mother of Ashwini came to know this and she reported the case in police station. The abuser, her grandfather was tried and on being found guilty was imprisoned for seven months only.

The act of Ashwini’s grandfather is not only a gross violation of her body but also of the trust of a dependent child in a caretaker relationship. Now the mother went to her father’s house with Ashwini and she asks to show her a place which is secure for her child.

Joint family system is the backbone of Indian culture, and is known for its values like trust in relationship, love and affection for family members and emotional bonds between one another in the family. The above case reveals that the Indian family is fast losing its value identity. The elders in the family who are most trustworthy care-takers of the children are violating the trust of the children. Instead of giving support to the children in difficult situation, they themselves, by their conduct are putting a question mark on their relationship with children.

[Source: Direct interview with the victim.]

2. Sexual Abuse By Cousin

Some children are more vulnerable than others because they are belonging to divorced or reconstituted families. Such families not only affect parent-child relationship but also relations between siblings. Children in such families are neglected and they are at risk of sexual abuse by family members.

Eight years old Anjali sat aloof, silently and there was a fear in her face. She sat on her two legs because she had injury in her vagina. The stitches were not properly given and she feels uncomfortable to sit. She has always pain in the stomach. Treatment was not taken properly. After
stitches they went only two or three times for checkup. Her mother has no time and nobody else is there to take care of her. Mother says that the child has no relief from the pain in stomach, because the treatment given was of no use and they have no money to show her in well equipped hospital and the mother said that Anjali was not the only the child. They have six children in their family and poverty never allows them to give the daughter proper treatment. The first need is to fulfill the basic needs of the family by earnings.

Anjali is the second daughter to her mother from her first marriage. Her step father’s is also a second marriage. His children from first marriage and second marriage are all living together. It is a reconstituted family. Anjali’s father is a drunkard and always beat his wife. They would quarrel very often. Anjali’s mother works in brick making site as her husband never works regularly. She is the bread earner in the family.

They are living in their ancestral house in which Anjali’s uncle also lives with his family separately, Anjali’s 20 years old cousin brother always came to play with her, he spent lot of time with her when he was alone, and he loved her very much. She liked him very much because her step siblings quarrel with her. In Indian family the status of a cousin is almost that of a real brother. Anjali’s cousin used to take her outside, in the farm and used to abuse her. He did different acts like touching her genitals, masturbating in front of her and forced to watch her. Form the age of five years he abused her by forcing her for oral sex and other sexual acts. He always asked her to keep silent because it was a secret between them.

One day Anjali’s cousin brother took her outside the village as usual and raped her by tying her hand to the tree trunk. Some villagers
saw her in unconscious condition having bleeding from her vagina. They brought her to home. Villagers stopped her parents from reporting to police saying that it may defame their family. It will create difficulties for her marriage. But one social worker helped them in reporting the case and the boy is in jail now.

The case proves that children under reconstituted families are at high risk as they are neglected, denied affection and deprived of emotional needs. It is generally found that the people discourage the parents of the victim from reporting the matter to police for fear of defamation.

This story shows that the children have adjustment problems in reconstituted families. The girl from first marriage of the woman feels lonely in the new family. Ill-treatment at the hands of stepfather and cousins is a common complaint. The girl is forced to do domestic work and also made to work outside to earn. Lack of communication between parents, no or little interaction with mother deprived the girl of her teenage needs of love and affection and small needs. Forgetting the values of relationship of brother and sister, the cousins sometimes abuse the trust of the girl and sexually abuse her. She loses faith in the relationship. Love for family life is lost forever.

[Source: Direct interview with the victim.]

3. **Sexual Abuse By Father**

   Sexual abuse is itself a trauma to the child, but when it is caused by a trusted close person like father how can the child believe in such relationship. This is discussed in case study No. 3.
Nagina a eleven years old girl studying in VI std. she has three elder sisters. Her parents are doing the work of scrap dealer. They have no other source of income.

Nagina’s mother is a second wife of Nagina’s father. Nagina is going to school and also doing domestic work and helping in their Bhangar selling work. Nagina says “sometimes the sisters go out in the night and come back dressing nicely and brought lot of things and money in the morning. Her father says that “these three daughters are for others and you are only for myself.” He always takes her to market gives her the things she likes. When her mother and sisters go out, he holds her in his arms and kisses her. He always does some other sexual acts with her. He tells her not to tell to anybody. She too loved her father but somehow did not like him touching her thighs and breast and genitals. She never told her mother as she felt her mother loved the three sisters more and there is always a quarrel between her parents as her father is alcoholic, he is not doing work properly and mother earns for the family. Her mother never liked her father.

One day when her mother and sisters were away to the market, her father came in saying that nobody is caring for him, they are enjoying the life and why he shouldn’t. He went near Nagina. She was sleeping. He asked her for intercourse. From that day it became routine for Nagina. She was helpless and in confusion to know what to do. One day her mother came to know this and she reported the case of rape against her husband and now the father is in jail.

The story speaks of how the sexual abuse made the girl child feel as spoilt, violated and a bewildering complex of guilt, anger and shame prevails. Father and daughter relationship is considered very
sacred, lovely and trust worthy as father is a protector and care-taker of child. The story shows how this sacred relationship of father and daughter became unhealthy, fearful and how a protector became a destructor.

[Source: Direct interview with the victim.]

4. **Sexual Abuse By Grandfather**

   Yellama a 14 years girl goes to her grandfather’s house in the holidays. Grandmother died when Yellama’s mother and aunty were kids. Her grandfather lives in the village and looks after his farm. Yellama’s parents were employed and they sent their child to her grandfather whenever he called her in the holidays so that she should not be alone and bored in her house. Her grandfather loves her very much and gave her whatever she wished. Yellama’s grandfather took her to the farm. He used to sleep with her and made ‘fun’ with her. At night he used to call her in his room and show her a different type of film in the dark. Then he used to do all those things shown in the film with a 14 years old girl. This continued for five years.

   The girl thought of telling her mother about what her grandfather was doing to her, but fearing that her mother might not believe her as the man is her mother’s father, she kept mum and she disliked her holidays which are generally very much liked by children. She thinks she lost her childhood.

   After some days the girl said that she was not feeling well so her mother took her to hospital and they came to know that Yellama is pregnant. Her parents were shocked and started beating the girl and asked her about the person responsible for this. She told about her grandfather’s behavior towards her. It was unbelievable for them. They never reported the case as it was a family matter and feared disrepute.
The story is an example of how the ‘child sexual abuse’ within the family violates the dependent child’s expectations of parental care, leading to confusion of roles. The child loses faith in the family and family members. The girl is depressed and confused. She lost the sense of self worth and dignity and developed an attitude of self sacrifice. She even thought of committing suicide.

The child kept mum as she might have felt that other family members would not believe her if she accused the old man of untoward behaviour. As grandfather, he is supposed to be her caretaker and protector. Moreover, the Indian culture taught her to respect and trust the elders in the family. This teaching did not allow her to speak about the abuse. Lack of interaction in the family made her keep mum. This story makes it clear that secrecy i.e. keeping mum increases the abuse of girl child within the family.

[Source: Interaction with the victim.]

5. **Sexual Abuse By Cousin**

Incest i.e. sexual relationship between a child and a related adult, has been identified as the most widespread form of child sexual abuse with a huge capacity for damage to a child. Children who received supportive response following disclosure had less traumatic symptoms and were abused for a shorter period of time. But the children who did not receive support from family members and others had more traumatic symptoms and they were abused for long period of time.

Kamala’s mother died when she was seven years old. Her father was working in sugar factory nearby. He came home once in a week and he was alcoholic. It was a joint family in which Kamala, her two aunts, two uncles, a grandmother and her five cousins were living together. She was the only child of her parents. She had to do households work and also
attend school. Her cousins were all brothers and she was the only female child. She liked to sing and wanted to become a singer.

When she was nine years old, her elder cousin brother who was 22 years old, told her that he knows one Guruji and he would take her to him. The cousin was a powerful person in the family as a job holder because except her father other male members were working in the farm. Her cousin brother brought a Harmonium and some new clothes for her and some CDs of songs. She is impressed with him as her teenage demands were fulfilled by him. She believed him to be a good brother. He took her to Guruji’s school twice in a week, while returning he took her to a temple outside the village and abused her. He forced her to expose her private parts and he exposed his private parts and forced her to fondle them. He said that it was a new game between both of them and it was their secret and she should not tell it to anybody. He promised her that he would give protection to her in her life and he would fulfill her wish to become a singer. It was continued for three years when she was 13 years old asked her for intercourse. Every night he used to call her in his room upstairs and had an intercourse with her. He told her that whenever he called her she should follow him.

She never spoke about her abuse in the family as her father had no proper interaction with her due to his addiction. She thought family members would not believe her if she spoke truth.

The cousin brother, a powerful person in the family, sexually abused this helpless teenage sister who trusted him as a protector and caretaker. Now she is depressed and anxious about her future.

This story speaks about the truth that sexual abuse that occurs in a context of granting of special privileges, may be as traumatic and
bewildering to the child as violent molestation. If the home and surrounding are not congenial enough and basic needs of foods, clothing, education and hobby are not met the child is likely to fall a prey to sexual abuse.

Absence of normal family life adversely affects the physical and emotional wellbeing of the child. The girl suffers with loss of appetite, lack of trust in family adults, fears of men, severe sleep disturbance and wants to be alone. Dreamy age of the girl is converted into an age of fear and depression.

This case also reveals that addiction of the father, tensed atmosphere in the family, presence of an authoritative cousin in the family, absence of congenial environment makes the girl suffer her abuse by the cousin. Family is a secure place, but abuse of girl child also occurs in the family and the abuse is by none other than the nearest and trusted member of the family. No wonder Indian family is fast losing its relevance and sanctity.

[Source: Interview with a social worker.]

6. **Sexual Abuse By Paternal Uncle**

   It is important to realize that child sexual abuse not only occurs in rural areas but it also occurs in urban areas and slum. Poverty, lack of education, absence of congenial atmosphere and overcrowding have been found as prominent factors in the occurrence of child sexual abuse in slum area of towns and cities.

   This story of sexual abuse of a poor girl reveals this fact. He said “I cannot live without you. If it is not possible for you to marry me do not marry anybody else. I can give you money to live happily.” Vidya said
“I am helpless and I am in confusion about what to do. I cannot ask my family members because they will not believe me.” These were the feelings of Vidya, a girl of 14 years. Her paternal uncle of 34 years sexually abused her since the age of 8 years. He used to give her chocolates and took her to garden. He used to visit their house daily as he was living in the same slum area. He showed her some dirty pictures when she was alone in the home. He said that he loved her very much. He gave her dresses, ear rings, bangles and also mobile as gifts. She liked him very much as her parents were not capable of bringing such things for her. Her father was a daily wage earner. Mother was ill. She had two brothers and three sisters. It was a large family with low income. The paternal uncle gave money whenever needed. Because he helped everyone in difficulty he was loved and trusted by all in the family. His wife had left him as she had an affair with a man in her father’s village. The possibility that the man could be an abuser is not considered by her parents and nobody objected to her going out with him and did not doubt when she came late from outside. He was satisfying his sexual urge by abusing Vidya within and outside the home or in lodges some times.

Her mother was ill and Vidya had to attend to her. It was difficult for Vidya to go outside so the uncle gave some sleeping pills to Vidya asking her to give the pills to her mother and then leave the house to meet him. He also gave her oral pills to avoid pregnancy and asked her to be relaxed.

The girl knew that the man was her paternal uncle and the marriage in this relation is prohibited. But the uncle said that he would keep her happy without marriage. She became irregular to schooling. She was in stress; she thought that if she told her mother it would affect her health. Disclosure of the matter might lead to defamation of the family as she
was the eldest daughter in home. But her uncle assured her and asked her not to worry as everything would be fine.

This went on for about six years and the girl was in dilemma, she felt guilty and even thought of committing suicide as she felt it to be an end of the road. She developed an inferiority complex and had sleeping problems.

The story indicates the truth that a child is at high risk when children are neglected; parents are experiencing financial problems, no communication between children and parents, and between husband and wife. In this situation the abuser lays the trap taking advantage of the situation, attracts the child towards him by giving things and by giving emotional support and wins the trust and misuses the trust of the child for sexual abuse of the trapped child.

The story also speaks about how the poverty, tensed atmosphere in the family and teenage of the girl, tempted her to believe the person who abused her sexually. A girl child, especially if she is poor, is considered as a commodity devoid of any personal choice and desire.

[Direct: interview with victim]

7. **Sexual Abuse By Perverted Father**

Personality disorder is responsible for child sexual abuse, abuser often had a propensity for impulsive and / or antisocial act that extended beyond the parenting role. A parent, according to this explanation, may abuse his child due to unmet emotional needs. Emotional scars from his own abusive family background affects his ability to care for his own offspring. Such a father abused his own girl child.
Gauri was eight years old when her Baba was playing with her some different odd games. He used to touch her vagina, inserting objects like pencil, pen etc. He touched different parts of her body. One day when she was 11 years old her mother saw what her Baba was doing. The mother was shocked and quarreled with her husband saying why he became so shameless and inhuman with his own child. He promised her that he would not do it again.

He was a teacher. His wife said that he was not talking much, not laughing, always sat silently, did not mix with others. He was always interested in playing with children especially the girl children. He loved Gouri very much and he was doing all her work from the day of her birth. But all the time he abused the child by making different sexual acts with the girl.

That was a Sunday when Gauri’s mother went to the market at 4.00 pm. Gouri and her father were watching T.V. she returned from market and she saw her child lying unconscious with bleeding from her vagina. Her father was sitting in the corner. She rushed to him and started beating him. In return he pushed her and beat her on the back. He was not having any guilty feeling also.

The 13 years old girl had injury to her vagina and had psychological problem. She took her child to the hospital immediately and then reported the case to Police. The man was punished for life imprisonment. Mother’s dream of happy home came to an end.

The story indicates the truth that the closer the relationship between the offender and the child, the greater the resultant trauma. When an outsider abuses a child, she turns to the family for support. But if the abuser is a family member, i.e. father the child learns that
the person, who is supposed to protect and love her, is the person who hurts to such an extent that she loses faith in parental relationship. This results in greater trauma. This may produce in the child an anxiety and fear and may potentially worsen the impact of trauma.

This case again proves that the relationship which is most trusted in the Indian family, the relationship of father and daughter is losing its value and strength bringing down the man to the level of beast.

[Source: Interview with police inspector.]

8. **Sexual Abuse By Paternal Uncle**

Many a times the mother knows that the brother of her husband is sexually abusing her girl child, but she dares not to tell this to her husband as she feels that her husband would not listen to her as his brother is the culprit. Silence of mother and girl child increases the strength of abuser to abuse the girl.

“My ‘chacha’ masturbates and shows me different naked photographs and asks me to do all that is shown in the photographs. I do not like all this but I am afraid to say ‘no’.” says fifteen years old Julie who is being abused by her paternal uncle since last four years.

John, her paternal uncle visits her home every weekend. He lives in a place 20 km away from her town. He is working as a manager of her father’s hotel. Julie, a student of X standard, used to study at night in her room and her uncle during the weak end comes to help her in her studies. At that time he touches her private parts, masturbates her, shows her naked photographs and forces her for intercourse. She is afraid of weekends as she is unable to tell about her problem to anybody. Her
uncle is very close to her parents and they believe him to be very sincere responsible person and loyal to them their family as.

**Once she told her mother that her uncle was a bad person, her mother had beaten her and told her to keep quiet and not use bad words against her uncle. Her mother was shocked but was not in a position to avoid it because of her own powerlessness.** He was a trusted and close person, but he was sexually abusing the girl. Julie became silent, helpless and lost her trust in family relationship.

Sexual abuse by close relatives is a fact of life for many children in India as it happens in all kinds of families and in all areas. It disturbs the child and makes the child self-blaming, guilty, causes mistrust in herself and in others.

[Source: Direct Interview with victim.]

9. **Sexual Abuse By Uncle**

Rukmini’s Father lived elsewhere with his second wife. Rukmini’s mother lived in the house with three children and made a living by selling liquor. The mother had no time for domestic work as she was always busy with her business. Ruknimi could not go to school regularly as she had to do the domestic chore like cooking, washing and in addition she had to take care of her younger siblings. The father of the children would visit them once in a month. Sister of Rukmini’s father and her husband lived in the adjacent house. The 34 years old uncle of Rukmini was jobless and a drunkard. One day Rukmini’s mother went to some other town for some work and during night Rukmini was sleeping alone with her younger brother and sister. The man next door, her uncle, entered her room, took her to the other room and raped her. Rukmini told her mother
next day about the incident and the mother lodged a complaint with the police, but the man is absconding and the police have not yet traced him.

The abuser in this case used the girl child to satisfy his own sexual gratification due to lack of moral values in the man. Unsettled families lead to child neglect and such situation tempts the potential abuser to exploit the children in their own home. The days of playful enjoyment in the life of the child are now full of horror, sorrow, guilt and shame. Inadequate control of the family, neglect of the child’s needs by the family and helplessness of the child taken together has resulted in the sad incident.

[Source: Direct interview with victim.]

10. **Sexual Abuse By Brother-In-Law**

Sheela’s mother works as a farm laborer. Her father died one year back. Sheela goes to school but also works on the farm during vacations. Sheela has no brother. Two of her sisters are married. One of her sister’s husbands asked her mother to allow her to accompany them when he and his wife were going for sugarcane cutting as Sheela’s sister was pregnant and needed help. 14 years old Sheela accompanied her sister to do household work and also to do work of sugarcane cutting.

One night when she was sleeping outside the hut she felt some one’s hand on her breasts. She looked up and saw that it was her brother-in-law. He threatened her not to shout and abused her. This went on for about four months of the sugarcane cutting season. She was frightened and was under pressure. She was in utter confusion about what to do and whom to tell. She dared not complain to her sister against her brother-in-law. **Sheela’s story is an example of how sexual abuse by a close relative is all the more damaging as the girl cannot protest against**
the abuser and the abuse continues. Life becomes bewildering as the child tries to cope with the feeling of hurt and fear when the near relative betrays the trust of the child. The child loses faith in relationships and it becomes very difficult for the child to trust any other person and the relationship.

[Source: Interaction with doctor.]

11. Sexual Abuse By A Brother-In-Law

Beed district is known for its migrant laborers. People migrate for sugarcane cutting for six to eight months every year. These people are mostly landless laborers and people with small or un-economical holding. There is no other source of income for them at their place of residence and poverty compels them to go to distant places in search of job.

During this season, the girl child in the family has either to accompany her parents or stay at home in the care of grandparents looking after younger brothers and sisters. Away from the watchful eyes of their parents, the girl children are an easy prey for the scheming adults around them. The abusers tempt the girls by giving gifts or by indulging in sweet talk and the innocent teenage girls are victims of sexual abuse.

Asha was just three years old when her father died. Her mother was a mental case. She had one married brother and one married sister. Both the families were engaged in sugarcane cutting in other state. Asha also accompanied them leaving her school. At the sugarcane farm they lived in huts. Her brother-in-law used to sing songs and made comments on Asha. He took opportunity to misbehave with her whenever she was alone and went to the extent of even raping her on occasions. She became pregnant and the brother-in-law ran away leaving her to the mercy of her sister and brother. They blamed her for the incident and tortured her
mentally and physically. They asked her not to let this incidence known to anybody as that would make it difficult for them to get her married. The girl at her tender age does not know what to do with a child to be born of her. She is just passing her days uncertain of her future. This case is also an example of a poor teenage girl being sexually abused by a near relative. The stigma attached to her character and the negative attitude of the family members weigh heavy on the mind of this girl and she has to live life of loneliness, feeling guilty and resigned to her fate.

It is sad to find that the caretakers, family member’s even parents, commit the heinous crime of sexual abuse and rape of the child in their care. Such incidences have a deep effect on the psyche of the child and the future life of the child becomes a life of shame, guilt, self-pity and fear losing faith in family relationships. Rarely the child can grow into a healthy and happy adult. The unfortunate girl child needs ventilation of emotions and help to cope with psychological problem.

[Source: Direct interview with victim.]

12. Sexual Abuse By Paternal Uncle

Jyoti was thirteen years old girl when her father died. Her mother was daily wage earner and she had four children, three younger to Jyoti. Jyoti at this tender age was burdened with the responsibility of her siblings and also of domestic work. She was staying at home and did not go to school. She had an uncle who was alcoholic and criminal minded. This man has established physical relations with her mother and used to stay for the night in their small house. After a year or two he started visiting Jyoti during day time in the absence of her mother and other children. He started abusing the grown up girl. She could not dare to tell
her mother as she thought that mother would only blame her and would not say anything to the man as they were intimate with each other.

By finding no other option she fled from the home and was sitting all alone at the bus stand. A lady befriended her and took her to her house. The lady enquired about her, showed sympathy, gave her food and shelter, and assured protection from the man. After few days the lady pushed the girl in prostitution. One day this child prostitute was rescued by police in a raid and was sent to remand home. **Her bitter experience of life at home and also in outside world made her depressed and withdrawn. She needed a long-term psychological treatment which was not available at the remand home.**

The way of life of the mother in this case had resulted in spoiling the life of the girl and landed her in more trouble in an eagerness to escape from the abuser.

[Source: Reported - Direct interview with victim.]

13. **Sexual Abuse By Male Cousin**

Sexual abuse of girl child does not always take place in poor and uneducated families. It also occurs in the well-to-do, happy homes of middle class people. Fourteen years old Anita’s parents are govt. employees and are having a house of their own. Her parents want her to become a doctor. They send her to coaching classes. They have provided her a separate room for her studies. In their anxiety to see their daughter get good marks in her entrance exam, they asked her cousin, her aunt’s son, a student of final year engineering, to guide and help her in her studies. The young boy is tempted to touch her checks, thighs, and even breasts when they were alone in her room. She is restless, mentally disturbed and cannot concentrate on her studies. He also shows her some
dirty pictures and speaks in a very vulgar language on phone. He tells her that it would create difficulties for her marriage, and nothing would happen to him if she tells others about him. She is very upset and is not being able to sleep properly in the night.

In their innocence, the parents don’t suspect that the young boys are also likely to be tempted to do untoward things when the situation is favorable. In this case, the parents of the girl are also responsible for the plight of the girl. They should have been more cautious and should not have allowed the girl and the boy the privacy to indulge in sexual encounter.

[Source: Unreported - Direct interview with victim.]

14. **Sexual Abuse By Brother-In-Law Of Sister**

Ameena, a fifteen years old girl from a small village came to the town for her higher education. As there was no hostel for girls, she had to stay with her elder sister’s family. Her sister worked as domestic help in some houses in the locality and the sister’s husband worked in a factory. Ameena went to school up to 12.30 pm. After returning from school she would do some domestic work and keep herself engaged in her studies. A young man, brother-in-law of her sister, was having a Kirana shop in a nearby village and would often come to town for purchases etc. Having come to know that Ameena is usually alone in the house in the afternoon, his visits to the town and to the house of his brother increased. He was not discouraged from doing so by her sister. He would bring costly gifts for Ameena, would take her out to market, to hotels and even to cinema houses. Knowing full well that he was a married man, the girl and her sister allowed him to develop physical contacts with Ameena. It was only when Ameena was pregnant that she and her sister realized their mistake.
This case reveals that the grown up girl, though child by definition, allowed herself to be exploited and abused and her sister did nothing to protect the girl. No wonder that the girl felt shame and guilt as it was her fault and is depressed. It cannot be denied that due to ignorance about sex and the age of the girl, she was carried away by her own temptation and did not pay attention to consequences of her behavior. The conduct of her sister also was quite opposite to what was expected of her as the guardian of the girl. Though there was clearly a violation of the trust of the child and her family, an easy access to child and no discouragement from her guardian sister, for reasons best known to her, helped the young married man to abuse the girl.

[Source: Unreported - Direct interview with victim.]

15. **Sexual Abuse By Neighbour**

Geeta, a thirteen years old girl is studying in VIII class. Her 25 years old neighbour is a photographer by profession. He started visiting her house and succeeded in gaining the affection and trust of her family members. **This is the typical ‘modus operandi’ of the persons intending to sexually abuse girls.** He photographed her and gave her gifts on her birthday. He also called her to his photo studio and photographed her in different poses. He told her that she was a beautiful girl and with photogenic features, had good prospects in modeling profession. He persuaded her in giving some revealing and half naked photos. These photographs were used by him to force her to succumb to physical intimacy.

Geeta’s father is an addict and the mother is a wage earner in the family. Brother is also a spoilt boy. The atmosphere in the family is not congenial and friendly. No help was available to her to get rid of the
nasty man. In a disorganized family there is no interaction between the children and parents. This prevents the girl from discloser of the abuse and the helplessness of the girl only increases the abuse.

The teenage of the girl, the temptation and absence of normal family life are the causes of the plight the girl finds herself in. The scheming neighbour took advantage of the situation and abused the girl. Normally children look upon their neighbours as their will wishers. They expect parental care and love from them, but such incidences show that the girl children do so to their own peril.

[Source: Unreported - Direct interview with victim.]

16. **Sexual Abuse By Neighbour**

Fifteen years old pinky is worried, confused, disturbed and mum. She is afraid of her middle aged neighbour. Her father is in other place for his job. He comes once or twice a month to see his family. Her mother is a working woman and goes to bed early as she is tired from her work and has to get up early the next day. It is the matriculation year for Pinky and she studies till late in the night. This night time is used by the elderly man next door to disturb her. He would come to her window and show obscene pictures on his mobile phone to her. Sometimes he would also show his private parts to her. He is known as a good person in the area and she is afraid nobody would believe her even if she told about his untoward behavior to others. She is in utter confusion as whom to tell and how to tell. She is unable to concentrate on her studies and the important year of her studies is being spoiled and wasted.

Child sexual abuse is a grave form of abuse because of its layers of guilt and shame. It is important to recognize that sexual abuse does not always involve body contact. Pornography is a serious form of sexual
abuse which results in serious emotional harm. Exposing a child to sexual situations or materials which are sexually abusive is equally damaging to the psyche of the child. Effect of such situations on the mind of the child is far reaching as the child is tormented by shame and guilt. The symptoms like depression, anxiety, fear and eating disorders are seen in a child who is exposed to such abuse. The child loses interest in studies and in playing with other children and thus the very childhood of the child is spoiled. Sometimes the effect of this abuse remains for a long time on the psyche of the child. The behavior of the neighbour in this case is most disgusting and reprehensible.

[Source: Unreported - Direct interview with victim.]

17. Sexual Abuse By Neighbour

Incident of sexual abuse makes the child develop negative sense of self as the child feels ashamed. Sushma, a fifteen years old girl, was living in a village with her parents, grandparents, two brothers and two sisters. Father was a farmer and her mother also worked on the farm. Sushma’s grandfather was the head of the family and being a retired government servant commanded an unquestioned authority in the family matters. All decision making power was centered in him and nobody dared to oppose him. Sushma’s parents were asked to live on the farm along with their other children. Only Sushma was allowed to reside with her grandparents and was said to be the most loved one of her grandfather. Raju, a 25 years old boy from the neighbourhood developed intimacy with her by promising her to marry. Her resistance to his advances was dismissed by him by saying that they were lovers and nothing was bad when the boy and a girl were in love with each other. Moreover, they were to marry soon. After abusing her sexually he
disclosed that he had no intension to marry her and that it was his hobby to have affairs with girls like Sushma. She was shocked and attempted suicide by drinking pesticide which was easily available to her in her house.

As it was a case of attempted suicide, the village elders tried to hush up the matter by arranging the marriage of the two lovers. Though both of them belonged to the same caste and Sushma was from a well-to-do family, the parents of boy refused to have her as their daughter-in-law saying that the girl was an illegitimate child of her grandfather. Village people suspected that sushma’s mother had illicit relationship with her father-in-law. The patriarchal atmosphere in the family and the dominating nature of her father-in-law had not allowed her to avoid the advances of the old man. The stigma of illegitimate birth attached to the child became an obstacle in the way to her happiness.

The head of the family had not only spoiled the life of his daughter-in-law but also the life of his granddaughter. Breakdown of the value system of the family and lack of morality has made the life of the family members pitiable.

[Source: Reported - Direct interview with victim]

18. **Sexual Abuse By Neighbor**

Chaya was just four years old when she was a victim of sexual abuse by an elderly neighbour. Her parents were wage earners. Whenever they were away for work leaving her alone at home, she would go to the neighbour’s house to play with their child. ‘Balu Mama’, the neighbour would call her to sit in his lap. He would touch her private parts. The girl child, in her innocence, did not understand his motive behind the ‘touch’. The man was alcoholic and usually quarreled with
his wife. After one such incident the lady left her husband and went to live with her parents. One day this man, perverted as he was, made the girl sit in his lap, removed her clothes, forced himself on her and tried to penetrate her. There was partial penetration and the poor child suffered vaginal injuries. After a day or two the girl complained of pain and difficulty in passing urine. The mother was alarmed and on inspection it was found that the girl’s vagina was swollen and reddish. On enquiry the girl told her mother what had happened.

The mother reported the matter to the police. The girl was sent for medical examination, but rape was not reported as there was no penetration. The sole statement of the child was not believed and the charge of attempted rape was not proved against the accused. The poor mother was shocked and lost faith in criminal justice system. The unfortunate girl had to live with the memory of the ugly incident throughout her life.

This case points out the lacuna in justice system dealing with cases of child sexual abuse. The offence was of an attempted rape. The victim/complainant were just a four years old child. The court ought to have believed her statement to give the verdict ‘guilty’ even though there was no corroborative or medical evidence. There was no reason for the girl to speak lie, or to make a statement that was not true.

[Source: Reported - Direct interview with victim.]

19. **Sexual Abuse By Neighbour**

“I loved Pintya as he looked like a hero from cinema.” Says 14 years old girl Varsha about her 25 years old boy friend. He gave gifts to her on her birthday, on valentine day, and also on some festivals. Both
her parents were wage earners and the mother was in relationship with a farm-hand. There were always quarrels between Varsha’s mother and father on this issue but the father of Varsha, somehow, could not dissuade her mother from her wrong-doing as she was also earning and maintaining the family. One day Varsha eloped with Pintya to Pune and they lived there for about six months. Varsha found that her lover was a pic-pocket and had been several times in jail. They returned to their village and stayed at the farm of one of his friends outside the village. This friend also abused her as he gave them shelter. Varsha repented and returned to her parents and was fortunate that they received her and now she stays with them. Her future is dark.

Due to her age and temptation she eloped with her friend not knowing the consequences of her imprudence. She had to return to her parents with a feeling of bitterness and hopelessness. Her father reported the case to police. *Tender age, poverty and innocence about the consequences made the girl meet the boy at cinema halls and in Public Park. Before long the girl developed complete trust and faith in the boy, sufficient for her to decide to leave her parental home and elope with him to an unknown destination, without realizing the consequences.*

[Source: Reported - Direct interview with victim.]

20. **Sexual Abuse By Known Person (School Peon)**

After her special class was over in the evening, Seema had to stay in her class room. The teacher and other students had left. Seema was copying some notes given by her teacher and the teacher had asked her to give the original notes to the peon of the institute, an old man. After completion of her writing when she went to the peon to hand him over the
notes she was bewildered by the behaviour of the old man. He snatched her dupatta, pulled her in his arms, torn her churidar and tried to rape her. She shouted very loudly and some boys who were playing on the ground outside came running helped her to free herself from the clutches of the old man.

The boys also gave a beating to the peon, thought till then to be a gentleman. Even though the head of the institution came to know of the incident, he was not ready to report to police saying that the institution would be defamed. There is no information whether the culprit was removed from the job or not. Seema told her parents about the incidence and did not go to school the next day. She thought other students from her school were talking about the incidence, and a feeling of shame and self-blame filled her mind. Her parents were also of the opinion of withdrawing her from the school. However, some other members of her family persuaded her parents to send her to some other school as it was her Xth std class. Though she went to school again she was not the innocent, joyful girl any more.

Such incidents make the children depressed and they adopt attitude of self sacrifice, either positively withdrawing from the surroundings or acting out in a self destructive way of thinking of committing suicide.

In the Indian culture, the elders- due to their age and experience- are respected and trusted persons. This case of Seema shows how the trust of the girl and his own age was misused by the aged peon in an attempt to abuse the girl. **This shows the deterioration of value system and morality in the society. Even senior citizen forget their age and behave in an uncivilized manner.**

[Source: Direct interview with victim.]
21. **Sexual Abuse By Known Person**

Ayesha, 17 years old girl, and her mother lived in a village. Ayesha’s father had died of cancer. Both, the mother and the daughter, worked as laborers at a brick kiln. The owner of the kiln used to bring his Tiffin and shared his lunch with them. They believed that he was a good person and was helping them. Though married he became close to Ayesha and visited their house at night time also. He even talked of leaving his wife for the sake of Ayesha. One evening he gave some tablets to her saying that she would feel better as she was tired. She slept and when she woke up in the morning, she found herself naked in the room and no one else was there. The owner of the brick kiln met Ayesha the next day and behaved as if nothings had happened. He would give tablets to her every night and rape her. He gave her money and mobile phone and said that he wanted to make her happy anyway. The 35 years old man abused Ayesha for about two years. Mother of the girl, a poor lady kept quiet and did not raise her voice in protest as she thought that nobody would help or support her.

Ayesha has now become psychic; she does not go to work, speaks to nobody and sits silently at home. There was an attempt to suicide also. Perhaps she expected the man to marry her. Poverty made Ayesha a victim of sexual abuse. The mother and daughter felt helpless as there was nobody to help them in the situation.

This story reveals that poverty, ignorance and illiteracy made Ayesha an easy prey of the abuser who exploited the poor adolescent girl due to her poverty and helplessness.

[Source: Interview with doctor]
22. **Sexual Abuse By Known Person**

Fifteen years old Kalawati was living on their farm with her grandmother. Her parents had gone to Karnataka for sugar cane cutting. A young man of 35 was working on the farm during day time and an old worker gave them company during the night time. The young man gained the trust of the girl and of the old woman by helping them in various ways. They believed him and thought that he would protect them from any ill. Gradually the girl became close to him. Taking advantage of the situation, the young man started regularly abusing her by giving gifts like clothes, chappals, Bangles, Cosmetics which were never given to her by her parents. She was impressed and was tempted to do anything that the young man wished her to do. The young man assured her of marriage but when she became pregnant. The old lady was bewildered and was unable to decide what to do as the parents of the girl were far away. The young man suggested abortion and also volunteered to give money required. The poor girl was shocked and suffered a trauma from which it was difficult for her to recover.

Migration of parents, helplessness of grandmother, poverty, ignorance as to the consequences of sexual intercourse due to the teenage of the girl, and not having healthy family environment made it easy for the abuser to exploit the girl. This again shows the violation of her trust and deterioration of morality and value system in society which made the girl suffer.

[Source: Interaction with doctor]
23. **Sexual Abuse By Known Elderly Person**

Kalpana, a fifteen years old girl, and her friend came from village to a town for their High School education. They attended tuition classes for X std. There was a fifty years old man, a bank employee, in the neighbourhood. He used to come and sit in their room till late in the night and help them in their study of mathematics. He spoke so nicely that the girls in their innocence believed him to be their well wisher. One day Kalpana’s friend went to her village as her mother was sick. The old man volunteered to give Kalpana Company for the night and abused her in the night. This went on for about a week as Kalpana’s friend was away to her village. The tender girl was abused by the so called gentleman. The parents of the girl were shocked but did not report the incident to the police for fear of stigma and defamation. After the old man was transferred to other town, it was found that he had abused many other girls before in this fashion. The poor girl suffered physically, had headache, disturbed sleep, anxiety and eating disorders. She lost weight and looked pale and sick. She did not do well in her exam and had to discontinue her education.

Sexual abuse hurts the child and it may lead to low academic achievement, poor concentration and it also affects the ability of the child to develop trustworthy and intimate relationship with adults. Due to the age of the abuser the girl did not expect him to behave in this manner and he misused her trust.

Indeed, because of social stigma and shame attached to the victims, sexual offences remain one of the most misunderstood and under reported crimes which gives strength to the abusers to abuse
the innocent, tender girls. The girls should be taught to respect the behaviour instead of age of a person.

[Source: Unreported - Direct interview with victim.]

24. **Sexual Abuse By Known Person**

Shilpa was 13 years old and was studying in VII std. She lived with her mother in a rented house in the town. Her father was a teacher and lived in some other town with his second wife. Shilpa’s mother had to work for their living. Deepak, brother of house owner, was a young man of 30 years and worked as truck driver in Mumbai. This young man visited his brother very often and developed friendship and intimacy with Shilpa. He gave her costly gifts and asked her to accompany him to Mumbai tempting her to the attractive way of life at Mumbai and also by giving her false promise of marriage. He also took her to his native place, introduced her to his relatives as his would be wife. Both stayed there for a week with his disabled parents. He gained her confidence and repeatedly abused her.

One fine morning he just dropped her at the bus-stand of her town and went away with a promise to return soon. She waited and waited for him and neither did he return nor talked to her on phone. The heart broken girl now stays with her grandmother who only blames the poor girl for the incident. Shilpa’s other relatives also blame her for the unfortunate incident in her life.

Separation of parents, neglect of the girl by the family is the situation taken advantage of by the man who lured the poor girl to the life of her dreams. The harsh realities of life are revealed to the girl at great cost. [Source: Unreported - Direct interview with victim.]
25. Sexual Abuse By Known Person

Rohini, a thirteen years old girl, was a victim of sexual abuse. Father was a marginal farmer living in a joint family of his parents, his step mother, wife, three daughters and a son. Two elder daughters were married and Rohini, the youngest daughter was a mentally challenged girl. Her brother attended school. As she was not going to any school, she helped her parents in household work and on the farm also. Once two young boys, knowing that there was no one else in the house except Rohini, entered the house and molested her. She started crying and could not understand what they were doing to her. She was an easy prey. Two elderly women heard her cries and came to her help but it was too late and the boys ran away after spoiling the girl. Body of a girl was an object of enjoyment for the boys and the poor girl only felt that some horrible thing had happened to her! This case was registered in police station and still the family is waiting for judgment.

The unfortunate girl is victim of both, her pitiable situation and the mischief of the boys. The girl ought not to have been left unattended. The boys were cruel and deserve harsh punishment for the crime committed by them, but the case also highlights the necessity of some special care to be given to such children.

[Source: Reported - Direct interview with victim.]

26. Sexual Abuse By Known Person

The two boys were vagabonds and rowdy from the locality. They were out of the control of their parents also. They would tease the girls of the area. One day, when Sangeeta, a 14 years old girl was about to leave for her school, they pushed her inside her house. Her parents had already
gone for work and her younger siblings had also left for school. As she was all alone in the house, the boys started misbehaving with her. She got horrified and started shouting but nobody came to her help. After the boys left she went to the farm to her mother crying and told her mother about the incident. Her father in the evening told the police Patil and the Sarpanch of the village but they refused to entertain the complaint. Even the police did not take cognizance of the case as there was no rape and just warned the young boys and let them free. The boys were not brought to book and were not punished. When the police which must give protection to people, refuse to do their duty, no wonder the antisocial elements in the society are emboldened and are a constant threat to the society.

[Source: Reported - Direct interview with victim.]

27. **Sexual Abuse By Known Person**

After Sujata’s birth her mother died and her father left home leaving Sujata to her aunt’s care. Aunty had four children of her own and the uncle was always ill and did not work for living. When Sujata was just five/six years old, the aunty would ask her to do all household work. She was not sent to school and was treated as burden in the family. When she was a little grown up, say of the age of thirteen, she was sent to work as house maid at other family’s houses. A young man took advantage of the situation gave her money and gifts and developed physical contact with her. He also made her believe that someday he would marry her. One day the young man sent her to one of his friends and the girl, lured by money and gifts, was made to live the life of prostitute. The ‘aunty’ was only interested in the money brought by her and gradually the girl started believing that money was everything in life and love and morality
were all meaningless things. Her experiences of harsh reality of life made this thirteen years old girl become insensitive to the good things of life.

The young girl, now, has an infection of STD and is HIV positive. Sexual abuse at an early age spoiled the childhood and damaged her mental and physical wellness.

An orphan is generally forced to work for earning, exposing the child to the vagaries of the society. The girl in this case had no home and the relative exploited her by pushing her into a life of prostitute. The people around, instead of helping her to free herself from the life of drudgery, only took advantage of her situation. This harsh reality of life only told the unfortunate girl that money was everything in life and love, morality and character are all meaningless things.

[Source: Unreported - Direct interview with victim.]

28. Sexual Abuse By Known Person

Vimala’s father lost his leg in an accident and was unable to do physical labour. Vimala’s mother had to shoulder the responsibility of earning for her husband, three children and also her in laws. Vimala, a girl of fifteen and a student of IX std. had to leave school and accompany her mother for sugarcane cutting on a sugarcane farm. They were staying in a camp near a sugar factory. Vimala sang well and used to sing songs while doing the work of sugarcane cutting. This youthful good-looking girl soon drew the attention of an officer of the sugar factory staying nearby and he persuaded her to give up hard labour of sugarcane cutting and to work as house maid at his house instead. He would give good dresses and gifts to her and much more money than she expected. He also promised a job for her disabled father at the factory. Gradually he developed intimacy with her and established physical contacts. This went
on for nearly six months, the period of sugarcane cutting season. He did not arrange for job for her father at the factory and Vimala and her parents had to return to their village. Vimala could not adjust with her life at the village and went into depression. She also attempted suicide.

This case of Vimala is an example of a girl child who had to suffer the ignominy of sexual abuse and its consequences of stress and strain. The family had to move from place to place in search of job forcing children leave their school and live the life of nomads. Persons like the factory officer take advantage of plight of such girl children; abuse them with an attitude of ‘use and throw’. The life of the girl was spoiled.

[Source: Unreported - Direct interview with victim.]

29. Sexual Abuse By Teacher

The teacher-student relationship is considered sacred in India. A teacher is an idol for the student and they respect him. Fatima, a school girl of VII std. was abused by her teacher. Salma, mother of Fatima, had lost her husband in an accident leaving behind his parents and three daughters and two sons. Salma was burdened to earn for the family. Fatima was sent to her maternal uncle for schooling. After few days one male teacher of her school made himself dear to her by helping her and gaining her faith. Fatima in her innocence trusted him. He gave her costly gifts and took her to his farm. He had a two wheeler and a four wheeler as well. The girl was also attracted towards the man with an attractive personality. Many times he took her to his house and she stayed there with him for the night. The wife of the 40 years old man was helpless as she had two daughters and a son from her husband and was afraid that the future of her children would be jeopardized. Fatima’s uncle knew the
affair but was silenced by the teacher by offering money. He even blackmailed her by taking her photographs. False promise of marriage was also given to continue the illicit relationship. When the teacher refused to pay any more, the maternal uncle of Fatima reported the matter to police, a case was filed and the culprit is on bail. The girl returned to her mother. She suffers from physical and mental illness, happy days of childhood are lost forever and the future of the girl is hopeless.

This story of Fatima is an example of an immoral behavior of teacher with his student which is unworthy of his profession.

[Source: Direct interaction with victim.]

30. Sexual Abuse By Stranger

Kasturi’s parents died in an accident when she was just 11 years old. Her maternal uncle brought her to his home. One day when her uncle and aunt had gone to their farm for work, a lady who was their neighbour, asked Kasturi to accompany her to the city to make some purchases. The girl initially refused but somehow was persuaded by the lady to go with her. Once outside the village the lady handed over the girl to two young boys who were already waiting by the road side. The boys forcibly took the girl to the bushes and raped her. They threatened her not to tell about the incident to anybody. However, there was physical injury and the blood stained under-garments of the girl were noticed by her aunt. On being questioned, the girl had to tell her aunt about the incident. Instead of reporting the case to the police, her guardian scolded and beat the girl calling her a girl of bad character. Instead of giving her any support they insisted on her to leave their house. The girl had nowhere to go, and therefore, was depressed. For no fault of her, the girl was blamed. In fact the girl was the victim of deceit. She was dependent on her uncle
and aunt and they were denying her any support. This shows the negative attitude of the society towards the girls who are victims of sexual abuse. The boys are scot free when they could have been easily identified and punished.

[Source: Unreported - Direct interview with victim.]

These above mentioned case studies prove that sexual abuse of girl children is disturbing, abhorrent and very often an unimaginable. Unfortunately it exists in our society. Girl children are sexually abused within and outside the family by the family members and other relatives or by known persons or by the persons in authority over the child. These are the persons who wield moral and physical authority over the child and are responsible for socialization of the child. Many times these very persons are damaging the child’s future by sexually abusing the child. These persons by virtue of their power over the child due to age, relationship or position of strength in the family use children to meet their own sexual urges.

These cases are the harsh realities happening in our neighbourhood, friend circle and even in our own family. It is more shocking that the persons who are supposed to be responsible for socialization of the children are the ones who are destroying their future. Childhood, which ideally should be a carefree time of life, filled with love and joy, becomes a shameful experience for these abused children.

In the present case studies the abusers are grandfather, father, male cousin and brother-in-law, paternal uncle, relatives, neighbour, teacher, the persons at work place, other known and trusted persons. The most respected elderly person in the family is grandfather whose status in the Indian family is that of a grand old man. He is a person who cares for his
grand children and is a trustworthy and beloved man in the family. But some of these case studies reveal the fact that the grandfather or elder persons in the family completely disregard the child’s immaturity and inability to understand sexual behavior and use her to fulfill their sexual desire. The girl child is shocked and bewildered when the same old man makes her an object of his lust. In Indian society the relationship of father brother and uncle is very sacred and trustworthy but some of the cases prove that these relations are losing their values and morality.

In joint family the status of cousin is almost that of a real brother but sexual abuse by male cousin makes the girl lose faith in the relationship. Father and daughter relationship is considered very sacred, lovely and trustworthy as father is a protector and caretaker of child in Indian families. But some of the above cases prove that such sacred relationship of father and daughter has become unhealthy, fearful and they also prove that how a protector has become a destructor. The relationship of paternal uncle is also sacred in the Indian families but such relationship is also losing its value and some cases prove that how these persons come to the level of beast. The teacher student relationship is also considered sacred in India. A teacher is an idol for the student and they respect him but again in some case studies it was found that there was immoral behavior on the part of teacher with his student which is unworthy of his profession.

Girl children are among the most vulnerable members of our society because of their age and dependency on adults. For many of the victims, the continuing sexual assaults of childhood are a guilty secret they have never been able to share. They regard themselves as spoilt, debased, and violated, and experience a bewildering complex of guilt, anger, and shame. Some victims never acquire a positive self image. The
models, their parents presented, are confusing. Hence, it is sad to find that caretakers, family members, even parents, close relatives commit the heinous crime of sexual abuse and rape of the girl child in their care. Such incidences happen in all kinds of families and in all areas. It disturbs the mental equilibrium of the child and makes the child self blaming, guilty and causes it to mistrust herself and others.

Sexual abuse of girl children is caused by number of situations like lack of communication between parents and children, little or no interaction with mother, no respect for relationship tensed atmosphere in the family, addiction of father, poverty and deterioration of value system and morality in the family and society. It also is causes by absence of congenial environment in the family, ignorance and illiteracy of the parents, inadequate control of the family over children, presence of an authoritative person in the family who thinks it to be his privilege to exploit the girl children in the family, the lust of the elders, an easy access to the child and helplessness of the girl child. Neglect of girl child by parents because of separation of parents or a reconstituted family are some of the situations that are taken advantage of by neighbours and other people to sexually abuse the lonely children. Lacunae in the criminal justice system and negative attitude of society towards abused girl children compel such children not to disclose their abuse and suffer in silence. Temptation, immaturity of age and not knowing the consequences of sexual behavior on the part of the girl are some of the important factors that are found responsible for this phenomenon of sexual abuse of girl children in the Indian society.

These girl children suffering with the stigma and shame surrounding the abuse, often struggle with a feeling of being ‘damaged one’. In such situations the response of the victim’s family has a
tremendous effect on the outcome. Supportive responses from the victim’s family and friends can go far to lessen the impact of the abuse while negative responses compound the damage done. All these girl child victims can be helped to overcome the situation, by asking them to become confident and self dependent. They should be told that it was not their fault and they have every right to live with respect and dignity of human being.

**Interviews With Key Informants**

Researcher also conducted interviews of 40 key informants who are working in the concerned field. These are the persons who because of their position in the society are in known of the phenomenon of girl child sexual abuse. These people were willing to share their knowledge with the researcher and their experiences, observations, opinions, suggestions were very valuable. They were ten social workers, ten doctors, ten advocates and ten police personals who help the sexually abused girls to face the situation, to cope with the trauma and sufferings.

These various informants were the key to the researchers understanding of the subject. They provided much information through formal conversations and specific interviews with them. These key informants were persons with special skills, were knowledgeable and because of their status and the capacity of responsibility dealing with cases of sexual abuse, were in a position to throw light on different aspects of the problem sexual abuse.³

Their observations and perspective were immensely helpful to the researcher in the study of this complex evil of sexual abuse of girl child in society. Even the difficulties encountered by these people in discharging their duties and the problems faced by them in handling cases of sexual
abuse acted as a valuable guide for the researcher in understanding this social problem.

An interview guide was prepared and key informants or the persons who know the problems were made to speak their mind on the matter. These key informants helped this researcher a lot to gather information efficiently, to gain a special understanding of the subject.

**Doctors**

This researcher interviewed about 10 persons from medical profession. The case is referred to doctor only when the injury is not simple and cannot be treated at home. When the case is referred to police, as in case of rape, sodomy etc. then, because of legal procedure, the police have to get the medical examination done as early as possible. The medical examination of the accused also goes to a large extent to prove the offence if the accused is immediately caught and apprehended and this medical examination of the culprit is done before it is too late. The time factor in the examination of such cases is very important in order to get the accused convicted by a court of law. Conviction of an accused for the offence and the award of the deterrent punishment generally desists the prospective offender from committing such offence in future. Very often a girl child, who is a victim of sexual abuse by an adult suffers physical injury, the case is referred to doctor only when the injury is not simple and cannot be treated at home. Secondly, the parents approach the doctor when the girl is pregnant. They insist on abortion to avoid disrepute. Doctors are persuaded to terminate the pregnancy even if there are no medical grounds for it. The possibility of the girl committing suicide or being killed in such situations is not rare. Therefore, the doctors agree to do so for money or on humanitarian grounds.
The girl who is a victim of sexual abuse, particularly when the girl is a child suffers from a severe psychological wound. This injury to the mind of the child is more damaging than the physical injury. The child goes into depression, feeling shame and guilt and owing to the attitude of the family members and the society at large to blame the child itself for what has happened to her makes the child lose her hope in future happy life and many a times the child is driven to commit suicide. If not, the girl child suffers from maladjustment with world around her. She is lucky if she could come out of this successfully with the help of sympathy of the near and dear and proper psychological counseling and treatment. This aspect of medical assistance to the girl is also ‘save the girl’ programe. Female feticide, child sexual abuse, neglect of health and education, child marriage, early and multiple pregnancies, domestic violence and dowry deaths are the many social evils the women suffer in society and doctors are the people who can do much to eradicate this evil.

**Police Personnel**

About 10 police officers working on different posts were interviewed on the subject of girl child sexual abuse. An analysis of their experiences, measures taken by them in handling the persons involved, difficulties faced by them in securing the punishment of the accused by court of law and most important of all is what they think that the parents, family members, relatives, friends and other people of the locality should do to prevent the occurrence of such cases. According to the police officers such incidents take place in the four walls of the home of the child.

It is the grievance of the police that hardly 5% of actual cases are reported to the police. The parents or other family members waste lot of
time in their decision making; ‘to do or not to do’ is the question. When
the case is referred to police, as in case of rape, sodomy etc. then, because
of legal procedure, the police have to get the medical examination done
as early as possible. The medical examination of the accused also goes to
a large extent to prove the offence if the accused is immediately caught
and apprehended and this medical examination of the culprit are done
before it is too late. The time factor in the examination of such cases is
very important in order to get the accused convicted by a court of law.
Conviction of an accused for the offence and the award of the deterrent
punishment generally desists the prospective offender from committing
such offence in future.

Whenever there is delay in reporting the offence, it becomes
difficult to apprehend the accused. Immediate medical examination of
both the victim and the accused, which is very necessary from the point
of view of evidence of the offence, cannot be done and this results into
acquittal of the accused in most of the cases. If the girl is from
economically poor and socially or politically un-influential strata of the
society and the offender is an influential person the people of the girl are
afraid of or unwilling to report the case at all. Even if the case is reported,
the complainant is very reluctant to disclose her identity, the parents or
other relatives make an absurd demand that the abusers be severely
punished but the incident should not get any publicity as the reputation of
the family is at stake.

The stigma that is generally attached to the victim and her family
by the society dissuades them from pursuing the matter to its logical end.
No witness comes forward to testify before the court about the identity of
the accused or about the incident itself. The accused often gets acquitted
for want of sufficient evidence to prove the offence. The general tendency
is to push the matter under carpet as the child’s parents feel that the court case in the matter would result into character assassination of the girl and her future would be in jeopardy. Compensation in terms of money induces them to settle the matter rather than seeing that the offender is punished. Witnesses turn hostile and the prosecutor is helpless. Some police personnel even admit that there is political pressure making the investigation of the case difficult.

**Social Workers**

Social workers, specifically those working in the field of child welfare or orphanage, or child homes, and observation homes, come across cases of sexual abuse of girl children. Their experience throws some light on the plight and suffering of the girl children who are victims of sexual abuse. The role of social worker in dealing with such cases is very important as they are the persons who give psychological support to these victims and try to understand their problems allowing the victim to express their feelings and thus help them in rehabilitation.

If any, of the girl child in the family can be noticed of by the social worker, he gives some warning sign of the impending danger and parents or guardians could be made aware of the possibilities of sexual abuse of the girl child.

The conclusions that can be drawn from the interviews of social workers are that the incidences of sexual abuse of minor girls are increasing in Beed District. Among the cases of sexual abuse of minor girls reported in the institutions and in the police station, most of the victims are from low and lower middle social-economic groups. Even though sexual abuse is prevalent in other socio-economic group they
remained underreported and undisclosed due to disreputation and stigma attached to such abuse.

Social workers are of the opinion that the vulnerability and powerlessness of girl children make them an easy target of adult treachery and lust. The teenage girls are easily attracted by the show of affection and false promise of marriage by the abusers. Due to ignorance and an indifferent environment, it has also been observed that in most of the cases the abused girls are having four to five siblings and she was the eldest female child. This indicates that the eldest female child is more likely to fall as she is alone at home, to shoulder the responsibility of looking after her younger siblings. Their observation reveals the fact that the abusers of the minor girls are their family members, relatives, neighbours and known persons and sometimes even strangers.

The causative factors for sexual abuse of girl children found by the social workers are

a) No cordial atmosphere in the family
b) Quarrels between parents
c) Bitterness and unhappiness in the family due to lack of adequate amenities
d) Temptation of teenage girls
e) Poverty
f) Ignorance
g) Illiteracy and
h) Large families
i) Migration

People expect the social worker to represent their case to the police and also before the court of law. They also expect the social worker to
console and give moral support to the child which is their own primary
duty in such cases. The family members also expect a social worker to
help them to settle the matter by making available some monetary
compensation to the victim from the abuser. The social worker by way of
counseling can help the child to get some relief from stress and strain of
the ugly incident. It is possible that the children are made aware of the
lurking danger by speaking to them in suggestive manner telling them
about hygiene and sex education. A social worker can have exchange of
ideas with parents and other family members in the form of social
education that the family atmosphere should be congenial and friendly.
There should be interaction between the children and the elders in the
family so that the children feel free to discuss such things with their care
takers. This too to some extent keeps the probable abuser away from the
child.

Hence, the social workers are working as agents of change they
help the parents to change, to adopt different coping skills and alternative
values about child recurring they help for the interaction between children
and parents and thus help them to release their stress.

**Advocates**

In medico legal cases of sexual abuse that go to the court of law, the
institutions of police, medical experts and advocates play very
important role. On receipt of a complaint it is the duty of the police to
investigate the case and file a charge sheet against the accused. Medical
examination and evidence provided by doctor dealing with case goes to a
large extent to prove the guilt of the accused. It is the duty of the advocate
as police prosecutor to prove the offence beyond reasonable doubt and
secure appropriate punishment for the accused found guilty. However,
advocates who are private practitioners appear in the court of law to
represent the accused and therefore, are more interested in getting the ‘not guilty’ verdict from the court. Though they appear generally as defense lawyers, advocates are well aware of the phenomenon of sexual abuse in the society. They know the mental state of the complainant and members of her family, they know the loopholes in the investigation by the police. As members of the society they are familiar with the attitude of the people towards the unfortunate victim and her family members. They can see the integrity of their brother professional- the police prosecutor and even the presiding judge. All these factors make an advocate a knowledgeable person to be interviewed by a researcher of the study of girl child sexual abuse in society. In the opinion of these advocates and prosecutors, the matter should be reported to the police as early as possible and medical examination of the victim and also that of the accused done without delay.

The advocates are of the opinion that efficient investigation of the case is very necessary, some amendments in law such as in-camera hearing of the case, presence of women judges and lawyers, and burden to prove his innocence to be placed on the accused as the victim is a child, are some of things that can be thought of. According to them the cases in which the family members of the victim refuse to cooperate with the prosecution are not rare as they are tempted to compromise and settle the matter outside the court. Many a times they do under pressure or just to avoid bad publicity. Measures are to be taken to deal with the curse of child sexual abuse in the society.

The conclusions that can be drawn from interviews of various advocates are that the crime is on increase because the offender rarely is punished for the offence. There are many factors responsible for this state of affair. Primarily it is the reluctance of the family of the victim to report
the matter to the police. In such cases, very often, stigma is attached to the victim and her family and it is the victim who is made to feel guilty rather than the accused. Hardly 5% cases are reported and then also the police are reluctant to take cognizance of the offence, and to bring the accused to book. The so called well wishers of the family and the police discourage the victim and her family from filing the case. Many a times the poverty of the victim’s family tempts the family to compromise and settle the matter outside the court for money. Witness, even if there is any, is unwilling to testify before the court. Prosecutors are not very keen to secure punishment in the trial. Conviction rate in Maharashtra is 3 to 4 percent, which shows the pathetic state of criminal justice system. Victims are mostly from low income group and are minors. Parents don’t listen to their children and most of the times the children are asked to keep quiet. Many times there is inordinate delay in reporting the matter affecting the availability of medical and other evidence. The date, time and place of offence are not properly recorded and the plea of alibi is easily available to the accused. The burden is always on the prosecution to prove the offence committed by the accused and the accused is acquitted for want of conclusive evidence. The various forms of sexual abuse, other than rape and sodomy are not well defined in the criminal law though they are equally damaging to the psyche of the victim.

According to the key informant’s interview in the present study the causative factors for girl child sexual abuse are neglect of girl child, absence of love and affection for the girl child in the family, lack of dialogue and communication between the members of the family, make the girl vulnerable. The neglect of the child is the consequence of the lack of awareness of the care takers. **Parents should always have a watchful eye for their children. They should promptly take note of any**
unusual and abnormal behaviour of the child and channels of communication and interaction between the elders and children should always be kept open. The child should feel free to talk about anything happened to it which is not to its liking and instead of blaming the child; the caretaker should see that the child is not an easy prey of the sexual abusers.
REFERENCES