

CHAPTER VIII

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In India, child abuse has long been ignored and treated as a private family matter or a way to discipline children. As a result, it has not been recognized as a social problem, and the true extent of the issue is unknown. official statistics from police and court records are few and likely only show a small part of the problem. Therefore, data from surveys and research studies are needed to understand and estimate the full extent and impact of child abuse, as well as its causes and consequences.

Meanwhile, the victimized child suffers four times over: when the act is committed, while narrating the incident, during the medical examination, and then in court. To advance the issue of child protection, there is a need to create an enabling environment through legislation to address child abuse, develop a policy on child protection, formulate interventions and outreach services, allocate sufficient budgetary resources, and establish an information base on child abuse and protection.

For all these activities, the government, policymakers, researchers, and administrators need comprehensive data on the problem. Child abuse is often

shrouded in secrecy, not always reported or acknowledged, and has emerged as a critical issue in contemporary times. Thus, studies like the present one are essential to understand the extent and magnitude of the problem at a micro level. While most research on this issue has been conducted in Western countries, little attention has been paid by researchers in India. As a result, child abuse has yet to be fully exposed and recognized as a social problem, remaining viewed primarily as a personal or family issue.

A review of the existing and limited literature on child abuse in the Indian context reveals a persistent story of neglect and abuse for various reasons in different situations. However, there are significant gaps in these studies. For example, earlier findings are not suitable for empirical scrutiny, and broad generalizations cannot be made because they covered only a limited sample of observations. Additionally, these studies did not address important factors such as family structure and the socio-economic characteristics of parents who abused or neglected children. They mainly focused on one or two aspects of abuse, ignoring other forms, which results in an inadequate understanding of the causative and aggravating factors within families. To gain comprehensive knowledge, we need studies based on large samples that cover all forms of child abuse and neglect across different communities, including tribal, rural, and urban areas. It is precisely within this context that the present study was initiated, aiming to fill these gaps and provide a more complete picture of child abuse and neglect in India.

8.1 The specific objectives of the study are the following:

The study aims to examine the profile of abused children and the social and economic circumstances leading to their abuse in the study area, as well as to assess the magnitude, forms, and dimensions of abuse and neglect experienced by these children.

The objectives include determining the association between selected background characteristics and child abuse, exploring the causes and consequences of the problem, and suggesting suitable strategies and interventions for its prevention. The logistics of the present research operation necessitated that the study be conducted exclusively within a single district in the state of Southern Rajasthan, India. This approach enabled the researcher to comprehensively

cover all three prominent areas: tribal, rural, and urban. To achieve this, districts in Southern Rajasthan, such as Chittorgarh, Udaipur, Sirohi, Pratapgarh, Banswara, and Dungarpur, were purposefully selected due to their diverse populations that encompass tribal, rural, and urban communities. By employing a multistage purposive sampling design strategy, the researcher was able to include a total sample of 400 respondents, effectively representing the varied demographic segments of these regions.

Considering the sensitivity of the theme, various child-friendly tools were utilized for data generation to create a supportive and comfortable environment for children. These tools aimed to ensure that children could respond with ease and openly share their experiences and any agonies they might be facing. By fostering such an environment, the researcher aimed to encourage children to discuss different forms of abuse they may be experiencing in their families, neighbourhoods, and schools. The approach was designed to be non-threatening and reassuring, helping children feel safe and understood while they conveyed their stories and concerns. This methodology was crucial in obtaining genuine and honest insights from the children, enabling the researcher to gain a comprehensive understanding of the various forms of abuse affecting them in their everyday lives.

8.2 Main Findings

The main findings that emerged from the study are as follows:

1. Profile of the Studied Children

- of the children in the districts under study, 42.5% were from rural pockets, 36.3% were from urban pockets consisting of various cities, and the remaining 22.2% were from the tribal belt.
- The mean age of the children came to 11.8 years within the age range of 5 to 18 years.
- of the children studied, Hindus constitute 76.3 per cent. Christians

13.3 per cent and the rest 10.4 percent are Muslims. of the Hindus,

40.1 per cent belonged to forward castes, 28.7 per cent to

backward castes and the rest 31.2 per cent to scheduled castes and tribes.

- of the participants in the survey, 77.8% were enrolled in different educational institutions, while the remaining 22.2% had not attended any school for a variety of reasons.
- The respondents' parents' average family income came to Rs.26,083 per month within the range of Rs.6000 to Rs.48,000+.
- of the children, 34.2% come from a low socioeconomic background, 55.9% come from a middle class background, and the remaining 13.9% come from a wealthy family.
- The average number of children in the families of our respondents was 2.2. Their family consisted of 4.5 people on average.
- of all children, only 29.5 percent were never abused, compared to 71.0 percent who experienced abuse in one way or another.
- of those ever abused children, 40.4 percent were physically abused,

19.1 percent were Sexually abused, 20.1 per cent were emotionally abused and the rest 24.4 percent were the neglected and discriminated lot. There emerged significant and positive association between respondent's sex and their abuse as revealed by Yules coefficient of association test.
- our chi-square test of significance also showed a significant correlation between the sexes of the respondents and their experiences with all four types of abuse.
- Analysis of variance and multiple classification analysis further revealed that respondent's family size, their level of schooling and their birth order had a regulatory effect on the neglect and abuse of the respondents studied.

2. Physical Abuse

- of the total 264 ever abused children, 38.4 percent have experienced physical abuse and of them, 62.4 percent were the boys and 37.6 per cent were the girls.

- There was a significant difference in victimization rates based on residence, with rural children being the most affected, urban children the least, and tribal children falling somewhere in between. This disparity highlights the varying degrees of vulnerability among children from different backgrounds, suggesting that rural children face higher risks of victimization compared to their urban counterparts, while tribal children experience levels of victimization that are intermediate between the two.
- The observed data indicates a higher incidence of physical abuse within the age group of 9 to 14 years. This troubling trend appears to be more acute among individuals from backward castes. Conversely, when examining the forward castes and scheduled castes and tribes, the incidence rate remains relatively consistent. These findings highlight a significant disparity in the prevalence of physical abuse, suggesting that socio-economic factors linked to caste status may play a crucial role in the vulnerability of certain age groups to such abuse.
- The data reveals a significant association between the schooling status of children and their exposure to physical abuse. Irrespective of sex, the majority of the victims were attending school, contrasting with those not attending school at all. This suggests that children enrolled in educational institutions are more frequently subjected to physical abuse. Additionally, the analysis indicates that the parents' level of education is inversely related to the likelihood of their children experiencing physical abuse. In other words, higher educational attainment among parents is linked to a lower incidence of physical abuse in their children. These findings underscore the complex relationship between education and abuse, highlighting the protective role of parental education and the vulnerabilities faced by school-going children.

Similarly, parents' monthly income is inversely associated with the

incidence of physical abuse of their children, indicating that lower family income correlates with higher rates of abuse. The data also shows a negative association between the social class of the respondents' families and the occurrence of physical abuse, with lower social classes experiencing more abuse. However, there is a positive association between the number of siblings in a family and the likelihood of physical abuse, suggesting that children from larger families are more at risk. This trend is consistent regardless of the child's sex, with most physically abused children belonging to higher birth order categories. The majority of these abuse incidents (67.4 percent) occurred at home, followed by schools and then the neighbourhood. Furthermore, 67.3 percent of the victims reported experiencing abuse regularly or frequently.

Among the majority of physically abused children, a significant 55.4 percent of the perpetrators were their own parents, followed by a smaller proportion of abusers including siblings, teachers, and neighbours. For 41.7 percent of these victims, the primary reason cited for the physical abuse was the desire of the abusers to maintain discipline and control the children's behaviour. This intention to enforce discipline was the most common justification for the abuse, overshadowing other factors such as the stresses and strains faced by the parents, instances of parental disorganization, and minor quarrels among children. The data reveals a troubling pattern where the role of the parents as the main perpetrators of abuse is closely tied to their perceived need to discipline their children, reflecting broader issues of family dynamics and the challenges of managing behaviour within the household.

8.3 Consequences of Physical Abuse on Children: Health, Education, and Emotional Well-being

The victims of physical abuse identified a range of severe consequences resulting from their experiences, which they ranked in order of impact. The most significant effect was on their health, followed by negative repercussions on their educational performance and personality development. In addition to these tangible outcomes, the emotional stresses and strains of the abuse manifested in feelings of fear, anger, frustration, aggressiveness, and insecurity. These effects underscore the multifaceted harm inflicted by physical abuse, which not only damages the physical and academic aspects of a child's life but also deeply affects their emotional

well- being and personal growth.

8.4 Significant Associations Identified in Chi-Square Tests for Physical Abuse

our chi-square tests of significance revealed several categorically significant associations between physical abuse and various demographic factors, independent of the respondent's sex. Specifically, the analyses demonstrated significant relationships between physical abuse and respondents' residence, age, parents' income, social class, and birth order. These findings indicate that these demographic variables play a notable role in the occurrence of physical abuse, highlighting the importance of considering these factors when addressing and preventing abuse. However, there emerged no significance between caste background and physical abuse of our respondents

3. Sexual Abuse

- of the 263 children who had experienced abuse in the study, only 17.1% were identified as victims of Sexual abuse. Among these Sexually abused children, 77.8% were girls, while the remaining 22.2% were boys.
- Age-wise, the majority of Sexually abused children in the study (62.2%) were between 13 and 18 years old. of these victims, 42.2% resided in urban areas, 40.0% belonged to scheduled castes and tribes, and 64.4% were currently attending school. Additionally, 40.0% of the Sexually abused children came from affluent social backgrounds.
- In the study of Sexually abused children, it was found that 36.6% of the abuse cases occurred on school premises, while 32.3% took place at the children's own homes. The remaining instances of abuse were reported to have happened in the children's neighbourhood localities or at various other locations.
- The study revealed that 57.6% of Sexually abused children identified their peers from schools and neighbourhoods as the perpetrators of abuse. Following this group, the perpetrators were most commonly close relatives, teachers, and family members, respectively.

8.5 Types of Sexual Abuse Experienced by Victims

The study on Sexual abuse victims revealed various forms of abuse experienced by the children. Specifically, 26.7% of the victims endured inappropriate touching and fondling of their bodies, while 22.2% were coerced into exhibiting their private body parts. Another 22.2% were forced to participate in Sexually stimulating acts, and 17.8% suffered from forceful kissing. The remaining 11.1% experienced Sexual harassment in different forms.

8.6 Reporting of Sexual Abuse among Children and its Implications According to Indian Law in 2024:

The reporting of Sexual abuse among children remains a critical issue in India, with profound legal and social implications that reflect both progress and ongoing challenges in safeguarding vulnerable populations. As of 2024, Indian law provides a structured framework for addressing child Sexual abuse through the Protection of Children from Sexual offences Act (PoCSO Act), 2012, which has undergone several amendments to strengthen its provisions. According to the PoCSO Act, there is a legal obligation for individuals to report incidents of child Sexual abuse, and failure to do so can result in legal consequences. However, a recent study reveals that a significant majority of Sexually abused children, 71.1%, did not disclose their abuse to any authorities, while only 28.9% reported the incidents to their parents. This underreporting highlights a critical gap in the implementation of legal protections and underscores the challenges inherent in encouraging disclosure. Among those who did not report, 62.5% perceived the abuse as inconsequential, while 37.5% were paralyzed by fear of the consequences of reporting.

4. Emotional Abuse

In recent research examining the landscape of child abuse, a notable focus has been placed on emotional abuse, a form of maltreatment that often escapes the public eye yet holds profound implications for child welfare. of the 263 children identified

as having been abused, 22.1% were victims of emotional abuse, a statistic that reveals the substantial presence of this issue within the broader context of child maltreatment. Among these emotionally abused children, the gender distribution shows that 51.7% were girls and 48.3% were boys, indicating a relatively balanced impact across genders but still necessitating targeted interventions. The

study further delineates that a majority of these victims were from rural areas, reflecting a geographical disparity in the prevalence of emotional abuse, with a significant concentration of cases among children aged 9 to 14 years. This age group is particularly vulnerable as it encompasses critical developmental stages where emotional well-being is crucial.

Additionally, the study reveals that a significant portion of these emotionally abused children came from backward castes, highlighting an intersection of socio-economic and cultural factors that exacerbate their vulnerability. The data also shows that most of the victims were school-going children, suggesting that educational settings may be both a site and a reflection of broader socio-economic challenges. Moreover, these children were predominantly from middle-class families with more than three children, pointing to the complexities of family dynamics and resource allocation that may influence the prevalence and recognition of emotional abuse.

5. Neglect and Discrimination

The investigation into child abuse reveals a concerning dimension of neglect and discrimination, as evidenced by recent findings from a study of 263 ever-abused children. This study identified that 22.4% of these children fell into the category of neglect and discrimination, a significant proportion that highlights the prevalence of these often-overlooked forms of maltreatment. Within this subgroup, there was a striking gender disparity, with 79.7% of the victims being girls, compared to 20.3% who were boys. This pronounced imbalance indicates that girls are disproportionately affected by neglect and discriminatory practices, which raises critical questions about the systemic factors that contribute to this gendered dimension of child abuse.

These findings are particularly relevant in the context of evolving Indian child protection laws, which have increasingly addressed various forms of abuse through legislative reforms. The Protection of Children from Sexual offences (PoCSO) Act, 2012, and its 2024 amendments represent a significant advancement in legal frameworks aimed at safeguarding children from Sexual abuse. However, the scope of the PoCSO Act primarily focuses on Sexual offenses, and while it has been expanded to include more comprehensive protections for children, the issue of neglect and discrimination remains a critical area for further legal and

policy development.

The study's results underscore a need for a more inclusive approach within child protection laws that addresses not only Sexual abuse but also the pervasive issues of neglect and discrimination. Neglect, as defined in various child welfare frameworks, encompasses a failure to meet a child's basic needs, including emotional support, proper care, and access to education. Discrimination, on the other hand, involves unequal treatment based on gender, socio-economic status, or other factors that affect a child's opportunities and well-being. The fact that a significant majority of children experiencing neglect and discrimination are girls suggests a gendered dimension of abuse that merits specific attention in legal and policy frameworks.

Finally, a significant number of these children were in high birth orders, suggesting that their position within larger families might increase their likelihood of experiencing neglect and discrimination due to the challenges of managing numerous siblings. These factors collectively illustrate the complex interplay of socio-economic and familial influences that contribute to the neglect and discrimination faced by these children.

- It was to a surprise that as many as 69.5 per cent of these victims reported that their own homes were the places for their suffering.
- To 59.3 per cent of these victims their parents were the perpetrators.
- Nearly a third (30.5%) of respondents felt that their parents paid less attention to their health, clothing, and education compared to their siblings. Additionally, 25.4% believed that their parents were taking sides, 17.0% felt they were often compared unfavourably with their siblings, and 13.6% thought they were given less food than their siblings.

The findings from our Logistic Regression analysis revealed that factors such as the respondent's age, social class, birth order, parents' income, and family size significantly contribute to explaining and determining the neglect and discrimination of children.

The present study underscores the profound influence of ecological, demographic, social, and psychological characteristics on child abuse and

neglect. The findings highlight the adverse consequences of child abuse on the cognitive, motivational, and behavioural functioning, as well as the personality development of children. These conclusions are supported by a vast body of empirical studies and theoretical evidence, establishing a robust conceptual and theoretical framework for understanding the phenomenon of child abuse and its repercussions. Researchers have conceptualized child abuse and neglect as a socio-psychological phenomenon deeply embedded within the dynamics of family, social, and cultural contexts, with multiple causative roots. To analyse and explain this issue, various macro-level (sociological) and micro-level (psychological) theories have been proposed, which were extensively discussed in Chapter 2. The findings of the current study align with several macro- sociological theories, such as cultural explanations, structural characteristics of the family, strain theory, and deterrence theory. For instance, our results indicate that different forms of child abuse and neglect are reported at varying rates across different societal strata, supporting the Cultural Explanation approach, which posits that violence is an accepted and encouraged form of cultural expression in society. This cultural acceptance of violence contributes to criminal violence rates within families and society (Tolan and Gwerra, 1998). The aggression and violence observed in homes reflect society's tolerance for aggression (Wyatt, 1994). Additionally, family structure can sometimes predispose individuals and families to violence (Brinkerhoff and Lupri, 1988). The interaction patterns within large families with more children, which cause tension and emotional insecurity, can lead to volatile family relationships. our findings clearly support the notion that the family environment and its structural features are associated with child abuse and neglect.

In the context of Indian law in 2024, the study's findings have significant implications. Indian laws, including the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act and the Protection of Children from Sexual offences (PoCSO) Act, aim to protect children from abuse and neglect. However, the study suggests that beyond legal frameworks, there is a critical need for socio-cultural interventions that address the underlying factors contributing to child abuse and neglect. The Indian legal system must not only enforce laws but also promote awareness and education about the detrimental effects of child abuse.

Additionally, policies should focus on family support systems to mitigate stress and emotional insecurity within families, thereby reducing the risk of child abuse and neglect. The integration of sociological and psychological insights into policy-making can enhance the effectiveness of legal measures in protecting children and fostering a safer and more supportive environment for their development.

The results of our study indicate that the issue of child abuse and neglect is predominantly found in families with low-caste and low socio-economic status. This finding aligns with strain theory, which posits that higher rates of child maltreatment are prevalent among low-income families and those associated with a disadvantaged social class background (Limber and Nation, 1998). Furthermore, our study is supported by Deterrence Theory, also known as control theory (Gibbs, 1975), which emphasizes the role of formal social controls. It suggests that parents are more likely to abuse their children when there are insufficient legal structures to prevent loss of control. The cultural acceptance of parent-to-child violence blurs the line between legitimate discipline and child maltreatment, underscoring the need for mandatory reporting laws and heightened public awareness to save children from abusive families and prosecute abusive parents (Besharov, 1996).

This perpetuation of violence from one generation to another, often described as "like father, like son" or "like mother, like daughter," highlights the process of modeling, where individuals learn social and cognitive behaviors by observing and imitating others. Our findings reveal that incidences of child abuse and neglect are at epidemic levels in the studied district of Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh, severely impacting the short- and long-term development of a significant number of children. This urgent situation necessitates immediate preventive efforts and the design of intervention programs for both prevention and promotion of child welfare.

In the context of Indian law in 2024, these findings have profound implications. Despite the presence of robust legal frameworks such as the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act and the Protection of Children from Sexual offences (PoCSO) Act, there is a pressing need for socio-cultural interventions that address the root causes of child abuse and neglect. The Indian legal system must enforce these laws effectively while also

promoting awareness and education about the detrimental effects of child abuse. Policies should focus on strengthening family support systems to reduce stress and emotional insecurity within families, thereby mitigating the risk of child abuse and neglect.

Moreover, the implementation of mandatory reporting laws and public awareness campaigns is crucial to increasing societal pressure to protect children from abuse and hold abusive parents accountable. The findings of our study, which highlight the epidemic nature of child abuse in specific districts, provide valuable insights for policymakers and administrators engaged in child welfare and development. By integrating sociological and psychological perspectives into policy-making, India can enhance the effectiveness of legal measures, fostering a safer and more supportive environment for children's development.

8.7 Limitations of the Present Study

The study is not free from its own limitations. These limitations are as follows:

1. The sample size and sub-sample sizes in this study are quite limited, which means they are unlikely to represent the full range of abuses children suffer. Consequently, the findings may not be suitable for broad empirical generalizations and are instead restricted to the specific sample under study.

2. The study is limited by the considerable difficulty of thoroughly distinguishing the antecedent conditions, correlates, and effects of all forms of abuse. Moreover, due to the cross-sectional nature of this study, it is not possible to examine the long-term impacts and effects of the various forms of abuse and neglect on the children studied.

3. In the present study, interviewing the perpetrators of abuse and other relevant stakeholders to elicit their opinions was not attempted due to constraints such as limited time, budget, personnel, and resources.

4. Although the study delved into some details regarding the impact of abuse on children, many other aspects of this impact were not covered or assessed through further probing.

Future researchers interested in this area must design their studies to overcome the limitations identified in the current research. While assessing and evaluating the scientific rigor of this study, it is crucial to consider its

constraints. Despite these limitations, this empirical study has unequivocally established that child abuse and neglect are prevalent in our country, with incidence rates significantly higher than commonly perceived. Additionally, the study has provided a valuable information base that can aid the government in formulating legislation, schemes, and interventions to address the problem. The study emphasizes that the primary responsibility for protecting children from abuse and neglect lies with families or primary caregivers. However, communities, civil society, and all other stakeholders also share this responsibility. Ultimately, the overarching duty falls on the state, which must create a protective environment and provide a safety net for children in vulnerable and exploitative situations. In light of these findings, and with special reference to Indian law in 2024, it is imperative that policymakers and legislators take decisive action to enhance child protection frameworks. The study's recommendations aim to address child abuse and neglect within Indian families effectively, ensuring that legal and social measures are robust and comprehensive.

8.8 Suggestions Proposed

1) Policy and Legislation: There is a pressing need for the introduction of a National Legislation dedicated specifically to addressing child abuse. This proposed legislation should encompass a broad spectrum of issues, including all forms of Sexual abuse such as commercial Sexual exploitation, child pornography, and grooming for Sexual purposes. It must also address physical abuse, including corporal punishment and bullying, as well as economic exploitation, child trafficking, and the sale and transfer of children. An effective legislative framework must include mechanisms for reporting abuse and delineate the responsibilities of individuals in positions of authority and trust. This necessity is underscored by the fact that over 80% of child respondents do not report instances of Sexual abuse, and it is evident that a significant proportion of abusers are individuals within the family or those in positions of trust and authority. Therefore, any new legislation must tackle these critical issues to ensure the protection of children and establish a robust system for safeguarding their rights. This approach aligns with contemporary needs and challenges in child protection and reflects a commitment to addressing the shortcomings of existing policies and legal

frameworks in India.

2) **Protocols:** To elevate the standards of care and establish a protective environment for children across the country, there is a critical need to develop standardized protocols for child protection mechanisms at the district, block, and village levels. These protocols must clearly define the roles and responsibilities of individuals and agencies involved in child protection, ensuring a cohesive and coordinated approach to safeguarding children's rights and well-being. The development of such protocols should encompass a comprehensive framework for effective child protection service delivery, including preventive measures, statutory interventions, care, and rehabilitation services tailored to the needs of children. To achieve these goals, it is essential to implement a robust community-based monitoring mechanism that ensures accountability at various levels of the child protection system. This mechanism should be grounded in performance indicators that assess the quality of services provided and the extent to which these services foster a child-friendly environment. By setting clear standards and procedures for service delivery and establishing rigorous monitoring practices, we can ensure that child protection efforts are not only effective but also sustainable in the long term. Such an approach is crucial for addressing current gaps in the child protection system and for creating a safer, more supportive environment for all children.

3) **Scheme on Child Protection:** Historically, child protection in India has been addressed in a fragmented and slow-moving manner, characterized by minimal resource allocation that reaches only a small fraction of children facing difficult circumstances. The results of recent studies underscore the urgent need for the implementation of a comprehensive national scheme designed to systematically address the multifaceted issues of child protection. Such a scheme should be developed to identify vulnerable families and children, work proactively to prevent vulnerabilities, and provide essential services to those in need. In particular, this national scheme should enhance and expand upon the statutory support services established under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000, which aims to offer care and protection for children in need and those in conflict with the law. With the introduction of adequate financial and human resources, the proposed scheme should focus on creating

a robust protective environment for children through the development of strong service delivery mechanisms, comprehensive outreach services, and effective interventions. This initiative should align with the updates to Indian child protection laws anticipated in 2024, which emphasize a more integrated and resource-intensive approach to safeguarding children's rights and well-being. By establishing a well-funded and coordinated national framework, this scheme can address existing gaps in the child protection system, promote preventative measures, and ensure that support services reach all children who require care and protection, thereby fostering a safer and more supportive environment for children across the country.

4) Outreach and Support Services: A recent study has revealed that the majority of abuse cases occur within the family environment, with the perpetrators often being close family relatives. In India, where child abuse remains a critical issue, the legal framework has been evolving to address these concerns. The Protection of Children from Sexual offences (PoCSO) Act, 2012, is a comprehensive law designed to protect children from offenses such as Sexual abuse, Sexual harassment, and pornography. This legislation mandates stringent punishment for offenders and provides a child-friendly mechanism for reporting, recording evidence, investigation, and speedy trial of offenses through designated Special Courts. Despite the legal provisions, a child who has been abused or continues to be in an abusive situation requires a variety of services. These include professional help in the form of trauma counselling, medical treatment, police intervention, and legal support. To effectively implement these services, a robust system should be established under the scheme on child protection. Moreover, the existing Childline service, which provides emergency

outreach services to children in difficult circumstances, should be expanded. Childline, operating under the Ministry of Women and Child Development, is a crucial helpline that offers 24x7 emergency assistance to children in distress. Expanding this service would ensure that more children across the country have access to immediate support and intervention, thereby strengthening the protective environment envisioned by Indian law for safeguarding children from abuse in 2024 and beyond.

Shared Responsibility: Child protection is a shared responsibility, and for any

intervention to be effective in India, there must be a synergy between the efforts made by different stakeholders to address the issues. The Protection of Children from Sexual offences (PoCSO) Act, 2012, along with other legal frameworks like the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, underscores the need for coordinated efforts in safeguarding children. To enhance the effectiveness of these laws, it is crucial to create mechanisms that foster synergy among various stakeholders. Such mechanisms should operate at multiple levels, including village, block, district, and state levels, and involve a diverse range of participants. These participants include parents, elected representatives of urban and rural local bodies, teachers, anganwadi workers, medical practitioners, police, social workers, and responsible members of the public. By engaging these stakeholders, a comprehensive and integrated approach to child protection can be achieved, ensuring that children receive timely and appropriate intervention and support. The establishment of these multi-level child protection mechanisms will not only reinforce the existing legal framework but also create a more responsive and resilient system to protect children from abuse in 2024 and beyond. This integrated approach aligns with the vision of Indian law, which emphasizes the importance of community involvement and inter-sectoral collaboration in addressing child abuse effectively.

6) Capacity Building: The formulation of a new policy, legislation, and schemes for child protection in India, alongside the strengthening of service delivery mechanisms, hinges on the creation of a cadre of trained personnel who are sensitized to child rights and the protection of children. In the first instance, it is imperative that Schools of Social Work and universities offer specialized courses on child rights, protection, and counselling to cultivate this cadre.

This educational initiative should extend to integrating child rights and protection issues into the curricula of administrative institutes, police training academies, law colleges, medical colleges, and teacher training schools. By embedding these subjects into the core training of future professionals, we ensure that those graduating from these institutions possess both the sensitivity and knowledge required to address child abuse effectively. According to the Protection of Children from Sexual offences (PoCSO) Act, 2012, and other relevant Indian laws, such an approach is essential for building a competent

workforce capable of implementing child protection measures robustly.

Parents and caregivers, who are primarily responsible and accountable for the safety and security of children, also play a crucial role in this ecosystem. However, studies indicate that parents often fall short of these expectations, highlighting a gap in parenting skills and awareness regarding child Sexual abuse. To bridge this gap, it is necessary to enhance parents' and caregivers' skills, knowledge, and sensitivity toward child protection. This can be achieved through targeted training programs, workshops, and awareness campaigns designed to equip them with the tools needed to handle situations of child abuse effectively.

Moreover, the results of various studies underscore the importance of a well-coordinated effort among different stakeholders, including law enforcement, educators, medical professionals, and social workers, to create a protective environment for children. The integration of these elements into a cohesive policy framework, supported by a trained and sensitized cadre of professionals, is vital for the effective implementation of child protection laws in India. This comprehensive approach aligns with the goals of Indian law for child abuse prevention in 2024 and beyond, emphasizing the need for an interdisciplinary and community-focused strategy to safeguard children's rights and well-being.

Gender Equity: Equity can be achieved when social norms ensure that the girl child lives in a non-abusive environment where she is cared for and respected. In India, gender discrimination against females manifests in various detrimental ways, including lower school enrolment, higher levels of malnutrition, trafficking for Sexual exploitation, child marriage, and exclusion from family decision-making processes. Addressing these imbalances necessitates significant attitudinal changes regarding the value of the girl child. The empowerment of adolescent girls is crucial, and this can be accomplished by making them aware of their rights, educating them on abuse, and instilling essential life skills such as knowledge of childbirth, child-rearing practices, HIV/AIDS prevention, and personal hygiene. Strengthening the adolescent girl component of the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) is vital in this context.

Under Indian law, specifically the Protection of Children from Sexual

offences (PoCSO) Act, 2012, and the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, there are stringent measures in place to protect girls from abuse and exploitation. However, effective implementation requires a multi-faceted approach involving government, NGOs, and civil society. These stakeholders must work collaboratively to instill positive norms and values through advocacy, communication strategies, and campaigns utilizing electronic, print, and folk media. open discourses on gender equity, with the involvement of public figures, can further promote these changes.

The focus should be on eliminating discrimination and abuse of girls by creating widespread awareness of existing legislation and the rights of the girl child. Initiatives should include comprehensive education programs and community engagement to shift public perceptions and practices. For instance, programs that educate communities about the legal protections under PoCSO and the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act can help reduce incidences of abuse and early marriage. Additionally, integrating discussions on gender equity into school curricula and community forums can foster an environment where the girl child is valued and protected. By addressing the root causes of gender discrimination and promoting the empowerment of girls, India can create a more equitable and just society, ensuring that every girl child has the opportunity to thrive in a safe and supportive environment in 2024 and beyond.

8) **Advocacy and Awareness:** The media plays a pivotal role in spreading awareness about child rights and enhancing public knowledge and sensitivity on child protection issues. In India, leveraging the media for this purpose can significantly contribute to the enforcement of laws like the Protection of Children from Sexual offences (PoCSO) Act, 2012, and the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015. Regular features on electronic media, such as debates and discussions with the active participation of children, can serve to inform and educate the public about the importance of child protection. However, it is crucial that media coverage adheres to high ethical standards to protect the identity and well-being of child victims. Disclosure of a child's identity can lead to further trauma and re-victimization, which is why maintaining confidentiality is imperative.

Ethical reporting should include obtaining the consent of the child before any coverage, ensuring that the child's rights and dignity are preserved. These

practices help to mitigate the stigma associated with abuse and prevent the sensationalisation of sensitive issues. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, along with media self-regulatory authorities, must take proactive steps to develop and enforce these ethical standards. This includes creating guidelines that media professionals can follow to ensure responsible reporting.

In the context of Indian law, such measures align with the guidelines set forth by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), which emphasize the need for sensitive and ethical handling of child-related issues in the media. Implementing these standards will protect children from the negative repercussions of media exposure and promote a more informed and compassionate public discourse on child protection. By fostering an ethical media environment, India can enhance its efforts to safeguard children and uphold their rights as enshrined in the country's legal framework in 2024 and beyond. This integrated approach, combining legal enforcement with ethical media practices, is essential for creating a supportive and protective environment for children.

This chapter attempts to present conclusions based on the previous chapters. Suggestions and recommendations are made for the security and future viability of child Sexual abuse. A study of child protection laws with special reference to Southern Rajasthan research was conducted using primary and secondary sources.

The information thus provided was segregated according to different socioeconomic parameters and the results were analysed both in tabular and graphical form. Based on the analytical tools, conclusions were drawn for different separations. These conclusions formed the basis for researcher to achieve his research goals.

8.9 Recap

The analysis of Sexual abuse crimes in the districts of southern Rajasthan, including Chittorgarh, Udaipur, Sirohi, Pratapgarh, Banswara, and Dungarpur, reveals that the incidence rates are significantly lower than the state average. However, this observation is overshadowed by the fact that these districts have alarmingly low literacy rates, with a negligible number

of literates considering the total population. The demographic findings regarding Rajasthan and India, with a particular focus on Sexual abuse, underscore that public awareness in these districts of southern Rajasthan has scarcely improved over time. Awareness about child Sexual abuse is significantly below the national average, providing strong and irrefutable evidence of widespread ignorance in the region.

In environments where ignorance prevails, social and economic maladies such as poverty, disease, and crime find fertile ground, severely impacting the quality of life. The socio-economic conditions in southern Rajasthan are notably below acceptable standards, and the residents' reluctance to embrace modern ways of life exacerbates their plight. The persistence of poverty, ignorance, and disease creates a vicious cycle that further degrades the community's standard of living.

To halt this deterioration and prevent potential destruction, education must play a pivotal role, particularly in raising awareness about child Sexual abuse. This form of education can serve as a catalyst for social and economic emancipation. Emphasizing the importance of education as a beacon of hope, it is crucial to improve the quality of life in southern Rajasthan by fostering greater awareness and understanding of child Sexual abuse. The study's rationale is validated by these conclusions, which highlight the urgent need for targeted educational initiatives.

These initiatives should aim not only to increase general literacy but also to enhance specific knowledge about child Sexual abuse and its prevention. Furthermore, recommendations include raising awareness about related issues such as e-banking fraud, which also requires increased vigilance and education. Indian laws, such as the Protection of Children from Sexual offences (PoCSO) Act, 2012, provide a robust framework for protecting children from Sexual abuse. However, the effective implementation of these laws is hindered by low awareness and literacy levels.

Comprehensive educational programs are essential to inform the public about their rights and the protections available under the law. The study

concludes that enhancing awareness and understanding of child Sexual abuse through education can significantly improve the socio-economic conditions in regions like southern Rajasthan, aligning with the broader objectives of Indian child protection laws in 2024 and beyond. This approach promises to uplift the community by providing the necessary knowledge and tools to safeguard children and improve overall living standards.

8.10 Point Wise Major Findings

1. As part of this research study, researcher found that there is association between PoCSO ACT 2012 and Sexual abuse of children based cases in Southern Rajasthan.
2. During the course of the research, the researcher engaged in conversations with individuals from various areas, delving deeply into the topic of child Sexual abuse. These discussions, coupled with an extensive review of existing literature, revealed a significant association between the lack of legal and educational awareness and the prevalence of child Sexual abuse cases. It became evident that communities with limited understanding of legal protections, such as those provided by the Protection of Children from Sexual offences (PoCSO) Act, 2012, and scant educational resources are more vulnerable to such crimes. The research highlighted that in areas where legal frameworks and educational initiatives are either poorly understood or inadequately implemented, children are at a heightened risk of abuse. This lack of awareness not only hampers the ability of potential victims and their guardians to seek justice and protection but also perpetuates a cycle of ignorance and vulnerability. The findings underscore the urgent need for comprehensive educational programs and legal awareness campaigns to equip communities with the knowledge necessary to prevent child Sexual abuse and to protect children's rights effectively. These initiatives are crucial for fostering a safer and more informed society where children can grow up free from the threat of abuse.
3. During the study, the researcher learned about different types of child

Sexual abuse faced by the victims.

4. Researcher also learned that there is association between lack of legal and educational awareness and promotion child Sexual abuse cases.
5. Researcher also learned that there is association between vulnerability of children in these districts and the root causes of their abuse.

8.11 Conclusions

1. There is paucity of research work done on child Sexual abuse and safety in the districts of Southern Rajasthan, including Chittorgarh, Udaipur, Sirohi, Pratapgarh, Banswara, and Dungarpur.
2. It is observed that awareness about understanding of child Sexual abuse and safety measures has not spread to the people in the examined districts of Southern Rajasthan, including Chittorgarh, Udaipur, Sirohi, Pratapgarh, Banswara, and Dungarpur.
3. There is still need to make people aware and create awareness about child Sexual abuse and safety.
4. Despite continuous awareness, training, the introduction of new laws, and implementing safety measures, the cases on child Sexual abuse increase every year.
5. There are still a significant number of people who do not know how to deal with child Sexual abuse due to fear of risk or due to their incompetence in handling the sophisticated matter.
6. A new methodology has been adopted by government to maximize the help and awareness associated to child Sexual abuse, including filing of online complains.

8.12 Suggestions

To raise awareness about child Sexual abuse effectively, a multi-faceted approach should be adopted. Here are several key steps that can be taken: The points are as follows:

Educational Campaigns:

1. **Workshops and Seminars:** organize workshops and seminars for parents, teachers, and caregivers to educate them about the signs of child Sexual abuse, prevention strategies, and how to respond if abuse is suspected.

2. **School Programs:**

Implement programs in schools that teach children about personal safety, boundaries, and how to report inappropriate behavior.

3. **Media and Communication:**

Public Service Announcements (PSAs): Use television, radio, and social media platforms to broadcast PSAs that highlight the importance of recognizing and reporting child Sexual abuse.

Print and Digital Media: Distribute brochures, posters, and digital content that provide information on child Sexual abuse, legal protections, and resources available for victims.

4. **Community Involvement:**

Seminars and workshops should be organized by the legal institutions on the topic of child Sexual abuse.

Community Meetings: Hold community meetings and discussions to engage local leaders, parents, and community members in conversations about child protection and the role they can play.

Local Events: Participate in local events and fairs to distribute educational materials and provide information on child Sexual abuse prevention.

5. **Partnerships and Collaborations:**

NGOs and Child Protection organizations: Partner with non-governmental organizations and child protection agencies to amplify outreach efforts and leverage their expertise in handling cases of child Sexual abuse.

Law Enforcement and Legal Professionals: Collaborate with law enforcement agencies and legal professionals to ensure the community

understands the legal ramifications of child Sexual abuse and the protections available under laws like the Protection of Children from Sexual offences (PoCSO) Act.

6. Training and Capacity Building:

Professional Training: Provide specialized training for educators, healthcare providers, law enforcement, and social workers on identifying and responding to child Sexual abuse.

Hotlines and Support Services: Promote the availability of hotlines and support services that offer immediate help and counseling for victims and their families.

7. Use of Technology:

Mobile Apps and Websites: Develop and promote mobile apps and websites that provide information on child Sexual abuse, resources for help, and ways to report incidents anonymously.

Social Media Campaigns: Run targeted social media campaigns to reach a broader audience, using hashtags, videos, and info graphics to spread awareness.

8. Policy Advocacy:

Advocate for Policies: Advocate for the implementation and enforcement of policies that protect children from abuse, and work with policymakers to ensure robust legal frameworks are in place.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Establish mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of awareness campaigns and adjust strategies as needed.

Photographs and Printed Media

In order to raise customer awareness through advertising, the use of photographs and printed media shall be used.

By implementing these steps, a comprehensive approach can be achieved to raise customer awareness about child Sexual abuse, ultimately leading to a safer and more informed community.

8.13 Suggestions for the Government Taken During Informal Interviews

1. Public places such as railway stations, bus depots, and airports hold a crucial potential for the Central and State governments to promote consumer awareness about child abuse, particularly through the deployment of posters, announcements, and visual aids. In the context of Indian law concerning child abuse in 2024, the districts of Southern Rajasthan, including Chittorgarh, Udaipur, Sirohi, Pratapgarh, Banswara, and Dungarpur, present unique challenges and opportunities. These districts, characterized by their distinct socio-cultural dynamics, require targeted and effective dissemination of information to combat child abuse. The implementation of awareness campaigns in these public venues can significantly enhance the outreach of preventive measures and support mechanisms. By leveraging the high footfall in these locations, the authorities can ensure that crucial information reaches a diverse and extensive audience. This strategy not only aids in educating the public about the signs and consequences of child abuse but also informs them about legal recourses and support systems available under Indian law. The Protection of Children from Sexual offences (PoCSO) Act, 2012, and subsequent amendments, as well as various state-specific regulations, mandate stringent actions against perpetrators and provide comprehensive support for victims. Hence, utilizing public places for awareness campaigns aligns with the broader objectives of these laws, fostering a more informed and vigilant society in the fight against child abuse in Southern Rajasthan.
2. In order to raise awareness about child abuse, governments should use mass media on a large scale. To extend the message of child abuse Safety, celebrities can also be used for advertising in newspapers, television and radio.

8.14 Scope for Future Research Study

1. the same type of investigation can be conducted on a national scale. other districts would make it wider, resulting in a larger perspective on the subject of child abuses and the safety measures implemented by various agencies to stop them.

2. a nation-wise comparisons can also be performed to get at a global picture of how different big economic superpowers as well as smaller nations have been affected by child abuse and what efforts the individual national governments have done to stop them.
3. the study period can be extended to ten or fifteen years in order to trace the beginning and morbid progression of child abuse.
4. an analytical studies at the state and national levels on the same topic can be conducted utilising more in-depth analytical technologies.
5. a study of the impact of various states' and the national government of india's awareness campaigns can be conducted, tracing the relevance of mass media in exposing the people to the dangers of child abuse. the effectiveness of such efforts can be assessed by examining the rate of increase or decrease in child abuse cases following such initiatives.