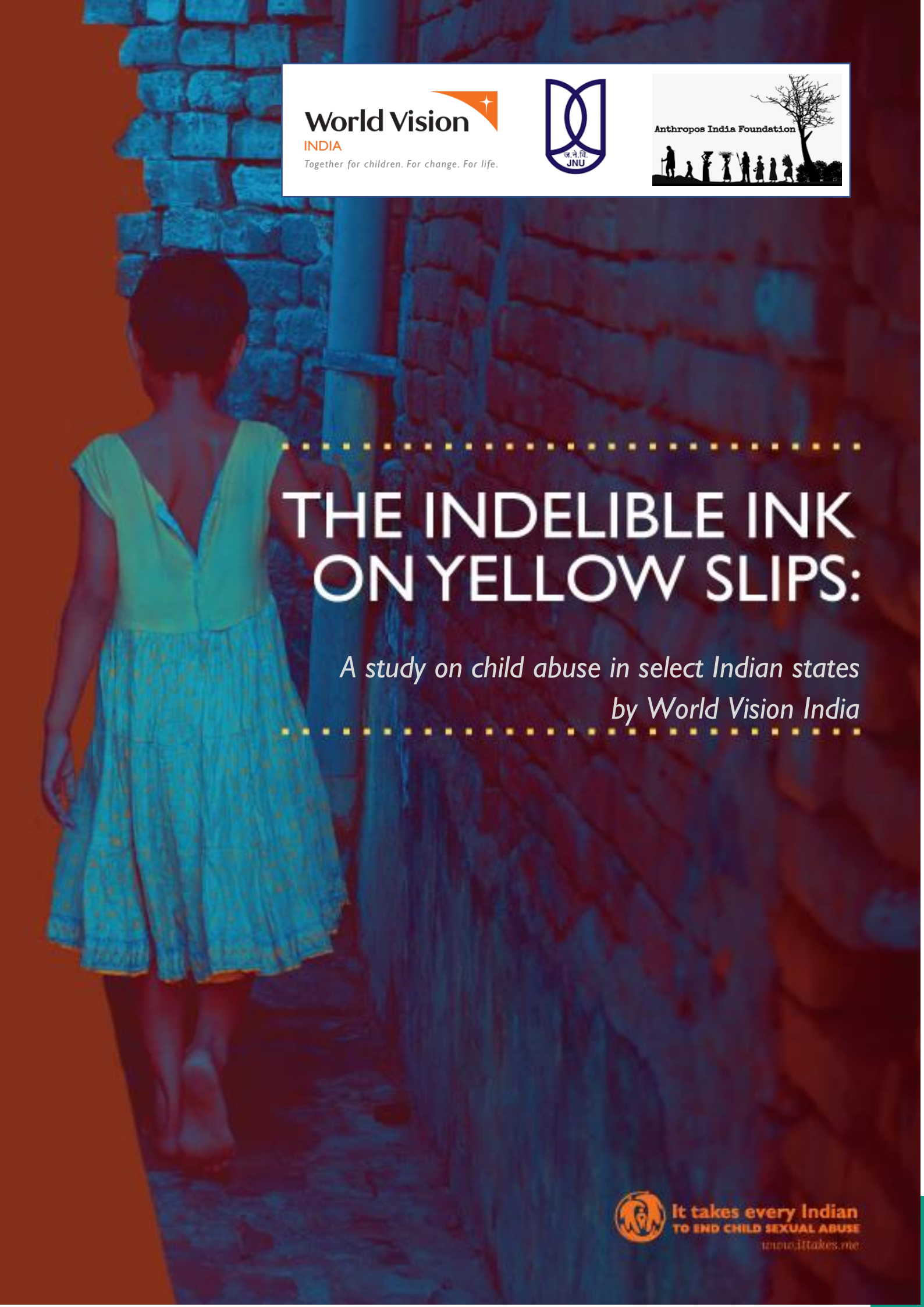


World Vision
INDIA
Together for children. For change. For life.

JNU

Anthropos India Foundation

THE INDELIBLE INK ON YELLOW SLIPS:

A study on child abuse in select Indian states by World Vision India

It takes every Indian
TO END CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE
www.ittakes.me

This study conducted by World Vision India in collaboration with Anthropos India Foundation and Jawaharlal Nehru University.

@Copyright 2020, World Vision India

World Vision India is one of India's largest child-focused humanitarian organisations with grassroot level experience spanning over six decades. We employ proven and effective development, public engagement and relief practices that empower vulnerable children and communities living in contexts of poverty and injustice, to become self-sufficient and bring about lasting change.

We serve all children regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, or gender as a demonstration of Christ's unconditional love for all people.

World Vision India addresses issues affecting children in 140 districts across 26 states in India. Our work impacts the lives of 26 lakh children and their families in 6,200 communities. We work in partnership with governments, civil societies, donors, and corporates.

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

Abbreviations

List of Tables

Executive Summary

I Introduction

II Methodology

III Findings: Understanding Child Abuse in Social Context

IV Conclusion and Recommendations

References

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study on Child Abuse in the selected four states in India, Delhi, Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan, would not have been possible without the encouragement, cooperation, feedback and inputs of many people. First and foremost, World Vision India would like to thank Research and Development department of Jawaharlal Nehru University and Anthropos India Foundation (AIF) for taking up this study and delivering on time with quality.

We would also like to thank our internal team Ms Sarojita Jebaselvi for spearheading this project with continuous support of Mr Joseph Wesley, Mr KA Jayakumar, Mr Ajay Mahajan, Mr Mikhael Pradhan, Mr Subramania Siva and Mr Sanal Mathai. We would like to acknowledge support from our project staff in respective locations, Child Protection Team and Creative Services Team for their support in shaping this report.

We would like to thank all the principals and teachers from the government schools, without their unconditional support, the fieldwork would not have been completed on time. We appreciate the officials from the Department of Education of different states, especially Mr Ravinder Kumar, OSD (CTB), Delhi and Mr Aroon Kumar, Deputy Director, Secondary Education, Rajasthan for sending permission letters to all the selected schools for a hassle-free data collection. We also thank the officials from Education Department, Mr Anil Malik, from Jind, Haryana, Mr M C Meena from Bikaner, and Mr Ravindra Kumar, and Mr Yatender Singh from Delhi for facilitating fieldwork in their respective schools and for their unconditional support. In Punjab, we thank the principals of the schools who permitted to conduct the study.

In the field, many friends were of great help, special mention to Saurav, Satinder, Harish Chander and Satyawan. We would especially like to thank several experts for their views and inputs in the preparation of the study: Prof. Sanghmitra Acharya, Dr Srinivas Goli, Ms Nandita Bhatla, Prof. Vaishna Narang. We are grateful to the researchers, Mr Simrandeep Sidhu, Ms Nibedita Roy, Ms Kavita Yadav, Mr Gagandeep Singh and Mr Mukesh Sidh for their hard work in collecting the information and entering the data for this study. We would also like to thank Ms Revathy V Menon for giving the backhand support for this study. Special thanks to Dr Hari Mohan for coordinating the whole research. We thank Dr Manoj Kumar from JNU and Dr Sanjeev Kumar for guiding us in the data analysis.

Finally, we would like to thank all the children who shared information with us without any hesitation. Their contributions have made this study rich and unique.

Dr. Prasad Talluri,
Head – Strategy and Research Department,
World Vision India

ABBREVIATIONS

AIF	Anthropos India Foundation
BBA	Bachpan Bachao Andolan
CBOs	Community-Based Organisation
CPCR	Center for the Protection of Children's Right
CRY	Child Rights and You
CWC	Child Welfare Committee
DCPCR	The Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights
FGDs	Focussed Group Discussion
ICRW	International Center for Research on Women
JJ	Juvenile Justice
JNU	Jawaharlal Nehru University
NCRB	National Crime Research Bureau
NCPCR	National Council for the Protection of Child Rights
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
POCSO	Protection of Children Against Sexual Offences
STEM	Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UTs	Union Territories
WHO	World Health Organisation
WVI	World Vision India

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Details of the Sample Size in this Study

Table 2 Forms of Abuse-All sites in the States Combined

Table 3 Category of Abuse (State-wise)

Table 4 Types of Abusers and Environment

Table 5 Types of Abusers and Environment (State-wise)

Table 6 State-wise Unsafe places

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

David Lancy' book on the '*Anthropology of Childhood*' and *'Raising Children'* gave a perspective on understanding childhood. Jo Boyden on situating children in socio-political context laid the foundation for this study. Often children are seen as vulnerable, incompetent, dependent and passive subjected to adult power and authority due to structural position. According to Jo Boyden, de-contextualised and universalistic conceptualisation is problematic. There has been chronic neglect of cultural contexts and factors which affect the lives of children largely understood from adult perspectives. Often there is a misconception of 'one childhood' anthropological literature shows multiple childhood and differential experiences of child abuse.

This study on Child Abuse was conducted in the four states of India; Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Delhi, the capital city. Though, Delhi is still not a full-fledged state, being the capital and having a bad reputation of increasing crime against women and children, it becomes essential to cover for the study. The attempt was to understand the contextual realities wherein the challenges, and concomitant abuses against children transpire. The fieldwork in the four states apprises us with structural realities that produce and perpetuate abuse and the challenges they face while growing up. Some of the common underlying values in all these states like patriarchy, parenting methods of control and micro-management, certain class/caste conditions meet out a similar impact on the lives of the children. On the other hand, there seem to be different socio-cultural and political factors that weigh heavily on the upbringing of the children and childhood.

This study attempted to understand various forms of child abuse. Further to understand the social and cultural determinants of vulnerabilities of children for various forms of abuse and to explore unsafe places for children and inform policy and protection of children.

Given the sensitive area of research, initially, illustrations suggesting various forms of abuse were pasted on the walls for children to come and write their views. This was an exercise to break the ice. Later, the PI gave a prevalence of child abuse around the world and India to break their silence around this issue. The children were then asked to put their experiences and that of their friends and safe and unsafe places on yellow slips keeping their names anonymous. Their scribbles on yellow sticky notes gave various kinds of abuses they felt, faced and experienced. Questions of upbringing, parenting and culture of raising children were also discussed with parents, teachers and some of the significant members of the community. The parents and community provided and spoke of the local contexts and challenges they face in bringing up the children.

They were asked about the idea of childhood and child-rearing and the expectations and aspirations of the parents. For instance, they were asked about the socially accepted disciplinary coercions/ corporal punishment meted out to children and whether the children felt it as abuse. The parents and community leaders, along with field observations, gave insight into the culture around childhood and upbringing. The context was then the mooring from where to understand the first-hand accounts of the children. The latter was approached in schools and interactions were aided with nuanced methodological tools to best bring out of the otherwise sensitive and personal issues with anonymity. The fieldwork consisted of spending roughly two weeks in every state.

WHO defines child maltreatment covering all the four forms of abuse for children under the age of 18 years. Unlike the four broad classifications of abuses, this study brings out a nuanced understanding of abuse from the child's perspective. Based on the anonymous testimonies and accounts, children shared 24 kinds of abuses. It is important to understand them in a specific context to take appropriate preventive strategies. This study goes beyond the conventional categories divided into emotional, physical, sexual and neglect (NCPCR and Child fund India, 2018), and sees the context and the social determinants of the abuse. Child abuse is not to be seen in isolation.

The contexts of ‘romances and forbiddances', and ‘the undoings of social ecology' were also understood as reasons for abuse. These two were sought as generalised headings to discuss the issues of children which emanate from restrictive, patriarchal, and conservative social practices, guided by the social norms and are made worse by the socio-economic conditions and the local context.

The physical abuse seems to be the most common form of punishment that the children in the said four states are facing. WHO puts the figure of 25-50% of physical abuse across the globe. Ministry of Women and Children in India 2005 reports, puts the figure to 69% facing physical abuse, 53% sexual abuse and 49% emotional abuse. Thus abuse stems from the general acceptability of inflicting such measures on children as a form of disciplinary action. Recounting the same as disciplinary action is also a form of injustice for physical abuse which can result into harm to the child's health survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power (WHO)[1]. The general acceptability of such child-rearing practices in the name of discipline and control leads to physical violence against children. Understanding of all the other forms of abuse and the social determinants are necessary to take action. This sheer scale of such instances calls upon the society in general and the interests groups (government or NGOs) in particular to intervene and present alternative models of parenting that would gradually wash these away by introducing new models of raising children. The conservative patriarchal spaces commit more sins than the spaces available to discuss them. This study maps out the workings of conspicuous ones that need to be dealt head-on like girl child education, outdoor restrictions etc.

The instances of abuse take place in a social space; a space that sometimes sanctions, allows, tolerates or at times fails to stop the abuse. The finding of the empirical study when reading through the data contextualised in the socio-economic milieu is not a unique case or two of any particular child but rather common. It becomes an intriguing exercise to notice the similarity and differences of such instances of abuse across the states, gender, and rural-urban spaces. While we seek to understand each state as a sui generis space, the instances of abuse are nevertheless discussed thematically.

The conclusions and projections are not solely drawn from the empirical data presented in the report but rather the data in from global and Indian literature and government reports. The author(s) have arduously collected the field testimonies, newspaper articles, and overall located in anthropological literature, followed by a continuous dialogue and exchange that culminated into insightful imagery of the states. A motley mix of prominent macro factors of each state and child centric experiences have been tied together to present a crisp and concise narrative of child abuse located in the social context of each state. It is hoped that the same can be a straightforward takeaway point in trying to make sense of the regions. It is only then we can, conceptually, begin to situate the child abuse in the local ecology and strategies interventions for minimising the abuse of children.

While there are general themes and parallels, there are also subtle differences in how certain realities have taken centre stage in different states. Delhi has been sui generis on account of it being a metro city and majority respondents being slum dwellers and migrants. The lives of children varied from the other three states, but each state has its challenges to fight. The relatively prosperous state of Punjab is grappling with unprecedented drug abuse that leaves the children susceptible and vulnerable. The state of Haryana highlights caste discrimination, more prominently. Rajasthan is grappling with child marriage and child labour. The cosmopolitan Delhi is rife with soaring crime rates and gruesome instances of kidnapping that overpower the discourse on child abuse.

There seems to be no indication that these given circumstances are going to change on their own. Only by uniting together with all the child rights agencies and with a concerted effort, can we see some change. The gradual modifications and tides might turn in favour one day. Still, we must remember that such changes need to be fashioned and guided by the forces that have in power to make a difference. This study hopes to induce more research of the kind that can thus serve as a source of a better understanding of the problem for the will to make a long-lasting change. It's everybody's responsibility to make children safe and secure, for we all pass through this phase of childhood.

I. INTRODUCTION

Childhood has to be understood in the socio-economic and political context. The experiences of childhood are layered by the social structures in which they live, laced with caste, class, gender, ethnicity. Similarly, the experiences of child abuse too have to be contextualised. David Lancy's (2014) understanding of children as 'Cherubs Chattel, Changelings' shows how some children are precious, cute and seen as gift 'Cherubs', some are seen as desired but pragmatically commoditised 'Chattel', and some are unwanted, inconvenient and neglected 'Changelings'. This also guides how children are treated. This can be applied to the Indian context too. It would be interesting to see if children from all these categories face abuse, if so in what forms?

Protection and safety of children is a huge concern and has been neglected for a long time. Few studies have shown the extremely vulnerable conditions in which the children live and face abuse of different sorts. It can be within the family, on the streets, in the neighbourhood, in the community and the institutions like schools and remand homes. They face not just neglect and verbal abuse, but also physical, sexual and emotional/ psychological abuse. The everyday newspaper highlights violence against children, mainly coming from the marginalised sections of the society living in the slums and JJ colonies. That doesn't mean violence against children doesn't happen in the middle and upper-middle classes.

India is a young country with 39% of its population being children. While there is a huge literature on education, nutrition and health, child protection is a neglected area of study. The national-level study by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, in 2007, done on 12447 children, showed that abuse is quite common among children; every third girl and the fifth boy are abused in their childhood. WHO puts the figure of 25-50% of physical abuse across the globe. Ministry of Women and Children in India 2005 reports puts the figure to 69% facing physical abuse, 53% sexual abuse and 49% emotional abuse [2]. The data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) is startling and shows the gravity of the situation. It is revealed that children are prone to abduction, kidnapping, rape and murder and children living in *Jhuggi-Jhopadi* (JJ) colonies are much more vulnerable due to the porous houses, lacking security and safety. Children in rural areas have different challenges of growing up. Most of the girls are stopped from pursuing secondary education due to the safety issues and the fear of elopement, rape and other concerns. It is essential to understand what all kinds of abuses girls and boys face in growing up, be it in the house, neighbourhood, schools and community at large.

Studies have also shown that more than 80% of the perpetrators are known to children. Though violence is more among girls, boys too are victims of abuse and the child rights issues are most neglected (Durham, 2003; Smith, 2008; Howe, 2007; Rowan, 2006; Turton, 2007). With the increasing exposure of children through different digital media, children are also victims of cybercrime. In India, there are hardly any empirical studies on understanding Child Abuse from a holistic and comprehensive perspective. There have been efforts by the Ministry of Women and Child Development to start the helpline called Childline 1098, to capture any report of crime against children. There are also efforts by the International organisations like UNICEF, UNIFEM, CRY, WVI, Save the Children, CARITAS and other NGOs and government bodies, like AIF, Butterflies, BBA, NCPCR and CPCR and child rights activists, to address issues of child rights and also violence against children.

In India, given the traditional mindset in parenting, imposing parents aspirations on children, a culture of silence and patriarchy, along with the dismal implementation of the law, child abuse continues to remain unabated. Despite a stringent law like "The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012" (POCSO), the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of children) Act, 2002, the crime against children continues to grow. However, the law is strong; there is hardly any provision in this law on "protection" and the entire legislation is focused on post-crime interventions. When 80% crimes are done by the children known to the child and the family, there remains 'conspiracy of silence', and the crime does not reach to the courts, and in the name of the family honour, the crime is pushed under the carpet. The child suffers silently and carries the burden into adulthood with serious consequences.

Despite the laws, institutional mechanisms at the centre and states and the helplines, which are commendable yet abuse against children continues. It is essential to understand the social context of child abuse thoroughly and put the concerted, comprehensive and integrated approach to address and prevent child abuse.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study is to understand the forms of abuse faced by children situated in the social context and inform policy More specifically they are,

1. To understand various forms of child abuse.

2. To understand the social and cultural determinants of vulnerabilities of children for various forms of abuse.

3. To explore unsafe places for children and inform policy and protection of children.

Implications of the Study

Practical Implications- The study will bring out a better understanding of child abuse in the social ecology context and also help the organisations in building modules to reduce child abuse and also generate awareness and give information to children to be safe, at the same time strengthen institutions to ensure the safety of children. It will also help in generation of advocacy material on child safety.

Policy Implications- The findings of the study will be useful to design effective policies to prevent child abuses. Mainly, it helps in understanding the context, pathways and nature of child abuses and their inter-linkages, which often missed out from previous studies.

Social Implications- The findings will also help in developing awareness and mass campaigns against the child abuses, relooking at the culture of disciplining, parenting and raising children.

We need to understand the lived experiences of children; the abuses they face, how the abuse and restriction of movements jeopardies their dreams, and how they would like to be treated. We also need to understand from the parents, teachers and significant others, their perceptions about challenges in raising children, especially the girl child. It would be interesting to know how we treat our children; whether we treat them with respect, understand their needs, recognise that they too have agency. Or do we treat them as dependents, with no agency and impose rules- regulations on them and control their movement and micro-manage their lives.

In the Indian context, given the diversity of cultures and social structures laced with caste, class, gender, ethnicity, religion and region, there are graded vulnerabilities for children. There cannot be a universal childhood and universal plans and interventions to make children safe and provide protected spaces. There is a need to understand the context-specific, social ecology of children and the unsafe spaces and situations which make them vulnerable to abuse. A nuanced understanding only can help in building strategies to prevent abuse.

The Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC)

With the growing concerns for the safety and protection of children advances have been made in Child Rights and enabling legislation and policy. CRC came into force, virtually all nations (the US and Somalia excepted) have committed themselves to advancing children's rights and to enacting legislation and policy following the doctrine of the 'best interests of the child'. Central to the CRC is a universal definition of childhood that defines childhood as beginning at birth and ending at age 18. In enumerating children' rights under the CRC, it is common to speak of the convention as embodying four basic sets of children's rights: the rights of participation, protection, prevention and provision. The right of participation includes the right of the child to participate in decision-making and also includes freedom of conscience. The rights, protection and prevention deal with protecting children from exploitation and abuse while the right of provision addresses issues of access to the resources of society including food, shelter and education. In practice, the central focus of political and legal action has been protection and prevention.

The sweeping definition of childhood in the CRC is critiqued from the perspectives of the anthropological lens of understanding childhood. A single universal definition of childhood, under international law, ignores the fact that childhood is understood and experienced in different societies in divergent ways. There is a strong theoretical conflict, where the law and anthropology tend to approach the understanding of childhood differently. As there are multiplicities of childhoods, each culturally codified and defined by age, ethnicity, gender, history and location, other factors define childhood in antithetical ways (David and Dickson, 2008).

This study thus follows anthropological perspective and methods to understand child abuse embedded in the socio-economic, cultural and political context and from 'emic' perspective – child-centric 'lived experiences' of children.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study is penned after field-based qualitative research carried out in the selected sites in four states of Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Delhi. A total of three-month-long work guided this anthropological work. The attempt is made to present a glimpse of child issues from an emic perspective inked with their very words where the format permits and; an anthropological commentary will guide their voices to forge an overall view of the state and thus the field altogether. The perspectives of parents, teachers, and community leader are also presented to contextualize their views on child-rearing and parenting.

Owing to the limited time and resources, Amritsar, Jind, South Delhi, and Jodhpur were the chosen districts purposively. These districts were furthered narrowed into two selected sites within them – one urban and one rural – that will remain unnamed for anonymity. A pilot study, for reasons of access and expeditiousness, was conducted in Delhi itself. In the case of Delhi, an urban village was selected along with a slum.

Class 11th or 12th students with equal parts boy-girl composition and a strength of 50 were selected from government schools. The underlying rationale for choosing the government schools was twofold: one, that they are likely to be more disadvantaged. The Anthropos India Foundation ethical review committee wetted the project proposal before starting, and the methods were also discussed with the experts in a workshop. Assent and consent forms from guardians, school authorities and parents were duly filled and taken signatures.

Some illustrations on big chart papers related to bullying, eve-teasing, sexual abuse were pasted on the walls and children were asked to come and write their comments in the blank bubbles of the conversations. This exercise of writing on chart papers with illustrations helped in ice-breaking and also students got the essence of the study, which paved the way to put down theirs and their friend's experiences without much hesitation.

Then the researchers shared the kinds of abuse which happen to children around the world. Children were asked to write their own and their friend's experiences of abuses and also mention the safe and unsafe spaces, without revealing their identity, on "yellow slips". They scribbled their experiences, which were collated and analysed into themes and compiled in simple tables for a better understanding. These slips, upon being filled with the answers, were not submitted in hand but in an opaque poly bag that a researcher would rally around the class. These yellow slips were set to become the indelible testimonies of grave problems that these children face. An interview schedule was designed with questions on demographic data and also questions covering the objectives of the study. Even though both English and Hindi interview schedules were prepared. Further, qualitative information was collected by brief interactions, group discussions, focused group discussions, and the use of case studies with the key informants like drop-out children, parents, school teachers, community heads.

Sample Size

The initial plan was to collect data from 400 school children (50 per site) with an equal proportion of girls and boys. However, above 500 children were covered during the data collection. Similarly, proportionate numbers of parents, out of school children, village elders, influential people/stakeholders, various government officials and school staff interviews, FGDs and case studies were collected. Based on the objectives, variables were listed, and themes were sorted to analyse and write the report. Since this is a qualitative study to understand various forms of abuse from a child's point of view, and to understand their social context, the small sample size cannot be generalized to the state.

Table 1- Details of the sample size in this study

S. No	State	Type	No. of children for pile sorting			Case studies	Individual interviews	Group interactions	Group discussions	Interviews with key informants
			M	F	Total					
1	Punjab	U	24	20	44	4	3	2	3	1
		R	63	38	101	2	3	2	3	3
2	Haryana	U	45	21	66	2	5	2	3	2
		R	25	28	53	2	2	3	3	2
3	Rajasthan	U	40	13	53	2	3	2	3	2
		R	23	32	55	1	6	1	2	1
4	Delhi	U	26	30	56	7	12	5	9	4
		R	53	37	90	6	1	1	0	0
Total			**299**	**219**	**518**	**26**	**35**	**18**	**26**	**15**

*U= Urban, R= Rural, M= Male, F= Female

III FINDINGS:

Forms of Abuse

Sharing their lived experiences and experiences of others in their family, neighbourhood and schools, these children put their indelible ink on yellow slips. The anonymous slips were given to answer questions on the abuse they experienced or their friends, when, where, and by whom. The 'yellow slips' gave a lot of nuanced understanding of the experience of abuse which they reported directly and indirectly. Since there were multiple answers, they were put down as experiences in the tables below with a simple percentage. The qualitative data presented here does not go beyond to look into correlation as the study was small and was not designed to capture correlation but to understand various forms of abuse and the social context. Their multiple narratives on the yellow slips were then categorized into 24 forms of abuses, as faced by the children. These are analysed thematically under different headings. Table 2 gives a snapshot of the number of responses against kind of abuses. The majority reported physical abuse and fights (192), followed by other abuses which are above a hundred responses like structural violence, eve-teasing and restriction and control of the authority. Structural violence broadly covers various issues, related to poverty, caste-based discrimination, gender-based discrimination due to the hierarchical social structures and power relations.

TABLE 2 – FORMS OF ABUSE- ALL THE SITES IN THE STATES COMBINED

Code-Category Of Abuse	**Total (Four States)**	
	No. of responses	*% of responses*
Sexual Abuse	77	5.26
Eve Teasing	108	7.38
Abduction, Kidnapping, Trafficking	6	0.41
Scolding	47	3.21
Physical Abuse, Fight	192	13.12
Emotional Abuse, Mental Abuse, Betrayal, Depression	79	5.4
Cyber Bullying	4	0.27
Child Labour	81	5.54
Harassment, Male Gaze, Stalking	26	1.78
Inappropriate Behaviour, Misbehaviour	21	1.44
Verbal Abuse, Quarrelling	91	6.22
Bullying, Ragging, Mocking, Teasing	77	5.26

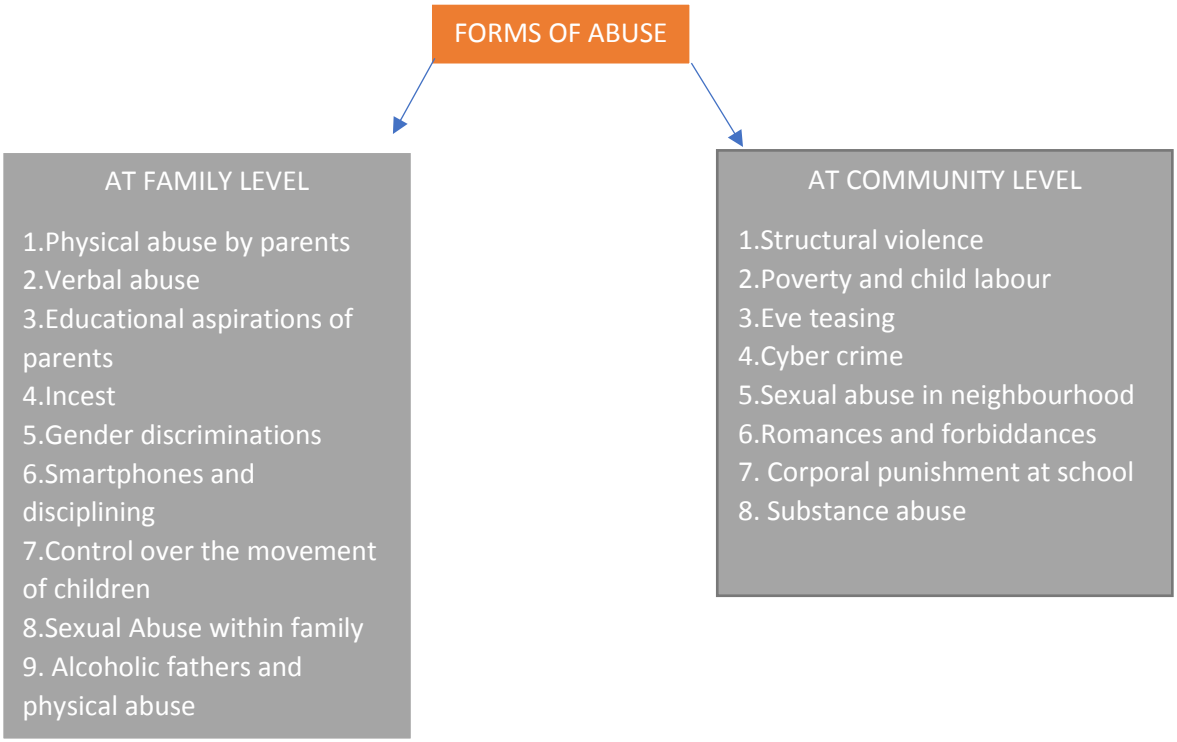
Incest	1	0.07
Corporal Punishment	20	1.38
Structural Violence	163	11.14
Body Shaming	2	0.14
Black Mailing	8	0.55
Acid Attack	1	0.07
Restriction And Control Of Authority	103	7.04
Neglect	49	3.35
Domestic Violence, Dowry	7	0.48
Child Marriage	18	1.23
Female Infanticide, Disrespect For Girl Child	5	0.34
Honour Killing	21	1.44
No Abuse	97	6.63
No Response, Unclear Response, Irrelevant Answers	158	10.8
Total	**1463**	**100**

Forms of Abuse

The most common type of abuse faced by children in the study was physical abuse followed by other abuses which are above a hundred responses like structural violence, eve teasing and restriction and control of the authority. For better representation we divide the forms of abuse under two major headings .i.e.

- At Family level
- At Community level

Though the two are interlinked because sometimes it is the community's expectations and aspirations that resonate at the family level. (For instance, curbing the movement of a girl child and not letting her study can be seen at both levels. The family may not be allowing the girl child to study/ free movement because the community or society conditions to do so). However, dividing them into family and community level will help in planning strategic interventions and steps to curb abuse and violence.



The neoliberal era with competitive education and shrinking job opportunities have put too much pressure on the parents and also on children to perform and outdo others during schooling and in getting jobs. Children in the study are coming from the poor socioeconomic group, where education is the only means for social mobility. Social context is impacting the experience of childhood. Respondents both children and parents from the urban and rural sites are under the pressure of academic achievement.

> 'Children have to face so many problems...parents force and pressurise them to take the stream they want.... children are pressured for studying.... nowadays parents just see numbers and not our potential.'
>
> (Girl, Delhi(Rural))

Educational Aspirations of the Parents

Children from government schools face a disadvantage over children studying in private schools. The parent's unfulfilled dreams and need for upward social mobility are leading to pressure on parents, and they pressurise children. This is manifested in the unpleasant parent-child interaction in the form of pressure /certain kinds of abuse from parents on kids; and also self-inflicted worry, harm on kids themselves. This was one of the major themes that emerged in all the four fields of study that parenting these days is pre-occupied of the future of their children and their present education. Financial resourcing or lack thereof, in discussing child development and parenting becomes major concerns for all parents. The problems however vary and usually go around finding a good and affordable private school, after school private coaching centres, and such investments in academics that have come to be associated with academic success. The institutional education and the success

in the recognised field of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) is a time tested, socially sanctioned, way to ensure upward class mobility.

It would not be uncommon to hear a part or full family moving to the city solely for the education (enrolment in city schools and tuition centres) of the child. Lest there be any confusion, it is not generally because of schools which are yet comparable but because of after-school coaching options which are naturally much better in the city. This came out prominently in Punjab and Haryana. The constant expectations of the parents for their children to score good marks in the examination create a pressure on the children to do well; in some cases, just doing well is not enough and they have to do increasingly better (their capabilities are largely rendered irrelevant) in order to fulfil the parents' expectations. The numerous queries of children on the same subject of 'how to score more in examinations', is but one proof of the same. It is now a well-marked pathology of the Indian education system, which makes parents and authority members look for the percentage of marks scored by a student; the subject knowledge/ understanding is usually equated to the marks obtained. The situation with most parents is that they think any student can be forced to score good marks by using different tactics of emotional blackmail, threatening, and beating.

The competency, intelligence, and worth of the students are minted in the currency of their grade. In worst yet not too few and far between cases, it is believed that a child could be beaten or disciplined into a '90 plus' student.

'Children are interested in doing sports…but parents force them to take sciences…..our talent is wasted ….children go into depression because of this.'

(Boy, Haryana(Urban))

Verbal Abuse

The verbal abuse is usually downplayed for it does not quite seem as grave as the molestation, sexual abuse like rape. Nevertheless, the solemnity afforded to verbal abuse should be seen from such vantage for it passes unnoticed and transpires with maximum frequency. It does without question leave the students with compromised self-esteem, confidence, and helplessness. The reporting of verbal abuse does not even meet the criterion of complaining about. It is so normalised and routine and seen as a way of disciplining the child.

'We are kids, and we do make mistakes because sometimes our concentration gets diverted…but our family scolds so much that we feel like running away. We are focussed on playing, but they do not let us do that'.

(Boy, Punjab(Urban))

It also speaks of the frustration and inadequacy on the part of parents and teachers as they resort to such measures out of habit. The Indian parlance and rules of discourse are notoriously infamous for using insults and swear words way too frequently (particular to a class). This then also creeps into the way the children are spoken to and treated. The children among themselves, especially the senior amongst them, claim 'superiority' by using most and 'unknown' swear words. Insulting, bullying, and name-calling are a favourite and popular pastime among the 'popular' students. There are a strong impact and dislike of verbal abuse by a number of the children(male). Some sharing that words are more hurtful than physical punishment to the children. Many psychologists would also argue that harsh and bitter words strongly affect the child's self-esteem and confidence. As literature shows the damage it causes in the adult life, they learn to take insults sitting down and are likely to become subservient and passive, having poor relationships and some become aggressive. The same argument seems to be reiterated by the children in numerous yellow slips.

'My parents scold me whenever I commit mistakes. My grandmother keeps on scolding me by saying "you don't know any household work yet…. what will you do at your in-law's house?"'

(Girl, Rajasthan(Urban))

'Physical abuse can heal, but dad's taunts hurt the most.'

(Boy, Haryana(Urban))

Gender Discrimination and Control

The feelings of neglect especially so for female children were common instances found in the study. It was intriguing to see the girls call out the bias and some so in unequivocal terms. The operational values of patriarchy were more than clear, and the same is true for all the four states. A major contention was always the simple liberties extended to the boys that were considered scandalous for girls viz. going out to play, hanging out with friends etc. The gender discrimination is witnessed and shared by girls when they see their siblings(male) prioritised, their achievements unacknowledged and studies were forsaken.

'My mother always tells me that girls have to work in their in-law's house, so studies are not important for girl'

(Girl, Rajasthan(Rural))

To understand the control parents want to have on their children especially the girl child, it stood out that due to the surrounding values, parents are more concerned about their daughters compared to the sons and hence, they try to put extra effort to make them safe. For instance, one of the parents stated that she never let her daughter wear jeans because she observed that wearing western clothes invites extra attention, which leads to all sorts of crime against woman. She also suggested that girls must be a little careful about what they wear and the way they behave with people outside the family. She reasoned this suggestion by saying that our society is such that whatever happens with a girl, she is blamed; adding to her statement.

'*apni izzat to apne haath mein he hai*', she said, '*aisa nahi hai har baar ladke he galat ho, aaj kal ki ladkiyan bhi do chande bahar ke hain*' (Female, Delhi(Urban)). Meaning our respect is in our hands, it's not always that boys are wrong, girls are no less.

'I don't get any opportunities to play. A girl also has the right to roam around, but my family does not allow me to go out. Even girls have life, don't they? A girl should also get all the rights as boys'

(Girl, Haryana(Urban))

Smart Phones and Disciplining

All the parents, unequivocally, viewed scolding (which includes verbal abuse) and beating (to a limit) as a legitimate means of disciplining their children. Disciplining the children has been told to be essential in the matters of education, conduct in the school and around the neighbourhood, and to fulfil all other expectations of the parents that they might have from their kids. Among all the four states parents usually cast smartphones as the devil of contemporary times; they are highly worried and angry over continuous use of smartphones by their children. Parents are worried because they feel that the Internet exposes the kids to irrelevant, unnecessary harmful things, which young kids should not witness. The anger supposedly results from wasting hours on the Internet on which parents have virtually no supervision; they are usually unfamiliar with what all platforms the Internet and smartphones provide. The elderly in the community have, reportedly, claimed to see the adolescent boys and girls watching videos of violence and pornography, besides playing games all day. These elderly men believed that exposure to such videos has an adverse negative impact on their mind and if they are to be believed, this impact makes them imitate what they see in such videos. They attribute the increasing number of cases of elopement, love affairs, and many such deviances to the mighty smartphones.

Alcoholic Fathers and Physical Abuse

The children many times mentioned 'drunk fathers/adults' physically abusing kids, wives, neighbours, etc. The common instances of physical punishment/abuse resulted, on part of children, from not doing the expected tasks including but not limited to household chores, homework, and not studying, outstaying their curfew timing.

'So much worse things have happened to me, so many times I have been stopped from studying and I have been beaten too. They tell me to do work. That's why I am stressed sometimes. My father gets drunk and hits my mom and because of this, my mom and I are very upset' (Boy, Punjab(Rural))

At the national level, about 14.6% of people (among 10-75 years old) are current users of alcohol, i.e. about 16 crore people. Prevalence is 17 times higher among men than women. Among people consuming alcohol in India, Country liquor ('desi') (about 30%) and spirits (IMFL – Indian Made Foreign Liquor) (about 30%) are the predominantly consumed beverages. About 5.2% of Indians (more than 5.7 crore people) are estimated to be affected by harmful or dependent alcohol use. In other words, every third alcohol user in India needs help for alcohol related problems. (NDDTC, AIIMS submits Report "Magnitude of Substance use in India" to M/O Social Justice & Empowerment 2019)

B. At Community level

The impressionable minds of the children are sure to be moulded in some manner by the mainstream culture. The present study is also a humble attempt to build a context where to situate the alarming cases of child abuse among the children of the states in question, albeit the degree varies to different levels among these states.

Structural Violence and Child Abuse

The states, although to varying levels, are also a victim of caste-based discrimination; cases appear vehemently during the research in the urban/rural areas. It has been reported in all spheres of everyday life of children and parents alike during the fieldwork. In one such instance, the respondent invoked a strong idiomatic trope to

underscore the same, for he felt that the dominant castes were akin to the monsters ready to eat the lower caste. Another parent in Haryana explained in great detail how their girl children have to go to school before time to clean the toilets in the school, as only after the stipulated chores they are allowed on the last benches of the classroom. While the boys are asked to do the other works of moving and placing the benches, filling up the water bottles, and taking care of the garden. This situation is somewhat similar to that presented in the documentary 'India Untouched: Stories of a People Apart', by the director Stalin K. There have been several narratives (mostly through parents) where the kids are subjected to discriminatory behaviour due to the caste they belonged to.

An incident shared by one of the community members back in his village is:

This is an incident of a Dalit man who used to sell bangles, he wanted to educate his daughter. So he sent her to a government school, but because of their lower caste that girl was asked to clean the school, and she wasn't even allowed to drink water from the same utensils. When her father complained, they were thrown out of the school. Her father went to DM, after their intervention the school was forced to take the girl back, but the Sarpanch of the village didn't like it, and he sent a few men who raped the daughter and broke the limbs of that man so that he might not complain again. (Male Delhi(Urban))

Parents here believed that the teachers are the perpetrators of this sort of discrimination as they also belong to the upper caste. The parents are disarmed and cannot revolt against this setting because there are no schools nearby where they can send their kids, and they cannot afford the private schools. Some of the dropouts said that such behaviour of the teachers was one of the reasons they left the school; working, hardships seemed way easier to them than everyday verbal insults they had to face in a school setting. As reported by children, in their everyday life, caste plays an important role, they find their solace only in peers of the same caste, for in that group everyone is equally discriminated, even so in the formal school setting. In some cases, they behaved the same with children of upper caste families, where they refused these children to enrol. The situation is worrisome here as what the children face in the school, becomes an initiation and inculcation of sorts into the same forces of discrimination. The young minds are already corrupted by these practices, they have been secluded since birth, forced to live in a closed community, sometimes deprived of their civil liberties, regularly bullied, and faced with discrimination in most public spheres. It is no surprise that they already have become institutionalised in some forms in the system.

'I heard that a person from the upper caste raped an orphan girl from the Dalit community. That person gave money to the relatives of that girl so that they won't complain against him. Now that girl is pregnant, and even few organisations came forward in her support, but nothing happened, and that person is still roaming free'.(Girl, Punjab(Rural))

Poverty and Child Labour

Poverty is one major reason for child labour through which children are unknowingly subjected to multiple vulnerabilities. Due to economic deprivation and poverty many of the children do not get a chance to go to schools; if in some fortunate case they do get enrolled in schools, they are unable to pursue the education for long. The labour class especially gets displaced very easily and it is a necessity to work in order to fulfil the basic needs and hence, children are also put to the same. Children helping the parents since an early age also give immediate (monetary) returns, and there is no choice but to put the children for work due to poverty.

One mother who pointed at the economic hardships and struggle to have a meal every day, shares:

'We don't send our children to school. I have no other option but to send my 14-year-old daughter for work as domestic help. I used to work there earlier as a domestic help. Now, she does all the household chores and also takes care of madam's children. I earn 250-300 per day by working in the mines. At the most, I work 20 days a month. What can we do, my husband is unwell, and he is suffering from tuberculosis. We hardly have options (Female, Rajasthan(Rural)).

Corporal Punishment at School

'Between 5th and 9th Standard my teachers used to beat me a lot. But now it is less. Teachers have no right to beat students'(Boy, Rajasthan(Urban))

The general idea of dispensing physical punishments as effective tools of instituting discipline is fairly accepted in the country. Two out of three school-going children in India are physically abused says the national report on child abuse by the Ministry of Women and Child Development in 2007. However, the current laws to abstain from corporal punishments in schools and prohibit physical punishments; came as resentment from teachers who felt that the rationales behind such rules were better served if it were left to the discretion of teachers. The students however wished to point out that it was not uncommon to witness teachers blatantly disregarding such rules. The issue of corporal punishment divided the teachers and students with many choosing to express strong views towards or against it.

The parents and teachers find such punishments necessary and easy method for instilling their authority. Physical abuse/ corporal punishment then becomes a part of disciplining cultures. The lower castes are more commonly subject to such treatment at the hands of teachers for perhaps, they are expected to be more subservient. Physical punishment is the normative standard.

Substance and Drug Abuse

'…the father had to go and look for peddlers because he could not bear to see his son suffering from extreme withdrawal symptoms; feared that they could lead to his death. The father understood the dangers too well; he was familiar, for he had seen all this before. Not too long ago, he had lost his elder son the same way.' (A parent, field notes, Punjab)

Substance abuse, however, is what almost each one of the parents is worried about, in the state of Punjab. However, the issue is starting to expand its surface and covering up the adjacent states as well. Although in the other three states, it has cropped up in very limited spaces, one can figure out that the word appeared from these scanty accounts seemingly point towards the impending epidemic. The parents of these state brutally blamed it to the adjacent state of Punjab for 'spoiling their kids' and 'luring the young ones in doing it'. From the testimonies of some parents, there have already been a few cases where the child died due to drug overdose and many are falling for it.

About 2.8% of Indians (3.1 crore individuals) report having used any cannabis product within past 12 months (Bhang – 2% or 2.2 crore people; Ganja/Charas – 1.2% or 1.3 crore people). At the national level, the most common opioid used is Heroin, (current use 1.14%) followed by pharmaceutical opioids (current use 0.96%) and then Opium (current use 0.52%). States with the higher than national prevalence of cannabis use are Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Sikkim, Chhattisgarh and Delhi. Of the total estimated approximately 60 lakh people with opioid use have disorders (harmful or dependent pattern) in the country, more than half are contributed by just a few states: Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat. .(NDDTC, AIIMS submits report "Magnitude of Substance use in India" to M/O Social Justice & Empowerment 2019)

Eve Teasing

Eve teasing is not uncommon and it is seen, as one of the ways of expressing attraction/ liking towards a person. It is consistently pursued in some of the cases, which becomes trouble for young girls. Initially, it starts with stalking or advances eventually take more perverse forms of harassment. The mention of eve-teasing was the most common subject among the girls. It is a nuisance that is well known, and no one quite has a handle on except policing the instances of the same. Eve-teasing is a practice which one is subjected to every day in their regular lives, but the matters are not taken seriously; or perhaps, due to the perceived consequences of restricted movement, facing the wrath of the perpetrator, such incidents go unreported. The female children, as their notes have shown, are particularly irritated by such acts and feel helpless. Their parents then also see them as potential victims and want to do away with the burden and marry them early. The victimhood is seen as the scourge and burden while the hooliganism that begets it is not adequately dealt with.

'I don't know what to do. He has been bothering me since three years. I can't say anything to my family. He asks me to talk to him just once. If someone sees this they will blame me and bad-mouth about me'

Sexual Abuse in the Neighbourhood

This research did not pose a direct question on the topic of sexual abuse while alluding the students to feel free to write about anything. It stands to show something that some, although very few and invariably girls, choose to recount such sordid tales. It ranged from eve-teasing to molestation to rape. It is perhaps without a doubt that sexual abuse is as worse as it can get. Also, it is now well established that in the case of child sexual abuse, the perpetrators are usually not strangers. That would also explain why many cases are unreported and pushed under the carpet, in the name of family honour.

'In my school, a girl from science stream was raped by her science teacher. He used to stop that girl after school for extra classes and take undue advantage of her'

(Boy, Rajasthan(Rural))

'One girl while going to her coaching was chased by a few boys, they took her to a deserted street by telling her that her friends are waiting for her and did bad things with her'(Girl, Rajasthan(Rural))

The abuse related to inappropriate touching was reported a lot more perhaps because of the frequency. The confined space of the public transport bus seemed to be the breeding space for such acts. The buses stand out as violent places that make the girl students uncomfortable and especially so because they don't have a choice but to travel by bus as it is the most inexpensive and sometimes free mode of transport for students.

'I come to school by bus, so many boys eve tease me. Out of fear I never shared this with anyone, I fear that they will make me leave my school. Now I do not feel like coming to school, my family does not support me. So I am losing interest in coming to school'(Girl, Punjab(Rural))

Romances and Forbiddances

The social norms and forbidding of romances and lack of spaces, tangible and intangible, for the adult couples (let alone school children) engenders many perverse forms. This issue puts the couples and venturing youth in precarious predicaments. The females then are at the blunt end of these restrictions for the patriarchal structures then stand to judge the character and 'promiscuity' of the said girl. Whence, their sexual relationships before marriage are judged heavily although there have been some gradual changes. It is the veritable prime factor in early marriages, besides the other variable individual reasons.

A girl shared :

'My life was very good at first, there were no restrictions, now they don't let me go out, and they only drop me for my tuitions. This happened because I bunked school to meet my friend. I really wanted to meet him, so I went. But my family doesn't understand that boys and girls can be friends. They have problems with this friend, and they beat me a lot. They took my phone and my scooty. This was the most terrifying experience of my life. The family says using Facebook is wrong, being friends with boys also is wrong, but they don't understand that a friend is a friend, no matter boy or girl. At first, he was my friend, but now I love him. Love as in my best friend' (Haryana, Urban).

The Four States

The four states, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Delhi, have some common underlying values like patriarchy, parenting methods of control, class/caste divisions. Poverty, caste and class discrimination gender discrimination, power dynamics have to be seen under 'structural violence' that meet out a similar impact on the lives of the children. Different experiences and conditions in each state culled out nuanced process and social contexts of abuse.

The state-wise data on various abuses reported by the study respondents are shown in the following table-3. Delhi gave more responses to sexual abuse, Rajasthan showed more of physical abuse and fights, Punjab and

Haryana showed structural violence. These responses are more indicative and no way representative of the region or state. However, the narrative given thematically shows the social determinants of child abuse. This data is not exclusively categorical and overlaps when seen in a social ecology. For example, some of the abuses as reported by the children like scolding, physical abuse, emotional and mental abuse, depression, corporal punishment, structural violence, restriction and control of authority all emanate from the pressure put forth by the parents on their children in the processes of parenting to fulfil their dreams through education. Structural violence is a broad category where the children are restricted due to their poverty and other discrimination due to their social and economic status.

TABLE 3 CATEGORY OF ABUSE (STATE-WISE)

Code - Category Of abuse	**Delhi**		**Rajasthan**		**Punjab**		**Haryana**	
	No. of respo nses	*%. of respo nses*	*No. of respo nses*	*% of respo nses*	*No. of Respo nses*	*% of respo nses*	*No. of respo nses*	*% of respon ses*
1 Sexual Abuse	50	13.1	14	3.4	13	3	0	0
2 Eve Teasing	22	5.8	22	5.3	56	14	8	3
3 Abduction, Kidnapping, Trafficking	4	1.0	0	0	1	0	1	0
4 Scolding	35	9.2	11	2.7	0	0	1	0
5 Physical Abuse, Fight	51	13.4	97	23.4	31	8	13	5
6 Emotional Abuse, Mental Abuse, Betrayal, Depression	16	4.2	12	2.9	24	6	27	11
7 Cyber Bullying	1	0.3	1	0.2	0	0	2	1
8 Child Labour	14	3.7	10	2.4	31	8	26	10
9 Harassment, Male Gaze, Stalking	15	3.9	11	2.7	0	0	0	0
10 Inappropriate Behaviour, Misbehaviour	10	2.6	1	0.2	9	2	1	0
11 Verbal Abuse, Quarrelling	16	4.2	37	8.9	27	7	11	4
12 Bullying, Ragging, Mocking, Teasing	21	5.5	36	8.7	13	3	7	3
13 Incest	1	0.3	0	0	0	0	0	0

14 Corporal Punishment	9	2.4	11	2.7	0	0	0	0
15 Structural Violence	19	5.0	25	6	73	18	46	18
16 Body Shaming	1	0.3	1	0.2	0	0	0	0
17 Black Mailing,	4	1.0	2	0.5	0	0	2	1
18 Acid Attack	1	0.3	0	0	0	0	0	0
19 Restriction And Control Of Authority	41	10.7	18	4.3	18	4	26	10
20 Neglect	13	3.4	14	3.4	11	3	11	4
21 Domestic Violence, Dowry	1	0.3	3	0.7	3	1	0	0
22 Child Marriage	2	0.5	8	1.9	4	1	4	2
23 Female Infanticide, Disrespect For Girl Child	1	0.3	1	0.2	2	1	1	0
24 Honour Killing	0	0.0	0	0	15	4	6	2
88 No Abuse	19	5.0	50	12.1	14	3	14	6
99 No Response, Unclear Response, Irrelevant Answers	15	3.9	28	6.8	69	17	46	18
Total	**382**	**100**	**414**	**100**	**414**	**100**	**253**	**100**

Types of Abusers and Unsafe places

The yellow slips also shared the perpetrators without naming them. Parents and strangers stood out as perpetrators followed by opposite sex and teachers. The abusive environment at home and neighbourhood and risk environment which are linked to elopement and social norms also contributed to child abuse. Clearly, it was not just private or public spaces which were unsafe. The children mentioned many places which they found unsafe. Some specific locations were also shared in their neighbourhood, colonies or a specific spots which were unsafe. Some of the children also shared the specific situation which can be unsafe like being alone, empty rooms and also relative's houses. Following tables 4, 5 and 6, show the types of abusers and unsafe places state-wise.

Table 4 - Type of Abusers and Environment

Categories of abuser-perpetrator	**Total (four states)**	
	No. of responses	% of responses
1 Abusive Environment/Neighbourhood	124	9.86
2 Risk Environment(Elopement, Society)	99	7.88
3 Uncle	28	2.23
4 Parents	153	12.17
5 Boys/Girls	116	9.23
6 Boyfriend/Girlfriend	9	0.72
7 Brother, Cousin, Sister	24	1.91
8 Teacher	76	6.05
9 Mother	21	1.67
10 Father/Stepfather	40	3.18
11 Stranger	175	13.92
12 Senior, Classmate, Student	58	4.61
13 Driver, Watchman	6	0.48
14 Friends	29	2.31
15 Family, Relatives	58	4.61
99 No Response	239	19.01
Total	**1257**	**100**

Source: Field notes

Table 5 -Type of Abusers and Environment (State-Wise)

Categories of abuser-perpetrator	Delhi		Rajasthan		Punjab		Haryana	
	No. of responses	%	No. of responses	%	No. of responses	%	No. of responses	%
Abusive Environment/ Neighbourhood	1	0.3	49	13.00	35	10.10	39	17
Risk Environment (Elopement, Society)	40	13.3	14	3.70	36	10.40	9	4
Uncle	13	4.3	10	2.60	4	1.20	1	0
Parents	53	17.7	18	4.80	34	9.80	48	21
Boys/Girls	26	8.7	44	11.60	36	10.40	10	4
Boyfriend/Girlfriend	2	0.7	0	0.00	1	0.30	6	3
Brother, Cousin, Sister	13	4.3	3	0.80	7	2.00	1	0
Teacher	23	7.7	31	8.20	15	4.30	7	3
Mother	5	1.7	10	2.60	4	1.20	2	1
Father/Stepfather	9	3.0	20	5.30	8	2.30	3	1
Stranger	39	13.0	45	11.90	77	22.20	14	6
Senior, Classmate, Student	18	6.0	24	6.30	4	1.20	12	5
Driver, Watchman	6	2.0	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0
Friends	8	2.7	10	2.60	5	1.40	6	3
Family, Relatives	6	2.0	14	3.70	32	9.20	6	3
No Response	37	12.3	86	22.80	49	14.10	67	29
Total	300	100	378	100	347	100	232	100

Table 6- State-Wise Unsafe Places

Category of an unsafe place	Delhi		Rajasthan		Punjab		Haryana	
	No. of responses	%	No. of responses	%	No. of responses	%	No. of responses	%
Jungle, Forest	6	3.7	5	2.90	3	2	14	2.91
Park, Playground	12	7.5	2	1.20	7	5	21	4.37
Public Transport	17	10.6	9	5.20	18	12	44	9.15
Secluded Streets	17	10.6	31	18.00	23	16	71	14.76
Crowded Markets	12	7.5	6	3.50	1	1	19	3.95
Home	6	3.7	1	0.60	3	2	10	2.08
Specific Places	14	8.7	34	19.80	21	14	69	14.35
Own Locality, Neighbourhood	3	1.9	6	3.50	1	1	10	2.08
Others and Relatives' Home	5	3.1	1	0.60	8	5	14	2.91
Dark and Secluded Areas	10	6.2	17	9.90	24	16	51	10.6
Schools, Tuition, College	12	7.5	17	9.90	10	7	39	8.11
Empty Rooms	1	0.6	0	0.00	0	0	1	0.21
Juggi, Village	3	1.9	6	3.50	0	0	9	1.87
Outside Home	4	2.5	2	1.20	0	0	6	1.24
Public Places	11	6.8	2	1.20	1	1	14	2.91
Washrooms	2	1.2	1	0.60	0	0	3	0.62
Religious Places	9	5.6	1	0.60	0	0	10	2.08
Liquor Shop	2	1.2	2	1.20	1	1	5	1.04

Being Alone	**0**	**0.0**	**2**	**1.20**	**3**	**2**	**5**	**1.04**
Road	**7**	**4.3**	**12**	**7.00**	**2**	**1**	**21**	**4.37**
No place is Safe	**2**	**1.2**	**1**	**0.60**	**0**	**0**	**3**	**0.62**
All places Safe	**0**	**0**	**5**	**2.90**	**17**	**12**	**22**	**4.57**
No response	**5**	**3.1**	**9**	**5.20**	**5**	**3**	**19**	**3.95**
Total	**161**	**100**	**172**	**100**	**148**	**100**	**481**	**100**

IV CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study brings out 'emic' perspectives of children on abuse in everyday life. While in literature and the conventional way of looking at abuses have been categorised into four forms; physical, sexual, emotional and neglect, the children in this study experienced numerous forms of abuse categorised into 24 types. While their sharing of abuse on yellow slips with confidentiality formed their lived experiences, brought out not just forms of abuse but the situation analysis, social context and determinants of abuse. This study is majorly qualitative in nature, brings out the processes of abuse in everyday life. Its smaller scope does not qualify for generalisations but gives ample evidence for strategising practical and pragmatic solutions to make safety and security of children as a priority. After the brief state-specific explanation for the abuses, more pointed recommendation follow in this chapter.

Social Ecology of Four States

There is a notable difference among the given four states in terms of language, culture, wealth etc., and yet parallels that can be drawn in the underlying system of norms and values. Conclusively, this study has identified a number of major themes that run through and colour each state. The study has so far introduced the data and then thematically laid it out from different forms of child issues. The conclusive remarks were reserved to see the whole state as one and discuss the emerging image. It would certainly help to see a common thread that runs through each state.

Punjab

Punjab is a relatively prosperous state, but the prosperity is by no means immune or even enough. The macro factors are clear: parents are naturally worried about their child taking up the drug use and such apprehensions did often surface during the course of the interviews, which was silenced from a child's perspective. The mention of drug use in every and average conversation takes place. We can nevertheless find some of its expressions in popular songs (as mentioned earlier), off-school conversations with the teens (although limited). It was clear that Punjab had to fight off the crisis before a healthy environment is instituted. Raising children is hard enough when we have average/regular problems and do so under the threat of children succumbing to a life-threatening habit is a grave circumstance. A lot, as a result, gets swept under the carpet in this altering set of priorities. Punjab is one such ground of where fledgeling modernity leaves in its wake many problems and challenges. The drug abuse is the most severe and the other problems stem from unabashed consumption, commodity fetishism, and the children being influenced by prospects of owning products and commodities and look at future goals as ways to achieve the same. The underlying set of values is informed by market individualism. It is here that we can witness a disconnect between the older and current generations.

Haryana

The state of Haryana has been infamous for strong lines of caste and the collective demands (essentially reservations) by prominent caste groups. When we hear news of violent mass demonstrations and demands made by dominant caste group, it is not hard to imagine a social space where the said caste would come to resent the 'lower' castes that already have the protective privileges. The government schools are also the spaces that bear witness to the caste-based discrimination and worse so, for the children here also learn to bear the 'burden' of their caste. The lower castes, given the comfort and space, spoke to the researchers about how their children are treated differently;

made to clean and sweep the classrooms at times, and more likely to face the brunt of corporal punishments. While such instances are by no means an exclusive of the Haryana state, it is yet a state where they are very pronounced. It is all the more so that conditions are volatile, given the violent expressions that it has taken on numerous occasions.

Strong patriarchy that goes with strong caste discrimination has been a potent mix for Haryana. The research visited a number of lower caste communities in Haryana, and their concerns about children were invariably coloured by the instances of caste-based discriminations. The resources were also then; as a result, attempt to strengthen the caste group as a whole. For example, we visited a voluntary tuition centre run solely by and for the students of lower caste where the senior college students took classes for the younger students. The formal education was valued and considered as a way out of otherwise caste-based occupational structures. Therefore, it was formal education where the people of lower castes pinned their hopes so that their children could break the damning cycle.

Honour killings, for example, are the other scourge that emanates from strong caste boundaries and social rules of marriage. If a boy of a lower caste wishes to marry a girl from an upper caste, it almost invariably does not end well for either and could very well result in the killing of the couple. The 'khap panchayats' of Haryana are particularly infamous for meting out this perverse version of 'justice'. The honour undermined by a couple of the upper caste is only restored by delivering such strong punishments on the couple but, more so for the lower caste boys. The part on 'romances and forbiddances' in this report is also to be seen in this light to better understand the grave turns that transpire if the social boundaries are transgressed.

Rajasthan

Rajasthan has its good share of problems emanating from patriarchy and caste-based discrimination. The instances that stand out, though, is the prevalence of child marriage in the state. Child marriage has although been an age-old custom practised in the country, but it has prevailed here like in no other state. One can well imagine the problems associated with child marriage for the very proposition of marrying children at such age. There are concomitant problems that come from it like formal education, especially of the girls, gets side railed by marriage. The research attempted to understand the perspective behind it and if any other issue that emanates from this take has an adverse bearing on the children.

The patriarchal norms and values are gradually changing to support the formal education of the girl child, but they are yet worse off as compared to the male children. These values also fear that if the girls are to be protected and kept safe in the comfort of the houses. A budding romance between a boy and a girl, in here, would thus be the worst thing to happen to the 'honour' of girl and also so, for the family. Given that budding romances will not allow social approval, many couples choose to elope and get married, and the family was left with shame. Our fieldwork was replete with mentions of some boy and girl eloping following which the other parents had imposed a stronger curfew on their female wards. This also meant early school dropouts, marriages at a younger age, and restrictions on social intercourse and going out unsupervised. The issues and lives of children in Rajasthan need to be imagined from such controlling realities.

The state of Rajasthan also has a great number of quarry mines, which has been a good source of income for the people of the state. This has also meant increased demand for labour to work in these mines. A number of poor families, as a result, have come to see on their children as resources that could be put to work. Our fieldwork found the mention of child labour as fairly common, especially working in the stone quarry.

Delhi

Delhi, the metro city, was naturally to have some bearing on the populace it encompasses. One could very clearly see how the major problems of the city had a strong impact on the children and parents. Researchers often would see that the first thing brought up by parents, especially the mothers, were mention of a recent kidnapping. A gruesome and cautionary tale was a regular prelude to the discussion of child issues. The mothers, despite coming from poor

families, were not taking up work to ensure the safety of their children, especially below 14 years. These were the people that resided in the slum, and the major problems had not to do with the inhabitation (as one would imagine) as much with the crimes and violence in the city. The irony of it is that the neighbouring colonies would see the instances of crime as a result of the slum in the vicinity. This is but one small glimpse of how the class-bias works in fashioning stereotypes and demonizing the other. The fear of violence and crime was by no means the only worry of the parents. Right from the pilot study itself, the researchers could witness the alarming exposure of the children to the instances of crimes against children like kidnapping, rape, and murder. The parents had chosen the routes and timings that needed to be abided by for the safe travels from and to the school or tuition centres in some cases. The girls seemed more aware and vocal about the presence of such threats. Perhaps, it was masculine to deny or not speak of them so fearfully, or that rape was more likely to occur with the female children. Nevertheless, it is with no good reason that one can explain the gendered responses to similar questions.

The share of child kidnapping in overall kidnappings rose from 23% in 2006 to 40% in 2012, and then climbed further to 60% in 2016, NCRB data shows [3].

RECOMMENDATIONS

While there are efforts by the government, international agencies, child right agencies for child protection, still everyday abuse is all-pervasive given from the child perspective. What comes out in media is minuscule. Efforts like 'beti padao, beti bachao' 'nirbhaya funds' campaigns for child safety and rigorous laws like POCSO are only one step which is yet to realize their potential.

The institutions of NCPCR and every state-level CPCR are yet to protect each and every child. While larger political and structural issues like, poverty, caste-based discrimination are taking longer time to make children safe, it is the culture of child-rearing and parenting which needs interventions. The social norms and values and the competitiveness and pressure on children to perform compared with more successful have to be discouraged. As David Lancy puts it every child is different and need to understand their worth and encourage. While the study questions today's education system and the consequences of it are the parental and societal pressures on the child, needs to be reduced. POCSO is a strong law, but when 80% of perpetrators are known to the children and in the primary and secondary kin circle, the cases of abuse are not going to see the courts, only solutions are to make everyone aware of the child rights, the laws, the consequences of child abuse on children as they grow up as adults. Further children not as personal property but individuals having dreams and aspirations which needs to be fulfilled by the parents and the state and protect their fundamental rights.

There is a need to come together to work and dialogue with the implementing agencies to recognise this as a serious issue which needs immediate action. It is also essential to recognise that there are graded vulnerabilities among the children belonging to different social groups, especially from marginalised communities. Further, those living in highly vulnerable areas and social ecologies like slums, streets and shelter homes need more attention.

More specific recommendations are

1. To bring in gender-sensitive messages, gender equality and child rights in the school curriculum in all the classes as per the comprehension of the children. This will go a long way to educate children, parents and teachers at the same time.
2. Build-in sexual health in the school health programme to identify children who are abused and take appropriate actions.
3. Mark all the specific areas mentioned as unsafe to be under surveillance to make them safer.
4. IEC on positive parenting and gender equality should be prepared and widely circulated.
5. Workshops in schools on gender equality and reduce bullying, abuse not just for children, but also for teachers, parents and others working in a school.
6. Schools to keep mandatory, anonymous grievances cell and complaint box.
7. Like Internal Complaint Committee ICC- such committees to be mandatory in schools for child protection.
8. More value to the girl child through different mediums and general culture of respect for girls and women. Reduce misogynist and sexist attitudes and practices of all, especially of men.
9. Make boys and men more sensitive towards women and girls and pledge to protect women and not be mute bystanders.
10. Building confidence among girls and learning self-defence to protect oneself.
11. Build trust in the community and take responsibility for child safety as a collective endeavour.
12. Positive social messages to treat girls and women equal.
13. Make schools, streets, neighbourhood, transport safer.
14. Bystanders need to be encouraged to intervene and stop any kind of abuse they see.
15. Reduce vulnerable and risky spots and make them safer.

16. Make all the Anganwadi centres into child-friendly places and keep them open for a full day for children even after school, as day care centre equipped with trained teachers and learning material.
17. Sustained campaigns for the safety of children at all levels.
18. Fast track courts and quick judgements for child abuse cases.
19. Sensitive and empathetic police personnel and easy filing of a complaint without hindrance. Sensitivity for police personnel is a must, who can rise above caste, class, ethnicity, and gender in registering the complaints. Thus there is a need for training of all those who deal with children to be sensitive to child issues.
20. Ministry of Women and Child development should organize meetings with CBOS, NGOs and INGOs working with children to coordinate different aspects of child rights and child protection.
21. Make the laws like POCSO, JJ Act simplified for the understanding of common people and disseminate widely.
22. Carve out separate ministry and department for Children to give exclusive focus on children.

Conclusively, as the research hinted earlier, while there are general themes and parallels, there are subtle differences in how certain realities have taken centre stage in different states. Delhi has been sui generis on account of it being a metro city and majority respondents being slum dwellers and migrants. The lives as such were set to vary from the other three states but nevertheless; each state has its own demons to fight; Punjab with drug abuse, Haryana with caste discrimination, Rajasthan with child marriage and child labour, and Delhi with crime rates and kidnappings. There seems to be no indication that these given circumstances are going to change on their own. The gradual changes and tides might turn in favour one day, only with concerted efforts of all the individuals, NGOs, agencies and governments, but we must remember that many of these children cannot afford to wait for that 'one day'.

REFERENCES

Bock, J., Gaskins, S., & Lancy, D. F. (2008). A Four-Field Anthropology of Childhood. *Anthropology News*, *49*(4), 4-5.

Boyden, J., & Hudson, A. (1985). *Children: rights and responsibilities* (No. 69). Minority Rights Group. Cited in Bracken 1998.

Boyden, J., & Ennew, J. (1996). Children in focus: a training manual on research with children. *Stockholm: Radda Barnen*.

Boyden, J., & Hart, J. (2007). The Statelessness of the World's Children. *Children & Society*, *21*(4), 237-248.

Census of India 'Percentage of Female by age at effective marriage and by residence India and bigger States, 2011 Chapter 2, Population Composition, Table Statement 12, India totals for < *18*, 2011 Census of India, Government of India (2013), page 26

Durham, A. (2003). Young men surviving child sexual abuse: Research stories and lessons for therapeutic practice. John Wiley & Sons.

Howe, D. (2007). Child Abuse: Towards knowledge base by Brian Corby, Open University Press.

Lancy, D. F. (2014). *The anthropology of childhood: Cherubs, chattel, changelings*. Cambridge University Press.

Lancy, D. F. (2017). *Raising Children: Surprising insights from other cultures*. Cambridge University Press.

Ministry Of Women and Child Development (2007) National Level Study on Child Sexual Abuse. Delhi.

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (2019) Report on Magnitude of Substance use in India submitted by NDDTC, AIIMS.

NCPCR and ChildFund India (2018) Handbook of Ending Violence Against Children. Situational Analysis of India)

Rosen M David and Fairleigh Dickson, (2008)'Child Rights and the International Community' Anthropology News April 2008.

Rowan, E. L. (2006). Understanding Child Sexual Abuse. University Press of Mississippi.

Smith, M. J. (2008). Child Sexual Abuse: Issues & Challenges. Nova Publishers.

Turton, J. (2007). Child Abuse, Gender and Society. Routledge.

UNESCO (1999). Expert Meeting on: Sexual Abuse of Children, Child Pornography and Pedophilia on the internet: an international challenge UNESCO, Paris, Room II, 18-19 January 1999 'Global Report Child Abuse and Neglect' BY Kimberly Svevo ISPCAN Executive Director.

UN 2005 https://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/indwm/ww2005/tab2a.htm
[1] www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/child/en/
[2] https://www.nhp.gov.in/disease/paediatric/child-maltreatment-child-abuse
[3] https://www.livemint.com/Politics/Bv4TbeToCpVS9j4IX3hJjN/The-rising-trend-of-child-abductions-in-India.html

It takes every Indian
TO END CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE
www.ittakes.me

World Vision
INDIA

www.worldvision.in

facebook.com/worldvisionindia
twitter.com/wvindia
youtube.com/worldvisionindiaweb
instagram.com/worldvisionindia
worldvision.in/blog

National Office: 16, VOC Main Road,
Kodambakkam, Chennai 600024

Delhi Liaison Office: 16, Pandit Pant Marg
CNI Bhavan, 4th Floor
New Delhi 110001