

PRELIMINARY REPORT OF A WORKSHOP SERIES AND SURVEY ON

CHILDHOOD SEXUAL ABUSE OF GIRLS

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The idea of doing this study came from friends and students while we shared our own experiences of childhood sexual abuse. This idea was

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greatly encouraged by my colleagues at SAMVADA and I slowly began some preparatory reading. Discussions with Dr. Shekar Seshadri, Child Psychiatrist from NIMHANS helped give the study a concrete shape. He also took part in the investigations and has helped immensely in reflecting on the findings.

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Our colleague Lucy translated the questionnaire into Kannada and conducted the workshops in the Kannada speaking colleges despite pressure of time. Arun Kotenkar has spent hours together in the coding of data and working with the whole statistical part of the study , constantly encouraging and guiding the whole team in his quiet way.

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I. ABSTRACT

10 This is an account of the insights we have gained into childhood sexual abuse (C.S.A.) in our society. The basis of these insights is not a “survey” in the conventional sense. We chose instead to conduct a series of workshops gathering information and simultaneously discussing the issue of C.S.A with 348 girl students, from various schools and colleges in and around Bangalore.

15 An overview of existing literature on C.S.A. (mostly from the west) suggests that this was once considered as confined to a handful of paedophiles, but is now recognized as endemic to society. The world over, research into C.S.A. began very recently in 1978 [U.S. National Centre on Child Abuse and Neglect] and therefore only for the past two decades has it been acknowledged as a problem of unimaginable proportions.

20 However research into C.S.A in India is in its infancy. This is largely because of the secrecy and stigma attached to it and the lack of a language for enquiry. There is an urgent need to understand C.S.A. in the Indian context thoroughly, before we can get down to taking any kind of preventive or therapeutic action.

This study has focussed on enquiring into

- 0 The incidence of childhood sexual abuse among females in our society and the age at which abuse occurs
- 25 1 The perception of those abused in terms of who they blamed and whether they felt in control or not
- 2 The extent, nature and type of disclosure about their own abuse
- 3 Who the abusers are
- 4 How the abused perceive the impact of the abuse experiences on
- 30 themselves and what their concerns are

It does not explore why C.S.A. exists nor does it examine the socio- ecological factors, social relations or the personal and / or familial predispositions that could precipitate abuse.

35 The workshops addressed the essential blamelessness of the victims and helped them see childhood sexual abuse both as a personal and collective (and therefore political) issue. For many, it was the first time this topic was addressed in a group or in a classroom and for some it was the very first time they disclosed their own abuse. So it was a kind of “taking the lid off” in a sense.

Purpose of the study

40 Through the study it is proposed to identify the most vulnerable age- groups so as to formulate preventive tools (personal safety workshops and educational material) for children approaching the “high risk” age. The information provided by our respondents regarding how they have perceived the impact of the abuse on them, will help greatly in

45 formulating messages to be incorporated in educational and therapeutic material / interventions.

5 The study could also be a starting point for a dialogue with those who feel concerned about the issue:- women's groups, educationists, parents, lawyers, doctors, counsellors and therapists. We hope that together we could work towards preventing abuse through educating children, evolving sensible laws, influencing the law enforcing machinery for a greater sensitivity to the children's' trauma and raising general public awareness through campaigns. In this direction, we hope to be able to train a group of interested persons to work as lay counsellors.

10 We envisage that the findings from this study would throw up areas for further research and study. There is a lot that we have to comprehend about C.S.A. and we hope this effort will encourage you to take up more inept enquiries into the various facets of abuse.

Similar studies and workshops could also be taken up in other cities, towns and rural areas to get a glimpse into the larger picture. The section on methodology has therefore been done in some detail to help those who wish to carry out such an enquiry in other places.

15 II. Childhood Sexual Abuse : An Introduction

What is Child Sexual Abuse?

20 One of the most common misconceptions people have about sexual abuse is that "rape" is sexual abuse. The media also carries stories on "Child rape" based on police reports, which tell us very little about what really goes on. The entire gamut of types, forms and degrees of abuse has been pushed under the carpet so effectively that it is almost easy to believe it doesn't exist. Yet, if only we would look a little, ask a little and listen, we would hear a lot. Listen to this:

25 " Eve teasing has become an almost daily experience and I have learnt to forget about it no sooner than it happens, but the physical abuse which I have gone through five times (not actual rape) was done by bastards called my relatives. These happened at night when I slept along with these wretched people thinking it was not wrong, some times because of a lack of space... and sometimes when meeting cousins and relatives after a long time, we would sleep in the same room to have a long chat. Taking advantage of the darkness, these persons, (my uncle once, my cousins thrice and my grandfather once) abused me at different times.[The first incident was when I was 8 years old]. The next day they all seemed to talk to me as if nothing had happened. Probably they thought that I had been sleeping because that is what I pretended, though I was awake, I was dumbstruck and spellbound...

35 It took me a long time to forget this and somehow I put it out of my mind. Still I was able to talk about this only when I became a young adult of twenty one years. I told all this to my sister who is a year older than me. I was shocked to hear that she too has been abused by four of the same people who had abused me. After consoling each other we have decided not to let any of the young girls whom we know to sleep along with these so called Blood relatives or anything called man. And I have decided that one day I will teach these wretched men a lesson..." (The girl's identity is not known, this is what she wrote on the questionnaire in response to our question on how childhood sexual abuse experiences have affected you)

45 Her sense of pain, helplessness and anger at the betrayal of trust is what abuse is all about and many of us can identify with this kind of experience. Yet, some simple definitions will help in clarifying what the term child sexual abuse means.

5 i) What do we mean by 'abuse'? Abuse is verbal or physical behaviour by one person, (perpetrator) towards another person,(victim) which is considered in their culture to be significantly upsetting, demeaning, harmful and / or traumatic. Abuse can be verbal abuse, psychological or physical.

10 Liz Kelly, a British researcher defines abuse: "Violence or abuse is the deliberate use of humiliation/ threat/ coercion/ force to enhance one's personal status/power at some one else's expense, and/or constrain the behaviour of others, and/ or get ones' needs and wants met at others cost" (Kelly,1991 p.13).

15 ii) What is sexual abuse? Is sexual abuse only rape?

Sexual abuse is abusive behaviour having a significantly sexual aspect. Sexual abuse can be through language, body exposure, body contact and can occur with or without other forms of abuse.

20 iii) What is childhood sexual abuse?

Sexual abuse of a child, where the perpetrator is generally an adult or a significantly older child; the child is not considered to be fully capable of informed choice or informed consent. A forced choice thus occurs with perpetrators generally forcing or persuading the child, directly or indirectly, and this unfair abuse of power in the relationship means that a child is not a equal partner. The key issue then is the exploitation of the child for the sexual gratification of the adult.

25 A more comprehensive definition has been provided by Driver & Droisen (1989 p5) which says child sexual abuse is " any sexual behaviour directed at a person under 16 without that persons informed consent. Sexual behaviour may involve touching parts of the child or requesting the child touch oneself, itself or others; ogling the child in a sexual manner, taking pornographic photographs, or requiring the child to look at parts of the body, sexual acts or other material in a way which is arousing to oneself; and verbal comments or suggestions to the child which are intended to threaten the child sexually or otherwise to provide sexual gratification for oneself. It must be defined by every circumstance in which it occurs: in families, in state run and private institutions, on the street, in classrooms in pornography, advertising and films "

35 iv) Incidence of C.S.A

40 Studies in North America indicate that one in four girls and one in six boys are sexually abused before the age of eighteen. Official figures reveal that 3,00,000 to 4,00,00 cases of sexual abuse of children are reported annually in former West Germany. The World Health Organisation states that one in every 10 children is sexually abused. Statistics have varied depending on the type of samples chosen and the definitions of sexual abuse, but the now widely accepted view is that, by far the most abuse is against girls with one in four girls having been abused as children.

v) Who are the abusers ?

5 What is even more heart wrenching is that most of the abuse is by family members. With girls, the abusers are usually uncles, fathers, brothers, cousins and close relatives, whereas for boys the abusers are often outside the home - teachers, coaches, older friends etc.

10 For both however, it is a known and trusted adult to the child who abuses that trust. What it also means that the abuser is often a person the child cares about and wants the persons approval and affection. This makes the child vulnerable to repeated abuse sometimes stretched over years together.

vi) At what age are children sexually abused ?

15 There is no specific age group of children who are safe from abuse. Children even 11 months old have been sexually assaulted. A survey done in the U.S. by the Federal Government in 1992 showed that 30% of rape victims had not yet reached their tenth birthday. In Delhi 54% of the rape victims (from police records 1992) were found to be below 15 and in 80 % of these cases the rapist was known to the child.

vii) Effects of abuse on the child

25 The trauma of a sexually abused person is hard to describe. Some studies have been done into the short term and long term effects of C.S.A. which manifest themselves differently. However the findings are still rather scant and uncertain. In the short run, sexually abused children have been found to be prone to a variety of psychological and behavioural disturbances caused by the trauma of abuse. These could include bedwetting, nightmares, sleep disorders, depression, anxiety, running away from home, multiple personality disorders, precocious sexual behaviour or its inverse, extreme inhibition and low self esteem caused by a sense of guilt and shame.

30 The extent of long term effects are dependent on several variables like the age at onset of abuse, relationship to the offender, duration and frequency of abuse, the use of force, penetration or invasiveness of the abuse and family functioning. However the main variable is the individual persons response which depends on whether she blames herself for the abuse, her general demeanour and outlook to life, socialisation and her level of awareness about what has happened.

35 A seventeen year old engineering student was brought to a psychiatric hospital for refusal to go to college, and feeling extremely fearful and anxious.

40 The clinical diagnosis was anxiety neurosis with panic. During therapy, it was revealed that she had been raped by her uncle when she was eleven years old. She had also been threatened with dire consequences if she let anybody know. The uncle continued to be a frequent visitor to the household. She began wondering whether all men would do the same to her if the opportunity arose and became reserved in her interactions with men, even her father and brother. These feelings became markedly exaggerated when she left her all girls school to join college where she had to interact with the opposite sex. She would become extremely fearful, develop panic attacks and had a pervasive sense of

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anger towards her male classmates. Eventually she dropped out of college altogether .
[Sanjeev Jain, Meena V, Valsa E and Janardhan Reddy in I.J.P. 1993]

5 In comparison with women not having a history of CSA, women who have reported CSA show evidence of : adult sexual disturbance or dysfunction, anxiety and fear, depression , revictimization experiences and sometimes suicidal behaviour. Some have also reported homosexual experiences in adolescence or adulthood.

However it is pertinent to point out here that most of those abused grow up to be normal functional adults where scars heal over time with love and emotional security.

10 Reversely, data indicates that a third of adults with marital or emotional disorders, had been victims of sexual abuse during their childhood. Sixty seven percent of female criminals had been sexually abused as children. (Nirmala Niketan, Bombay)

viii) Disclosure :

15 Abuse is often accompanied by threats of dire consequences “...if you tell any one what I did “ or by cajoling - “ ...this is a special secret between you and me only, lets not tell anyone about it” by the abuser. Culture and socialization itself have a deterring effect and discourage victims from disclosing as it attaches a stigma to the person who has been abused, making him or her feel sullied. With smaller children, who do not know what has been done to them, it may not occur to them to tell anyone about it. It is often the physical
20 hurt which she / he runs to “show mummy” who then asks how it happened.

The main dilemmas in disclosure are : Whom to tell?.. someone in the family or outside? Why to tell ? When? How to tell- totally, partially or modified? What to tell?

At the same time there could also be a tremendous urge to tell someone,
25 to be believed, to be reassured that it is not one’s fault, (there is often a fear of being reprimanded) and a need to be protected from further abuse.

The Indian Context

Is childhood sexual abuse prevalent in Indian society or are we simply aping the west in this regard and assuming that because it exists there, it is prevalent here as well ?

30 There is a need for concrete data about the incidence of C.S.A. here. Both structured and unstructured explorations into the issue would be necessary. Data from the west would be inappropriate for any preventive efforts in India in the light of our family structures, social and cultural environment, value systems, sexual mores and levels of knowledge about sex and sexuality.

35 In a culture which places too much importance on female virginity and equates it with purity, virtue, “izzat” and honour, the sorrow, bewilderment, anger and trauma of an abused person is aggravated by a sense of shame and self contempt. This could even lead to attempts at suicide and self destruction. Fear of being maligned forces victims to keep quiet and the secret pain and shame is a tremendous burden for a young mind.

40 Support systems like counselling facilities, legal action, sex education, public campaigns for awareness, sensitive law making and enforcing bodies need to be built up taking into account the context of abuse and the stigma attached to the victim in our society.

At the same time, the very values on which this culture is based, need to be questioned and young boys and girls have to be educated to analyse social structures which have pervaded the common psyche.

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Summary

There is sufficient evidence to indicate that C.S.A cuts across families from all sections of society irrespective of class, caste, ethnicity and religion. The question then is, is sexual abuse purely sexual? Or is it an aggression associated with power and with contempt?

10 Given the magnitude of the problem it can no longer be dismissed as confined to pathological families / or individuals. Surely there is something basically wrong in the power relations between men and women, between adults and children. The sanctity of the family as a nurturing haven, as the bosom of love and security can no longer be taken for granted. The innocence of children can no longer be romanticised or eulogized as cuteness. And we can no longer say that what goes on in the family - whether wife
15 battering, marital rape or child sexual abuse- is none of society's business.

The traditional diagnosis and response to C.S.A. appears restricted to treatment / protection of individual victims and treatment or rehabilitation / punishment of abusers because of the contextual variability. There is therefore a need to contextualise the issue
20 and have a multi pronged approach to sexual abuse.

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III. THE Scope AND PLANNING of the survey

30 1) Our main focus is to establish whether or not sexual abuse of female children is taking place in Indian society. The study is an open ended enquiry (rather than a testing of a hypothesis), into the extent of sexual abuse among female children, age at which it occurs, perception of blame and control, extent and nature of disclosure, who the abusers are and the effects of abuse experiences on the victims.
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The class background of the respondents is roughly related to the type of college or school

Urban English speaking == upper middle class

Urban Kannada speaking == middle and lower middle class

40 Rural kannada speaking == middle and lower middle class

Though we are aware that sexual abuse of girl children exists in poorer sections of society, we did not include them partly because of lack of access. Secondly, some categories like rag-picking girls, daughters of commercial sex workers, children in remand homes and correctional institutions, rural dalith girls could show much higher rates of abuse, varying
45 patterns of abuse and possibly more extra familial abuse.

5 In these categories literacy rates would be near zero and so a written questionnaire where anonymity of the respondent is maintained, would not have been possible. Asking questions orally face to face would have been most threatening for them as the interviewer would be a complete stranger. Including them along with girl students would then lead to misleading findings - not representing either the "normal" risk categories or the "high" risk categories of girls. These sections have to be studied separately, in depth, in the context of their socio economic situation.

10 Therefore it is not really a sample representative of our society at large, but rather a sample representing certain cross sections of society where the chances of C.S.A would be neither abnormally high or abnormally low.

15 This study is limited to C.S.A. among girls because the incidence of abuse is higher among female children. This does not in any way imply that we are unconcerned about sexual abuse of male children - it exists and we do care, but it needs to be studied separately. It would have been impossible to include male students in most of the workshops along with the girl students as it could have made the girls more reticent and withdrawn.

20 We have chosen to collect information from girls in the age group of 15 to 21 who have passed puberty and the age where C.S.A. could have occurred. Choosing a younger age group could have led to missing out on abuse experiences in the late teens. Also, we have limited expertise in dealing with ongoing abuse within the home and had we come across such cases, we would have been handicapped by our inability to help.

25 2) Deciding what to ask and what we cannot / should not / need not ask and the rationale behind our decisions

i) We decided to ask

- 30 a) Whether eve teased, heard of or witnessed eve teasing
b) whether molested
c) whether raped
d) age at abuse
e) self blame or not
35 f) felt in control or not
g) disclosed or not
h) whom disclosed to and when
i) nature of disclosure
j) relationship to abuser
40 k) frequency of hard spectrum abuse
l) number of hard spectrum abusers and their sex
m) how abuse experiences affected them and what their concerns are.

Defining the range of abuse :

45 There is a range of sexual abuse, and the first thing we had to clarify was our definitions of sexual abuse from the point of view of the scope of this study. Broadly speaking, there are soft spectrum forms of abuse and hard spectrum forms. Seen on a continuum, our definition of soft spectrum abuse would include eve teasing in its various forms. However for the purpose of the study we have limited it to mean physical forms of eve teasing like

pinching of breasts and bottoms and it does not include whistles, winks and verbal comments.

5 “Eve teasing” would therefore refer to acts of touching of breasts and bottoms rather fleetingly where the abuser is taking advantage of a crowded or public place and the anonymity it offers. By calling it soft spectrum abuse, we are in no way implying that the person eve teased takes it lightly or that it is not traumatic .

10 Under hard spectrum child sexual abuse we include overtures / unequivocal sexual invitations / physical touches of a sexual nature, which are out of place in the context of the relationship which exists, where the abuser is misusing the power of age, kinship and / or the opportunity to transgress physical boundaries. Molestation would therefore form a predominant part of this spectrum of abuse and would include sexual touching of the abused or the abuser forcing the victim to sexually fondle the abuser.

15 The hardest spectrum of sexual abuse of children would be acts involving aggression and force i.e. rape, attempted rape, oral sex, penetration using objects, using the victim to masturbate etc.

We decided to differentiate between these three levels of abuse and seek information about all three. We also decided to study these three levels on the dimensions of perceived control, self blame, disclosure and relationship to abuser .

20 ii) We decided NOT to ask

25 a) Name, family details like income level, religion, joint family or nuclear family, number of family members and sibling position. At first we were rather keen on getting information about the families to see whether we could draw any correlations between family profile and the extent / nature of abuse.

30 Later we realised that our sample size is much too small to draw conclusions about specific communities or family types. Secondly we questioned whether such information would help in planning preventive steps. Thirdly, seeking information about their families might have made the respondents unsure about the anonymity of the survey and may have frightened them from telling the truth about their abuse experiences.

35 There are also some disadvantages in not having this information. For example, when we ask about whom they have disclosed to, if a respondent does not mention mother or sister, we have no way of knowing whether she has a mother and sister or not!

b) Immediate reaction to abuse and levels of distress / disability

40 How do you ask someone about their reaction to a painful and traumatic incident (s)? A “yes/no” question about whether you were distressed or not, would be grossly inadequate. Therefore it was decided to do away with this question in a structured form. In the open ended question about how abuse has affected them, they could write, if they wished, about their reactions and levels of distress as well.

45 c) Identity of abuser: The purpose of the entire exercise was not to study the abuser and his or her profile. Nor was the intention to take any punitive or therapeutic action on the abuser. What we wish to know is merely the relationship of the abuser to the victim in the case of hard spectrum abuse.

d) Explicit details of form of abuse: The questions on hard spectrum abuse read as follows :

5 Have you ever experienced forms of overture or physical touch of an insistent or "sexual" Nature?

Have you ever experienced serious forms of sexual abuse involving coercion, aggression and/or physical hurt?

10 These questions are explained in the workshop to help them understand what is meant in each question, but we have no way of knowing what exactly took place. Did he make a pass? Was it fondling and kissing ? Did the abuser exhibit his genitals? Did he force her to touch or fondle his private parts ? Did he force oral sex ? Did he attempt "penetration" ? Did he "rape", seduce, beat or gag ? Did he make any threats, if yes, what were they?

15 Seeking such information through a questionnaire could be too threatening. On the other hand, how will it help if we know? Would we have sufficient cases of serious abuse to make any conclusions about the forms it takes? Such information may be disclosed in a therapeutic setting but may not be disclosed through a questionnaire.

20 3) The accent of the study is on qualitative rather than quantitative data because

5 the sample is small (348)

6 it is retrospective

7 respondents might be afraid to give information, especially about intrafamily rape

8 memory of incident may be repressed

9 The effects of abuse on the victims cannot be quantified, as it is a one time statement of currently perceived effects. Some of the effects in terms of their sexuality and adult relationships have probably not yet been discovered and / or articulated.

35 (How we worked at maximizing accuracy within these parameters is outlined in the section on Methodology)

IV.METHODOLOGY

40 1. Deciding Who to ask : To get a fair representation of the problem, we decided not to work with a pre-screened sample, but rather a random sample of girl students in the 15 to 21 age group from selected colleges and schools catering to Urban English speaking, Urban Kannada speaking and rural kannada speaking girls.

45 Within the school or college, the group we addressed was randomly chosen from the point of convenience. In some colleges it was the final year from a particular discipline chosen randomly, in some a cross section of girls from all classes and in some colleges

it was the pre university students. The size of the groups addressed ranged from 16 to 68.

5 A total of 14 colleges / schools were approached, two refused and in one college, the dates suggested by us did not suit the students. Approaching the college authorities and seeking permission to conduct the session entailed some explanations about the issue and we found it very much easier to get permission when the person in authority was female. Our experiences at Colleges where men were approached for permission turned out to be problematic as they were not convinced about C.S.A.. or attributed it to misbehaviour on the part of the girls!!

10 In contrast, where women were approached, they were very helpful and wanted the workshop conducted. The staff even answered the questionnaire in a few cases. This was largely because the female teachers / principals could identify with the issue of childhood sexual abuse and spoke about abuse cases they knew of or about their own experiences.

15 Twelve colleges/schools gave permission, and in eleven we conducted the workshops.

- 20 2. Formulating the questionnaire : We made most of the questions easy to answer with a “YES/NO” response, providing separate space to write about their experiences. The questions were fitted into a single sheet to give an impression of simplicity and brevity, beginning from simple and least “resistance invoking” questions to the more sensitive.

The language for enquiry : Choosing the right words was very difficult, especially when we had to translate the questions into Kannada. We found that the words were either considered obscene or had other negative connotations.

25 We were not happy to use the term “Eve teasing” for its inherent sexist bias, but still decided to use it because it is easily understood by girls of this age group.

30 Words like rape and molestation were not used, as they have very limited and painful connotations. Question 4, as stated in the questionnaire and as explained in the workshop, would cover a range from overture to physical touch. (see page 4) The question is phrased in this way so that the various forms of this spectrum of abuse are included.

Similarly in phrasing question five, and in explaining what all such abuse implies, it was clear that any form of penetration / attempted penetration was to be included.

- 35 3. Designing the interactive workshop :- Options considered, dilemmas faced and final design selected :

40 Right from the outset, we were aware that it is neither possible or desirable to walk in and out of schools and colleges administering questionnaires on such a sensitive issue. We therefore contemplated various ways in which we could get to elicit and provide information about C.S.A. at the same time.

i) Options Considered

45 Option A) Introductory inputs and discussions about C.S.A. with a group followed by distribution of questionnaire to be filled and returned to us through the post / volunteers

Option B) Introductory inputs and discussion with a group followed by administration of questionnaire

Option C) Introductory inputs and discussion simultaneous with the administration of the questionnaire, requiring about 1.5 hours. This could be preceded by a preparatory session for students in the 15 to 17 age group, introducing them to adolescence, sexuality etc and clarifying myths they have about related issues.

Since Option C seemed the most promising in terms of the quality and accuracy of information we would receive, we decided to adopt this method, which would essentially be a rather lengthy interactive dialogue session.

ii) Dilemmas and Anxieties Faced

- Will we trigger off successfully repressed memories of a traumatic event? Do we have a right to do this? If it happens, in what way can we reach out to the person concerned?
- What if someone starts crying / having a breakdown during the workshop? How do we react and reach out? Will the college authorities throw us out?
- What if the abuse was never perceived as abuse? It could have even been perceived as a pleasurable and privilege experience. How do we help them discern abuse from non abuse?
- How do we differentiate between date rape and situations where the girl is a willing party to fondling and caressing, not willing to go “all the way” but gives in to sex under pressure from the boyfriend feeling a sense of loss of control and later feeling used / abused?
- How do we differentiate between children’s’ sexual explorations of each others bodies and abuse?
- How do we clarify that sex with informed consent with boy or girl friend for mutual pleasure is not abuse?

In our attempts to resolve these dilemmas we decided to do three things.

- a) Make a concrete offer of help to those who wish to talk
- b) Clearly explain the “grey” areas listed out above
- c) Clearly explain to the college and students the purpose of the workshops and study

4. Conducting the workshops :

The workshop design envisaged the following stages:

1) Setting the tone and mood-:

- Preparatory sessions for younger students in the 15 to 17 age group were conducted in three colleges.
- assurance of anonymity,
- stressing on our collective experiences as women and our collective responsibility to share so that appropriate steps can be taken,
- reiterating that if any one has been abused it is not her fault and there is no need to feel guilty or ashamed,
- affirming the positive nature of our sexuality,

- cautioning that all men are not bad.
- Before asking the last question, stating that the “loss” of virginity doesn’t mean its the end, most of those molested and raped in childhood grow to be healthy and functional adults leading fulfilling and happy lives.

5

2) Our own disclosures and sharing our concerns was to be an integral part of the workshop to help in personalising the issue and giving it a face. Also, the fact that we have survived abuse experiences, coped and are now able to talk about it, would itself have some therapeutic value and encourage them to disclose.

10

3) The gradual build up: The questionnaire is distributed and we start from soft spectrum abuse experiences like “eve teasing” (which most people can relate to and talk about) slowly moving to hard spectrum abuse involving molestation and rape.

[See Appendix 1 for the outline of the contents of the workshop and its structure].

15

We often took their attention off the questionnaire and related anecdotes in between so that they wouldn’t feel they like objects of a uncaring and impersonal survey.

4) Making an offer of help to those who feel they need to talk or feel they need counselling, Giving information about where professionals involved are available, leaving addresses and phone numbers.

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V. Findings

Soft spectrum Abuse

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1) The incidence of “Eve Teasing”

This section was included in the survey section and in the workshops as a relatively non threatening area to start with. The findings are that 82% of the respondents have had personal experiences of “eve teasing”. The striking feature was that 70% of the respondents have directly witnessed such episode(s). These indicate that the phenomenon is both widespread and visible i.e., there are vast numbers of eve teasers and they are unafraid of being watched.

35

Many of the girls have written (in the narratives) that eve teasing is “... almost a daily affair” and have resigned themselves to this commonplace phenomenon.

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There is a small variation in our statistical findings about eve teasing in different classes of society.

Eve teasing	Yes Freq.	Yes%	No Freq.	No %
Urban English	137	93 %	10	7
Urban Kannada	95	75 %	32	25
Rural Kannada	52	75 %	17	25
Missing	5			

45

The percentage of urban English speaking girls who have been eve teased is significantly higher than the Kannada speaking girls. This could be because of several factors. The Kannada speaking girls were still feeling shy, diffident and inhibited as this was asked in the early part of the workshop.

5 I am sure this finding could tempt some people to say that it is because of the way the elite girls dress. We have no data on what they were wearing when eve teased, but most girls wear salwar kameez to college irrespective of class background. What is true however is that the urban English speaking girls are much more mobile and move around on their own therefore making them more vulnerable.

10 2) Age at first experience of eve teasing :

If the near universality of the personal and contemporaneous experience of “eve teasing” is disturbing, the age at first experience is shocking. Pre pubescent girls also experience eve teasing as indicated below. The implications of this are discussed later.

15

Age at 1 st Eve-teasing	No	Valid %
Age up to 10	33	13
Age 11 to 14	74	29
Age over 15	146	58
Missing	36	
Not Applicable(not eve teased)	59	

20 348

3) Self blame :

25 On the whole 78% of the respondents who were eve teased felt that they themselves were NOT to blame for what happened. This is further elaborated in the narratives where they express indignation and anger rather than self blame.

30

Self-blame	Frequency	Percentage
YES	60	22
NO	211	78
Missing	18	
Not eve teased	59	

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35 Here again there are significant differences in the extent of self blame depending on the type of colleges as indicated below:

40

Self-blame: Eve teasing	Yes Frequency	Yes _____ Percentage
Urban English	16	13
Urban Kannada	18	19
Rural Kannada	26	54
Not Applicable (not eve teased)		

45 -----

With 54% of the rural girls blaming themselves for being eve teased, it is clear that their socialisation is different from the urban girls.

Needless to say, when you blame yourself, the trauma is compounded.

5 4) Disclosure :

Disclosure is considered to be a significant communication behaviour and we wanted to explore whether a disclosive network exists about eve teasing.

10 81% of those who have been eve teased have disclosed their experiences to at least one person. There is a parity here in different categories of colleges where the percentage of disclosure is between 81 to 82 %. The variation comes in the timing of disclosure highlighted below.

75% of the respondents have heard a first person account of eve teasing from friends and peers and 72% made a disclosure about this disclosure.

15 The overall findings indicate that the disclosure network about eve teasing experiences is extensive though not total. 19% of the respondents have never disclosed their eve teasing and the survey form was their first disclosure.

20 5) Time of Disclosure

25 The time taken to disclose reflects how comfortable people feel about talking about such issues. A person who feels that she will be believed, not judged and not looked down upon will disclose sooner than others. It is also a reflection of the kind of support system that exists and the opportunities it provides girls with to talk about their troubled experiences.

Time of Disclosure	Frequency	Percentage
Disclosed immediately	95	43
Disclosed later	95	43
Disclosed much later	31	14
Not applicable (not eve teased)	59	--
Missing cases	68	--

35 There is a significant variation in the times of disclosure of respondents depending on their class background.

Time of Disclosure	% disclosed immediately	% disclosed later	% disclosed much later
Urban English	57	33	10
Urban Kannada	37	49	14
Rural Kannada	14	61	25

45 This low incidence of immediate disclosure and higher incidence of “much later” disclosure among rural girls is again a reflection of their self blame, level of comfort in talking about abuse and the fear of stigma. The urban Kannada girls fall in between the urban English and the rural Kannada.

6. Nature of disclosure :

Type of disclosure: eve teasing-	Frequency	%
Total	155	68
Partial	57	25
Modified	15	7
Missing	62	
Not applicable	59	

With a majority (68%) of respondents having disclosed the entire episode of how they were eve teased, it is heartening to note that they could talk about the experience in totality. The critical question here is why have 32% of the respondents felt a need to censor or modify what happened to them? What were they afraid of and why?

7) To Whom Disclosed :

A total of 250 disclosures have been made by 202 respondents. Twenty respondents have made two disclosures and 14 have made three disclosures. The distribution of to whom the disclosures have been made is as follows:

To whom eve teasing disclosed:	Frequency	Percentage
Family Members	98	39
Female Friend	140	56
Non Family members	12	5
	250	100

Within the family disclosures include 52 (20 %) to mothers, 28 (11%) to sisters and 28 (11%) to other family members including brothers, fathers and other relatives.

The fact that female friends have been the main source of comfort and solace is significant with regard to eve teasing experiences.

Hard spectrum Abuse

Insistent/ sexual overtures or touches

The general visibility of eve teasing has been referred to earlier. This visibility often gives rise to an acceptance of the behaviour as “normal”.

In this context, the finding that 47% of the respondents have experienced insistent or sexual overtures and / or physical touch assumes importance. A figure of 47% indicates that abuse experiences are in near parity with non abusive experiences. This raises important questions of what is normal and what is abnormal ? If one in two girls has had such an experience of abuse, one can hardly discern between what is the rule what is the exception.

Incidence of overture / sexual touch shows a variation depending on college type as illustrated below :

Overture/Sexual Touch: Yes: Freq Yes: % No: Freq No %

5	Urban English	87	61	56	39
	Urban Kannada	45	35	82	65
	Rural Kannada	28	39	43	61

10 1.At which age

There is no significant difference in the ages at which such abuse occurs in comparison to ages at which girls are eve teased. However the trauma of pre pubescent and pubescent girls experiencing sexual overture and touch, as against eve teasing would be much more especially because the abuser here is most often a family member as compared to an unknown eve teaser.

15

The distribution is as follows :

	Age at first overture /touch	Frequency	Valid %
20	Age up to 10	21	15
	Age 11 to 14	43	30
	Age over 15	79	55
	Not applicable (not abused)	181	
	Missing	24	
25	<hr/>		
	348		

For half these respondents, the abuse has occurred on more than one occasion and for a third, the experience has occurred in the hands of more than one perpetrator. The implications of this are tremendous in the context of the long term effects of repeated abuse / multiple abusers on the child's psyche and behaviour.

30

2.Self blame

As compared to eve teasing where 22 % felt they themselves were to blame, a larger percentage, i.e. 37 % of those who experienced overture / touch felt self blame. This is ironic because in reality victims of any type of abuse are never at fault, but have been conditioned to think that they must have contributed in some way to their victimisation.

35

From these figures it indicates that more serious the abuse the higher is the sense of self blame.

	Self Blame	Frequency	Percentage
40	Feel self blame	52	37
	Do not feel self blame	87	63
	Missing	28	
	Not applicable (not abused)	181	
45	<hr/>		
	348		

Here again the variations within college type are significant:

63% of the rural girls abused feel self blame as compared to only 22% of the urban English girls who feel self blame in the context of overtures and sexual touches. The level of self blame is also significantly high in the urban Kannada group with 55% blaming self.

5 Feel Self Blame: Yes Freq Yes % No Freq. No%

Urban English	17	22	60	78
Urban Kannada	23	54	20	46
Rural Kannada	12	63	7	37

10

3. Disclosure of overture / touch

15

67% of the respondents who have experienced overture / sexual touch made a disclosure about their experiences. This is less than the extent of disclosures made about experiences of eve teasing (disclosed by 81 %) and is to be expected given the social context and the secrecy shrouding such abuse. There is no significant variation in the extent of disclosure among students from different types of colleges.

20

4. Time of Disclosure

25

	% disclosed immediately	% disclosed later	% disclosed much later
Urban Engl	32	34	34
Urban Kann	25	41	34
Rural Kann	17	50	33

30

The data indicates that a third of students from all types of colleges wait till much later to make their disclosure.

Looking at the extent of immediate disclosures, the highest incidence is with the urban English speaking (32%) and reduces gradually as we go down the social ladder as they opt for disclosing later.

35

5. Type of disclosure

As abuse becomes more serious it becomes more difficult to make total disclosures, hampered by a lack of an appropriate language to describe what was done and what body parts were touched.

40

Type of Disclosure	Frequency	Percentage
Total	57	57
Partial	30	30
Modified	13	13
Not Applicable(not abused)	181	
Not disclosed	49	
Missing	18	

45

The variations in type of disclosure according to college type is as follows :

Type of Disclosure	% total	% Partial	% modified
Urban English	58	34	8
Urban Kannada	50	27	23
Rural Kannada	69	23	8

The group with the highest percentage of modified disclosures is the urban Kannada speaking group. Our data indicates that 69% of the rural respondents made total disclosures and consequently here the incidence of partial or modified disclosures is the lowest.

6. Who is the abuser ?

Often when we talk about molestation and sexual invitations we envisage that the abusers are outsiders, but the data reveals the opposite with the majority of abusers being family members.

Touch / Overture Abuser	Frequency	Percentage
Family Members (Male)	93	55
Female Friend	2	1
Non Family Members (Male)	75	44
Total number of abuse events		170

In the non family members there are those who are known to the respondents and others who are strangers. The number of strangers who have abused is 32, comprising half the non family abusers. This also means that 33 of the non family abusers were known to the girls and were neighbours, friends, teachers etc. On the whole 75% of the abusers have been known to the girls abused by them. The betrayal of trust by a known person, sometimes a loved one is bewildering for an adolescent girl and this has caused many of them to become extremely distrustful and suspicious of men. This is further elaborated in the narratives section.

Serious forms of abuse : coercion, aggression, rape etc

1. Incidence of serious forms of abuse

By serious forms of abuse we have meant attempts at penetration, forced oral sex, rape and using the victim to masturbate.

Serious Forms of Abuse	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	49	15
No	279	85
Missing	20	

On the average we have found that 15 % of respondents have experienced serious forms of sexual abuse. The implications of one in every six girls being seriously abused are

tremendous. In the context of the short term and long term effects of serious abuse, this is a very disturbing finding because the victims have almost no support system except family and friends. When one in every six girls has been seriously abused we have act and act fast as the repercussions are several and worrying.

5 The variations in terms of college type are as follows :

	Serious Forms of Abuse	Abuse Frequency	Abuse Percentage
10	Urban English	20	14
	Urban Kannada	11	9
	Rural Kannada	18	30
	Not applicable (no serious abuse)	279	
	Missing	20	

15

2. Repeated abuse

38 % of those who experienced serious forms of sexual abuse had repeated experience of abuse and 62% had such an experience once. The highest percentage of repeated abuse was in the urban Kannada category with 50 % of those seriously abused reporting that they had been abused many times. This has to be seen in conjunction with the prevalence of abuse among the urban Kannada group (9%) which is lower but more repetitive than the urban English and rural college respondents. (see table above)

20

3. Age at serious forms of abuse

25

	Age at Time of serious Abuse	Frequency	Percentage
	Age up to 10	11	32
	Age 11 to 14	5	14
30	Age over 15	19	54
	Not applicable (no serious abuse)	279	
	Missing	34	

30

35

As compared to age at eve teasing and sexual touch / overture where 13 % of the victims are less than 10 years of age, we see here that 32% of the victims of serious abuse are less than ten years old. Does this mean that the lesser the age of the girls, the abusers feel more powerful and abuse is therefore more serious? Or is it a matter of physiology ? As eve teasing and molestation are essentially targeted towards breasts is it possible that the under ten age group is not victimised as much as the other age groups as breasts and hips have not yet started developing? Rape and attempts at penetration do not require breasts and are focussed on the vagina which even little girls have. Does this fact coupled with the fact the small girls are easily coerced and more likely to be ignorant about sex, encourage serious abusers to look out for younger children?

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45

4. Self blame

Self Blame: Serious Abuse	Frequency	Percentage
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Feel self blame	20	50
Do NOT feel self blame	20	50
Not applicable (no serious abuse)	279	
Missing	29	

5

10

50% of those who have been seriously abused hold themselves responsible to some extent and feel self blame. This is significantly higher than the feeling of self blame among eve teasing victims (22%) and victims of overture / sexual touch (37%). Therefore as the seriousness of the abuse increases, the extent blame goes up.

Variations with regard to college type :

15

Feel Self Blame	Frequency	Percentage
Urban English	8	42
Urban Kannada	5	50
Rural Kannada	7	64

20

With 64% of rural girls feeling self blame having gone through serious forms of sexual abuse, it is significantly higher than the percentage of girls feeling self blame from urban English (42%) and urban Kannada (50%) speaking colleges.

25

5. Disclosure

61% of respondents who have experienced serious forms of abuse have made a disclosure. This not significantly less than the percentage of those who disclosed their overture / sexual touch experiences (67%) but is much lower than the disclosures about eve teasing (81%).

30

There is no significant difference in the extent of disclosure among the respondents from different types of colleges as illustrated below :

35

Disclosure	Frequency	Percentage
Urban English	12	63
Urban Kannada	6	60
Rural Kannada	10	59

40

59% of rural respondents, 60% of urban kannada and 63 % of urban English who have been seriously abused have disclosed their experiences.

6. Time of disclosure

45

Disclosure Time: Serious Abuse	Frequency	Percentage
Immediate disclosure	10	39
Later disclosure	5	19

Much later disclosure	11	42
Not disclosed	18	
Not applicable (no serious abuse)	279	
Missing	25	

5

There is no significant difference when comparing the time of disclosure of eve teasing, overture / touch and serious forms of sexual abuse. The percentage making disclosures much later is low (14%) as far as eve teasing is concerned in comparison to those experiencing sexual touch and serious abuse.

10

7. Nature of disclosure

A majority (64 %) of the seriously abused respondents have been able to make total disclosures. 20 % of them have made partial disclosures and 16% have made modified disclosures.

15

The nature of disclosure varies widely among respondents from different backgrounds. Among the urban Kannada respondents who were seriously abused, no one has made a partial disclosure, 80% have made total disclosures and 20% made modified disclosures.

20

Nature disclosure	% made total disclosure	% made partial disclosure	% made modified disclosure
Urban English	73	18	9
Urban Kannada	80	-	20
Rural Kannada	45	33	22

25

30

8. To Whom serious abuse disclosed

The irony of the family being the point of abuse and also the source of support in serious abuse, is significant. While the girls have turned more to friends to disclose their eve teasing experiences, they largely depended on family members to talk to in cases of rapes and other serious abuse.

35

Serious abuse disclosures	No. Of disclosures	Percentage of disclosures
Family members	14	61
Female Friends	9	39
	23	

40

9. Who are the abusers?

Thirty eight abusers were identified by the respondents who were seriously abused. The details are as follows.

45

Abusers: Serious Sexual Abuse No. of abusers Percentage

Male Family members	21	55
Male Non Family members	17	45

38

5 This is almost identical to the profile of abusers in sexual touch / overture.

PERSONAL NARRATIVES

10 Telling stories about past events in our lives is a universal human activity. The content of narratives and their form (Why we tell the story 'this' way), what we emphasize and omit, our stance as protagonists or victims,... all these tell what shape we can claim of our lives and the way in which we are fashioning our identities and making a point.

15 In order to explore how the respondents perceive their abuse experiences, abuse of friends and C.S.A. in general, we decided to ask an open ended question, to which they could respond in a narrative form. The question asked was " How have these experiences affected you and what are your concerns in this regard?"

Speaking about traumatic experiences can be extremely difficult as disordered experiences have to be given a reality, unity and coherence.

20 The purpose of seeking narratives and then analysing them was to see how they have imposed order on the flow of experience, how they have created plots from chaos creating events and how they have tried to make sense of the abuse events in their lives.

The response to this question ranged from blank sheets, to terse one / two sentence(s) and sometimes more prolifically to an entire page of outpouring of experiences, emotions, questions, pleas and introspective reflections.

25 On reading the narratives carefully, we found that the main focus was on:

- a) relating abuse events and disclosures in some detail
- b) immediate emotional reactions to an abuse experience
- c) long term effects of abuse on themselves
- d) attitudes to men
- 30 e) expectations from the organisers of the workshops

What we coded for analysis was divided into four parts comprising (b), (c), (d) and (e) listed above. A detailed analysis of these is in Section 1 below. All quotes are reproduced exactly as written by the respondents.

35 The part (a) of descriptions of abuse events were not very numerous, but provided us some insights into the settings of abuse and little about what was actually done to them. These were not coded for analysis as the number of respondents who wrote about this was too small. Some of these narratives are reproduced in Section 2 verbatim to provide a glimpse into these events.

40 It is pertinent to point out here specific questions about the areas were not asked and therefore all 348 respondents have not touched upon each of these areas. Their responses have been free flowing personal narratives, touching on various facets of abuse from the point of view of their subjective realities. We have gleaned some trends which respondents have touched upon for the purpose of an analysis.

45

Section 1.

Reactions to abuse, long term effects, attitudes to men & expectations

5 1) Emotional Reactions

Emotional reactions to abuse have included sadness, fear, anger, guilt, shock, helplessness, disgust, humiliation, frustration, worry and confusion. A total of 375 emotional reactions have been recorded which are distributed as follows:

Emotional Reactions	Frequency	Percentage
Sadness	119	31
Fear	31	8
Anger	69	19
Guilt /shame	18	5
Shock	9	2
Helplessness	51	14
Disgust	27	7
Humiliation	13	3
Frustration	24	7
Confusion	8	2
Worry	6	2
<hr/>		
375	100	

The predominant feelings are sadness, anger and helplessness.

25 These frequencies tell us very little about the intensity of emotions involved. More articulate respondents have been able to spell out clearly what they have felt, whereas many others have not been able to say more than “ I feel very bad about this experience” and ‘bad’ could mean sad, ashamed, guilty and many other emotions.

30 Anger :- Some of their expressions are very vehement and relate to how they wish they could retaliate to the abuse :

One of the girls who has been seriously abused writes “ Feel like chopping off a man’s pride “. Another girl who has been eve teased and molested writes “I feel bad and feel like kicking those who did this “.

35 A respondent who has been physically abused at the age of seventeen writes “ .. I have been emotionally affected- adversely... at least while it lasted and for a few hours after the incident (sometimes for a couple of days); anger, heated anger has been a very important component. In fact looking back, anger is what I probably felt the most, coupled with disgust.”

40 Frustration and helplessness ;-“ One fails to react to such situations (eve teasing) after some time though the helplessness and distress does not reduce. Speaking about it at home becomes very difficult and overtures at home are hard to be reacted to” writes a student who was abused by her cousin. Another respondent puts it this way “ many times I think of revenge in vain”

45 Fear :- “ Initially I was scared of my brother, I am still scared of him. I hardly ever talk to him.. I even get dreams of my childhood & they really do haunt me...” A girl who was raped once and molested many times by her brother between the ages of 8 and 9.

Shame :-“.. the first feeling is anger and shame,.. you feel ashamed of the situation and feel stupid, you only feel worse. Since I am not close to my mother or anybody it was very difficult”

5 Humiliation :-“ Feel like a piece of shit” and “ I felt and still feel that I have been insulted by the males of our society”.

10 Disgust :-“ It is so disgusting that somebody can touch you and feel you as if you are a public property...” “ Sickening that people can do things as crazy as this..”

15 Confusion :- “ I didn’t know then what had happened and later found out from my mother what it meant.” Another girl who was eve teased when 6 and abused when 13 says “ I never could understand what touching the private parts meant and I was confused initially”

Shock :-“ I was shocked initially...though I had heard other girls’ experiences...I didn’t imagine that I would be a victim some day....”

2) Long-term effects

Long term effects as perceived by them at the moment have been articulated by some respondents.

20 The frequency is as follows (For those seriously abused)

Long Term Effects	Frequency	Percentage
Hurt	77	48
Depression	30	18
Suicide attempt	4	2
Problems in physical intimacy	9	6
No long term effect felt	12	8
Learnt to handle situations	27	17
Total No. of effects stated	159	100

30 Hurt and depressed:- A girl who was abused by her “neighbour uncle” when she was six and raped at the age of eight describes how it has affected her : “... Earlier on I had these periods of extreme depression and after I disclosed it to my friend, we visited a psychiatrist a few times....its much better now, though there are still times when I blame myself for what happened.....”

35 Not disclosing who abused her when she was seventeen, a respondent writes “ I feel very disgusted and tormented”

40 Problems in physical intimacy :- The problems in this regard have been narrated from the point of view of avoiding any kind of touching to specific problems in intimate relationships :” I avoid hugging as a symbolism of farewells” and “... My abuse was mild, but occasionally, in my relationship with my boyfriend, I experience revulsion when there is caressing of my body”

45 3) Attitudes to men : Hatred, distrust. fear,

The basic attitudes to men which have been expressed by the respondents refer to a sense of distrust , hatred and fear. The details are as follows:

Attitude	Frequency	Percentage
Hatred	19	14
Distrust	54	40
Fear	16	12
Need to be alert	47	34
Attitudes stated	136	100

10 Distrust and the need to be alert : Distrust is the predominant attitude. Implicit in the need to be alert is also a assumption that all men cannot be trusted.

15 “ Distrust of all men, especially older strange men” is how one respondent has described her reaction to her abuse by her friends brother. Expressions of hatred are mixed with an urge to avenge the wrong done to them “I think women should become stronger and just bash them up... nothing succeeds like brute force”

20 Regarding distrust of men, the narratives seem to touch on a sense of sorrow about their suspicions. “These experiences have made me behave in a very odd way with guys... I don’t even trust my dad and my brother” or “...I avoid crowds, I’m constantly on guard and cannot communicate in a relaxed manner..” A respondent who has had no personal experience of abuse, but has been told by a friend about her abuse writes “...all men are not good and I hate men”

4) Expectations

25 Many of the narratives contained expectations of what they felt should be done about Childhood Sexual Abuse . These mainly centred around the need to prevent abuse from taking place, need to punish abusers and the need to be able to talk more openly about sexual issues.

The details of their expectations are as follows :

Expectations	Frequency	Percentage
Help to Abuser	3	1
Punishment to abuser	45	14
Sex education needed	39	13
Need to talk about sex	53	17
Women should fight	42	13
Should be Prevented	98	31
Help to abused	26	8
Girls learn martial arts	9	3
315	100	

40 There is an overwhelming feeling that something should be done to prevent such abuse from taking place. Some of the respondents have also given their ideas of how this can be done and would like some organisations to step forward in this direction.

45 Need to talk about such issues openly : - “ These experiences have taught me that there is no need to hide and be secretive about such things. One feels much better if we confide in someone. It helps to take the burden off your head and mind.. we can make others aware of what could happen so that they equip themselves.”

5 Prevention and Punishment to abuser :- One of the most interesting observations on this is that several girls have mentioned a need for law to be enforced and a need to punish abusers as an act of deterrence. However, not a single Law student has talked about the need to punish abusers. Is this because the former were reacting from an emotional need to punish, while the Law students were responding from a realistic understanding of the limitations of the Law and the trauma of the victim in a prosecution, especially when the abuser is someone you love ?

10 Help to those abused :- “ I feel very desolate and bad...my main concern is to try and forget this...to erase it out of my mind. Can you help?”
While some of the narratives contained such open pleas for help, others wanted help to be extended to others whom they know are abused.

Section 2.

15 Abuse experiences :

20 Difficulty in disclosure :- “ These experiences affected me mentally... I don’t talk about them to my family members excepting my mom and sister. I generally feel ashamed to speak out to my daddy and brother. I don’t narrate such things to my friends also.” This respondent has not disclosed her eve teasing experience to anyone, but told her sister about a sexual touch attempt much after it happened.
See form 303, 327, 320

25 About self blame : “...putting the blame on yourself all the time is an act of cowardice and guilt and will not help anyone. Instead it will encourage these people to feel right about themselves and indulge further in such heinous acts. So, help yourself and help others!”

Conclusion

30 This is a preliminary report and we have no intention of making any final conclusions at this juncture. We have a lot of information and data which can be further scrutinised, examined and analysed in the light of the discussions which we hope this report will generate.

35 I would like to end on this note with the above quote from a respondent’s narrative about self blame. While we should work together to look at ways of preventing abuse, we also have to help in healing wounds caused by sexual abuse. The first step in this direction is really to stop blaming ourselves and others who have been abused.

Here we only recap briefly the main findings :

- 83 % of respondents have experienced physical eve teasing, 13% of them when they were less than 10 years old
 - 47% of respondents have been molested / experienced sexual overture and 15% of them were less than 10 years old
 - 15% of the respondents have experienced serious forms of sexual abuse including rape and 31 % of them were less than 10 years old
 - Disclosures have been made by 86 % of those eve teased, 67% of those molested and 61% of those seriously abused
- 45

- As the seriousness of abuse increases the tendency to self blame also increases. 22% of those eve teased, 37% of those molested and 50% of those seriously abused feel self blame.
- The tendency to blame self increases as we go down the social ladder and move from urban to rural representation
- The preponderant effects are sadness, depression, anger, helplessness and distrust of men.