

# Sexual Abuse in Children: Shocking Figures in Pakistan

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## Author's Contribution

<sup>1</sup> Conception of study

<sup>1</sup> Experimentation/Study conduction

<sup>1,2</sup> Analysis/Interpretation/Discussion

<sup>1,2</sup> Manuscript Writing

<sup>1,2</sup> Critical Review

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## Abstract

**Introduction:** Sexual abuse is an alarming issue in children of Pakistan<sup>1</sup> which has not only physical but also mental implications.<sup>2,3</sup> It is common globally but many cases are not reported because of fear, feeling of self-blame, guilt, or many other reasons.<sup>4,5,6</sup>

Pakistan is still in the infancy period to deal with and protect child abuse cases although legislation has been passed and needs to work a lot on this issue. This article gives an idea of the current situation in Pakistan so that policies can be made and protective measures were done at the grass root level.

**Objective:** To determine the frequency of sexual abuse in children of Pakistan.

**Materials and Methods:** A cross-sectional study with retrospective analysis from the data of SAHIL Non-governmental Organization (NGO) for the year 2017.

**Results:** In the data analyzed a total of 1002 cases of child sexual abuse were reported in 2017 out of which 414 cases (41%) were of sodomy and 588 cases (58.6%) were of rape. Almost all the age groups were the victims in which boys were more affected in the 6-10 years age group while girls were more affected in the 11-15 years of age group. The data shows that 74% of cases were reported from Punjab, 18% from Sindh, 4% from KPK (Khyber Pakhtoon Khwa), and 2% from Islamabad's capital territory. Also, 17% were from urban areas and 83% were from rural areas.

**Conclusion:** Alarming high figures of child sexual abuse are noted in Pakistan mainly in the province of Punjab and serious efforts are needed for its prevention in terms of public legislation as well as awareness of parents and teaching staff.

**Keywords:** Sexual child abuse, prevention.

## Introduction

Sexual abuse is an alarming issue in children of Pakistan<sup>1</sup> which has not only physical but also mental implications.<sup>2,3</sup> It is common globally but many cases are not reported because of fear, feeling of self-blame, guilt, or many other reasons.<sup>4,5,6</sup> Although a multidisciplinary approach should be applied Pediatricians have the main role in detecting sexual abuse by local examination, sampling, assessing the trauma, and mental health of a child<sup>7</sup> so they should know about the child protection agencies and law enforcement organizations to protect the child.<sup>7,8</sup> It is also a great threat for mentally disabled children and can be prevented by increasing awareness in children as well as parents.<sup>9</sup>

Pakistan is still in the infancy period to deal with and protect child abuse cases although legislation has been passed and needs to work a lot on this issue. This article gives an idea of the current situation in Pakistan so that policies can be made and protective measures were done at the grass root level.

**Objective:** To determine the frequency of sexual abuse in children of Pakistan

## Materials and Methods

A cross-sectional study was conducted with retrospective analysis from the data of SAHIL Non-governmental Organization (NGO) for the year 2017.

### Definitions:

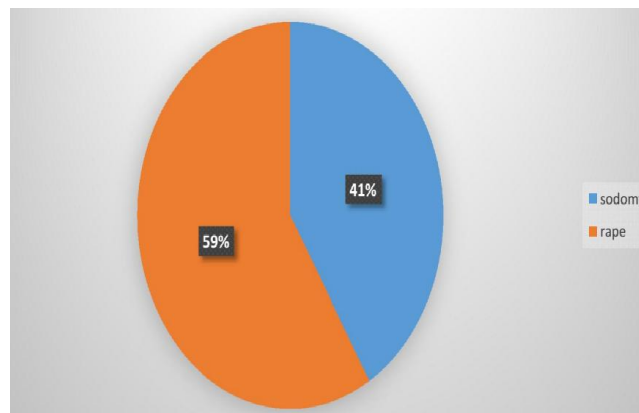
**Child Sexual Abuse:** The World Health Organization (WHO) defines CSA (child sexual abuse) as a coercive act by a child who is unable to comprehend or provide consent, leading to serious physical or psychological damage<sup>10</sup>

**Sodomy:** it is the forced sexual intercourse between two males

**Rape:** it may involve sexual intercourse which is initiated against a female without her consent

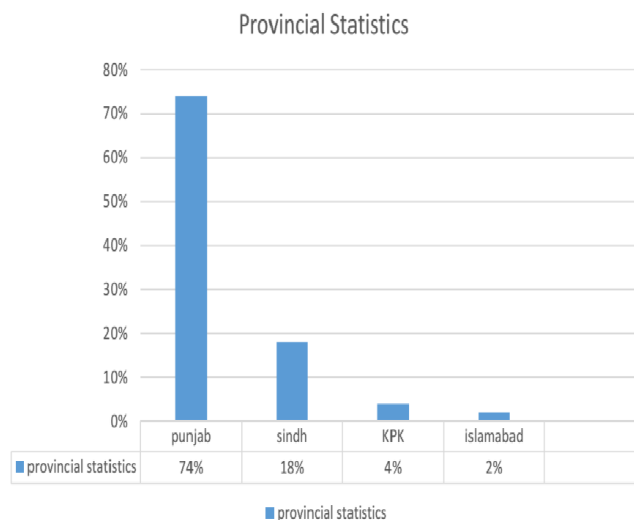
## Results

In the data analyzed a total of 1002 cases of child sexual abuse were reported in 2017 out of which 414 cases (41%) were of sodomy and 588 cases (58.6%) were of rape.



**Figure 1: Categories of Child Sexual Abuse**

Almost all the age groups were the victims in which boys were more affected in the 6-10 years age group while girls were more affected in the 11-15 years of age group. The data shows that 74% of cases were reported from Punjab, 18% from Sindh, 4% from KPK (Khyber Pakhtoon Khwa), and 2% from Islamabad's capital territory. Also, 17% were from urban areas and 83% were from rural areas.



**Figure 2: Provincial Statistics**

## Discussion

Child sexual abuse is a problem with both a national and worldwide prevalence.

Globally, 5 million to 1.5 million children suffer violence every year and 73 to 150 million girls are subjected to abuse every year.<sup>11</sup>

In Pakistan, no official data exists on various types of Child abuse and neglect. In our study, 41% were boys while 58.6% were girls. According to an unofficial report, 15-25% of children are sexually abused in Pakistan. In our study, 74% were from Punjab, 18% from Sindh, 4% from KPK, and 2% from Islamabad. While in another study in Karachi 88.7% of school children reported physical abuse; 17% of 300 school children in Rawalpindi/ Islamabad were sexually abused (1 in 5 boys and 1 in 7 girls), and 72% of the victims/survivors who were abused were below the age of 13 years.<sup>11</sup>

Prevalence rates of Child Sexual Abuse range from 8% to 31% for females and 3% to 17% for males.<sup>10</sup> The highest rates have been reported for boys (<18 years) in Africa, i.e., 19.3%, and for girls, in Australia, i.e., 21.5%. Asia has the lowest rates both 11.2% for girls and 4.1% for boys.<sup>10</sup>

A study in Iran showed that 20.9% of the children had been sexually abused. Depressed children were 3.2 times more likely to be sexually abused than non-depressed children. Furthermore, 8.7% of girls and 48.2% of boys suffered from depression.<sup>12</sup>

## Conclusion

Alarmingly high figures of child sexual abuse are noted in Pakistan mainly in the province of Punjab and serious efforts are needed for its prevention in terms of public legislation as well as awareness among parents and teaching staff.

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