

## NON-COMMERCIAL SEXUAL ABUSE OF CHILDREN IN BANGLADESH

## A Case Study Based Report

## Breaking The Silence

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## FOREWORD

Sexual abuse and exploitation of children has become a widespread phenomenon throughout the world. The demand for children as young as 5 and 6 years old is increasing in the commercial sex industry everyday. The problem of commercial sexual exploitation of children is no different in Bangladesh than in other countries. In recent years, there has been an increasing awareness on this issue among people in a lot of countries. The government of Bangladesh too appears to be recognising the growing problem and has introduced tougher laws to prevent it, though its effective implementation is yet to be seen. However, while the focus is growing on the commercial aspect of sexual abuse and exploitation of children and measures and programmes are being undertaken by governmental and non-governmental organizations to combat it, there has been a tendency to neglect the non-commercial aspect of sexual abuse of children. Sexual abuse, that is rampantly taking place within a child's home and workplace; a form of sexual abuse which people at large are inhibited to address and often deny the existence of this problem by pushing it aside as a "stray incident." Whereas, children have been (and continue to be) subjected to non-commercial sexual abuse for generations and which has been affecting their physical, emotional and psychological growth. Yet there is a deafening silence on this issue.

To address the violation of this fundamental human rights of children. Breaking the Silence, took the initiative to commission a Case Study-Based Report on this issue. Breaking the Silence, is an activist group, which is working to raise widespread awareness on the issue of non-commercial

sexual abuse of children in Bangladesh. The Report focuses on a small number of case studies from Bangladesh and does not represent the whole country, However, the Report offers a good insight into different forms of non-commercial sexual abuse and repression of children taking place in this society. The case studies also reveal the extent of the problem that exists in this country among all social classes in both urban and rural areas, irrespective of gender. We hope that this report, part of Breaking the silence's effort in raising awareness, will contribute not only to a better by the Government and the civil society in the campaign against non-commercial sexual abuse of children and in defence of the rights of children.

We express our gratitude to Mr. Afsan Chowdhury and his term for doing the case studies and to Radda Barnen for providing financial assistance in commissioning the Report and in publishing it.

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### Instead of an Introduction

The reporting team has spent most parts of seven months involved in this work. Originally it was meant to be ready by April 1996 but a variety of intrusions including a long spell of political unrest cost us time. We also spent longer hours than originally planned investigating and collecting cases. But the time spent has been worthwhile.

We actually didn't expect to gather this amount and level of information when we began the work. But now we feel pleased that we at least could fulfill our responsibility and preliminary evidence on child sexual abuse could be collected. Out of the total cases collected, we chose of the more representative ones but each case seems to stretch beyond the confines of words and impressions because of what they contain. One may disagree or even reject our analysis but the case studies remain. And every statement made in the report is based on one case study or another.

Knowing fully well that it is an emotion based statement, we are saying that the case studies indict the state of criminal negligence of its children population. The country, the governments, society, all have failed the children. Children are not just hungry, they are not just uneducated and ailing, they are also sexually abused.

Our original intent was to work with 36 case studies but we ended up with 50 of them. Doing justice to them would probably require years of analysis and produce an even thicker volume. But we didn't have the king of time and nor did we seek that. Like the members of the Breaking the Silence (BCE) who sponsored the study, we are also child rights activists and our concern is to initiate preventive, mitigating and management action at all levels on the issue. Tomorrow or another day, we may experience the luxury of a long academic analysis but today we want action right now, the crisis is here and neglected. We want to draw immediate attention to it. And that's why the report.

The case studies form the most important part of the report. We request our readers to peruse them carefully. They are some of the most telling evidence against exploitation and repression of children anywhere.

We have tried to refer to as many case studies possible but some were selected for greater focus because they were either representative of a major problem or reflected a particular type of a situation requiring focus.

We believe Breaking the Silence (BTS) has done something remarkable. They have initiated a process to address an issue which by our estimate and understanding affects millions of children. Social sex abuse of children is an issue denied and discarded till now in Bangladesh. We hope that with the report Breaking the Silence will be able to go ahead even further and involve others in the fight to eliminate the problem.

This may also well be the first full fledged report of this kind on the problem. Thanks are due to Radda Barnen for making this study possible by assisting the objective of Breaking the Silence. We are thankful to both for having been chosen to do the work. It has given us a chance to join the fight against social sex abuse of children. Having completed this assignment, we feel we have seen far too much to deny our involvement in the struggle.

To ensure confidentiality, all the names, addresses and possible identification marks of each case study have been changed. However, original versions are being maintained in case there is an official challenge to the collected facts. BTS has agreed to this method of ensuring secrecy. A major concern is the social and personal privacy of the individuals who, despite their trauma

agreed to share their experiences. And they are almost all children. The original case studies are in Bangla Language. For more details please read the introduction to the case studies.

The term non-commercial sex abuse and social sex abuse have been used to denote the same in this report. Nor is this, a report on numbers and percentages. The approach was to document case in a specified geographical area. It was also important to pursue and identify as many types and patterns-social and personal-of sexual abuse as possible.

We ourselves were initially disturbed and shocked by the very high incidence of sexual abuse. Discussing the matter, we felt that reporting might have been enhanced by the fact that once a contact was made with an abused child, other informants came forward with their cases. There also appears to exist a network of the abused children which adults know little about.

We also took cognizance of the those incidence which were already publicly known because they reflected best the trauma of an abused girl child. Sometimes we were directed to cases because once it became know that we were working on this topic, children wanted us to known their personal history. Contrary to adult beliefs that sexual abuse is part of growing up, it is at best a very negative experience for the children and terrifying one at the worst for all. Its a nightmare ignored. So the high number probably reflects not just high incidence but discovering an area of high neglect. We know there will be resistance to the level of sexual abuse that we are reporting. But controversy doesn't scare us. We have been with the abused and saw their pain and we owe it to them.

But our apologies for all the errors and mistakes, whether in analysis or presentation and certainly in typos. We have tried our best but they still remain. We also go on record saying that only we are responsible for what is in the report and shall bear all responsibility whatsoever.

The report was a team effort. The team members spent many days trying to accept some very disturbing facts about the society they lived in but ultimately became convinced that they were doing a work which deserved their effort beyond the call of their contracted duties. They put in months of unpaid work and I am grateful to them. Quamrul Haque was fully responsible for all logistic and management and he collected cases and helped complete extensive part of the analysis as well. Our debt to him is high. His support is deeply appreciated here.

Afroza Parveen, Sultan Mohd. Razzaque, Md, Shafiqul Islam and Kum Kum were not just Research Associates but as a team made a pioneers. They made connections and earned the trust of the children through a variety of improvisations and never let down their moral responsibility. I deeply thank them for what they did. I am sure they will continue to be involved in this sector of work where we need more and more committed souls.

The work is hardly the final word on the subject. Its in fact a seminal work, perhaps the first organized probe. And that was the objective. Much needs to be supplemented. So if informed, we shall be happy to incorporate comments and corrections in any future editions of the report. But all of us will serve the children best of we reflect upon our own life and lives discussed in this report and do something to address the problem. That will be the best thing that can happen to the children of Bangladesh and Save the children.

Afsan Chowdhury

Study Team Leader

Non-Commercial Sexual Abuse of Children :

A Case Study Based Report

## Executive Summary

### Background of the Report.

1. The study was commissioned by Breaking The Silence, a group of activists who are working to bring the issue of social level sex abuse into public focus. Its an informal construct with the objective of advocacy and mobilization against child sex abuse.
2. although there are stray references to the issue in different reports, very little organized probes have been done to produce concrete evidence of the state of social level sex abuse of children. A lot of interest exists regarding the problem of commercial sex abuse but household and community level or non-commercial sex abuse has been generally an ignored topic. BTS felt that it was being sidelined and the issue was subjected to the same silence it receives at the social level where it takes place.
3. Most people tend to ignore its existence or minimize its significance. The absence of any work and programmes convinced Breaking the Silence Group, the need to have some concrete evidence to prove that it is a major problem and deserved immediate attention.
4. It was therefore decided that a number of representative case studies would be collected so that they could be placed before all to prove that he problem not only was there but was probably bigger than it was thought to be.
5. A team was commissioned to do the work based on their past experience in dealing, both with sexual issues and Children in Especially Difficult Circumstances. This team was composed of a Team Leader, an Assistant Team Leader and four Research Investigators.

### Process of Work

1. It was agreed between the study team and the sponsor that 36 Case Studies (CS) would be considered sufficient as representative at this initial stage. These CSs were split into Urban literates and non-literate, rural literates and non-literates, CEDC cases and cases referred y doctors. Each segment was again split into males and females.
2. The method of information collection was to focus on a particular physical area and collect the cases in order to ensure greater depth. Since, the team didn't have a previous study to compare its results with, it was felt that an area focus would provide case studies with greater insight on the social behavior pattern. It would also profile the behavior patterns of abusers more clearly. Conventional wisdom dad it that child sex abuse was very high in the CEDC segment and it deserved special attention to justify its selection as a special segment. To beef up the cases, it was also decided to access medical records, if possible.
3. Since the work was in a possibly new area and extremely sensitive, the team decided to do a rehearsal run first and find out if the subject was at all possible to probe into. Most wisdom had it that the world was a secret one and if not so, the cases were so few that the team would have to scout the entire country for a few cases to come across.
4. After completing interview training to arm oneself with greater skill to talk on the topic, the team felt that they could do a test run. Knowing that such probes could generate hostile reaction and even possible violence, it was decided to withdraw probing at the first sign of threat from anyone or group.
5. Three levels of informants were decided upon. (a.) Children themselves so that the information would be absolutely authentic. (b). Adult recalls of such experience in the absence of children,

(c). Parents of abused children who could provide information and if need be confirm the incident of abuse should it appear that the children were making up stories for whatever reasons.

6. During the pre-test, it became clear to the team that the subject was approachable. Contrary to popular wisdom, children and adults were willing to talk in many cases if proper rapport building was made. The relative ease with which such connections were made and the obvious prevalence of the problem gave the study team the confidence it needed to feel that the work could be done to a satisfactory degree.

7. Two urban areas and two rural areas were chosen. The selection of probe areas were partly influenced by the connections the investigators had in those areas. Since the team was going into unknown territory, it was felt that some contacts would help the solo investigator locate him/herself with ease and reduce suspicion of their intent. The team was aware that the topic was potentially explosive.

8. The investigators who worked with great diligence not only obtained evidence of the problem but also drew an unsettling portrait of rural and urban societal structures to expose a shadow world of violence and lies and deceit in which all participate.

9. However, the earlier designed samples couldn't be maintained. The adjustment was on the basis of similarities and differences. The investigating team in a midterm review felt that, abuse didn't show variations within dominant classes and groups, defined by wealth and education. Focus should be on male and females and the role of social power in influencing the entire child abuse syndrome because of the vulnerabilities that were brought into focus. The role of the family and the attendant issue of the relationship of these institutions became more prominent as work developed. What came across was a more complex subject than the report title suggests. Child abuse was clearly seen as rooted in the overall social dynamics and not simply a sex behavior related issue. That simplified the segments but made the analysis more multi-layered and overlapping. The socio-political background was therefore given greater prominence.

### Vulnerabilities

1. As children, age was a major issue in assessing vulnerabilities. It appears that no age is a safe age. Children as young as five/six years have been abused. Children under ten years are routinely abused.

2. The age group-10-14 years-came across as the period during which the highest number of abuses occur. This applies to girls as well as boys. Obviously, this age phase is one of emerging sexuality and therefore encourages vulnerability.

3. Parents often fail to recognize the sexual growth of their child and continue to believe that their environment is safe without any concrete or contrary evidence. A young child's vulnerability increases because she/he is considered sexually mature but her parents/family doesn't recognize this which leads to abuse by those who are sexually attracted to them.

4. Girls seem to be vulnerable throughout or till they are no longer "sexually attractive." This isn't the case with boys who can become safe in most cases once they can defend themselves physically. This physical aspect of vulnerabilities is the most violent component of the entire syndrome. Its society's signature of approval of an acceptable form of criminal social behavior.

5. Young girls are seduced by men much older. Some of the girls are so young that it should be termed as pedophilia. But this is a gray area because in rural Bangladesh, marriages happen so

early that sexual relationship with under-fifteen's is common and socially acceptable. Nationally, more than half are married under the legal age of 18 years.

6. Young boys are abused by older men and women, both. They have a physical vulnerability problem till they become strong enough to resist rape. One case of a boy raped by an older man is recorded. But this boy also managed to convince his parents to do something about the incident. The abuser, a part of the family circle was scolded. Raped girls can hardly expect that since the first impulse of the family is to hide the incident as much as possible.

7. There is evidence of sex amongst young children themselves. This type of sexual relationships appear to be more dominated by natural instincts and curiosity rather than expressions of power relationships. Not even when one is the son/daughter of the house and another is a domestic aide. However, the matter changes rather swiftly as the borders of childhood are crossed.

### Gender Vulnerability

1. Girls are more vulnerable than boys. Girl children are the most oppressed part of society in at least the sexual abuse sector.

2. Girl children have to face abuse twice. First, the child is physically abused. Next, she is abused by society through its customs, practices, censures and ostracization.

3. Any girl who is abused is designated as noshto meye (bad/rotten girl) and she is considered unmarriageable. Since, for a girl, marriage is thought to be the ultimate personal and social objective, being denied this is the ultimate punishment possible. And this, when she isn't even responsible for the act.

4. The pressure to marry pushes some girls to look for grooms early. She is socially programmed to find a match if possible. The well off and the powerful have a psychological advantage in abusing because the girl may be thinking that the relationship is being conducted with her future husband and not someone taking advantage of her vulnerabilities.

5. Girls also are susceptible to declarations of love by potential abusers. Once contact is made, abusers immediately declare undying love, knowing that this will reduce resistance. The abusers, in many cases, however don't hesitate to rape violently if the resistance is too high. But "love" is a weapon which abusers have used quite effectively. The fact that they refuse to marry all those they abuse doesn't appear to influence the girl children's behavior pattern. Abusers are not only violent but capable of manipulating trust and confidence to a high degree. Management of manipulative behavior as an adjunct to violence is pre-conditional to survival and success in a conflict ridden society.

6. amongst the urban under privileged, rape is unusually common. Girl children, especially those working or having to go out too household chores are almost constantly harassed sexually. It involves, verbal abuse, flashing, touching, and the more serious form of abuse, fondling and vaginal ape. But these girls seem to have a high capacity to keep such incident a secret. Silence is deafening in the urban sector.

7. Rural areas display a high level of tolerance for rape as well. It certainly doesn't threaten the sense of collective self-respect of a village if a girl is raped in that locality. Since, most girls who are raped are from the less powerful groups, the informal justice system also doesn't do much about it. Girls are very easily condemned as Noshto.

8. While a boy's family suffers little in the rural areas, because the stigma of abuse affects the girls, the girl's family suffers hell once the incidence of abuse becomes public. They are also



denied the right to protest in most cases. The family has to accept the humiliation in silence. They do their best to keep such incidents a secret but in the rural areas, this is difficult. The entire family is traumatized and ostracized and not just the abused.

9. In some of the cases where the girls became pregnant, the family has to arrange abortions. Sometimes the child is born and left as a foundling. Since abusers always deny responsibility, the future of a child considered illegitimate would be extremely painful.

10. The bottom line for gender discrimination is that those who are abused can't marry, the abuser can marry. In fact, the abusers find no problem in finding brides. But in case of the girls' family, not only can't the abused fail to find grooms, her sisters can't either. Even the publicly raped aren't given the benefit of doubt regarding her consent to being repaid in public.

11. The trauma level for most boys is low compared to the girls. This is particularly true for rural boys who seem to be able to move through this patch of life with relative ease compared to their sisters. In the urban areas, the CSs we found relating to boys however reflected great trauma in most cases. This segment was better educated and more sensitive. But the girls in the poorer section of Dhaka suffered great trauma and compared to their urban poor brothers were much worse off.

12. Boys can push for action if abused. They can even refuse to have sex and still survive. But for girls, this option is very limited because the girls are either physically forced to have sex or forced to endure the trauma of an attempt. The failed abuser may publicly also accuse the girl of trying to seduce him which is readily believed. In both cases, she can't fight back and this creates the terror for her. In both the cases, she has to undergo public humiliation. The boys can fight back and have less problem of having to deal with the future. A girl who has been victimized has her reputation tarnished. She is marked forever. A boy doesn't have to experience that.

#### Socio-Economic vulnerabilities

1. Existing socio-economic structure is seriously stacked against the interest of the child. Sex abuse is denied with a vehemence or brushed aside as insignificant. In the process the abusive activities continue to happen.

2. Sex abuse is committed by the powerful more than the powerless. The powerless, the poor, the sinecure make up most of the victims. Society protects the abusers through its social systems which is run by the powerful. Since police is considered friendly to the powerful, the victims turn to the informal justice system. But this system too is again under the control of the powerful. The salish is the servant of the powerful. As a result, the powerless has no chance of redress.

3. In the cases that were reported, salish decisions are either ignored by the abusers or they didn't even consider such cases worth discussing. The salish also doesn't follow up the cases. So after a period of time the victims aren't compensated at all although it may have been decreed by the salish. But the salish can also collude with a powerful abuser and push the powerless out of the village if the actions of a victim threatens a power group or family.

4. Given the power relationship in the rural areas, one feels that the powerful may actually be deliberately choosing the powerless to abuse. It's a safe group to access for sexual gratification. The grosser forms of post-abuse scenario is to be ostracized by most if not all villagers through a collective campaign led by the abuser or his family.

5. Sometimes, an abused girl child may also benefit from being a member of a powerful family. The girl who belongs to a prominent family doesn't have to undergo the kind of trauma her sisters

have to do because of the family's status. Elites, whether boys or girls- are protected more from societal condemnation in comparison, It cuts across gender lines but that doesn't mean that being a member of a powerful family guarantees a girl from the purgatory her poorer sisters also experience.

6. The report finds that rural society won't allow anything to happen which will threaten the status quo. The village society is too entrenched to allow something as child abuse, which it considers a minor issue, to endanger a system which allows the groups, factions, clans to operate in a village. The child is in total conflict with the institutions that a village formally sustains.

7. The urban system is different and there are variations within a city itself. The urban poor in our report still had remnants of rural institutions with them, however weak. There is at least one instance of abuse being decided in an urban salish in the urban poor sector. But the city has developed alternate institutions to which other urban sections are loyal and turn to.

8. Urban middle and upper class also follow traditional patterns of success in society including marriage. For them, conforming to established paths of success publicly is important, upholding public values is, no matter what is done in private. Thus a family is not threatened when incest occurs but is threatened when the girl wishes to marry her gay partner and not their chosen groom.

9. In the same vein, a girl can be so scared of her social status-conscious family that she might fail to report abuse and blackmail and end up attempting suicide. The family prestige overrides the safety and psyche of the child. The child is also not considered threatened when abused by close family members. The scare comes when reporting or public knowledge of such behavior looms large.

10. The family refuses to open up because, in their alienation, they have a common goal of maintaining the imagined ideal of a society which is educated, enlightened and therefore free from such vices. To protect that ideal they have to deny the existence of child abuse.

11. This puts the urban child in particular but all children in general in conflict with the state powers that be. The urban mix, representing the most articulate voice of the state can't and won't protect the child. And in not doing so exposes the bias of the state. The societal expressions that exist in the urban milieu tolerates sexual abuse of children. By refusing mitigating action, by refusing to acknowledge, it also is refusing to put the state under any threat. The powerful social segments will protect their private behavior and by extension of the various manifestations of the state because their existence is mutually dependent.

12. Since the state hasn't created an alternative support structures, the family is still the predominant mode of behavioral expression of society. Individuals return to the family for protection and many survival needs. The individuals also therefore protect the family by refusing to acknowledge any deviant behavior which the family may experience. In doing so, it tolerates and ultimately protects the sex abuser of the child.

### Emotional Vulnerability

1. The report finds that people are often abused as a result of emotional dependence. This may take very serious forms depending on the level of dependence. The abuser can manipulate children's emotional needs and gratify their own sexual needs. In some cases, in the urban sector, the child may be so emotionally hungry that he/she may submit to abuse in lieu of emotional gratification.

2. Children also submit to the will of the family. In some cases, its observed that every when they are aware that they are being abused, they will go along to ensure peace in the family. This is more intense when such considerations are laced with economic dependency.
3. But the dividing lines between economic and emotional vulnerabilities can often be fudged. In some cases, a child may submit to forced sex because he/she care for the financial needs of his/her family which is dependent on him/her for their physical survival.
4. But whatever be the compulsion, the trauma and its attendant damage is obvious in most cases. The behavior of a child can be warped by the perception that the child is forced into an abusive situation. This has very serious impact on the psyche and the report has recorded such cases. An abused child is a traumatized child and that's an inescapable fact.
5. The greatest pressure of course comes from within the family. The family sends a message very quickly about what is expected from each member and this, as per our report appears non-negotiable. The need to remain silent about abuse and the trauma caused by it is generated within the family.
6. Children may also submit to sexual abuse willingly and this veers very close to sex transactions because it allows a child to gratify material needs. This is an increasing urban phenomenon where children left to themselves, without the pressure of major economic distress are moving into children in conflict with child rights. They receive no positive social and family value inputs because the family funds little time for the child except to expose to the value structure of consumerism and commercial transactions.

#### The Family Dimension

1. That the state of the family would become such an important part of the report wasn't clear when the investigations began. But since then, the family has become the most significant institution which is linked to the child and therefore to sex abuse in general.
2. Families do suffer immensely with the victim. For no fault of its own, the family has to undergo a series of and varieties of trauma ignited by an incidence of child abuse in the family. In most cases, their suffering is the same as that of a victim. For example, sisters find it difficult to get married, are teased as family members of an abused and so on.
3. Families recognize that their abilities are limited and there is not much that they can do to improve the situation for them and the victim. This makes other family members resentful of the victim and the victim suffers within the parameters of the family as well.
4. Knowing that suffering for the family starts with the public knowledge of the abuse, families are the most committed silencers in society. They will go to any lengths to try to keep such incidents a secret knowing the consequences of knowledge. In this, everyone in the family cooperates. This process also denies right to justice of the abused.
5. The family also knows that the justice delivery system, whether in town or rural areas, simply doesn't deliver justice. This report recorded many instances of terrible miscarriages of justice in the informal system. Police can't ensure justice either and nor can the courts because of the process demands of the formal justice system. The powers that be wherefore offer few options to the family except to seek silence to protect itself, the family. Of course, as a result, the rights of the abused is sacrificed.
6. Families also create value structures which encourage abuse. Marriage for girls is held so loftily as a family objective that children on their own pursue that goal which brings them in

contact with the abusers. They poached a long way and walk into the danger zone in the hope of a good marriage. Most males are aware of this fact and take advantage of it.

7. Parents are so driven by the marital objective that they don't hesitate to marry their daughters off to habitual abusers knowingly and we have specified the cases in the body of the report. It apparently doesn't matter as long as the girl child is married off. This is a direct encouragement to child abuse and sustenance of abuse enhancement in society. Since men face little problem in finding a new bride, even after being convicted by the salish, life becomes easy for the sex predator. Such cases have been recorded in both urban and rural sectors.

8. The family also circulates the myth that its circle of relatives and friends are sexually safe which isn't a fact. The report indicates that most of the abuse takes place at home and by those who have ready access meaning members of the safe circle. Strangers who abuse are few and far between. The report also finds that the abusers continue to maintain links with the family, even after committing abuse. The family circle is kept intact even at the cost of a family member being abused.

9. Perhaps the example most cited by the victims relating to tolerance of sex abuse by the family pertains to the behavior of the dulabhai, the brother-in-law (sister's husband.) He is generally described as a person who has the freedom to flirt, fondle and if given a chance abuse his wife's other sisters. This behavior is socially accepted and continued by each family. If the behavior is found offensive, little can be done because, he might take it out on the daughter. This tolerance takes extreme proportions and a form of abuse is continuing for years. In a society which puts so little worth on a woman's life, structuralized family sex abuse can't be expected to be less important than child rights.

#### Profile of Abuser and Society

1. The report found that there were no defining characteristics of an abuser because just about anybody can be an abuser. The ordinariness, the commonness and the absolute variety of personalities make any stereotyping impossible. In fact the stereo typing of abusers as domestic aides or mastans is a method of diverting attention from the principal abusers, family and friends of the family.

2. Just as the extended family provides support and network, it also widens the door of entry to abusers into the circle of intimacy. Relatives who come and go are generally the most active abusers in the rural areas in all classes. In the urban areas, the family and family friends are the principal abusers. Teachers who come in close contact also form a noticeable group.

3. In the urban poor section, strangers and mastans have a presence worth mentioning. They are again expressions of raw physical power. Even in the rural area, one case is reported of a boy who had no money but a group of thugs which let him abuse, threat and get away.

4. In the areas, rape is tolerated. Its not perceived as anything beyond sex with force. Forced sex appears to be a different category of definition to them. In the urban areas, rape is even more common. But while, rape incidents get known in the rural areas, silence follows more commonly in the cities.

5. What provides comfort to the abuser is the social structure which he/she knows is designed to protect him/her. Having seen the fate of previous abusers, who suffer no humiliation, on difficulties, she/he can't but be encouraged.

6. The boy children's attitude towards sex is also indicative of the kind of atmosphere in which he grows up. He suffers from little or no stigma and in some cases flaunts his exploits. Even when in trauma, he can access commercial sex and there is a case of a boy who is almost a commercial sex worker by choice. On the contrary, girls are still not allowed to even acknowledge their sexuality but is forced to play adult roles in the household. Thus a girl becomes matured but is not treated as such. Nor are they allowed to recognize their equal sexual status, as a result of which, they may turn to romance as a substitute which makes them vulnerable. Boys may grow up with a reckless attitude, while the girl is taught to suppress natural feelings.

7. There is evidence of a high degree of homosexuality among boys. There are instances of confirmed gay behavior and reports of abuse including rape of boys. In the urban areas, patterns of behavior are also similar but in the rural areas, its both consensual and coercive, though both being done with children, are abusive in the final analysis. Young boys are particularly chosen as victims. Older women in the rural areas generally choose under ten year-olds to abuse. In the urban areas, the older women display greater forms and variety of abuse. For both, very young boys are a matter of great convenience. It means less resistance, greater surrender to candies and toys, less questioning, greater cooperation and if found out lesser social damage control. Is sex with young children-which is apparently common-and not a sexual liaison with a social person that is on the mind of the female abuser. Children are also believed less by other adults so post-abuse security is more. The abused is therefore an object and not a being.

#### Psychological impact

1. Almost every abused is traumatized. It only varies in degree. The report finds that there are four types of abuse. a) Caressing. b) Fondling and kissing. c) Genital manipulation. d) Full penetrative sex. The trauma generally is related to the degrees of abuse but also upon the individual mental frame and state of mind of the victim.

2. The extent and depth of the trauma can only be understood from the expressions of the victims. The intensity of pain is very high and suicidal tendencies, deep depressions, aggressive behavior and hatred of the opposite sex is common. But the greatest trauma is a visible lack of trust in another human being.

3. There are no active agencies or sources which are at work to assist people in sexual trauma management. As a result, families and individuals have no idea what is to be done. This ignorance leads to further aggravation of the trauma and subsequent damage of the victim's psychology.

4. Children also tend to bottle up their secrets in fear of being punished, individually or socially, for having been abused. In the urban areas, the sense of terror, both from neighborhood thugs of family level thugs are high. In comparison the rural boys seem to be able to handle lack of concern for sexuality including that of the opposite sex. They appear to be less sensitive because their cultural atmosphere is also somewhat insensitive.

#### How prevalent is sex abuse

1. This report was carried out not to find out numbers but gather preliminary evidence to record child abuse at the social level, describe the backgrounds and the social and psychological scenario, all of which could be able to stand up to scrutiny. However, the overwhelming level of incidence of social sex abuse which the team came across was not expected.

2. Although the team went looking for 36 Case Studies (CSs) it ended up having 50 + of them. Its not that the team wanted to increase the number but that is was approached by the victims themselves. It was difficult to refuse documenting such experiences hence the higher figure than originally planned. Although, at the initial stages, getting cases were relatively difficult, once it became known that a person was documenting such experiences, the matter became easy and cases of more than one abused in one family were also recorded.
3. The team reported on the number approached and the number who admitted experiencing sex abuse. This may be challenged. On that our position is this. We could have collected many times more the number we did, if we had gone on. This is not bluster but an admission of horror. Having learnt somewhat, to recognize the signs and having learnt better to talk to kids, the team feels that the CSs could be multiplies simply by spending more time collecting information. As rapport had been established, it was then just a question of recording.
4. As we talked to families (outside the reporting universe), we were often told that they already took precautions. But abuse occurs overcoming such precautions. Because, anybody could be an abuser, the child can/t be protected. The child can only be empowered to protect herself and himself.
5. The Team Leader for whom, this is the third involvement in probes into child abuse have talked to about 150 persons. Most have admitted experiencing, one form of abuse or another. Certainly much more than the half of them.
6. In another session, where 35 women from various countries including Bangladesh were present, they were asked how many hadn't been abused. Those abused could indicate their position by remaining silent. Although given a choice to deny, they didn't. All remained silent.
7. To deny child sex abuse is to deny the child's right to be protected from the basic instinct, from the basic physical drive of others, and deny the child's right of protection to grow up without a severely traumatized self.

## SECTION-1

### Background Of the Study.

1. Although there have been sporadic reports in the media and primary level health workers and doctors have come across cases of sexual abuse, they have not been explored with any substantial degree of thoroughness. People have tended to ignore the issue and this aspect of social behavior has been silenced. The result has been a complete lack of action till only a few years or less.
2. One of the reasons why there could not be any large scale interventions was lack of concrete, verifiable and substantial information to develop a case that child abuse exists and at a rate which should cause serious concern. That its not isolated cases of rape but a social process which should cause serious concern. That its not isolated cases of rape but a social process which brings children into the realm of sexual activities committed against their will and they have to suffer the consequences because of that.
3. Many development agencies had also consigned the topic to the back burner because other priorities always budged in. As far as dealing with the issue from the point of child rights is concerned, other priorities have also emerged. As it is, the children's sector is already under a severe pressure due to the challenge of creating and implementing programmes for laid off child workers. Many activist organizations have been busy in this sector. Its also a sector which is well resourced and draws positive publicity from all around.

4. Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum, the network outfit of NGOs and child rights groups has identified child sex abuse as one of the issues it intends to focus upon but till date, it hasn't initiated any major action. It is planning to, Unicef, which has a unit looking after children in especially difficult circumstances in supporting action for child abuse in the commercial sector but it hasn't supported any action in the social sex abuse sector. Their focus of action has again been mostly on child labor as far as implementing the social clauses of CRC is concerned. However, they are interested in the subject.

5. "Breaking the Silence" is a loose group of individuals coming from a variety of sectors who had felt that, greater attention should be paid to the issue. Their position was/is that social level child abuse is a fact of life and is happening but silence is arresting any action on the matter which must be broken. To this end, this outfit was born in the first half of 1994 and they began to carry out advocacy activities. They have also produced a leaflet providing information on how to prevent sex abuse and on post-abuse counselling. This could be the first such document of this sort and BTS deserves congratulation for having brought into open the issue in a such a large scale manner.

6. It may be mentioned also that BBC, which has produced a radio documentary series on sexual issues devoted one episode on child abuse and has extensively used BTS materials in their programme. In their follow up which is being conducted by Family Planning Association of Bangladesh, a booklet on sex education is being mailed to every listener who wrote back for more details. The BTS leaflet has been added to it, thus reaching thousands of people in both Bangladesh and West Bengal. In this leaflet their appeal to parents is to listen to a child if the child complains of sex abuse. They have even appealed to the abusers to refrain from doing so. The main issues covered in the leaflet area :

- Types of child sex abuse
- What is to be done if child complains of sex abuse.
- How will you tell the child about sex abuse.
- Myths and facts about sex abuse
- What you can do to end sex abuse of children
- What you may do when the child informs that she/he has been sexually abused.

7. However, BTS didn't have any hardcore and organized date which was a hindrance in taking their advocacy action plans to a higher level. Recognizing the need for such a work, a plan was formulated to prepare a package of case studies on the topic. Apart from that, another need was to defend the cause of protection to children from sexual abuse by placing before the pro-denial lobby the facts which couldn't be denied for long. Clearly, this was not a subject which would be accepted easily and turned overnight into extensive advocacy or intervention programmes. And that's why, the report was thought to be an important and necessary salvo in the fight against child abuse.

8. The weak legal and social justice system as far as children are concerned have been examined in depth by a number of studies. To this is linked the obvious reluctance of the Government to pick up child sex abuse as an issue and then design programmes to address the matter. The extensiveness of the level of abuse is also a discouraging fact. Going to scale would mean a serious commitment on the part of the Government. Meanwhile, there is no mentionable programme in the private sector either to tackle child sex abuse.

9. Those who are living in the cities and can afford, do access the services of the child psychologists but the number is small. Most don't want the facts to be known. In fact, the sense of silence has been so strong that few documentation have been made. BTS therefore felt that if documentation of cases could be made, some of the sounds of repression could break forth through the silence and be heard by many.

10. It was therefore a supportive action for a larger possible programme to combat child sexual abuse. The study was important because it could, not only provide clues to the state of the victims but provide profiles of the victimizers as well. In the end, it would itself be accessible to those who would want to initiate more area/subject specific research on the topic. But before all that could be initiated, the first organized set of information on the topic was required and the case studies could do that. If there was no child sexual abuse, that too would come out in the exploration.

SECTION-II

1. Objective Of The study was to document at least thirty six (36) case studies which would reflect the situation of child abuse that exists at various socio-economic levels. The number 36 was arrived at by identifying certain segments and considering the minimum number of case studies that could be collected which would provide a well rounded picture of the state of child sex abuse.

2. The segments and the number of case studies against each were as follows :

Urban literate	4
Urban non literate	4
Children in EDC	8
Cases referred by doctors	4
Rural literate	8
Rural non literate	8

.....

36 case studies

3. The segments were selected in order to reflect a wide variety of the social frame. In each segment, the cases were to be equally distributed between boys and girls. The objective was to be as representative as possible. It was thought that since poverty and education had a direct relationship. we could get a fair idea about the state of sexual abuse in each of the major social segments. It would reflect the behavior of all social classes.

4. There were two other segments. One, case studies provided by doctors and two, cases involving Children in Especially Difficulty Circumstances (CADC). The reason for including these two extra segments were to obtain cases which might be absent in the overall collection of case studies (CSs) but which could be indicative of a particular type of sexual abuse which deserved special notice . In our work, we thought that extreme situations such as incest might fit this bill as investigations may not lead to collection of such information and we might have to access confidential information after taking consent of the victims. In fact, we were not sure of



the extensiveness of the problem and the kind of response we would get. These segments could provide ready made cases. In the end, we had so many case studies that accessing any other collection was not required at all.

5. The other area was together cases from CEDC sectors. The higher number of cases from the CEDC segment could also compensate the lesser number of cases from the urban segments. As it is, one of them is children in prostitution but the study focus was absolutely on non-commercial sexual abuse. However, it was intended that the study should very much reflect that part of society, who were victims of constant social abuse including sexual abuse. We also were aware of anecdotal data regarding the sexual scenario of Children in CEDC and felt that they should be given some special attention. In the report however, no special segment is mentioned because as we went along, children being abused became the most difficult segment to be in. Economic segments were run over by the enormity of the problem. CEDC cases were integrated into both rural and urban groups because in the end the study was built on analytical frame based on vulnerabilities and not socio-economic conditions.

6. It was also decided that there would be greater number of rural CSs because whatever work had been done on the topic, had mostly been done in the urban sector. There were a few reports on urban children's sexual behavior and abuse but we knew very little about their rural cousins. That's why there was greater focus on rural segments. But in the end they sort of balanced out and the four segment that emerged were much more simple to distinguish and desegregation on prior assumptions didn't interfere with the findings.

#### What Happened To The Segments

1. The segment selection was designed as an ideal scenario with balanced representation. But when we worked in the field, we found that it wasn't possible to maintain the segments as envisaged in the study plan. This happened due to the following reasons.

2. As the cases were collected the segments were defining themselves. We had intended to focus on rural areas anyway but as work progressed there was encouraging response which opened up other related avenues, critical to the understanding of child abuse situation as a whole. We thus adjusted as we went along keeping in mind the over all plan.

3. Because of the nature of the topic, we had less control over choosing case studies. Thus segments emerged by themselves and overlapped socio-economic definitions. The CSs indicated that there were less than expected differences between the classes and literate and illiterate as segments weren't fully justified. However, the situation was different when it came to classifying the behavior of those who were powerful and those who were not.

4. As work progressed, the investigating team met to discuss the mid-term situation. Readjustments were made in the segments in view of the investigator's understanding of the situation and need to be appropriately representative according to the situation that existed. That is, more case studies reflecting particular situations were included and it was decided that even within segments, there would be more focus on variety rather than just target reaching to secure greater representation.

5. Since the differences among socio-economic divisions were less and it was more in other sectors, the collection strategy had to be changed to reflect that understanding. In this approach the number of CEDC cases became a casualty because they didn't reveal any major distinction within the segment. Hence lesser number of CSs could show the state of sexual abuse of CEDCs. This was compensated by higher number of CSs in other segments.

6. The number of segments were also reduced and merged as the subdivisions within the rural and urban milieu didn't reflect any major deviations. The socio-economic decision was not always clear within classes. However, when they reflected a major consequence like power relationships and access to social justice, the distinctions were maintained.

7. Data on socio economic decisions are given but gender distinctions seemed to deserve some extra consideration in terms of analysis. This was not anticipated when the study was designed but in the source of the study, this alteration took place. Since the gender factor was very obvious, the study ultimately began to be built around power relationships not only among classes and communities but genders as well, which emerged as quite a distinct dimension. It was not just the sexual politics of individuals but families, communities and ultimately state as well.

8. But socio-economic status piggy backs on the gender factor by heightening existing vulnerabilities. This is clearly reflected in the urban under privileged groups where there is a higher predominance of rape than amongst their better off counterparts where emotional pressures and other factors play a major role in sexual transactions. The lower class segments tend to still hang on to traditional institution patterns like para level salish which has no counterpart in the better off neighborhoods of Dhaka.

### SECTION-III

#### Method of Information Collection

1. Those selected as investigators as well as the Team Leader and Assistant Team leader had previous experience working as information gatherers in CEDC studies. The TL had also spent nearly a year in different countries working as information collector with special focus on child abuse. However, everyone felt that, the matter should be treated as being a new problem without a track record to take assistance from. A new method or methods had to be devised for this particular study.

2. It was also felt that understanding the purpose of the study was important. BTS was trying to establish a set of CSs to gather evidence to see if sexual abuse of children existed and if so to what extent. While they did believe that it was rampant in Bangladesh, the bias was not involved in the design. This particular study was critical to the positioning of BTS in the advocacy world. The study was expected to advocate the fact and initiate preventive and mitigating action if social sex abuse existed at an extensive level. Hence, unless one was absolutely sure and the evidence could be relied upon, no CS would be accepted.

3. At the methodology development workshop, held by the study team to design a specific package for this study, it was decided that, to cut down as much risk as possible of false information and memory let downs, the study would directly approach the children who had been abused. The team members came to the following conclusions on the matter. The advantages of this approach would be :

- \* The information would be first hand and directly reflect the state of the mind of the abused.
- \* Their recollection would be more vivid and present the abusive situation more correctly.
- \* They would mention details which might not be known to those who had come to know of the abusive act and was/were willing to talk.
- \*Retelling by relatives, friends, etc. would be less reliable. It could be challenged by others on a variety of reasons. In case of children, distortion of facts would possible be low.

The disadvantages were thought to be as follows :

- \* Talking directly to children on sexual abuse was risky and dangerous. Family members
- \* If a child was abused, the child might think of the investigator as another abuser and cause problems, to herself and others.
- \* Children often tell stories and this could be one. They also might accuse another out of spite.
- \* Children may not be aware of being abused. We were not aware of what the term would mean to different people, especially in the rural areas where our urban perceptions may be in question.
- \* Establishing rapport would be a critical factor. While this was a relatively simple matter when it came to other CEDC segments including child prostitutes, a work which the members of the total had participated in, there was no previous experience in this field, which was information gathering in a field of a structured relationship with socially sex abused children. There was concern regarding the reactions.

4. It was finally decided that there would be three levels of informants. They would be as follows :

- \* Abused children themselves would be primary informants. They stood out as the most reliable informants.
- \* Parents of abused children would form the next group if the investigators failed to elicit information from the abused children. TL's previous experience had been positive in this regard while conducting a smaller but earlier probe on the topic.
- \* Recollection of childhood events by adults who had been abused would be resorted to as the third level of data collection.

5. Having decided on the informants, the next step was figuring out how best to approach a child and collect information without disturbing the child's world and risking the investigator's "health" too much. This turned out to be less of a problem.

6. The most important factor was rapport development. There was a question of building it with the community, village and the family before the child could be approached. In this case the matter being a sensitive issue, rapport building was considered even more critical.

7. Having discussed various methods of rapport building, it was felt that at no stage should anybody feel threatened by the possibility of the report being made. We had no great idea of what the world we were entering and so these areas were vague and lacked references which we could rely upon.

8. The "outsider" factor was thought by all to be the most critical factor because as sex abuse is always hidden, the whole point was to become a "peri-insider", reduce the threat perception of the local citizens concerned and gather information.

9. As matter of strategy it was decided that the rural investigators would try to identify an area where they had some access and could move around without being suspected to unsocial intents. It would have to be a place where they could link up with local elites if necessary, in order to allay suspicion and seek protection if necessary. However, this didn't mean that elites would be collaborators of the study since, it was the impression of all we talked to before going into the field that sex abuse would certainly involve rural elites.

10. The urban section presented another set of issues to be addressed for collecting cases. While there was less chance of being singled out as anti-social while in the process of data gathering, the matter of the variety of socio-economic segments was a factor for consideration. It was important that we should be as representative as possible. In trying to be so, it was thought that the upper class might not come forward since such secrets would certainly threaten their position like their rural counterparts, in fact more so because they could be socially well known.

11. The TL however said that this was not the case and he was already in possession of such cases which could be used if all else failed. He also pointed out that he was in touch with psychiatrists who were willing to share CSs provided anonymity was ensured. As it is, there were supposed to be a few CSs from the doctors file. What was important was to interview children belonging to the educated middle class who had been sexually abused and making sure the victims were not abused further as a result of their experience being exposed publicly.

12. The urban investigators, who had worked on a major CEDC project using tape recorders to directly record CEDC life had expertise in that sector but not so much with other socio economic children groups. It was also important to recognize that high income alone didn't define socio-economic classes and other factors combined to create such class definitions. To that end, pre-study segmentizing was done under the direct supervision of the TL. In the end, it was decided that the TL would support the urban project in CS collection while the ATL would support the rural group.

13. Since discussing sexual abuse with children was obviously a very sensitive area of work, the study team did simulations, of the same to adjust themselves to the task. As one investigator did the talking, others observed and took notes, based on which constant adjustments were made to the method/approaches. to find out if the approach was acceptable or not and how much adjustments were required, a pre-study trail run was made. Some of the observations of that were :

- \* Sexual abuse was a closed topic and unless there was some initial contact, it would be difficult to study the topic.
- \* Rapport building was very critical and it took considerable amount of time to do it.
- \* Although sexual issues were a closed topic, preliminary probes led to discovery of child abuse cases in the pre-test stage. That is people were willing to talk.
- \* In all communities, there were some elements who were willing to provide information on such matters. They appeared to be some people "who knew more than others."
- \* The community as a whole protected itself from outsiders. The family was protective of its members. The rich protected themselves better than the poor.
- \* While it was difficult, the work was possible.

14. The Investigators applied a number of methods to elicit information. Some of the methods are noted below.

#### A. Rural Boy Child.

The Investigator found that children found the child rights subject very interesting. He had thought that nobody would be interested in the issue but this didn't happen. In fact, discussion on child rights led to explaining the various kinds of rights which a child may have. This included freedom from sexual abuse as well. The investigator found them to be curious and interested in

the topic. The Investigator also showed them the leaflets of BTS which evoked great interest. Subsequently he identified about 20 children who seemed keen to discuss rights issues out of the original 48 boy children he began his discussion with.

His observation on information collection are noted below :

- \* "Some information I got through discussions with the boys,"
- \* "Some came forward having seen the BTS booklet."
- \* "A few information came through the personal network of friends and relatives in the area."
- \* "Rapport sometimes established/accelerated by buying gifts like candy etc."
- \* "Those interested in visuals like TV/VCR, became interested after watching colored view cards (not pornographic)"
- \* In one case, Investigator established rapport by talking about sex with a young boy who seemed keen to do so.
- \* In some cases, the Investigator said that laws were being passed to protect children from child abuse and the offenders would be punished, some came forward and told their experience.
- \* It appeared to the Investigator that had he been able to give more time, more children would have come forward. He feels that rapport building takes long and anybody who spends a few months will have a fuller picture. But once its built, identifying and collecting cases are not very difficult.

Initial general discussion	48
Selected for specific discussion	20
Case studies	09

## B. Rural Girl Child

1. The methods used by the Investigator in eliciting information form girl children in the rural area was dependent on establishing rapport with the girl children and their families in the area.

She explains her strategy this way :

- \* "The subject was not easy to work on so we had decided in Dhaka to build relationships with a wide variety of people first and then try to gather information. The area was familiar to me and I knew some of the local people. I told them that I was doing some research work and needed their help. As agreed in Dhaka, I mentioned the subject of child rights and also sexual abuse of children which was part of my work."
- \* "Although some people were shocked at the mention of the topic and a few said that this never happened in the rural area I began to get second hand information from people about instances of sex abuse. Slowly, as I became a common sight in the three adjoining villages that I worked in, I began to enquire more directly about the topic. In this work I was also helped by the local health workers who have a good knowledge about local level sexual behavior and incidents."

\* "Over a period of a week I made contacts with roughly 29 girl children and discussed many topics with them. I didn't start with sexual abuse issue but talked on other matters. At some point I discussed the topic and soon had the name of a girl who was known to have been abused by a young boy from a powerful family. Once, the first contact was made, the others followed. There were two developments as I worked in the area":

\* "I learnt about those who had been abused although it was sometimes half a secret, sometimes semi-public. I came in touch and over a period of time earned their confidence. Initially they didn't speak about their experience but slowly they opened up and the Case Studies were formed."

\* "In some case, there were victims who came to know that I was working on sex abuse and either themselves or through their friends got in touch with me. It appeared that they wanted to talk to someone to relieve their suppressed stress."

\* "There were some cases which were public knowledge. I approached the victim's family and got the information."

2. "I don't want to say that the data collection process was extremely easy but it isn't impossible either. My experience shows that the critical element is trust. If the victims realize that the report is not going to harm them in any way and secrecy will be maintained, people will inform, though the number may vary. But this is clear that even gathering such sensitive type of information is possible. My feeling is that, anybody who stays in a rural area will know that sexual abuse takes place though forms may be different. At the same time this too is a fact that every probe becomes an invasive action. We should always remember why the work is being done and what we are trying to achieve. Only actions to prevent child sex abuse justifies doing this kind of work which intrudes into the extremely private world of individuals."

### C. Urban Girl Child:

1. The Investigator working on sexual abuse of girl children in urban scenario had to innovate to obtain information. She used a variety of techniques to develop contacts, establish rapport and gather CSs. A senior member of an urban poor based NGO, she has extensive contacts amongst the disadvantaged whose experiences were included in her CSs.

Her experience is noted here :

\* "I utilized the slum level Volunteers to send out messages that a video show would be held at my office. This generated a lot of interest and many children came. The film was a Meena animation video."

\* " After the video show, a general discussion meeting was held on the rights of the child and the social environment in which children grow up. Posters, leaflets of Unicef, BTS, etc were distributed to create a positive atmosphere.

\* "In the next stage we showed them videos which were directly related to the issue such as "Karate Kids" and "Gold Tooth". These videos were on AIDS and the issue of child abuse was presented without any embarrassment. The film shows were followed by group discussions. Those who couldn't understand that the subject was sex weren't called to the subsequent meetings. Through this process of introducing the topic by displaying globally accepted forms of communication materials on sex, it was possible to start wide discussions and also explore individual cases because those who came to see knew that the issue was and also told others.

This way, where the catchment area is not well defined, many could well be mobile residents and door to door reach would take a long time. this method worked along with traditional use of selecting key informants based on discussion and information.

\* "In the middle and upper middle class range, the time spent to establish rapport with abused children, despite having prior information took a long time. In some cases the school teachers helped because they often knew about the cases. Apart from that, once it became known that CSs on child sexual abuse was being collected we obtained some cases from the abused themselves who came directly, either to talk or seek "justice". We also faced hostility from the locality were some people thought that we were "polluting" the children. So we tried a mixed bag and it seems to have worked."

#### D. Urban Boy/Girl Children.

\* "I collected CSs in two phases. In the first phase the work was for a radio documentary series on "Sexuality" for the BBC. I stumbled upon the enormity of the level of sex abuse when I talked to various groups of people, rural and urban. The psychiatrists were very useful in providing insights into the topic."

\* "In the first phase, most of my CSs were adult recalls. I found that by stating my own experience of sexual abuse, I could open up other people and they came forward to state their experience. It was also possible that my own credibility was enhanced by the organization I represented at that time, -BBC- and subsequently, when the episode was broadcast, others started to approach me. Cases often arrived by themselves as a result of the broadcast."

\* "However, the matter is slightly different with children who are not aware of what has been said in the broadest. but I have observed the same reaction when approaching a stranger child. Rapport building is critical here but in my case this phase is reduced because of the empathy factor. I however follow the same rules that have been followed by others which is to spend time to build trust and focus on the issue of child rights. Children are sometimes confused about the issue of abuse but I have found that many are aware that sexual abuse is not tight, especially when it happens within the family circle. With CEDCs, this is slightly different. In many cases their entire life is a tale of abuse and sexual abuse is only one of them, thus reducing the impact. Moreover, they themselves indulge in consensual sex with many of their fellow CEDCs. So the sexual taboo factor is blunted. This was also the experience of the Investigator in the urban boys sector especially the underprivileged. With children coming from other sections of society, this is different and the approach has to be modified accordingly."

Cases Collected :

Urban Girls - 2

Urban Boys - 8

1 Case Collected by The Team Leader

## SECTION - IV

The Vulnerabilities

The Age of Vulnerability

1. Since child abuse involves the matter of defining a child and therefore a particular age group, the age of the victims, the perception of being a child and how closely age and vulnerability was linked appeared to be a critical area of scrutiny. In this connection we again mention the fact that we draw no quantitative conclusion from the number of CSs but that the total number may help us identify the trends.
2. The earliest age when a child first experienced abuse was only five years old as stated by a victim. The victimizer was her own father. This was probably a case of both incest and pedophilia and it ran for years and past the age of childhood. In another case of study, Luckily, a six year old rural girl was raped by a domestic aide. So while one case involved a male abusing a young female, the other was that of an older female abusing a young female.
3. Children are always vulnerable. Clearly, they remain vulnerable till, they become less "children" and enter the new territory of young women/men whereupon the vulnerability undergoes a transition and becomes a different sort though no less difficult. Girls continue to be vulnerable till they are considered sexually non-desirable. But boys are freed from some aspects of this vulnerability once they cross the age of fifteen or can physically defend themselves. This crude matter of, physical ability is a fact which gives child abuse its peculiar pungency.
4. Another factor which relates to age is the crossing over from the pre sexual child to the sexual child. This would probably be best defined as pre and post puberty children where one is sexually aware and has become a biological women while the other is still "pure and innocent" mentally and physically or just mentally, especially to others. However attractiveness is a mobile vision and one can't set a limit or draw lines of division.
5. In the case of Falguni (rural) her father was unaware that she could be sexually attractive to a person who could rape her, so he let her walk past a pond which was relatively deserted at that time but more important, it was the haunting ground of the local unruly youth who would often make lewd comments at those who went past the place.
6. "Nobody ever made a remark at me because I was very young. That day, when I was returning home, my father had let me go alone because he had thought that I was not in any danger even if I went alone because I was too young to be in that sort of danger. Plus nothing of that sort had ever happened in that village."
7. Falguni was raped by two young men who were lounging near the pond which was deserted at that time. Her bloody and senseless body was discovered by a peddler going past the area who informed her family. She was taken home and treated by doctors. The incident couldn't possibly remain a secret because of the involvement of others. Falguni, who was twelve at the time of rape has become withdrawn and it's impossible for her to socially adjust to the village.
8. The father's lack of understanding of the possible sexual danger was a critical factor. It appears that girls and boys become sexually attractive long before the parents recognize their sexuality. So Falguni's father had no notion of what danger he was putting his daughter into. Although, she was still a child in her father's eye, she had become a sexual object in the mind of others. Her age or "innocence" was not a protective factor. Many have this mind set despite observing the negative impact of holding such views.

#### The power Of Pretense

9. The belief in the false innocence and safety of the village/community is also common and reflects the refusal to put these key social institutions under any scrutiny or threat. Since a lot of effort is made to keep such acts a secret, the cases can remain so. Falguni's case became



tragically public knowledge because she was publicly raped and left at the bank of a pond to be discovered by an outsider. It became the ultimate night mare for the child and the child's family. But given the social geography of a village, its difficult of keep such secrets for long. It may be a secret to some but some do get to know it. This is more so noticed in case of girl children.

10. Another significant point is that, contrary to stated beliefs of the villagers, sexual abuse cases proliferate in the village. Yet Falguni's father and she herself both thought the village to be safe, a terrible misjudgment or a deliberate illusion. This false idea, deliberate or otherwise reflects the difficulties of facing the realities of collective social behavior patterns. reassurance to keep it that way is reflected in all the cases except a few where the matters is bought to the notice of the salish as were the cases of Lucky or Shwapna, both going against the interest of the girl child. Lucky was considered too young to be social damaging or so the parents thought. As Shwapna had become pregnant, the family and the village had no option but to resort to the informal justice system.

11. Because sexual abuse course in a society where the mean age of marriage is officially 17.5 (legal age of marriage) but in reality appears to be much less, specially in the rural areas, malatal sex is not uncommon with girls as young as twelve. The question of where non-consensual sex ends and pedophiliac sex begins is difficult to pin down. Is all pre-puberty sex pedophilia or any sexual act with an adult before the regulation under fifteen years of age is? This question will have to be looked at in the context of Bangladesh society, especially rural society where early marriage has diminished a bit but is still on. Where sexual attraction for very young children is not a total taboo.

12. Sufia, a victim herself mentions in her case study about a very pretty eight/nine years old girl who stays at the fag end of the village where Sufia lives. This girl would often come to their house to collect water from the tube well. An adult was very attracted to her and would follow her around singing songs-as they do in films-to draw her attention. The girl would often get mad at the boy and scream and shout but it didn't deter the boy. She mentions that seeing the scene she wishes she could tell the boy to push off but as he comes from a wealthy family in the village, she is seared to anger him because of his social position. So, early age attraction is not uncommon, certainly not pedophiliac as understood commonly.

13. In cases of boys, early sexual encounters are also common and seem to attract less stigma. Apart from the fact that boys appear to admit/declare greater number of sexual encounters, it is often perceived as a part of growing up. Boys also learn early to protect themselves and are probably less abused.

#### Pedophilla Or Not?

14. Cases of very young boys being abused are not uncommon either in rural or urban settings. Khokon was nine years old when his cousin sister Bina (16) tried to seduce him. He later told his mother about it who managed to keep the incident a secret. In this case the mother could not have done much anyway because if involved a close member of the family. "My mother said that if it became public, everyone would make fun of me and our family would be come an object of shame. Besides those who are our social enemies would get advantage because of what had happened in the family." Bakul was barely ten years old when he was used for sexual purposes by an older woman, Shahida. As she ran a grocery store it was convenient to offer the boy candy and such stuff to abuse him for a longer period of time. Young boys are also chosen by both men and women because it is convenient when the abused is too young to protest and not believed so easily. In some cases, of course, the age itself is a factor in the seduction because the person

prefers very young children. Most of these cases are related to under ten years old. Women especially go for younger ones because of greater chances of social safety. They know very young children are generally disbelieved and older ones can cause social problems.

15. In another case, a madrasa (seminary) student was abused by a teacher when the boy was around nine years old. The young age apparently provides a sense of security to the victimizer. Raju (rural) was also under ten years when his cousin sister Rashu (17) abused him. In this case also the young adult told the boy that if others come to know about the matter they would tease him a lot. It was meant to deter him from disclosing the incident to anyone else. In case of Tareque (9 years) the madrasa (seminary) teacher Rafiqul (47 years) told the young boy, it was his religious duty to masturbate the older man. He was also told that it was also his religious duty not to tell any one. When the matter was discovered by the head Moulana of the madrasa the abuse stopped but the abuser teacher was not sacked. The head Moulana told the Investigator that it would bring shame to the education institute. Obviously, the seminary needs to be protected and not the child. Incident of abuse of male children in segregated institutions with older men in positions of power are almost universal and Bangladesh is no different.

16. In the case mentioned above, the victimizer uses the carrot and the stick approach. In most cases children are plied with gifts both as an instrument of seduction and also as a weapon of silence. In most cases the boys do accept the gifts and according to statements made, although they did not enjoy participating in the act, they did so out of the temptation and obligation that the gift brings. In the urban area also, gifts by the abusers to seduce the young boys are common. In family situations where the boy is abused by a close family member, the matter is mixed up with gifts plus emotional links. Ratul had a long sexual relationship with his paternal uncle which was a mix of tangible gifts and emotional gratification.

17. In many cases the child who is very young may not even know that he/she is being abused. Should the mother or father come to know they may take action. But a very small child will not know that. In case of girls, bleeding as a result of sex is an evidence which allows adults to recognize the victimization. In case of boys if anal sex is perpetrated at a very early age they may be instances of bleeding as in the case of Hasan (Urban CS). But in most cases it can remain a secret. In urban areas, this may be discovered when the child complains of discomfort or pain in the anal or genital area and doctors diagnose the real cause. Two such incidents were reported in the BBC episode on child sex abuse.

### The Rape of a Young Boy

18. The threat of rape is far less in case of boys. Every girl has to live with the fear of being sexually abused from the age when she comes to know what sex is. In our case studies, we found extensive incidents of rape and forced sex. It also arrives disguised as a sexual threat. That is victimizers force victims to have sex or threaten them with public disclosure to others as *noshto meye* as punishment for non-cooperation. As expected, in all the cases the girl has been severely traumatized both personally and socially.

19. The case of a boy being raped was also recorded. The young cowherd Farid was accosted by an abuser by the name of Alam who took him fishing. There he first fondled and later pushed him to the ground and anal raped him. When Farid told his mother she asked him not to reveal the incident to others but at his insistence she told his father who called the rapist Alam home and after rebuking him made Alam beg forgiveness from Farid but didn't seek *salish*. The rapist was a relative. This is an unusual instance and reflects the gender factor that played its role. Such situations don't happen in case of girls where the parents would be more keen to hush it up.

Farid is a strong and worthy personality who did what no one else did. He challenged his family values and take cognizance of the violation of his rights.

20. Farid's case illustrates that parents are willing to live with the rape incident of a young boy in a rural scenario because they think it will have little social impact although it injures the boys emotionally. At the same time even the "minor stigma" of being teased is sometimes too much for the family to bear. Its at Farid's insistence that the parents took some action and not on their own. They would much rather have kept quiet. If this is the case a boy one can understand the pressure parents feel they are under when the victim is a girl.

21. The overall trend seems to indicate that children between the age of eight to fourteen are in a high vulnerable area. Whether it is their lack of ability to protest or their growing sexual attractiveness, it seems that abuses take place in all urban/rural study segments when they are in this age group.

22. In the urban areas parents and guardians seek medical help more readily than in the rural areas. Hasan was bleeding from his anal passage and the family initially thought it was a problem requiring medical attention. Suspicion about abuse arose later. Doctors report that they detect many cases of genital rashes especially among girls which are often the result of sexual abuse of very young children. In case of girls in the rural areas we know very little. On the other hand, while family level rape cases may also be hidden in the urban situation, there are very social secrets relating to forced sex in the rural areas.

23. The rural area boys seem to display a lesser degree of trauma then their urban brothers. For the girls the situation does not differ significantly at any age in any location. Boys in the rural area report a number of iso or gay sexual cases as well as one instance of bestiality. Tipu, Tareque, Kajol, Farid, all experienced homosexuality. Of them Kajol doesn't seem to mind his present sexual behavior. Ekram and Faruque are into bestiality and they told the Investigator that they were very happy having sex with animals.

24. The behavior pattern and the lack of censure they face, secrets being almost impossible to keep in rural societies, show the freedom hey enjoy and he leeway boys have. Even Farid and Tipu who were forced into sexual relationships are less traumatized than any of the girls coming from the rural sector. In fact the cases of Bakul and Karim, who are both under ten and running an active sex partnership with Shahida, who to her utter convenience runs a shop selling stuff which kids like is noteworthy. The traditional notion of sex may be absent but the temptations level is certainly there. They probably have inadequate idea of sex, though obviously they are capable of participating and the matter is made easy by the exchange of gifts. While other boys have resisted, they have not. Age could be a factor but that role of material exchange, be it short term like toys or long term like marriage make abuse possible. With rural boys, there appears to be an emotional shield which many if not most have.

25. Lucky's case is a classic example of the syndrome. She says, "I was six years old. I have a cousin who was about 20/21 years old. He used to buy me chocolates. One day he took me to a field next to our home in the name of buying me chocolates. The field was full of mustard plants which hid the field from outside. My cousin brother gave me some candy. Then he made me naked. He also became naked himself and tortured me. I could not serum because he had put his hands over my mouth. When I started to bleed seriously he got up and run away."

"My mother who was searching for me heard my groans and found me in this bloody condition. When she started screRipong and crying, other people came and took me home. A doctor was called who came and treated me. I was sick for a long time. When they asked me who had done this told them my cousin brother's name."

26. It should be noted that the matter reached the salish, verdict was handed down in favor of the girl but the guilty party managed to elude paying compensation. This case illustrates all the angles of vulnerability.

#### The Welcomed Abuser?

27. A family doesn't stop social inter-action with the abuser if he is a family member. Shimu was eight years old when she experienced abuse. An uncle would visit and ply all of them with gifts and affection. Since she was very young she was allowed to go out with him. One day this uncle took Shimu to have a bath and there, after undersign her did the same himself. He started to fondle her as a prelude to the sexual act when by chance her mother arrived and suspected abuse taking place. Shimu later told her mother what had happened. Her mother told her not to mix with that uncle any more and also forbade her to tell her father anything about the matter. The uncle still visits them but Shimu avoids him. Other abusers specially, family members visit. Sometimes, after an abuse in exposed they visits less but family links are rarely cut off.

28. This a typical decision based on a variety of social impingements. Because the mother had seen a bit of what was on, she has a fair idea about what the uncle was doing. But she is quite powerless to stop his coming because of the family links which can't be damaged. She obviously realizes that the exposure will cause serious damage to the family as a whole. While Shimu would get sympathy because of her age, she might not be fully believed because of the same. Instead of risking a family confrontation, she keeps quiet. She is different from Lata's parents in the sense that she was able to keep it a secret. Her age was not an encouraging factor in her circle of protection. But her mother had stumbled upon her being abused and thus saving her from penetrative rape.

29. There are no safe ages for boys and girls. Sexual abusers certainly prey on children of all age. But this peaks as they are near puberty from either side. The number of pre-puberty children being abused are high enough to generate concern. Greater concern is created by the silence that surrounds such acts. Even mothers will hide it from fathers and children will hide it from parents, common in urban areas. Very young girls can't hide and tell their mothers, who on their behalf observe the silence and ensure that it remains a secret. Painful as it may be, its not the child who gets protection but the structure which sustains sexual abuse.

#### Vulnerability: The Socio-Economic Dimension

1. Of the main vulnerabilities that affect children the socio-economic dimension cuts across both rural and urban, male and female segments. As in the case of other vulnerabilities, it impacts on the child both as a potential victim and also as that of a victim who is punished by social institutions for being one.

2. Nasrin states her experience this way. "There was a rich man's son who used to tease a lot of girls. One day he offered me some candy when I was coming back from school. I did not take them. The next day when he saw me he grabbed me and started to pull me away. I became very scared and started to scream .When a man saw being pulled away the boy left me and ran away. This man told the boy's father that he was grabbing a girl away."

3. "On hearing this the boys father called my father and told him, "Why should my son want to drag your daughter away? There are many other more beautiful girls in the village. Your daughter is more at fault . So you will leave the village along with your daughter."

4. "The boy also threatened my father. He said, "because of your daughter I have had a bad name. I will burn your daughter with acid. Hearing this my father didn't dare stay in the village. Plus he doesn't stay at home. Who will look after us if something happens? People know the facts and are sympathetic but they are too powerful and nobody can say anything against them."

5. The above stated experience of Nasrin is an extreme case but such incidents of power being used to protect the abuser is common in almost all the case studies. When the matter involves girl children, this is even more evident, Even in the case of Lucky who was six years old when raped and had the sympathy of the entire village, power played a major role in the justice seeking process.

6. The village salish decreed that some land should be given to Lucky's family as compensation. The boy's family did gift some lands but it turned out to be fake. Since they were more powerful nothing else has happened to them and compensation though decreed wasn't delivered.

7. Poverty is a trigger of vulnerability. The poor is always powerless while the rich is always powerful. This dividing line is by itself an abuse of social relationships. The situation is extreme in the rural areas because there are no alternative systems to the informal social justice systems which is controlled by the rural powerful.

#### Poverty And Abuse

8. Poverty acts as a negative factor in case of individuals as well. In both urban and rural areas sexual abuse may be continued for a long time because a refusal could result in an even greater distressing situation.

9. Tipu comes of a very poor peasant family. Because of poverty he could not study. The 1995 flood which destroyed the aman crop has made the family even more vulnerable. Tipu helps his father in the field the whole day and looks after a shop at night in a neighboring village. For this he is paid Tk 250 which is considered a lot of money for the family.

10. One night Moslem (35) came to the shop and asked for paan. But after taken the paan he didn't leave but said that he would spend the night here. They lay down and went to sleep. But Tipu was awakened soon after and found that Moslem was playing with his genitalia. Moslem expressed anger and turned over to sleep indicating that he wasn't interested.

11. At this Moslem became angry and said that, "if you don't have sex with me, I will have your job. I will make you a thief and organize a bichar and fine you take 5,000. If necessary I will get you to police and make you go to jail. You know very well that the shopowner is a close friend of mine." After this Tipu didn't. Tipu says that Moslem is very powerful and even does bichar in the village.

12. The socio-economic pressure can be at its most intense when it comes to matters involving working children. They are left without any options and have to submit to sexual abuse in order to survive or assist their family to survive. Shanu (urban) is the only child of a working class woman whose husband has deserted her. He was put to work as a boy servant in a upper middle class home. He was treated well and was close to a girl in the family. The husband and wife would have massive fights and during these episodes the girl and the Shanu would hide together and play with each other including touching the genitals which appears to have given them some sense of emotional security.

13. When the husband and the children went for a holiday, the lady of the house called him to massage her body which ultimately led to sex. Shanu couldn't confide in anyone in fear of losing

his job. The woman was nice to him during the sexual episodes but behaved badly including beating him up later on. This relationship continued even after the family returned. Shanu however managed to find a job as a tempo helper and left.

14. The experience has deeply affected him and he has become both guilt ridden and violent. He believes he has committed a grave sin, a fact which he thinks he learnt while listening to a religious sermon in a local market premises. He steals money and has sex with others including adults whom he pays for it. He is on a guilt and self destruction trip. He thinks everyone will go to hell. This case is an example of how CEDC feel and react to adverse experiences. While his coping mechanisms as far earning a living is concerned is on, his mental health is seriously hurt requiring expert attention but he has no access to even the barest level of care of any sort.

#### The Power Of Institutions

15. The power of social institutions are not equitably shared but are basically the monopoly of a small group which controls it. However clichetic it may sound, the fact is, the poor can't expect to see justice done. The power relationship is such in urban and rural areas that even justice institutions are subservient to the needs of the powerful. An experience straddling both village and the city will exemplify this.

16. "I am Khaleda. We are very poor so my mother sent me to Dhaka to live with my uncle. I used to work at their home and go and watch TV at the landlord's house. The landlord had a grandson named Rumi, who was in his mid-twenties. I was about 12 years old then. He used to show me "bad" films. I loved TV so much that I would run off to watch TV any time. One day, while watching TV, he said that he loved me, he wanted to marry and wouldn't be able to live without me. Rumi would also buy me different gifts."

17. "Although I was initially not attracted to him, I later fell in love with him.....One day while he was embracing me he started to kiss me.... I protested but in the end we had sex. I was shocked and didn't want to continue but he said that if I didn't agree he would make a scene and throw my uncle out of the building and tell everyone. So I started to go again."

18. "One day we were discovered in bed and that very night we were married by the landlord's grandfather. Next day I was sent home. Rumi never tried to contact me. I was divorced after payment of taka 5,000. After this incident I would stay at home by myself."

19. Khaleda later "fell in love" with her brother's friend Mannan, who visited her one night when there was no one. However, somebody did notice that and entered the house. She tried to hide the boy but was caught. This made matters worse and led to another shotgun wedding for her. The boy promised to return for a formal ceremony later. But he never did. Khaleda stated that the boy now says, he didn't know about her earlier marriage. He wants to divorce her now.

20. She is the ultimate noshto meye". This is the verdict of the village council. Or else why would two incidents happen to her?. The boy had wanted to pay her Take 5,000 but she has refused. She questions "Whose fault was it anyway?" Her mother too asks the same question. "Why should my daughter pay for the sin of two people. Why has nothing happened to the boy? Why should only my daughter be stigmatized?"

21. Khaleda is almost 14 years old now. Father is a agri-laborer. Brothers work too in different occupations. She loves to dress up. The investigator says Khaleda is "very pretty." Khaleda's mother said that she feels terrible for there daughter. She knows that her daughter is not a "bad girl". But she can't do much against the strong voices in the village.

22. The boy's family is very powerful and would probably pay a standard Tk 5,000 and get a divorce. But neither Khaleda nor her mother wants a divorce. Everyone misbehaves with her. Young boys tease her, some make passes at her. But Khaleda accepts all this, hoping that her marriage will survive. If it doesn't, the entire family will try to move to another village.

#### A Potential Good Groom is Worth Any Price And Shame

23. The pressure on a girl as she grows up is most that of marrying well. Just as puberty is emerging, the idea is drilled into a girl's head that she must marry and if possible marry well. In many cases, girls take the message to their heart and do try. A good marriage is good for the family as well. So the family encourages this as well. Since the pressure to marry well is known, boys from the well off families can take easy advantage of the mind set and try seduction with a reasonable degree of freedom with those who are from lesser off families.

24. Societal pressures are therefore translated into family and then into individual pressures. The social status/position factor comes in when there is a possibility of a match between a high and low status family. One reason being, the boy's family wants to marry well as well. Thus, when a child from a poor family is abused and the boy refuses to marry, the boy's family and the supportive social environment helps the boy. The girl, whose world mostly drifts around marriage suddenly finds herself in a situation where society and the power structures turn against her. She is victimized twice in this manner.

25. Rosey was 12 years old and became friendly with her brother's friend after he declared his love to her. He was about 24/25 years old. They used to go out regularly and even went to the movies. During this courtship, which was public because Rosey's family approved of it, they kissed and fondled. But when the boy's family came to know of the affair, they arranged his marriage elsewhere. The boy agreed to this. "He told me that he didn't really love me. He was just having fun. Now everyone in the village knows of the affair. They say the fault is yours and that of your mother. You chased a rich boy for marriage and see what has happened to you."

26. In some ways, the villagers are right because she was allowed to mix freely because the boy was from a wealthy family. The girl's parents themselves would have intervened had the boy been poor. So the driving force behind the relationship was marriage which as it often happens leads to sex abuse. Rosey says that people in the village now say that the boy had a very bad reputation and had relationships with others girls before. But because he comes from a wealthy family and is of course a boy, the problem of getting a bride is not there. In fact the boy's family was more concerned that the affair might lead to a socially embarrassing marriage. Hence the intervention. We should mention in passing that our Investigator says that Rosey who is now 14 years has turned out to be a very beautiful girl and will probably find it possible to find a groom despite her past because of her good looks.

#### Power And Prospects

27. In case there is power on both sides, some protection can be afforded but that is not sufficient.

28. Lata is from a well off rural family. They have many comforts at home and she is considered pretty by all. "My aunt sued to stay in the next village. One day when I was retiring from her home in the afternoon, she forbade me because of the risk of the lonely road but I didn't listen to her. On the way back I saw this older man standing. While I was crossing him, he suddenly

grabbed me, But he left me as soon as I screamed. Then I returned back weeping to my aunt's place.

29. "I went back and told my brother. He immediately returned along with his friends and caught the man. He was slowly slipping away but my people got him. They brought him back, beat him up and then tied him against a tree. But when my uncle came back, he asked that the man be released. He said that people seeing the scene were asking why the man was tied up. So the man begged forgiveness from all of us and he was let go."

30. Obviously the sense of prestige and honor and therefore the secrecy was greater than compensation for the violence committed against the girl. Although, the man was caught red handed and the abuser was from a lower status family, the family couldn't afford the pain and shame of having a family member abused, even when they have a major share in the power structure. Salish would have drawn too much negative attention and made them vulnerable as well to other power contestant's move to replace them. Everything being equal, having a female in the family who was abused would make them weaker. the family has managed the situation well and she is not publicly condemned. Her family's position has helped her here.

31. Another illustration comes from case of Falguni. They are very well off and have business interest in Dhaka and in their local area. She is 13 years now. The incident occurred when she was 12 years old. Falguni was raped by two boys. Although her social status was high, she still suffers from trauma and the family is in the same vulnerable position. She has dropped out school because she is a curiosity. Her family status couldn't protect her from the social stigma of public sexual abuse.

32. The role of socio-economic status in urban areas salish or any informal justice system is weak because the formal system is so pervasive. But rape was reported more in cases coming from the urban poor The upper class is seemingly immune from rape or doesn't talk about it at all. Thus legal enforcement authorities such as the police deal only with the less powerful sections of society, In some case when the rape case itself becomes a cause, there are some court verdicts and arrests but they are some court verdicts and arrests but they are few compared to the number actually occurring. This is despite having the entire social advocacy structure of great clout present in the city like Dhaka.

33. There however, one incidence of salish in the urban are, A 12/13 year old girl Nina was molested by one Sabu in full view of everyone. When she screamed, the molester ran away. Nina complained to her parent who informed Sabu's uncle. A salish was held at he uncle's, initiative and Subu was thrashed as a punishment. While this was a sole example, its an invigorating one.

34. It appears to be an exception because we didn't come across such cases even in the para-slum area where forms of informal justice system operate, In fact, urban girls are more careful to ensure the secrecy of their abuse than their rural counterparts. But it does show that such intervention can happen. It should however be noted that the victim now spends her time in horror because of her experience. For a person of her age she takes unusual care to hide all signs of her emerging sexuality.

35. However, should a girl's reputation become "tarnished", irrespective of class, she will have to bear the shame along with the family. In fact, the opportunity of moving to the next village is denied to urban educated because of the extensive information network and lack of appropriate economic opportunities. The poor, even in the cities, do move from one locality to another to escape social scrutiny. In that, they have some opportunity. However that opportunity is limited because moving is again linked to income. Competition for jobs prevent movements as well.



### Vulnerability : The Gender Factor

1. What has come across most strongly in our probe is the gender factor in sexual abuse. Although this is a fact that both boys and girls are abused in urban and rural situations and cutting across all social and economic compartments, this fact too is obvious that girl children suffer more as victims.
2. During our probe we made a comparison between the number of boys and girls abused and we found that given the same sample universe, the girl child is certainly at a far greater risk than the boy child. The post-abuse trauma which a girl faces is also much more than a boy does. Obviously even in sexual abuse there is a gender bias.
3. The most profound vulnerability is in the area of the physical. An abuse is mostly a violent physical act, even when the abuse is marked by a wrapping of "love". The abuser generally tries to be sure the first time that the girl will agree because of "love". Refusal makes the abuser aware of the physical vulnerability of the girl. The result is a violence which lies just below the surface of Bengali society. There are no safe zones for girls here.
4. Access is critical for committing abuse. The abuser has to gain entry inside the home which is possible only for close relatives and friends. The next phase is to find relative security of a closed room and they to have sex. Most abuser try to express love and even marriage proposals, as they had been doing for sometime and continue the act. In many cases, the girls do go along, either because they feel they are reciprocating an emotion or because they are aroused. However should they resist, the matter can turn into a full blown rape. In some cases-such as that of Nasrin, Shonali, Neela and a few others-they had resisted as hard as possible, cried out or bit the hand of the rapist-lover and managed it draw attention and escape sexual penetration but not all were successful. Falguni, Shiuli, Alea never got the chance or were just physically overpowered. Both, those who escaped and those who couldn't escape face the trauma which seems inevitable.

### The Trauma And The Marriage

5. Vulnerability to abuse and vulnerability to post-abuse trauma are both high for girls. In terms of being abused, the fact that they become "sexual possibilities" at an early age is the reason. Our study and other probes show that girls are already accepted as sexualtransactable by the time they are only ten years. It also seems that , we came across most cases where the girls had reached puberty when they were less than 12 years though the national average may be lower. But they mostly do or are believed to reach puberty by twelve and are often victimized by that age. Many of them also know what sexual relationships are all about.
6. The vulnerability is increased if the family is unaware or is part of a massive collective pretend under which they believe that their locality or village is "pure and safe" and nothing happens there. Falguni is a classic case where illusion has practically destroyed a life. Proma's (urban) case is also similar. The trauma that she goes through is enormous and little can be done to make it less. The trauma extends to the family and affects their social position as well. And marriages become elusive if not impossible in such families in the rural areas.
7. If falguni's father was fatally naive, then the reckless Lata has paid a price of a lifetime. Although her powerful family caught the man, he had to let go because "people were asking why." "Nobody wants to be known as a family were sexual abuse of a girl has taken place even when its rape by a man known to be a habitual offender.
8. A major part of this vulnerability is of course marriage. Children who are abused remain unmarried and the prime social function of a girl/woman is to marry. The social price of abuse

for girls and boys differ. The overwhelming number of cases say that they hid the fact of abuse because it would have brought them derision. Few mention shame. Even the abusers tell the young boys to keep it a secret so that others don't make fun of them. When Farid forced his mother to tell his father about the incident, the father could chance to scold the man because it was a boy who had been abused and who was insisting on some action.

9. The heavy focus which a girl has on marriage decides on the level of vulnerability. If it gets known that she had been abused, marriage will not take place, If it gets known that she was married before, even then marriage may not take place. On the other hand, girls are expected to marry and if possible marry well. So they are encouraged by the family to look out for opportunities while not told how to protect themselves from sexual abuse.

### The Danger Of "Love"

10. The other vulnerability comes from the early onset of post-puberty syndrome, both physical and emotional. In our case studies, we found that almost no boys amongst any segments is interested in romance. Although the boys had been involved in sexual relationships, they have little emotional attachments. Even the gay partners or the two who practice bestiality are not romantically involved. Love was considered something to snigger at and no was in "love". On the other hand, love was a deadly potent when it came to applying it to girls.

11. This fact that girls fall for love is a fact which is known to the abusers who are much older. Since they also come from the familiar circle of friends and family, they probably have a rough idea of the mental state of the girl. As a result the vulnerability level of the girl is highly increased. Its possible that girls do fall in love because they have no right to experience sex except through a relationship while boys can experiment.

12. Shiuli is 14 years now. She comes from a relatively poor family. "I was then about 11 years old. There was a boy in the village who was very good looking. He was always being very friendly with me. He used to give me a lot of gifts. When he expressed his love for me I agreed to go along with it. My bhabhi used to forbid me to have such a relationship because I was too young. One day when I went out with him he grabbed me and started to fondly me. I pushed him and came away. He however begged forgiveness and we started to go around again."

13. "Another day, while walking near the river it became evening and he again embraced me. Soon he took off my clothes and then had sex with me. I was hurt and cried a lot but there was nothing I could do. I told my bhabhi everything. I have never met him again."

14. "I thought that the man would marry me when bhabhi approached him but he refused. Bhabhi says that I should have listened to her warning and not gone out with the boy. She has also promised to find a good by for me."

15. Shiuli's bhabhi also told us the incident and confirmed what had happened. "I talked to the boy after the incident but he refused to marry her saying she was too young..... I could have told others about the incident. I could have asked for bichar. But what good would that have done. People would do no more and everyone would have blamed my sister in-law. She would have no chance of marriage then."

16. Sufia comes from a wealthy agriculture family. They have many consumer products at home and separate rooms for guests to live in. She has studied up to class five. There are two younger siblings, both in class six. One older brother is a guest worker abroad while another works in a shop.

17. " I was than twelve years old. A brother of my bhabi used to visit our house frequently. He used to have a lot fun with us. Sometimes he used to touch me also. One day he declared his love for me. I did not agree at first but then I gave in. He used to give me a lot of gifts. Since he was a relative, nobody was offended that he used to come to our house and talk to me."

18. "One day when nobody was in the house, he came in and seeing that there was no one around closed the door. I thought he would tell me some secret. But instead he grabbed me and started to kiss and fondly. After sometime is was done and all over. Later on he used to visit our house regularly and whenever there was opportunity we met physically. If I did not agree he would threaten to tell others. Within a few months I became pregnant. I was then 12 years 7 nonths." She later had an abortion.

19. Suriya Begum is now 13 years old. She comes from a family of illiterate rural agri-laborers. The river has taken away their homestead. She likes to play with other children but Suriya knows that she has already become different.

20. "When I was about 11 and half years old, a cousin of mine became interested in me. We are very poor and our cosign are much better off than we are. The cousin would bring a lot of gifts with him when he would come to visit our home. Every one would be very happy seeing him. Nobody would make any adverse comments. He used to give me a lot of cosmetics. He used to love that. One day he declared his love to me. I refused because he was so much older than me. (25-26 years). But he would love me so much and give me so many gifts that I thought that it would be good if we could have a relationship that culminated in a marriage."

21. "Then he told me that a marriage proposal would soon be coming from his family's side. After hearing this I became even more close and we used to go around all over. One night he came to my room and started to caress me. Slowly I became involved and we had sex. After this we used to met like this regularly."

22. Suriya became pregnant and after the boy had refused marriage, her father brought her to Dhaka where she had an abortion. Her father sought social justice but the cousin denied everything. Soon he stopped visiting the area. Now the people in the village call her a bad girl. No marriage proposal arrive for Suriya although the family had accepted the relationship and she bad gone alone with only one objective a good marriage.

#### The Urban Terror

23. Our case studies in the urban sector are no different and seem to reflect standard behavior of this "Love Syndrome". Urban girls bereft of their class fall prey to declarations of love. This fact seems to be well known to all. Girl children naivete allows much of this to happen. Nor are they beyond the concern of marriage but in urban areas, the marriage doesn't happen at 14 unless the residents are slum dwellers where such laws are rarely abided by. In the middle and upper class, marriage is not the prime driving force but "love" can be.

24. Proma is the daughter of a senior government official. They live in an apartment complex. She is twelve and hasn't yet reached menarche. She mixes with most of the families in the apartment complex including the residence of Reba Apa who is very fond of her. Her brother Hiron is a recently passed out doctor. One day she visited the flat and found that only Hiron was present. Hiron asked her to come in.

25. When Proma went in, Hiron suddenly grabbed her but she resisted. She knew about such sexually abusive situations because she had seen them in ZEE TV. But Hiron promised eternal love and said that he would die if she didn't agree to share the love with him. So Proma was

moved and felt that Hiron was truly in love with him. This was followed by petting and then penetrative sex. Then he took her to the toilet and gave her a wash. She was bleeding badly by then.

26. When she came back home, the housemaid noticed the bleeding and immediately gave her some pads and pants assuming this was her first menstruation. She was in pain and lay down. When her mother came back, the maid told her. Her mother was very supportive and said, "You shouldn't worry. This happens to every girl." This reassured Proma who realized that her mother didn't suspect anything. She already knew about periods from her friends. She fell sick and spent the next few days in bed.

27. A few days later, Hiron's sister came and gave some sweets and said that a girl had been chosen and Hiron's marriage date had been fixed as well. Hearing this Proma said that "But Hiron bhai told me that he loves me." At this her mother and Reba both started to laugh and Reba embraced her and said, "but we all love you." It transpired that the day Proma had abused her, the family was out choosing a girl for the boy's marriage.

28. A case study of a girl from a relatively impoverished family reflects the same pattern. Latifa stays in a peri-slum area of Dhaka. Although they are not well off, the brothers and sisters all go to school. Latifa's oldest brother drives a baby taxi. Family income is around 6,000.00 take per month. They pay house rent of taka 800.00.

29. Latifa goes to a neighbor's house to watch TV. Here, Manik (20) would come and sit next to her and tease and pinch her. Latifa one day slapped him. When Latifa, gradually a relationship developed and they became lovers and participated in sex. Latifa believed that this was leading to marriage. But one day Manik went missing. He was not seen again.

30. Latifa is completely bewildered by the unfolding of events. She had no idea that Manik was using his love just to have sex with her. She stays home now and is very depressed. She has not shared her information with the family. Only a close friend knows this. She stays in a locality where violent sex abuse is common. Nowadays she goes to fetch water from the local Municipal tap taking someone along for safety's sake.

31. Vulnerability of women is mostly equated with rape. Instances of rape are relatively easy to find because they often become public knowledge. Interestingly, rape victims are often considered as much responsible in many cases. But the line drawn between consensual and non-consensual sex is very thin. Though use of brute force should be the definition of rape, it appears more a matter of lack of opportunity and time which pushes a rapist to act that way. A more conventional analysis is that rape itself is an act of expressing power, an act of control of feminizing sexuality. The men seem to resort to sexual violence with great ease.

#### Right To Protection, Right To Rape

32. However, we are trying to look at it from a rights point of view and from the case studies it appears that declarations of love to have sex, which appears simply to reduce resistance is also a form of rape if it is to be defined as sex without consent. It obtains initial reluctant consent from girls-in most of the cases-and this makes sexual encounters easy. Since, the original intent is to secure a passage to sex, the intent is to reduce resistance.

33. If a man in similar circumstances uses drugs to achieve the same objective, as it happens in case of date rape, he is not treated as having had normal consensual sex. It is considered rape. There is very little difference between the two in the process. Both drugs and declarations of love are meant to break down resistance and make the act easier to commit. It may not be acceptable

in the courts of law today but the moral situation is clear. Many are forced to go on having sex after they have had sex once. All this points to a need for a broader definition of what rape is and what actions should be taken to prevent and punish the rapist.

34. Of course, the most violent instrument which heightens female vulnerability is society itself. By a priori deciding the guilt of females, by threatening to carry out and actually punishing girls by refusing their most valued social status-marriage-and denying other forms of social acceptance. The girls are pushed into a state of constant terror. A male doesn't have to complete the act totally but any kind of relationship is enough to destroy the chances of stability in life. A few seconds can literally make all the difference in a girls life.

35. As stated before, girls are interested, because they know its worth, to marry well. Every time they agree to have sex, the thought of marriage accompanies the act. Society will forgive if the marriage takes place-as it might have happened in case of Shiuli and others had marriage had taken place and continued-and moving around in a supposedly conservative Bangladesh is considered non-condemn able. It becomes a matter or reprimand only if it doesn't end in marriage. The girl has little value even today much beyond the frame of marriage. The situation is better for the mid-upper urban girls though not too radically.

36. The situation for the urban girls are often starkly crude and brutal where such issues are settled by force. It simplifies into acts of pure rape. Yet that is not where the vulnerability is identified. It lies in the silence of the victims.

37. Seleha of Dhaka city went to the toilet one night outside their apartment and was suddenly jumped upon by a stranger and raped. Apart from physical and mental distress, her main fear was public knowledge. Only a friend knows this. Even her mother doesn't. Saleha is terrified and silent.

38. Asma went to see a movie with her friend and his family. Her friend's dulabhai who was sitting next to her in the darkened hall molested her. "He had planned it from the beginning. I couldn't shout or scream. I was silent, I didn't tell anyone after I came home. 5-6 days later I told my sister on the condition that she doesn't tell it to mother." Her sister has rebuked her and told her not to tell anyone. If others come to know this, her sister said, there will be difficulty in getting her married.

39. Sara works as a garbage collector. She goes from flat to flat to collect the trash and then deposits it in the dustbin. She was raped by a man servant in one of the flats where she had gone. When she came home, she had a had case of bleeding. When the bleeding became serious, the mother came to know and she had to be hospitalized. There, the authorities told her that there would be a police case. The mother and daughter were so terrified that they ran away from the hospital eight the police documents and medical prescriptions. She had been raped about ten days before the interview had taken place. The police is not perceived as a friend by the urban poor.

40. Alea is 11 years old and works as a housemaid. Khalil works as a house boy in the same place and was sympathetic to her. He would give her candy and other gifts. And one day, when no one was around he grabbed her and tore off her clothes and raped her. When she complained to the lady of the house, she was severely shouted at as if it was her fault. Khalil was given a mild rebuke. In fact, Khalil then threatened to get even with her for complaining to he employer. Not only did she keep the secret from her family but she left the job and went and took another job at a garments factory.

41. Perhaps a relative exception is Selina, whose father is a dope addict and mother peddles it at the street level. Father stays away for long stretches while mother returns late at night. One night, her Iandlord's son Rahman, took advantage of the empty house, came inside and raped her. After

this, he would often visits to have sex with her. When she protested, he showed her the knife. But one night, she had serious abdomen cramps and bled a lot. Mother became to know and Selina also told her the entire episode.

42. Selina's mother took the matter in her hands. She first got the daughter treated. Then she took a job as a maid so that she could return home early. Then she went and paid the abuser a visit and through threats made sure he didn't try anything else on her daughter. She also advised her to use a knife if needed to protect herself.

43. It was perhaps possible for Mariam Begum to take such a position because she was already living on the margins of 'Bhadrolok' society. She could threaten to use a knife and advise her daughter to do so because she had much less at stake than others. In the end she blazes across the report as a heroine of incredible proportion, one who has been marginalized by society, a dope pusher, but who can stand up and defend her dignity bestowing some dignity to the citizens of the city as well.

44. The lack of physical, environmental and social insecurity is extreme amongst the urban poor. They are literally at the mercy of the males. But this isn't just to heighten the fact that its not strangers but those who are close to them, who have access who rape but that the girls who are raped have a common conspiracy of silence. This is essential if they are to survive, to breathe, to eat and for all that to happen, go to work. The values they uphold are traditional and the society they live in are far from the imagined ideal. The distance between the two is so much that compromises aren't possible. They do what is necessary to stay alive. If silence can ensure that, they will remain silent.

#### Vulnerability: the Emotional Factor

1. Emotional vulnerability is probably the most complex one them all because it does not always stand alone and can spill over into other vulnerabilities or it could be a result of other vulnerabilities. It may also be a mix of such pressure points which result in the sexual abuse of children.

2. For example, when a boy (Tipu) is abused by Moslem, under the threat that refusal would lead to sacking from the job which would ultimately hurt the family, the lines are fudgy as to whether its emotional or socio-economic blackmail. Similarly when a girl is abused on the pretext of being in love the same confusion regarding the origin of vulnerability arises.

3. From the case studies it appears that except for out right rape by strangers, almost all the cases have a strong emotional angle. Emotions are manipulated and brutalized by the abusers to achieve their sexual objectives. Most of the rural girls had sex with people they trusted. This betrayal leads to the deep trauma. Hence the emotional angle remains the most quizzical and least defined of all the vulnerabilities that children face in the area of sex abuse.

4. Sex abuse is essentially taking advantage of the physical and emotional vulnerabilities and weaknesses of children. In perusing our case studies, we have come across some cases which require special attentions because they pertain to some specific difficulties of the children in question. They are traumatized children with a degree of devastation no less than children in war situations.

#### Incest

5. Among all experiences, one of the most traumatic one is that of incest. Experience of this kind may warp a behavior pattern completely. So profound can be the impact and so grave the devastation that even doctors are often unable to help such patients. While carrying out this study we kept in touch with doctors and had requested them that should they come across a victim of incest and who is willing to talk, they should get in touch with us. The doctors had informed that such cases are not uncommon but victims are often too traumatized to talk to outsiders. However we received information from one of our doctor sources that a victim was willing to talk. Her summary of experience is noted below. We did not access any of the cases which the Team leader had collected in an earlier probe on incest related issues.

6. Miss XI is 22 years old now. She is socially very well placed. For the last few years she has been staying away from her family. Her father would fondle her for sexual gratification when she was barely five years old. This became a full fledged sexual act when she was about ten years old.

7. After her menarche, her father stopped having sex without explaining why. Since she thought that what her father did was a way of showing love, she was disturbed feeling she had made her father unhappy who had stopped loving her. At the age of 13, she shared her experiences and feeling with her uncle-her father's refusal of her-who after hearing this all had sex with her. She thought this was natural because that's how her father also showed his emotions. After the uncle left, her father started to have sex with her. She was happy with his return. In the next five years she had sex both with her father and uncle. She doesn't know if both knew. She thought it was a physical expression of emotions.

8. The crisis began when she had a relationship with a boy her age. Her father became very jealous and even beat her up. In fact, she was sent away to stay with her uncle, who naturally abused her. But the aunt found out and sent her to another aunt's who, upon hearing her life story fainted. For the first time, she felt confused about her past feelings and guilty as well. She also resented her parents for not protecting her from what seemed an unfair situation.

9. She was staying outside Dhaka and working. She later moved to Dhaka but her contact with her parents were thinning. She read some documents on incest and immediately had a nervous breakdown. She began to feel uncontrollable hatred for her family. She also developed gay tendencies after this. She shared a flat with a partner. She refused a marriage proposal arranged by her family and told them that she wanted to marry her flat mate. Her family beat her up and she dragged away and locked up. She was taken to psychiatrist to "care" her lesbianism.

10. She hates men now because "they exploit women and children". She was rescued by her neighbors who are very influential and who have a score to settle with her father's family. She told us that she would have a relationship only with a woman. She feels that her entire family took advantage of her feelings and exploited her.

11. Incest is the most difficult of all sexual abuses because it is entirely based on emotional vulnerability. As the case shows, the father and the uncle both exploited her but others including her mother never did anything to protect her. The girl feels certain that her mother knew though this is not confirmed. There are more recorded cases of incest within the unclear family which is part of another probe. Incest is rare but far less rare than thought of. Incestuous relationships between siblings are much more common.

12. Family level trauma can also be a strong ignition point leading to abuse. Children are devastated by families breaking up and they constantly try to fill up the vacuum which they experience in the absence of one of the parents. In the case noted below we see an example of a

child who attempted to replace the father with a father figure even though in the process of the transaction the child is sexual abused.

#### Payment For Emotions

13. Hasan, who is 8 years old, suffers from the impact of a broken family. His parents have split and his mother is staying with her family. They come from a wealthy background. Staying with his uncles, he misses his father a lot. Plus, his mother was very distraught with the break up and herself needed looking after. Meanwhile, Hasan developed a close relationship with makbul, the family's driver. A trusted man and long employed by the family, he gave time to the child when nobody else did. He also began to sexually abuse Hasan which continued over a period of months. When Hasan had anal bleeding, his uncle thought it was piles but later suspected abuse and asked the TL to talk to the boy because to his past experience in such matters. The boy told of his experience without holding back.

14. When we talked to the boy it was clear that he would rather be sexually abused and have a father substitute than be left without one. Clearly, the child's emotional needs at the point was extremely high and the mother wasn't strong enough to cope with her own emotional distress and also support her son's emotional hunger. It wasn't just that the boy was missing the father. he wasn't getting much of the mother either. But he is severely traumatized and his behavior pattern may take any shape in future.

15. A case study which was related to us by an adult (Ratul) who recollected a situation where he was very fond of his uncle and at one point began to have sex as if it was a game. But it was found out and this led to a difficult family situation and he was shifted away elsewhere. There, he had a relationship with a person closer to his age. However, he has suffered severe trauma and his sex life may be called "very disturbed".

16. Emotional blackmail is not always spoken out. In most cases it remains unsaid though the implications of not complying with are unclear. In the urban mid and upper class scenario, much is veiled unlike the rural areas where threats are made with greater honesty. Again unlike the rural scenario, inter-personal relationships develop complex patterns and resemble a dance with shadows with identities switching more quickly and emotional dependencies creating numerous patterns.

17. In another case study, Motaher's father died when he was very young. He was brought up in his grand parent's house. When he was 10, his uncle would take him out. He was very fond of him.

-- His uncle got married and then was divorced within a week, he doesn't know why. His uncle, one day took him to the cinema. There his uncle took his hand and put it on his genitals. Then he played with his and asked him to do likewise.

--This went on and still goes on. He is scared that if he tells anyone, they will be thrown on the streets as his mother salary isn't enough to keep both going.

-- He has come to dislike his uncle. Before the lights go out, uncle talks about how successful he is with girls. Then they masturbate.

-- His studies have suffered and his health may suffer but he has little option.

-- He hasn't told anyone because he isn't sure of the consequences of the same.



### Abuse Or Sex For Gain?

18. But there are also cases where the sexual abuse is indeed close to being consensual, where the element of abuse is no longer there in terms of individual relationships. What does act as a catalyst is a value system which encourages objective reaching without any commentary on the means or the process. Hashem is an appropriate example.

19. Hashem's father is a clerk in a GOB office. They stay in a colony. He has 2 brothers and 1 sister. He comes home from school and is without parental watch till 5 p.m. His mother too is a clerk.

-- He is 12 years old and was introduced to sex by his residential colony friend who has had sex with an older woman in the area. The woman gives sedative to her two children and has sex with others. Now Hasem too has sex with her. In return he gets gifts and can watch VCP.

-- He knows that some people suspect him doing this, but he says many families are like that and often there are fights on this. One lady's husband had a person beaten up who was suspected of having sex wife.

-- He seems confused. He likes book, chocolates and movies. He doesn't think if his parents find out they will beat him but not leave the colony. They can't afford private rent.

### Mental warps?

20. but traumas can be very terrifying as can be noticed in the case of Shanu, Rahim and Mahmud as well. They have been forced to participate in sexual acts which qualify as rape anyway and the resultant trauma has created mind warps which are examples of the terror which child sex abuse generates.

21. Rahim is 10 years old. His father works in the Middle East. His mother works in a private company. The boss of the company spends nights with her.

-- One day he came and not finding her, started to talk to him. Later he started to undress him. He didn't like it but didn't know what was happening. He was very aroused and accepted his advances. It ended in non-penetrative sex.

-- Thus the man had sex with both, mother and son. This went on till the landlords got wise to this situation and threatened to throw the woman out. Later, the man raised the extra rent and all was quiet.

-- Subsequently, they both contracted STD and came to a doctor for treatment. The doctor found the boy emotionally disturbed but such situations are common, according to her. The boy is traumatized and the doctor feels that given the relationship pattern the boy's mind is at risk of a breakdown.

22. Mahmud works in a factory as a helper. He gets Taka 1000. His mother is a Commercial Sex Worker (CSW). He hates her for being a CSW. His father deserted them. He fantasizes about his father taking care of the family and loving them all.

-- He stays in a mess where he is like a glorified servant. He has to do the beds, clean the rooms(2) and fill in water bottles.

-- He is often asked by his mess mates to press their body. Often they ask him to masturbate as well. He does. He gets money or gifts for what he does. He doesn't have penetrative sex with any.

-- He has no choice because his food and shelter is free. He believes that because people knew he is a CSW's children they felt more easy to approach him.

-- He has no sense of enjoyment. He hates sex, he likes neither men nor women.

-- "I am saving money to go back to my village and bring back my brother. Together we will sell chatpatti and not work where I have to masturbate people."

24. The cases mentioned above are almost all from urban situations. However, the same rules of emotional vulnerability apply to the rural areas. In fact, girls, both from rural and urban areas, are victims of emotional situations except in cases of outright rape by strangers. Their vulnerability is intense because they often face no choice except to give in. In the urban areas, we see greater incidence of rape while in the rural areas, emotional blackmail is also common. Interestingly, many urban poor girls are wooed by men but they tend to distrust them. Most have had negative experiences with men. With the higher classes, the pattern is more towards emotional vulnerability being channelized to a sexual act. But the urban middle and upper class boy appears to be more sensitive to sex abuse. The CEDC cases are mixed. But in all the cases the child is deeply hurt. There is no happy child who has been sexually abused.

## SECTION-V

### Sex Abuse : The Family Dimension

1. The overwhelming number of case studies refer to children living with their families. Except in case of CEDC, the family and its immediate environs is the location where the abuse occurs. So sex abuse of children principally affects the family. The nature, character and status of family also determines how they respond to a situation. However one thing is common. Given the chance most would prefer to be silent though its not always possible, especially in the rural areas. In the urban areas, silence is deafening.

2. The case studies indicate that the impact of sexual abuse differ from family to family, person to person. This difference is based on gender, on socio-economic status, on cultural level, on their physical location etc. Trauma management mechanisms at the social level are however absent in almost all the cases as a result of which, the agony that children experience are not removed or softened through any specific interventions. Trauma also depends on the levels of abuse. A case of sex abuse involving the genitals or full penetrative sex ignites a much higher level of trauma than an attempted case so seduction or sexual harassment, physical or emotional in general. But sensitive people experience high degree of trauma with lesser degree of abuse as well. Rape is probably the most terrifying experience that one can face.

3. The family is generally helpless when it comes to dealing with such situations because there are no social institutions or service agency to deal with the matter. An incident of abuse may become a law and order matter or an issue for social justice but its not a subject for initiating actions to heal a body and the mind. If anything, it is the opposite because in the post-abuse scenario, the suffering intensifies. The abused and the families suffer, either trying to hush up the matter or if it becomes known, as objects of shame and ridicule.

4. Some of the impacts are very concrete. While they vary from situation to situation whether diffident by gender or class, the girl child is the most blatantly oppressed human being in this theater of cruelty. She is also handed down the ultimate denigration's in a Bengali society-unmanageable and noshto. The literal meaning of noshto ranges from bad, dirty, rotten etc. So great is the fear of this prospect the victims, individually and collectively go to almost any length to hide the fact, to silence the truth. In the rural areas, the social information network is more

active and familiarity is common hence secrecy is always under threat. the cities offer more space to hide.

5. What has emerged as a divergence between urban and rural girls is that, while the rural girls from all levels ultimately surrender to the family, the urban girls try to maintain a distance, independence if you will and this is done through the weapon of silence. They are in one way more self sufficient. They have much greater choices and opportunities especially in matters of employment which allows them the chance to be independent.

6. The rural family is sometimes better knit than its urban counterparts. In our investigation many of the victims spoke with affection for their family but hostility exists as well. Women resent the abused girl more than men in many cases. In the urban families, the emotions are mixed. Many families face complications beyond their coping skills. The urban family in some cases are actually rural families who have migrated to urban situations to look for employment. They sometimes even carry the value system to the urban areas. But in many case the families are split and in such situations, the individual is made more vulnerable. For girls, this is more so especially among the poor because many are also child laborers.

7. While there is relative protection in the rural areas, the urban poor girl has little protection. This is specifically so for the urban working class. She is either working in garments factories, working at other people's homes or going into the sexually violent world to do household chores. The families that exist have little access to mechanisms which will help them cope with such distressing circumstances. Asma of Dhaka tells of one such running experience. "Lablu is the local mastan(thug). He stands and flashes himself to all ----- waits for me every day and chases me. Every girl in the area is afraid of him. If they see him on the road, they try to return home through another route."

#### The Dogma Of Stigma

8. Families know from experience that not only is the victim stigmatized but along with her, the rest of the family is too. Sisters as siblings of an abused girl child is also less marriageable and that is way the stake of the family in maintaining this silence is so high. Falguni's sisters are finding it difficult to get married as are Sufiac's amongst others. Sometimes the victims themselves maintain silence knowing the cost of speaking out. They are generally successful. In the urban areas unless there is severe bleeding as in case of Sara, they rarely share such secret with their family. They know how little difference it will make. They also fear consequences because most abusers stay close by and are known to them. Threats to knife them can be very real. It happens all the time. Silence again is safety.

9. The families which are affected by sexual abuse invariable feel that they never experienced any trauma of this level before. The negative situations which germinates from such experiences range from a migrating from the area of residence under duress to migration of individual to other areas to hide from the stigma. b. social ostracization of the individual and family;c. loss of family harmony and self esteem. d. social marginalization.

10. While neighbors and clans tend to respond negatively to the incident, often siding with the local social milieu to avoid the stigma of relationship with affected, friends and relatives may sometimes offer support. Friends are the most convenient confidante, more than family because they are not directly affected by the stigma. In case, in both urban and rural scenario some members provided protection. In one case (urban incest) protection was a way of expressing ammosity towards the victim's family. Both for boys and girls peers ----- friends they prefer to rely upon. This was noticed more in case of urban situations than -----ones, partly because

urban families are a bit alienated compared to rural ones. One of the reasons behind such behavior is the role of the family, impact on the family and the behavior and attitude of the family towards the victim.

#### Tolerating Abuse At The Family Level

11. This should be recognized that families do tolerate sexual abuse and at great length ----- most common form of sexual abuse within the family range from harassment to rape----- main perpetrator of this form of abuse is the Dulabhai, the sister's husband. In most of ----- cases, the dulabhai fondles the child to derive sexual pleasure. The investigation mentions numerous cases of such abuse sums up by saying, "There is a lot of teasing ----- goes on between the dulabhai (brother-in-law) and the shali (sister-in-law). Members of the family don't think of this as offensive. Even if somebody feels bad about it, nothing is ----- . That is because this relationship is considered one of that types where such teasing (obscene/vulgar teasing?) is acceptable. If the elders say anything (complain), the girls will have to hear abuses from her in-laws. Maybe the girl will not be allowed to visit her parents any more."

12. For the sake of perceived happiness of the girl, the dulabhai is allowed to flirt and tease. "Everyone is fond of Shaila because she is a good student. But her dulabhai jokes with her and says "Dirty" things. She doesn't like listening to them, our investigator reports." In case of Suriya Begum, the following is stated, "Everyone is fond of her. She likes being liked by her bhabhi, parents and others. But she doesn't like being touched by her dulabhai who does so out of fun." Sisters tolerate the behavior of their sister's husbands in order not to cause discomfiture in her life.

13. But some of the relationships go beyond the usual flirt and touch. A typical example is that of Nafisa who describes the behavior of the dulabhai Abul Hossain. "Abul Hossain knew both sisters and then married Rashida (urban). Nafisa says that he was interested in her as well. He would pull at her breasts and say that unless dulabhais did that, the breasts wouldn't develop. He would also fondle her genitals. He was then married already to Rashida. But now he has stopped maintaining Rashida." Families tolerate abuse as far as possible especially in matters of marriages of girls because that's where the main focus of a girl's life is. Girls learn their worth in society very early.

14. Where parents have felt that they stood to lose less by taking a protective role, we observe interventions, both discreet and open. In case of Nina and Lucky the matter went to the Salish. In case of Falguni, the senior members of the family refused to take it to the salish fearing social difficulties. Despite this, her family is finding it difficult to marry off the sisters and the public knowledge of rape is causing severe distress. "When people come to know that there is a raped girl in the family, the marriage negotiations break off." In case of Tipu, the father dressed down the rapist of the boy. In case of Khokon, the mother quietly told the older girl to stay away from the boy. Since she was a relative from the husband's family, her opportunity to do anything was also limited by her vulnerability as a woman in a patrilineal family.

15. But in none of the cases did the family totally discard a member to protect itself. Although extreme distress has occurred, nobody sought separation. But this isn't a simple question of unwavering acceptance. In case of Falguni, the brother is very affectionate but not the sisters, in case of Shiuli the bhabhi is reluctantly tolerant and in case of Suriya Begum and others, the family has no other option but to accept. Khaleda's mother asks, "what is my daughter's fault?" but as a woman she has little voice in the matter. In case of the victims, (girls) they stay at home and suffer.

16. The trauma of the boys are not so pronounced in the rural areas and in fact they seem to be the most well equipped group to cope with the possible trauma. And this leads to a situation where they can maintain a sense of self esteem and also a wider choice of relationships. In fact there is a surprisingly high incidence of socially deviant behavior in the rural areas involving boys. Kajol, who is 14 years old is having an affair of sorts with Moslem, who appears to be a habitual offender. They didn't display any guilt to our Investigator. Ekram and Faruque, led by Motiur are seriously into bestiality. As cowherds accessing animals is not difficult. Either nobody knows or the tolerance level for male sexual behavior is quite high. Circumstantial evidence points to the latter. They can get away with both gay and bestial sex. No girl could and if they did, it would have to be in great secrecy. As boys are allowed to move freely, they can create social spaces which the girls are denied. Marriage proposals are clearly the bottom line for the girl's family while boys don't have this particular agenda to address.

17. But in the urban cases, we come across complex relationships, sometimes verging on incest, sometimes almost an apprentice commercial sex worker identity, sometimes sex in exchange for emotional gratification. Most are very traumatic. Sometimes entire families move to another country to except from such situations, a urban counterpart of the rural family forced to move to another village. Here the threat is internally generated by the state of helplessness. The trauma of Ratul is also nether case where a child suffers abuse as a sort of emotional substitution despite a supportive family. In case of X 1 the family split completely because of the specific nature of the relationship. Shanu has no relationship with his mother blaming her for being abused by his employer. In other words, the responses in the urban sector are more complex, perhaps painted differently, because families are under stress of not having an extended family or any other replacement support system. The more compels. Families have also been nuclearized. In the rural areas, the extended family still exists very much. But as the report finds, apart from the advantages that extended families offer, they also provide a wide range of access and lack of security due to the sheer number of entries which create opportunities for abusing children.

18. The Family's role is not so easy to define in these contexts. As we have earlier argued, the families do exist in a state of conflict with the individuals especially the children. Since, children are not expected to have a personality and no role beyond fulfilling family responsibility, the abused is not given any extra space to resolve the problem. The abused family is of course provided even less space by the social structure in which they live so they lack the socio-emotional space that could have been generated by the community and extended to the family for coping. This creates a situation where the protective role of the family is severely diminished and victims, whether living in or outside is forced to face the world alone. All the problems emerge with great intensity and ostracism affects all. Family, including other female members do resent the victim.

#### Rape And The Urban Scenario

19. Being alone and facing the world is most pronounced amongst the girls in the urban area who have to face a variety of threats. They have to face neighborhood thugs, apartment thugs, thugs in workplaces and family thugs to boot. Rape is the commonest form of abuse and girls seem to take the experience with some degree of sang froid on the outside. Some even display defiance. Shafia says "If somebody comes to abuse me I will thrash him and teach a lesson". Shamima who had to experience an offer to commit oral sex in lieu of a piece of bread says, "Such people should be sent to jail." There are many such statements. If they had the chance they would be brave. But their world overwhelms their defiant courage.

20. Expect for Nina who sought urban salish, others have preferred silence. As a segment could be called urban poor. Alea, who was raped, never told anyone. She is even now harassed at her workplace. Saleha, raped by a masked stranger carries her trauma in secret. Shathi who was set up for a sexual encounter by her friend remains silent. When Sara told her mother about the silence become the most eloquent statement on the state of social and individual rights.

21. However, Binu, who comes from a well off background was molested by her house tutor and she told her parents who took action and the tutor was packed off. CS shows that the family takes great care in ensuring prevention of abuse. Her abuser was 30 years old. The obvious deference between the socio-economy segments is clear in terms of decision making especially in the urban sector. Hasan's urban, educated family also took steps as soon as learning that the child was victimized.

22. Miss Xb is another case where the girl developed sympathetic feelings towards the house tutor who was treated badly in the house. It led to physical relationship. Later, he used sex to manipulate her feelings. Having had sex once, he kept on. Meanwhile, a servant who saw them began to blackmail her. The parents were too haughty to even consider that she was having this relationship with someone whom they looked down upon. at one point, she broke down and tried to commit suicide. Later, her sister who had some experience in such cases helped her. Her statement is, "If mother didn't frighten me so much, the matter wouldn't have gone so far." The family focus on prestige and power blinded them to abuse at home. Essentially, it had ceased to function as a unit, its behavior tarring it into another extreme example of conflict between the family and the child.

23. One of the reasons why the victims don't share the secrets and the pain is that they are aware of the consequences. Apart from the standard punishment of losing marital eligibility, the victimizers may attack again. They remain more visibly present than ever. Except in such cases like Nina's where the abuser's senior relative played a role, most abusers are free to roam. Its not smart to risk revenge. Others say that whatever they may feel, they know they don't have either the opportunity or the power. Saleha, who was raped at night by a stranger, was told not to tell anyone she was raped at a knife point. She still remembers the knife.

24. Children are also aware that there is only so much that families can do. Many, staying with relatives prefer not to bother. Plus, urban girls know that families often put restrictions on their movement if such incidents are reported. So silence is preferred. In the end, the silence----- But the capacity of girls to suffer seems to have no end.

25. The -----also don't really know how to cope with the situation or deal with it that will heal the wound. In most cases, the relationships with the social structure remain and living within that means undergoing the entire response from such institutions. If the salish gives a bad decision and they stay in the same village, they have to play by the rules of the village. Our investigator writes, "most of the abusers of girls in the rural areas are from powerful families. So even after salish, they can use threats to force the victimizers to go by their wishes. They can even force them not to speak about a negative decision of the Salish." This will happen even if families are torn apart, a process accelerated by public knowledge of the abuse. For the family's sake, the abuse is pushed into the silent era. This survival instinct though negative for the individual is certainly instinctual.

#### Sexual Abuse And The Rural Powerful

26. Social institutions are firmly-at least in the rural areas-in favor of the powerful. Hence they are not ready to deal in a manner which might threaten social balance. The result is a starkly

unfair salish system which is generally not accessed but if done so will do little, if at all. In case, the victims are too marginalized and the victimizer too powerful, they will allow gross injustice to occur such as forcing an entire family to move away from the village to get rid of the problem. Nasrin's case being an extreme example.

27. In any society where sexual encounters are so high and taboo on its discussion so high as well, the conflict creates distortions that individuals, families and communities can't handle. The haplessness is writ on every case where even the victims have been observed to have had sex in the hope of a good marriage, a self and family objective, because poverty and possible social security influence such decisions. Often this turns into a payment of a terrible price for what is merely an illusion. All the girls who thought they were in love fall under this category.

28. Samaj and Gram can't afford such disturbances either because it is kept stabilized by the informal command structure of a village. Villages behave in a simple manner and in that scenario, the powerful sustains the structures which ensure the survival of the village and this includes disbursement of resources through a structured trickle down system. Hence, the villages have to keep the powerful in place because they most often provide the support which keeps the village intact. To threaten them is to threaten the village without any option observed elsewhere. They certainly have a right to the security of tradition and safety but that approach also protects the abuser.

## SECTION-VI

### Society And Sex Abuse

1. Sexual abuse of children happens in most cases within the knowledge of someone. Sometimes its kept a secret by the victim or shared with a friend or close relatives but it does get known. However, its not limited to family and friends only. What we call society, community also get to know about it. Their attitude and response is an indicator of not just societal values but the kind of support the victims can expect to get, should they try to access social instruments of equity. The hierarchy of knowledge of the act moves from peers to siblings, from sisters to mothers, and from females to males. Unless present or called, fathers and brothers know last. This applies to most cases, males or female.

2. The rural and urban values systems also differ. In the urban areas the victims can have a space to hide themselves as a result of a weak social structure and a higher degree of alienation. The lack of concern of one person regarding the other is a relief of sorts. In Hashem's colony, having multiple sex partners is fairly common. In this case the children and adult share a silence of convenience. Nor does a CSWs son Mahmud have to explain his behavior to anyone.

3. But similarities do abound. Prama and Falguni have the same problem. The family can't recognize their sexuality and thus the dangers attached to. An explosive situation is created where incest/semi-incestuous behavior is involved. But in the urban areas, secrets are kept much better.

4. Unlike the rural areas, the neighborhood culture has almost vanished from the urban scenario except surviving to some extent in the slums. So the social justice system which is intact but weakening in the rural areas has almost no counterpart in the urban situation It exists only among first generation city dwellers of the underprivileged variety. But we also notice its accessing in only one case although it exists in a number of urban slums. Obviously, it isn't the most dependable survivor of amongst the migrants to the city. Interestingly, rape is far more tolerated in the rural areas but in the urban areas it seems to occur more. Since girls don't report, the rapist

gets off in both rural and urban situations. If a rape is reported, there is possibility of some action. But in urban areas reporting of rape is also less.

5. The insecurity of rural families is a result of what many leaders have told our investigators. We are summing up the comments taken from a number of salish and social leaders on the specific issue of sexual abuse of children. These leaders were/are aware of sexual abuse occurring in their own area and some have also dealt with such cases. Interestingly, the rural segment from all classes recognize the existence of sexual abuse but the urban community leaders-social and political first deny and then refuse to recognize it as an issue and finally end up blaming it on western cultural intrusions.

#### The Status Of The Child And The Salish

6. What is striking is the near total absence of any value attached to the status of the child in the rural areas. There is no knowledge or understanding of the issue of the rights of the child. About 10% of the people have some idea about such concepts but they too are vague.

7. Both the investigators who worked in the rural areas have said that half of the people they talked to think that child abuse doesn't take place. The rest who know don't attach much importance to it because they believe that this is something that happens to most when they are children. Its not such a serious matter.

8. There is considerable conflict within a village society. These conflicts are manifested in a variety of ways and they center around materials gains in general. The operational mechanism is often the salish which can't decide against the powerful because the members are part of the system as well. When things as too obvious-Lucky, Shwapnai, etc-they take action which isn't followed up.

9. Apart from the fact that people don't report such cases because they fear social ostracism, many, especially the rural poor, also refrain from reporting because their feeling is that, the rural social justice system will not deliver because the matbars do not judge in favor of them due to socio-political or factional loyalty.

10. Parents prefer to deal with or punish the abuser directly without letting the matter come into the open when it involves a boy or parents tend to ignore the matter because its isn't socially threatening. In case of boys the matter isn't considered worth going to the salish. Farid's father just told off the boy while Rashu was quietly asked to stay away from the young boy. No fuss when it comes to boys.

11. If some parents do seek social justice or try to bring the matter to the notice of the salish, the matbars themselves discourage the matter. As reported in one case, the matbar had said." Don't overstep your limits on such petty matters. These things happen when a child is small. Besides, who is going to go and preside over such a salish." Obviously, child abuse, even when noticed is a low priority issue.

12. In a couple of cases that the salish got involved the results have not been particularly encouraging. In case of Lucky the salish gave a decision but it could not be enforced despite a positive verdict. The abuser and his family could get away with it because they were aware that other powerful people would not move to follow the matter even when they cheated the abused family of its compensation. In another case,-Nasrin-the salish had in fact supported the victimizer and took no action when the matter was brought up.



13. The salish is an extension of the rural power structure and expresses the positions held by the powerful people. The salish is not an independent judicial system but the enforcing arm of social power relationships. Hence, before expecting any kind of commiserating activities one must locate the position of salish in that society within which it performs to maintain balance or power amongst the powerful and ensures that the status quo of power sharing is maintained.

14. The point that is most important to be recognized is that social positions play a role in distribution of social justice. Rural societies are dominated by the powerful and the salish is one of their instruments of manipulating social behavior. The role of salish, as mentioned before, is to ensure that the balance of relationship as it exists is not harmed. This results in a situation where the abuser can feel comfortable about abusing and not having to pay a serious social or personal price.

15. A typical case is that of Shiuli, who had to experience multiple abuse situations. In the first instance, her sexual relationship was socialized through a marriage which was actually illegal since she hadn't attained the legal age of marriage. However, the grandfather of the abuser ensured social sanction of the sexuality because they were exposed. The second time around also, she was married off, again illegally and like the first time, was discarded. Apart from the individual case, she has little social support. Plus, the local leaders sided with the boy accusing the girl of "seduction." I would appear that even without seeking support, a male, a boy can get it.

16. In the cases where the girls were in love or experienced sexual intimacy as an extension of their emotional relationship and were subsequently "found out", the girls have suffered. Social arrangements are such that girls are perceived as "predators" whether sexually or socially unless the status of the family are the same. Lata's family is one example where the power and status was on the girl's side and it was exercised. Because of this she was spared the public teasing and no salish was held which could increase her trauma. But her potential marital status is cloudy nevertheless. This kind of support to a girl child this in one exception to the rule.

17. In most of the case, the boy came from a well off background while the girl came from a comparable deprived one. This means that those who are powerful know that there is a better chance to have a sexual relationship with those and its difficult to ignore the element of deliberateness in making such choices.

18. The official law enforcement agencies play no role. Even in cases of rape, families didn't turn to the police force. The protection was not sought from the legal enforcement agencies but from the traditional socila institutions. such institutions also didn't deliver that leaving the victims and their families exposed to unmerous dangers.

19. Rivalry and conflict between families, between clans and factions and within families also play a role in encouraging sustainability of sexual abuse. There is simple not enough public opinion against sexual abuse at any level. This is applicable both in the urban and the rural areas. The response from social leaders in both urban and rural areas reflect relatively the same mindset.

#### Abuse And Class

20. In the urban sector, the social impact of abuse differ. the urban poor undergo a series of abuses which are often dictated by their social classes. In the case where a boy has to sleep with a housewife the abuse takes the shape of coercion without physical violence. However the boy who is forced to have sex with the man because he might get the boy sacked experiences

humiliation also even if he later on refuses to participate. But in the urban situation. It takes the boy longer to decide. It also warps his mind much more.

21. But socially, the segment of young boys who have to suffer abuse, not by their peer's but by their employers is a indication again of power relationships. In a society which has a high level of child abuse, formal and informal, the boy child is under constant threat of isosexuality. We have recorded four such cases for rural boys and four for urban boys.

22. But boy children coming from middle to upper class background suffer no less because the city hides its sexual proclivities much better. The trauma experienced by the urban boys are also very intense because in most cases, the abusers are their close relatives. Since there is no mechanism for seeking help the boys remain victims till circumstances end them.

23. In at least two cases, older urban woman have had sexual relationships with young boys. In rural areas, two such cases are also noted. In case of the urban situation, the abused and the abuser are not from within the family intimacy circle. In the rural area, one relates to a family member, while another is not linked. The abuser have taken advantage of the vulnerabilities, whether of age or social position. However, one "abused" child in the urban scenario comes across not as a classical abused case. He is having sex for goods. He is knowingly entering such a relationship.

24. This case requires to be noted because of the complex factors which lead to its happening. It seems that the social surrounding can be such that children may be pushed into activities which could be against their interest in the absence of guidance for informed choices. The boy is participating in unsafe sex and he can't be the only one. But there is no social system to provide sexual and social value based education. So because, the child has had no access to any kind of information or counseling or education, he is entering into a potentially harmful relationship which could be compared to a form of child labor in the commercial sex sector. In other words, in this case too, his rights are being violated. Pursuit of material gratification through commercial sex is a rising concern.

25. Society tolerates the rapists, the abuser and the victimizer. It takes no action because committing an act of rape is by itself an act of power. Having abused a child by taking advantage of her age and emotions and not being punished and leading a normal social life after being identified an abuser are all signs of power. In this power balance, the scales are decidedly in favor of men. The women who do abuse, do so by hiding behind one form of deceit or other but they don't seek resources from any social power base because they have none to seek from. Even when one is locked with men in a secret siblinehood of sexual abuse of children, women are less advantaged. One may therefore contemplate the state of the abused girl child.

## SECTION-VII

### The Abuser

1. Everyone has a natural tendency to think that the abuser is some kind of a monstrous stranger who comes lunging out of the dark and rapes the girl. Such incidents do happen but not mostly. Most molesters are those who have access to the abused without arousing fear or suspicion. In fact sexual abuse relates more to a question of gaining access to abuse and not a matter of entering dangerous situations or liaisons.

2. A rudimentary table of relationships show how close family members are involved and in how few strangers are. Strangers are always the rapists because they don't have the time to establish rapport with the potential abuser and or they could be driven by the desire to commit rape-adult

or pedophile-and thereby enjoy the feeling of control over another being or any such compulsions. In case of Lucky, the cousin is an obvious pedophile. When Tipu is forced to have sex, the man appears to be a habitual abuser who sees no restrictions about his movement. Having raped a boy, he can go ahead and rape others if necessary.

<b>Abuser Abused</b>	<b>Father, Uncle &amp; Other Close Relatives</b>	<b>Persons close (Other than relatives) to the family (House tutor) Neighbour the and others.</b>	<b>Other known members of society</b>	<b>Strangers</b>	<b>Total</b>
Rural Girl	8	4	2	2	16
Urban Girl	2	10	3	2	17
Rural Boy	3	6	-	-	9
Urban Boy	3	3	2	-	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>50</b>

~~Abuser-~~

~~Abused~~

~~Father, Uncle & Other Close Relatives~~

~~Persons close (Other than relatives) to the family (House tutor) Neighbour the and others.~~

~~Other known members of society~~

~~Strangers~~

~~Total~~

~~Rural Girl — 8 — 4 — 2 — 2 — 16~~

~~Urban Girl — 2 — 10 — 3 — 2 — 17~~

~~Rural Boy — 3 — 6 — — — 9~~

~~Urban Boy — 3 — 3 — 2 — — 8~~

~~Total — 16 — 23 — 7 — 4 — 50~~

3. In all the case where relatives are involved the family can't be expected to do anything against the abuser, if only to preserve the family. When there is a matter of dependence, the situation is even more intense. In other cases as well, the abusers face no restrictions, not even censure. In case of the urban girl, who is a victim of incest, there is no protest from within the family.

4. According to our investigations, the abusers come across as normal ordinary beings who have no problem in other aspects of life. In case of rural segments, we know that there appears to be habitual molesters moving about but rural society appears to be more tolerant about sexual abuse than was assumed. As in other sectors, unless it affects the powerful, one needn't worry.

5. One is also struck by the high level of acceptance of molesters as sons-in-laws. Those who have had abused and later backed off from marrying the victim, neither face stigma nor find it difficult to marry another person. Abusers of Shiull and Shwapani, both publicly known cases and in one case with a salish decision against him are already married. In fact according to our case studies few are not. A man who violates a woman's body is not condemned. In the urban areas, where power relationships differ to the extent that its more evenly distributed and other factors tend to dilute it, more care is taken to keep such relationships secret but in the end, the abuser does get away. There is no question of social or familial excommunication.

6. Part of that happens because society is not willing to stand up to sexual abuse at the social and household level. The denial by all and sundry, either by minimizing its significance or refusing to accept its existence are signs of society not able to come to term with the most difficult form of inter-personal relationship. Like the rural leaders who say that its a minor problem, society as a whole has marginalized it. By doing so, they have found a reason not ----- with it.

7. The male abuser (Moslem) who talked to us provides a vivid impression of his social security and in some ways, behavior traits which society is willing to overlook through one excuse or another. He has been abusing children since 1989 and hasn't been caught or punished. He is confident enough to talk about his methods of seduction. According to his statement, he first decides on a target, a boy he wishes to seduce. Then, at night or during evening he approaches the boy, sits next to him and starts talking on erotic topics. Subsequently, it leads to fondling and then sex. He also said that he chooses servant boys because they are easy to manage. His rate of seduction also increases during the summer months because people sleep outside in courtyards which allows him to access targets better. He is 35 years old and told us that this (anal sex) is supposed to cure his chronic backache problem.

8. The rest of the abusers also seem invulnerable to law, justice or for that matter any kind of system where he will be punished, not just for violating the rights of a child. But the abuser is protected by the social belief that a girl who has passed or nearing puberty is sexually mature and therefore emotionally so. The cases show that girls become fully involved in household work from an early age and is forced to step into mature life. In other words, she assumes adult household roles. Having done that, people expect that they are mature enough to play sexual roles too, a fact which encourages early age sex. As an "adult", she is therefore responsible for her sexual behavior Since marriages take place below the legal age and in fact we came across no marriage where the girl was past eighteen, its safe to assume that the burden of guilt is on the girl, no matter who is actually responsible.

9. There is little difference between the protection an abuser gets in the rural and the urban areas. The difference is in case of a grown up and older woman who has to exercise caution so that the stigma of a noshto meye doesn't stick to her. In the cases reported in the rural areas, the boys chosen to be seduced are under ten which appears to be a deliberate choice. Shahida has had relationships with at least two boys, Bakul and Karim, both under ten years. A divorced and disfigured woman. Shahida feels deeply rejected by society. Her shop which deals in candies and other stuff attractive to children helps her seduce young children. They are too young to resist, too gullible to resist, they succumb easily to temptations, they may not have a good idea of what's really going about and chances are they will be less believed. On top of that, such young boys

will not be a social threat seeking sexual favors by using the past. A lot of planning seems to go into the seduction of young boys.

10. In the urban areas the older women seducers also take greater care. Unlike their male counterparts they also have little access to commercial sex industry. The level of repression can therefore reach extremely high Celsius. Society accepts sex outside marital relationship for men and is yet to accept publicly the same for women. What they privately do is another matter.

## SECTION-VIII

### Psychological Impact Of Abuse

1. One doesn't have to make an extra case for the psychological impact of the abused and more so in case of multiple abuse, one sexual and another social but its required because the entire issue of sex abuse is either denied or considered too common to deserve attention or just not serious enough. The rural matbar who says, it happens to everyone when one is a child actually presents the near universal viewpoint and that position is in favor of tolerating sexual abuse of children.

2. That is the reason why it should be stated all the time that children who are abused face extreme trauma and distress. Its only the children themselves who can describe the shame, the helplessness and sense of betrayal each child experiences. In case of rural girls, the trauma is extended to the life after abuse where she along with her family is ostracized and she has to face the prospect of not getting married or even if she does, of not getting a suitable groom.

3. The psychological trauma extends to all aspects of life and it severely damages the self-esteem of the abuse. she becomes either an object of curiosity-in case of rape -or that of not being worthy of a relationship. This is a fact that the girls who participated without coercion in sex believed they were having sex with their future grooms. shattering that dream take as great toll on the mind and most of the victims reported suicidal tendencies, deep depression, self-hatred etc. Most also experienced hatred towards the abuser. But in the rural areas, they also know that the ultimate arbitrator of justice is the power elites, from whose homes most abusers come. And even if the abuser is not a direct member, he will at least be a member of a powerful family.

4. But in most cases, this is unnecessary because sex abuse occurs within the family and the parents are more keen to hide the facts of abuse then seek justice for violation. While some family members do give the time to the victims, in most cases the family itself is traumatized and the situation is such that it becomes a taboo subject for discussion.

5. As there is no trauma analysis of such victims except with doctors, we have to resort to them to measure the varying degrees of emotional damage. There are four different levels of abuse;

- \* Caressing - First degree.
- \* Kissing and embracing - Second degree.
- \* Genital manipulation - Third Degree.
- \* Penetrative Sex - Fourth Degree.

6. Those who experience third and fourth degree abuse are also all severely traumatized and appear to need professional help. In the urban cases where adults provided information on their

past, there were two instances of sexual malfunctioning and case of attempted suicide. Urban males seem to suffer more from it.

7. The boys in the rural areas seem to handle the trauma best and although there were cases of a high level of stress, they hadn't been subjected to other trauma especially of the social variety. Boys in the rural areas have coped better because of lack of the kind of pressure the girls have to face.

8. Although the report was not on building psychological profiles, it has seemed to the investigators the children are forced to learn to ignore this aspect of their life and get on being left without any choices. In all probability, many of their parents too have faced such a situation and not having had no relieving experience also tend to brush the experience away. As there are no social, psychological, emotional and inter-personal relief and no social movement to provide a sense of having being wronged and being able to protest against that, the emotions are bottled up inside and appear to have negative affects though external behavior may appear normal.

9. One that is noticeable is the lack of concern and sensitivity towards sexuality. Having experienced brutality, whether physical or emotional, with most of them suffering socially as well, the children can't possibly grow up with a healthy attitude towards sex. This is a strange inter-generational ailment which keeps company with every attitude relating to gender and inter-personal relationships.

10. Ruma of Dhaka city says, "I hate him. I will get even." Chances are that she will not be able to. But in the absence of all that, she may well turn out to person who will hate the opposite sex. The feeling of hatred towards men and towards women by the respective victims is common and expected. We have documented elsewhere the trauma that continues to pervade other life and probably will continue.

11. The other emotional damage is the sense of betrayal and taking advantage by an older person of a younger person. Both boys and girls, feel their helplessness and appear to trust no one when they talked to us. If the scale of abuse is as high as it appears, is it possible that millions have been traumatized and this trauma is determining many of our social behavior patterns.

12. The case studies speak for themselves regarding the emotional trauma that they have suffered. In the absence of a social and emotional coping mechanism, the abused are left to fend for themselves. We don't know how severe is the level of trauma and how extensive the extent of abuse but it appears that both are deep and deeply damaging to a child's mind.

## SECTION-IX

### How Prevalent Is Social Sex Abuse

#### Of Children In Bangladesh?

1. The report was initiated not to study prevalence but to look at evidence which could stand up to scrutiny and be able to confidently say that sex abuse of children exists and at different locations. The objective was not quantitative collection of data on the number of abused but collect evidence of its presence, describe the nature of abuses that take place and finally point to any specific features relating to the issue.

2. However, questions may be asked as to the size of the problem. Critics may say that, its a lot of noise on a minor issue. Some may even say that its been carried out to besmirch the good name of the people. Others may point at the potentially damaging role of the report in frightening

parents and guardians that the problem may touch their life and make them wary of all family members and friends.

3. The reporting team wishes it could say that the problem is a minor one or that its scale is limited and that too to a particular socio-economic group or class. But that doesn't seem to be the case. In fact if anything, its bigger than we thought it was.

4. When we began our work, we chose four geographically dispersed areas to collect the case studies. Our objective was that this would make our case collection strategy more strong because of the limit set on the area. We knew that we were trying to achieve something tough because, sex abuse was an area which had not been probed before. We did have our anxious moments that we wouldn't get the required number which we thought would convince skeptics that the problem existed and at all levels. At the end of the study, we think, we needn't have worried at all.

5. Our reporting stages went like this. Choose the area, establish rapport, interact with children and adults, make a basic contact with the potential interviewees, whittle down the number to those willing to be open about their life experiences and not necessarily sexual life and then proceed towards a possible interview on the topic.

6. We also asked around about any incidents and if we did come across them, we would approach the person and if the person was willing to talk we would record it.

7. In some cases, children (and a few adults) approached us and told us about their experiences on their own. In a way, we were serving as "listeners". Talking to another seemed to relieve the person who has been abused considerably, even if the person has talked about it before.

8. So our probes can't provide a quantifiable number but we have the following information.

	Approached	Discussed topic	Admitted abuse
Urban male*	12	10	8
Urban female	30	22	17
Rural male	48	20	9
Rural female	30	22	16
.....	.....	.....	.....
	120	74	50

\* Ten cases were collected but not used in the urban boys sector because they were a bit vague and some of the information seemed suspect under scrutiny.

9. It shows that in more than half of those approached, the subjects had admitted abuse. A few cases were public knowledge but as the study progressed we began to find cases more easily though they still must be not too many. In case of rural segments, the investigator didn't hand over all the cases because of poor quality of information even though there were cases of admission of abuse there as well.

10. Even after taking into account the known cases, the number of people who were ready to admit sexual abuse is extremely high. Besides, we have mostly documented third and fourth degree abuse cases. In most people's mind a bit of touching and fondling is invariably not taken seriously. For example in many of the cases, as stated elsewhere, the sister's husband comes through as a habitual molester. There seems to be almost a social license for dulabhais to take

sexual advantage of the shalis, often described as second wife. whatever be the historical reason, it extremely high level.

11. As our study progressed and began to gain an insight into the dynamics of the abusive act and the social atmosphere under which it happens, we questioned and probed as many as we could and rarely came across individuals who hadn't experienced some form of abuse or another. The team Leader has asked about 150 persons-male and female-and found that an overwhelming number had been abused. Those who denied were not terribly convincing either. A common statement when questioned about child abuse is that-"Everyone has a little bit of experience when one is a child. Its nothing serious".

12. Many urban families (outside the report segments) that we talked to also that they were quite aware of the problem and they took precautions. this was in the form of not keeping male servants where there were growing age girls and chaperoned movements of the girls. However, our report shows that domestic aides are hardly the principal perpetrators and its mostly familiar people who abuse. Few precautions were taken to protect children against this circle of abusers. Once a person felt confident that their incidents would be kept confidential, the stories came down in bursts. If anything, its been a shock for the study team to find out how wide spomad it is.

13. Having worked with CEDC in general and commercially sex abused children in particular, we had focussed on the residential section of Dhaka where the economic statues was relatively less. We felt there should be better representation of the city so we shifted the focus to a mixed neighborhood with a much wider grange of income levels. This was the heart of Dhaka-Dhanmandi-Mohammedpur-and providing all kinds of population segments.

14. Since there are no links to any structured social arrangement and the area hardly resembles the kind of neighborhood which is found in other arts of Dhaka, we thought we would find difficulties but we found a surprising network of forgotten information, first among male adults and later females. And from there on to children. And they were ready to recall.

15. The case with which the cases were collected and the relatively little time that was required in report building does point to a need to talk about the problem by the victims and the high degree of frequency of incidents. The urban population also is severely damaged by the trauma of sexual abuse. But the middle or upper class members sometimes nowadays seek medical support including for the wrong reasons like convincing a severely abused incest victim to agree to a marriage of her abusive family's choice. The adults, who spoke to us are living testaments that sex abuse leaves permanent scars, some so deep that life is negatively affected forever.

16. In the end, the team got together and discussed how wide spomad the problem was based on their experience in doing this study. The team concluded a figure on the higher side but they have decided not to say so in order not to bias the report.

17. We would like to end this section with an anecdote. An adult female, who talked to one team member had denied that the problem existed when the study began, admitted at the concluding stage that she herself was a victim of abuse and was always tense about what would happen to her children of varying ages. She mentioned a meeting of women held in another country the year before which Bangladeshis had also attended. At that meeting about 35 women from different parts of the world were present. the facilitator asked, if there were any women in the room who hadn't experienced sexual abuse. She should speak up. Further more, those abused, also could deny their experience of abuse by speaking up if they wished. The response form the participants was total silence.



## SECTION-X

## Sound Of Silence : The Reasons Why?

1. Among all the abuses a child has to experience in a traditional society like Bangladesh, sexual abuse is the most difficult and complex. Not only is the experience harrowing in itself but the agony for the child doesn't end with the act of abuse. The forces that govern society pushes the child and often the victimized family into a silent corner, forcing them to not only deny themselves or the child, the right to access legal or social justice but often carry for ever the stigma of a victim. It is the victim who must bear the burden of guilt and not the victimizer. In many ways, a sexually abused child is abused twice, first by the perpetrator physically, and second by society, both psychologically and socially.
2. The matter becomes even more traumatic because the child and its family has to observe forced "silence" on the matter. The act of violence committed sometimes can't even be discussed (often even within the parameters of the family itself) because they might result in further aggravation and punishment through a variety of social ostracization means. This situation forces the victims, in individual and collective capacity to remain silent as a means of protection from further misery. Thus silence of the victim becomes a weapon of protection of the victimizer and the victims are forced to collude with this.
3. Sexual abuse is a difficult issue to deal with because sex in general is considered a taboo subject in Bangladesh. It's neither discussed openly nor dealt with honesty in personal relationships. A recent BBC radio documentary series for the Bengali audience which was edited by the Team Leader of this study, explored the issue of "duplicity" at length and concluded on the basis of statements by experts and individuals that sexual behavior and beliefs held about sexual behavior vastly vary.
4. Sexual behavior in this society is by no means different from other societies but people would prefer to believe otherwise and prefer not to take any preventive or mitigating action. Since this isn't discussed publicly the sexual behavior patterns in our society remains largely unstated.
5. However, the foggy area of sexual behavior has recently began to be explored. In the last few years, the possible impact of an AIDS pandemic has led to a few works on the issue and sexual behavior pattern of the people are being exposed and explored with some degree of accuracy, objectivity and "courage" by a number of development researchers.
6. But till date not much academic analysis of the subject has been carried out or if done so presented for public consumption. It probably means that there is either little social priority of the topic or that even the academic world is observing a silence of convenience on the topic. There are however some exceptions.
7. This lack of workable data on sexual issues is however not a Bangladesh specific phenomenon. A review of (Pattens III countries meaning countries still struggling with a low income and low GDP) of research report shows very little work in any country which is academic interest driven. Research on the topic has been programme driven-whether family planning or AIDS-in most developing countries and that too is something which is happening in the last few years only.

## Conflict Of Rights

8. Child abuse is different because while Family Planning or AIDS is basically a health issue, child abuse relates to socio-sexual health as well as legal rights of the child. These rights are

protected by the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) which has been universally accepted and is supposed to be implemented and monitored by all who have ratified the Convention. Thus the principal inspiration for protecting child rights under which sexual abuse prevention falls has come from efforts to implement the Child Rights Convention.

9. The implications, limitations and advantages of CRC have been discussed at many levels and in different fora. So child abuse, principal is a issue of tights and not just biological or psychological health though it certainly involves them and reflects physical and mental health concerns of children among others.

10. The critical issue of concern regarding CRC is that of enforceability or implementation. Evidence at the moment suggests that CRC is neither legally enforceable and the legal structure that exists in this country at the moment is not a child friendly/ aware one either. Agnes Rohfritsch and N. Sattar in their monograph titled "A critical Review of Judicial Institutions in Relation to the Rights of the Child" have shown in details how inadequate the legal justice delivery system is. "The concept of development is applied so as to justify collective rights as being above individual rights. ..The sole idea that children can have rights is probably very difficult to admit when this very same idea is already challenged when applied to adults." (page 108)

11. Given the situation for adults, violation of child rights is taking place without any serious kind of protest or preventive and mitigating action from any sector. Unless CRC itself is taken seriously, that is the legal system reformed to accommodate implementation of child rights, child abuse can't be mitigated in isolation through vertical programming.

12. Amongst the many violations of the rights of a child that are taking place, child labor has gained the greatest visibility. It seems to have captured the interest of the developed would, perhaps because commercial transaction plays such a major role in its everyday life. Most developing countries are experiencing child labor related issues with decisions often reached with great difficulty and probably reluctance. In fact, most countries respond to child labor mitigation efforts as a result of pressures exerted by commercial interests who turn philanthropic to off set low priced competition generated by hiring child labor in LDCs. But the interest of the developed countries and their agencies are certainly more in the commercially transacted sector.

13. That may be a reason why organizations including Unicef are involved in actions to prevent commercial sex abuse but globally have paid insufficient attention to the social sex abuse of children. The subject being a taboo one in many countries may also have contributed to its neglect in the field of development research.

14. It's also possible that in many cases, people or organizations tend to take a safe position on the matter, arguing that such matters should be left to families and police if necessary in case of rape to handle without external interventions by the state or society. The Government agencies in charge of children's "welfare" are also not that up front about this issue because admitting that there is large scale sexual abuse of children could be politically disconcerting and beyond their scope of activities. "We love our children. Why should we abuse them. Sexual abuse is a western problem." This was stated to the Team Leader of this report by a senior bureaucrat when asked if this was an issue they intended to address.

Ignoring the Issue : A safe approach

15. Obviously, the issue is one of safety. Governments find it dangerous to discuss sexual problems that confront society and more so topics like child abuse which could have potential

negative implications on the national psyche which in turn could turn into a sensitive political issue. The great resistance to the acceptance of a possible AIDS pandemic as a result of sexual behavior patterns is an excellent example of how, extremely urgent issues are sidelined to ensure "political comfort". It is important to recognize that there could be societies where public and private values are both strong kept apart and may exist in parallels or in contradiction of each other. Norms and practices aren't the same. Families and communities may flourish with great cohesiveness even where abuse is taking place. The important point therefore here is the Collective with a capital and not the individuals.

16. We observe that a basic pattern showing that the family and its social extensions are supreme and the intra-family relationship which exists within families aren't threatened by other social institutions. This is more so when and where alternative social structures are weak or haven't emerged at all. In such situations, one has to return to the families in the end for a variety of survival needs and that is why the family structure remains so powerful. So social exposure of sexual abuse of minor age members of the family by adults is hazardous to the family as a whole. It may lead to a variety of threats including whole scale humiliation of the family and perhaps the extended family and clan, bongsho, paribar etc. This would put in the line of fire the very institution which is the bedrock on which society is built upon. Threatened families and its numerous functions could also threaten the community as a whole. That is way on issues relating to sex, silence is not only a form of protection to the abuser but to the primary social unit of society as well. Silence is survival.

17. Exposure of such situations can disturb a family or the society in which the family is located very seriously. This is even so in urban areas where sexual abuse exists in greater variety of forms and silence takes on a new dimension. In the cities, the traditional social structures are also weak and the all consuming samaj and salish play a minor role allowing other value structures to rise and supplement traditional ones. But that doesn't mean that child sex abuse is no less a threat to the family and its value system. In fact there is sufficient space to live with deviant or repressive socio-sexual behavior and still not be ostracized in the urban areas.

18. Extraneous systems like the rural justice one is unnecessary here because families continue to treat the sanctity of the family almost equally though it may not be so with the extended family or clan groups as they turn to the formal justice system. "Apartment" societies can afford to sustain a much higher degree of deviations, in all the sectors, it appears. It also prefers not to disturb the status quo like the rural counterparts. The boundary line in urban society could be rape which is no longer as socially acceptable as in the rural areas. But even here, we came across a surprisingly high number of forced sex incidence amongst the economically low status families but whether this is a carry over from rural values isn't known but instances of its presence do exist at a high level. Its also possible that their unacceptability is indicated by the lesser number of rapes noted. But the instead of an indicator could very well be under reporting. Because there is so few reports we are assuming a value transition. In fact, our report indicates a higher incidence than rural areas but substantially lower reporting. The absolute numbers of cases is a matter of investigation as is the proportion of incidences to population.

#### Values at Risk : Families and the State

19. It could be assumed that, members of the middle and upper class, who are increasingly becoming the part of a different value system and is obviously not going to rely on traditional structures alone, may refuse to accept their child being abused. Economic freedom may allow a mother to leave a husband and social pressure points, may allow a woman to deny the demands

of a family which has exploited her. Perhaps, she/he has greater choice to exercise in the 'civilized' urban space.

20. But this isn't the case. We could record no instance of resistance to sexual abuse. Families may take some actions but because the subject is subsumed in silence and not enough is known and there are no social protection system, people keep quite about the matter, hoping it will run away and not cause a ripple. They also run away if given a chance.

21. Nothing happens in the urban areas which could stigmatize sexual abuse and insist on actions. The urban family needs as much protection as the rural family does from its network. In the urban areas, child abuse is made convenient by the apathy which such scenarios produce. Our case studies didn't produce a single example of protest. Interventions occurred only when the abuser came from a lower class. The family did tolerate abuse in other cases. So sex abuse of children continues to have basically the same manifestations in both rural and urban scenarios.

22. Because sexual abuse of children involves adults in most cases, the veil of silence has been weaved by their own hands at the cost of the rights of the child. Power belongs to them, be it family, clan, community, society and ultimately state power. Resistance to its exposure also comes from them. The possible fall out and potential damage possibility would also be highest for them. Should this issue become known as a far reaching if not nearly universal phenomenon, the entire adult society, male and female could be under a cloud of suspicion thus shattering the values on which a traditional society is built. The stakes stacked against breaking the silence on this subject is therefore very high.

23. To choose between silence and exposing child sex abuse which will mean risking massive social review including accepting the fact that one is part of society which tolerates and through its communication structures protects abusers is probably too much to ask from the powerful. To accept this fact is to lose face and reform some aspects of the definition of the Bengali society. And that too is too high a price to be paid for acts which, if real, has existed for a long time and now through exposure can only bring shame but not relief. After all, it may be asked that, having found some shards of evidence of child abuse, what are we doing to end it?. Can we do anything? If we can't don much about it, why are we raising this terrible" issue accept to bring shame on Bengali society as a whole?.

24. Sexuality, family and the state are connected by a number of strings and attachments, some visible, some not so. The common thread is that of domination, a theme whose echo is constantly found in every part of the country. The notion of the state as it exists in contemporary times, is still that of one which is based on coercion through a variety of socio-political institutions including accessing resources and information, structural violence and denial of access to rights to the majority.

25. For the child, its more so. The CRC is an intervention on behalf of the child and has been accepted by the Government of Bangladesh as part of a global movement to earn commitments on its behalf. But in the post CRC era, there is little evidence to show that the Governments have been able to display a fundamental change in ensuring and implementing policies which will dramatically and positively improve the life of the child. the CRC is in contradiction with the basic behavioral pattern of society which in turn influences the nature of the state.

26. All bias may ultimately be located within the belief structure of the state. The state does the bidding of those who define its meaning. Empirical fails to show a positive, child friendly society in this country although there have been a number of child friendly initiatives. They are mostly in the realms of public health and education though in case of the latter, the initiatives may be considered less than substantive.

27. The failure to generate funds for children, allocate resources and improve the state of the life of the child are all evidences of a non pro-child state. The matter is more tragic because successive Governments are willing to sign any documents and pull many themes into legal codes and system but the implementation status remains stagenant. If, to achieve such goals, a social revolution is necessary, than nothing short of a revolution will do to ensure a child friendly state. But nobody is prescribing a revolution here. Far from it, the Governments haven't even paid much attention to the reformist moves to which they had committed themselves to.

28. For the powers that be, its evident that the status quo will not be disturbed by poverty, as history has shown. People have accepted extreme poverty as a way of life and it no longer generates social unrest. Social inequity in other forms especially repression of women, despite national and international pressure moves at a literally "killingly" low pace. Idealized notions of sexual behavior, which is one of the prime psychological driving force of inter-personal relationships, provides the emotional security blanket to society and state as the ideal which guarantees the existence of all other imagined equities. Sexuality also becomes the imagined ideal. That's why deviant behavior is either denied of its existence or marginalized. In some cases, its argued that such abuses don't have as much a negative impact as people claim it has. In other words, nothing is allowed to interfere with the imagined ideal which holds the state together through families and communities.

29. These falsities, because global and local data shows massive negative impact on behavior and the level of denial is too absurd to be taken seriously. Given the high rate of case studies in proportion to the total number approached at any point of time, it can only indicate a deliberate wish to refuse to ace the facts. While at the collective level, there are social and political pressure points, the matter at an individual level is also very sensitive. To accept would be to recognize vulnerability and the shame of inadequacy of the family to deal with the problem. The collusion of many such forces, force silence into an overreaching weapon which becomes a deadly instrument of torture of young children, generation after generation. This is more true in case of girls than boys.

30. The recent studies and investigations on the sexual behavior of young people show a marked variation from the kind of behavior people of rural people are no less deferent. Although creative writers and artist have written about sexuality at young age, the tendency has been to deny that any such collective behavior patterns exists. The recent refusal of governments all over and Bangladesh in particular to accept the existence of AIDS which would indicate that promiscuousness is very much present is a classic example. It's not disease control which is at stake but in all probability social control. The could not be defined in traditional terms of control and obeisant relationships anymore if sex would become a non taboo. Honesty about dealing with sexual behavior is therefore socially too dangerous

31. Its from that source that denial about child abuse also emerges. Children as individuals, children tugging at the leash of irrational control, children participating in perceived adult activities, children who can accuse adults of numerous exploitation's are all examples of possible and threatened instability. Its in the interest of the adults who control state power that silence is observed.

## APPENDIX

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### Introduction to the Case Studies

1. This reports stands or falls on the case studies which were collected over period of three months, though not in one go. Initially, there was some concern that the team would not be able to collect the number of case studies that had been set as a target. There was apprehension that we would not be able to remove the veil of secrecy that exists in society in relation to the topic and reach the victims. This prove to be a false fear. In the end, the main issue was not the number of case studies collected but the quality of the case studies and their accurate level of representation.

2. There was a dynamics in operation, as is always the case, within the case study collection team. But, because of the empathy that was naturally generated, this dynamics existed between the abused and the investigators too. so, the case studies emerged as a result of that inter-action. The collection is not the credit of the investigators alone. Its a joint effort between two participants, the victim and the listener, which made the collection possible.

3. One mustn't forget that the investigators are individuals coming from different fields with divergent backgrounds and value systems. Their mental state accompanied them during case collection, during writing down the case studies and while making observations and notes. And child sexual abuse is a very sensitive topic which perhaps influenced their style of reporting. Its not a topic like calculating agricultural inputs, it deals with the most vulnerable of all human beings, children. It is a highly emotional subject and try as one might, remaining a neutral note taker is a very difficult task. But other "value judgements" sometimes crept in.

4. To cite an example, rural boys engaged in gay sex or bestiality displayed no guilt or shame which to our investigator, who also comes from a rural background, was a bit of a shock. After taking the cases down, he did spend some time trying to convince them to give up their "perverted ways." He mentioned his effort in the report as well. Such responses occurred in other sectors as well, so the parts where the investigators became "reformers' were diminished or taken out.

5. As we sifted through the cases at the final stage of the report writing, we found that the number of cases had run well over fifty, in fact were close to hundred. But some of them were partially completed, some sounded not fully credible to the investigators and some had other problems. So it was decided that any case that didn't make the entire team feel absolutely confident about its credibility would have to be excluded. In the end, we decided to limit the number of cases to fifty and that's how the number stood. It was fourteen (14) more than we had hoped to get and about forty (40) less than what we had actually collected. As there were more cases in the rural areas and less so in the urban areas, we struck a proportionate balance between the number of cases collected in the sectors and those included in the report.

6. There were many cases of adult recalls, both in urban and rural areas. Initially, there was an element of insurance in collecting them to reach the required number of cases which would justify building up a case but it later disappeared as the number of cases mounted. These were perfectly valid cases and they are preserved but not all were used. However, in the urban segments, they have even used and we felt that the nature of the experience described in the cases justified inclusion. The trauma and the subsequent impact on a child were of a particular type-both dealing with incestuous or semi-incestuous relationships-which we thought deserved special attention.

7. The cases were all collected in Bangla, and most of the case studies have been reported and written in direct speech and in a language with no holds barred. Many will sound sexually explicit as they record actual conversations. They have been toned down in the translation.

8. Again, regarding language, the investigator used colloquial language of the collection area and of the victims in preparing her cases in the urban girls segment. This provided a sense of the immediate and expresses the atmosphere of violence in which the urban poor survive which actually adds to the strength of the reported cases.

9. So when the cases reached the translators group, they had to wrestle with differing type of stales and language patterns of each segment though dealing with the same topic. This wasn't an easy task. They were also given the case studies while report preparation was already in motion. The report was completed by the team using the cases directly from the original Bangla. So the report was written based on their own translation of the cases. Since they themselves had done the interviews they felt more comfortable with this process. So the translations in the Case Study Section may differ somewhat from the language of the cases in the report. This is mentioned just to prevent any possibility of confusion regarding the cases. The contents are the same.

10. While the cases, all clustered together in this section are more clinical in approach and sometimes indirect in language, the references and quotes from the cases in the report are more direct, perhaps more "emotional". But the content is standardised and the team went through each study to make sure that linguistic inconsistency didn't distort facts or that nothing got lost through the cracks of nuances which could be noticed only by the specific interviewer of that case and perhaps missed by others.

Breaking-11 Point-2

11. The most difficult work was to make sure that confidentiality of victims were as impregnable as possible. The investigators had to provide original names, addresses and family details so that they could be checked out. The team cross checked a sample in each segment to ensure authenticity. But once that was done, efforts were on to protect the identify of the victims.

12. The investigators in some cases had already changed the names when the cases were submitted as drafts and provided the real names separately. So when the draft typing was completed, the names were already changed. But then we realised that a number of details were still there, using which an energetic investigator could trace the victims if such a person wanted to. To ensure double protection, all the names - of victims and victimisers and related persons-were hand checked and changed and typed in the final report. We also took out names of the parents, specific family details and so on because they could provide the identity of the victims. Besides, these information didn't from a part of our analytical frame. However they are preserved with us and most probably, after consultation with the sponsor or the report will be destroyed soon. that's the only way to ensure absolute protection and confidentiality.

13. A number of terms have been used because the translations don't convey the sense even if they do the meaning of the word. A short glossary has therefore been enclosed.

## CASE STUDIES

Case study: Rural Girl. 1

Sufia Akter

Age When abused. 12 years.

Background : Sufia comes from an affluent rural family and spends her time helping her mother with household chores, chatting with her friends or playing board games. Sufia's family owns a television set. She is extremely fond of TV programmes especially those on film songs and films/drama on TV. She also likes to watch Hindi films on VCR and didn't consider the movie heroines as her role models.

About her family and her relationship with other members, she stated that her elder brother was very fond of her. She however feels very uncomfortable with the lewd jokes made by an elder brother-in-law (sister's husband). She clearly identified a relative by marriage (elder brother's wife's brother) as a bad person. Sufia by passed questions on romances and such stuff in films.

She is aware of the sexual pressures young girls face early in life. She mentioned the case of a young girl, no more than 8-9 years, who comes to their house to collect water from the tubewell. When she is there, the girl is constantly harassed by a young boy who sings songs directed towards the young girl which troubles her (the girl a lot. Sufia confessed that she wished she could do something about it but she is scared and unable to do anything. since the boy came from a well-to-do family he could create problems for her and the girl.

personal experience : Sufia told her own personal experience of sexual abuse which occurred when she was 12 years old. Her sister-in-law's brother Ratan, whom she had earlier identified as a "bad person" would frequently visits their household. His visits were not questioned or seen otherwise because he was a relative and through his pleasant behaviour, he became almost a part of the family. He also became close to her. The initial overtures were touching her which would be followed by small gifts. It was embarrassing but not intimidating.

Gradually the boy would come when others were not present at home. It coincided with the absence of elders. On one occasion when the entire house was empty, he enticed her into a room, and then promptly bolted the door and started to kiss me. At first I resisted but slowly I gave in. After sometime he let me go." Thus began their phases of physical relationship.

The man would come many times to the house when nobody was there. When Sufia objected to the sex sessions, he would threaten her, saying that he would tell others about it. Three months after the affair started she became pregnant. Her mother came to know recognizing the symptoms. She was 12 years 7 months old then.

Her mother told her father who arranged to take her to the Rhana hospital at night hiding from prying eyes where she had an abortion. the boy was then asked to marry her but he bluntly refused, and further more, insinuated that the pregnancy was not of his doing.

" I had thought that he was not admitting his involvement because he was scared. That he would soon take responsibility and declare that he would marry me. But when he went on refusing. I became very depressed and would sit and weep. I didn't want to face anybody. I contemplated suicide more than once. Mother has shouted at me and beat me up so many times because of it all".

Despite all efforts to keep this incident a secret, rumours have started which point the accusing finger at Sufia. They have had its negative impact on the girl and the family. She has become a



"kharap meya" (bad girl) in many people's eyes. Her marriage proposals break off soon after arrival. "I don't know how it happens but it does. Somebody informs the prospective boy's family. My bhabi used to love me a lot but now she can't stand me and shouts at me all the time. Even my sisters are angry with me. But that I am not at all responsible for the incident is something nobody seems to understand."

" I am left without any marriage prospects. I keep thinking of the incident all the time. I am still in an agonized state of mind. I don't go out of the house very often. I don't mix much with others either. I keep thinking that everyone in the village knows about the incident. And I feel the shame."

Observations : In Sufia's case, her father's request to the influential people to keep the incident a secret has been partially successful. This has let her family escape total ostracism. However, it doesn't appear to be enough to ensure her a marriage or allow her a normal life. The perpetrator in Sufia's case was a young man aged 20/21 years.

#### Case Study : Rural Girl. 2

Lata

Age When Abused. 11 + Years

Background : Lata now studies in Class VII. Her two younger sisters are in primary school. The only brother is not of school going age. She is 13 years old now. Lata's family own a television set but her mother does not allow her to watch all the programmes. She has not been to the cinema hall but has seen films on TV. She likes romantic scenes but does not desire to be like the film stars. She is a very good looking girl and has two close friends. She is liked by everybody but specially by her father and one of her younger paternal uncles. Lata is not good in her studies for which her mother scolds her.

Personal experience : Lata's personal experience of sexual harassment occurred when she was about 11-years old. Lata would frequently visit her paternal aunt's house which was in an adjacent village. One late afternoon, while on a visit there, Lata wanted to return home but her aunt forbade her, saying that the road was deserted and she could be in danger. But Lata didn't heed the warning and started for home.

But while she was on her way home, she was physically grabbed by an elderly man who with one hand fondled her breasts and with the other tried to pain her to his body. Lata, somehow managed to escape from his arms and ran back crying to her aunt's house. Her cousins, on bearing there story and seeing her weep went chasing the abuser. They caught him as he was trying to slink away and then brought him back to their house and tied him to a tree.

But when Lata's uncle came home and saw the scene with the man tied to a tree, he asked his sons to let the man go. He said that people were asking why a man was kept tied up like that and such questions could lead to queries and ultimately cause embarrassment to the girl and the family. So the abuser begged forgiveness from Lata's uncle and Lata, promised never to do anything like this again and was let go.

Although she was not involved in a penetrative rape situation, she has become traumatized. The above incident has put into Lata's mind an ingrained fear of going out and she is generally seared of males. Village people in the knowledge of the incident have not blamed her at all since, her accuser was already branded as a "bad man". Besides, her family status, which is very high has protected her.

Observations : Lata felt very embarrassed to speak of her experience despite the fact that the fault was not hers. Lata's mother, knowing the social scene would not approve of Lata's speaking about it. Salish Alone can't punish a man if there are forces supporting an abuser. In this particular case the man was from another village and the salish jurisdiction would not probably extend there.

Case Study : Rural Girl. 3

Falguni

Age When Abused. 12 Years

Background : Falguni's eldest sister is a housewife and has married into a well to do family. One brother is in business, a sister is a teacher in the primary school, the second brother is an HSC (High School leaving Certificate) examinee. Another sister is a school drop-out since studies do not interest her. Falguni has studied upto Class VI and has dropped out though her parents try to persuaded her to go back to school. Her businessman brother is based in Dhaka which allows Falguni to frequently visit the capital city. Her two close friends are in the village and Falguni passed most of her time with them. Her friends, however, are still going to school. Being the youngest child. Falguni is the pet of her eldest brother but she does not approve of the sexually suggestive jokes cracked by her brothers-in-law. Their house in the village has a guest room for visitors and TV for entertainment.

Personal Experience : She was about 12 years old when the incident took place. On that day, she had accompanied her father to the market. After the shopping was over, Falguni's father was held back on some other work and he decided that Falguni should return home by herself. The route home meant walking past a large pond. This place was rather desolate and rowdy young men would sit there and make bawdy comments about the ladies or girls who walked past them. Her father felt that since she was so young there was no possibility of trouble. Falguni also says. "I was young so nobody had ever said anything to me. Plus nothing of that sort had ever happened to anyone in the village."

But on her way back Falguni saw a couple of boys sitting near the pond. They called her but she didn't move. Suddenly one of the boys jumped up and grabbed her. Then both the boys dragged her under a tree and raped her. They left her unconscious and bleeding.

A village peddler passing by noticed her condition and brought her home. She was given proper medical treatment. Her father made a huge effort to ensure that the news of this unfortunate incident did not spread in the village. Falguni's brother came back from Dhaka and started searching for the two culprits. These boys had in the meantime fled away to another village. Falguni's elder brother asked his father to lodge a complaint with the police, which he declined to do so fearing undue publicity. The abusers have a lot of influence in the village. In the meantime the fathers of the culprits wanted to come to an amicable settlement on the issue which Falguni's father and brother have both flatly refused.

After this episode, Falguni was very unwell both physically and mentally. She had lost a lot of blood. Her depression at one stage was so acute that she even considered committing suicide. Presently she has become a recluse and refuses to meet people. Those who know of the incident approach her and try to talk about the incident which disturbs her a lot. She stays in Dhaka most of the time and even there hasn't got admitted to any school. She passes her time watching television and video tapes in an effort to distract herself from the traumatic memories of the incident.

The back-lash of Falguni's incident has besmirched the honour of the family. Her elder sister's wedding proposals are broken off since the guardians of the boys are under the misconception that the girl who was raped, is being offered for marriage. Many people now ask her father what made him send her alone but her father says its too late to answer such questions. He blames himself now for all that's happened.

Observation : Falguni is still in a state of trauma and she harboured a desire to take revenge on the culprits. Three days were needed to coax Falguni to speak and that too on the condition that her parents would not know that she had talked to the Investigator.

#### Case Study : Rural Girl. 4

Shimu

Age When Abused. 8 Years

Background : Shimu's elder brother studies in Class IX. Shimu studies in Class VI. Shimu's two younger brother & sister attend primary school. Shimu's family own a battery-operated television set, since they don't have electric power connection. Shimu is allowed to watch only the "good" programmes on TV. Shimu has seen moves on television and enjoys scenes of violence and songs. She however does not wish to be like the heroines. Shimu does not have to share her bedroom with any visitor, since they have a separate room for guests. She is loved by everyone, specially her father. She used to be particularly loved by a certain uncle but not now. She found the uncle's way of expressing his affection very embarrassing and uncomfortable. Shimu's concept of "bad" is when boys tease young girls and make vulgar comments. She also disapproves of young boys in her village who have long hair and smoke. Shimu has never been teased by the boys of her village, probably because of her father's influential position in society.

Personal Experience : Shimu admitted that she had experienced an abusive situation at the age of eight. She used to be very fond of her uncle, Rahman (a cousin of her father) who used to often visit them. This Rahman uncle was particularly fond of Shimu but he is not so close now. She stays away from her uncle and his affections. In fact she is seared of him. Her mother has also said that the uncle is a nasty person. All the sisters avoid the uncle now.

The girl in the village are harassed on their way to school by the local rowdies. They stand on the road and make obscene remarks. They show off and try to draw attention to themselves. But they are careful when Shimu is around because the family is very powerful. She is not afraid of the rowdy boys but she won't try to say anything and anger them either.

When asked why she has developed negative feelings towards her uncle. Shimu narrated her experience. She was only eight years old then. "We were all very fond of him. One afternoon my uncle told me that he would give me a bath. He said, "To have a bath you will have to take off your clothes." After making me naked he began to rub me all over. He even touched my breasts and told me. "I will drink your milk." "Then he held me tight and started to caress me and also manipulate my private parts. As it was hurting I started to cry. Hearing my voice my mother rushed there. even then my uncle hadn't left me. He kept holding me. But I was rescued by my mother who took me elsewhere and gave me a thorough bath. She also asked me what had happened. Then I told her everything. My mother told me not to go near the uncle again. She also warned me not to share my secret with others."

"I have told no one about the incident except my sister and that to prevent her from experiencing anything like what I have. Even my mother doesn't know that I have told her. That day I had wept because I was hurt but I now know that my uncle is a bad person. But he still does come though

not so frequently to our house but we don't go near him. Mother does not welcome him like she used to earlier either.

My mother has explained many things to me after that. She has told me that as a young girl I shouldn't have baths with boys. I shouldn't play with them either. I should go less in front of older men. She has also warned me not to tell the incident to anyone. Otherwise people will call me a kharap meye (bad girl).

Observation : Shimu was afraid to talk about it since her parents would not approve of her discussing it. She is still very young and naive and it took the interviewer quite some time to convince her of the seriousness of the matter. Although it is obvious that the uncle had ill intentions, Shimu's mother chose to draw her children away from him rather than tell the father and do something which would punish him.

#### Case Study : Rural Girl. 5

Shaila

Age When Abused. 12 Years

Background : Shaila's elder sister is married, 3 younger brothers and 2 sisters are school going. Shaila studies in Class IX. Shaila is involved in extra-curricular activities of her school and has won several prizes in acting and recitation. She comes from a respectable and well to do family. Her uncle owns a television which Shaila often enjoys watching.

Experience : Shaila is a good student and as such is liked by most people but especially by her father. They have a Radio and cassette payer to which she listens. Her paternal uncle has a T.V. which she likes to watch, particularly the movies. She enjoys watching romantic scenes but doesn't think she would want to imitate them in real life. She is a keen participant in both indoor and outdoor activities. She has won prizes at school for her extra-curricular activities.

Talking about romance in real life she narrated how some of the girls were teased by boys standing on the road. There was one particular incident which she vividly remembers. One boy, who was enamoured of a particular girl, one day suddenly grabbed this girl and told her "I can't live without you." Than he ran away. The girl who had to experience this was horrified but could do little about it.

But Shaila herself has an experience to tell of her own life. When she was 12 years old and a student of Class VI, she had an unpleasant encounter with a distant cousin Babul aged around 26-27 years. The cousin would often visit their house and one day expressed his undying love for her. Shaila refused him at first. She and many others in her class actually looked down upon those girls who had relationships with boys. So naturally she didn't take it too kindly.

One day the whole family went on a walking trip along the river but Shaila had stayed at home. Suddenly the "cousin Babul" appeared on the scene. Shaila didn't know that he had stayed back. Her mother was also next door chatting with the neighbors. When Shaila entered the boys room to tidy it up he found him sitting there. Shaila had gone into the room assuming that her cousin had gone out with his friends. But before she could leave, he grabbed her and began kiss and fondle her.

"He told me that unless I agreed to marry him that very moment, he would kidnap me. But I forced myself away from his embrace and ran to safety. I reached my room and began to cry. But I never told anyone about the incident except to a friend of mine. Even my parents don't know.

The boy left the house that very day. But he has come to our house many times after that though I don't go in front of him anymore.

That day after the incident, I washed my face again and again. I wept a lot. I suffer even now because I can't share the pain of the incident with anyone else. I could have him thrown out of the house but I didn't. After that I can't trust any boy. I feel uneasy whenever I am in their presence." Her friend had suggested that Shaila ought to have slapped her cousin.

Observation : Shaila basically being a "good girl" felt extremely shy in relating her experience. She confided only after being assured that her identity would be kept a secret. She was terrified the her parents would find out. So she gave her interview away from home in another place. She is quite traumatized. A full penetrative rape would have damaged her psyche seriously.

#### Case Study : Rural Girl. 6

Shiuli

Age When Abused. 11 Years

Background : Shiuli's elder sisters are all housewives; one elder brother is a shop-owner and married. Her younger brother is an apprentice in a shop. Shiuli studied up to class 4 and then dropped out. Shiuli is good looking and likes to dress-up. Their financial status is weak but they do have a radio set. She is not too keen on TV but has seen movies on her visits to Dhaka. Shiuli has two close friends. She loves to spend her time with them. She is generally liked by her paternal uncles and brother-in-law.

Personal Experience : One being questioned, whether she was aware of any incident where a boy had harassed a girl, Shiuli stated that she was aware of one of her friends being harassed, Shiuli also told two young girls who used to live in her village, had to flee to save themselves from the pursuit of a village "hero" who along with his friends made life miserable for them. The girls were fatherless and so were residing with their mother in the house of their uncle. The boy would often harass the girls on their way to and from school. Since the older girl was a good student she refused to entertain advances from this hoodlum. This angered the boy and his friends and so they began throwing stones at their house. When matters became uncontrollable they were compelled to leave the village. The girl finally passed the school S.C Exam, but did not stay in the same village. The boy is still there and despite Shiuli's contempt for him, she does not dare to say anything in case she also has to face the same consequence.

When asked about herself she confessed that at the age of 11, she somehow got friendly with a good looking boy Azim from the village, After the initial overtures of romance, Shiuli, who was at that time very young, acceded, despite her elder sister-in-law's caution that it could lead to problems for her. The boy would give her gifts and he would go out with him.

"My bhabhi use to caution me but I didn't listen. She would say that I was too young to romance. I was 11 years then. One day, he grabbed me and started to fondle which I resisted and came away in anger. But he begged forgiveness and promise that it would never happen again. And we started to go around again.

"One day while walking by the riverside, it became evening, Azim again held me and then started to fondle and kiss. Then he forcibly undressed me and abused me. I was very hurt and in pain. I was weeping loudly. When I came back bhabhi suspected something and asked me what had happened. I told her everything. I never went out with him again. I still sometimes see him on the street but I avoid him and never talk to him. I shall never forget my horror. My bhabhi approached

the boy to marry me but he refused. He told her that I was too young to manage his household. I didn't expect that. I had thought that was just nervous about it all and would soon agree. But within 2/3 months of the incident, he got married to someone else. "The boy's refusal has had an adverse effect on Shiuli's mind. She developed an aversion towards boys and feels guilty at the same time. Suicidal thoughts have also crossed her mind but her sister-in-law has deterred her though she adds, "I told you so." She regrets not listening to her bhabhi. The boy's was essentially a bad guy who would pursue any good looking girl. Shiuli says She has returned to his old ways again. Relative secrecy of the whole episode has prevented any social backlash.

Observation: The boy's father is not influential but the boy's "Mastan" connections have ensured his freedom of movement. Shiuli's sister-in-law, Sakhina, aged 27 years and mother of a son and a daughter is aware of Shiuli's experience. She felt that reporting of the incident to others, Shaalish etc. would have led to further exposure and prospects of Shiuli's marriage would have become bleak. Sakhina strongly felt that in most cases, only the girls are held responsible whilst the boys go scot-free. This is an extremely unfair state of social attitude, and felt that the boys should also be accountable.

#### Case Study: Rural Girl.7

Khaleda

Age When Abused.13+Years

Background: Khaleda comes from an impoverished family. Khaleda's mother supplements the family income by working as a domestic help in neighboring better off households. Khaleda's elder brother delivers meals to different shops in and around the village. One younger brother studies in class 11, The other brother being very young stay at home. They live in a house provided by an NGO. The poverty is obvious but still they do own a Radio.

Personal experience: "I was then very small. We were very poor. So my parents sent me to Dhaka to stay with my uncle. I used to work in their house. And I used to go and watch TV and VCR at house of my neighbour's in the flat complex where my uncle stayed."

Rumi, the neighbour's grandson was about 25-26 years old. He used to call me over to his place whenever it was empty and show me pornographers. Because I was so fond of TV, I would go there even leaving behind household chores. One day, during one of the video sessions, he said he loved me. That he won't be able to live without me. He wanted to marry me, Initially I was reluctant to enter into any relationship with him but I later given. The servant girls who used to stay nearby would also encourage me. I used to go out with him regularly. Rumi would often buy me gifts. and he would often hold caress me"

"One day, while we were watching a movie on the VCR he suddenly grabbed me and started to kiss and fondle me with ferocity. I resisted but he was massaging me in such a manner that I lost control and gave in. After it was over I cried and wept after coming home and didn't see him for sometime. I was too scared to tell anyone about what had happened."

"After a few days the boy again called me. When I refused, he said that he would tell others all about it and also throw my uncle out of his flat. So I started to go to the boy out of fear. Then it became a regular affair."

"My aunt suspected something was on and so one day when I was in his room, She and my uncle entered and found us there. My uncle and the boy's grandfather together got us married that very night, Rumi disappeared that night and my uncle sent me home the next day."

"Rumi never took any interest in the marriage. The grandfather told my uncle not to bring me back to the city and my uncle also changed their house. Meanwhile, I was divorced with a payment of Taka 5000 from the boy."

"Out here, I would stay at home most of the time. One day, two years after my divorce, I met a friend of my brother, his name is Mannan. We slowly became close. We would go for walks near the river. I was 14 years old. We developed a relationship and I even went to see a movie with him. But I never had any physical intimacy with him."

"One night the boy Mannan came to our house and while we were chatting, he suddenly got up, closed the door and the next thing was pressing me down to the bed. Meanwhile, an old lady next door, who must have seen him enter the room knocked on the door. I quickly hid him under the mosquito net. But the lady knew what was on and discovered the boy under the net. She made a scene and many people came and there was such a situation that I was married again that night, the second time in my life. The boy promised to come back in two days and marry me with proper ceremony. But he never came back."

"I later came to know that the boy was unaware of my first marriage, On the night of my second marriage, a relative of ours had gone to his parents and told him about my past. That I was a nostho meye."

"The boy wants to divorce me. The salish has declared me to be a noshto meye. They say, if I'm not a bad girl, why should two such incidents happen to me. The boy wanted to give me TK 5000 and end the marriage but I don't want that. I want the marriage to survive. When my first marriage broke up I was a small child but now I understand much. I will not let go of the boy easily."

"Nobody understands my position, my feelings, No relative of ours visit us, nobody talks to me, My brother and sister can't go out of the house people call me a bad girl in my face, I want to kill myself but my mother watches me all the time."

Khaleda's mother Halima Begum said that her daughter was being victimized. She feels that her daughter is not the only person responsible for the incident. "The boy's family is powerful and they have the salish in their favour but what is my daughter's fault?". We live in great difficulties and can't even go out of the house".

Observations : Investigator visited Khaleda's house many time before she agreed to talk although it was a well known affair, She found it difficult talk about it, Khaleda's incident in Dhaka was at an impressionable and tender age and she was practically forced to have sex. Her second relationship, that in the village, was a deliberate one since she was convinced that she was in love with the boy and it would end in marriage. The first incident also took place initially through declarations of love by Rumi to Khaleda. The first marriage of Khaleda was solemnized by a Mollah while her second one, in the village, was a registered one. Both are illegal since she is underaged. The second marriage is in the process of breaking up. If it does the family may leave the village, For khaleda the hopes of the marriage surviving is indeed bleak.

Case Study : Rural Girl. 8

Shwapna

Age When Abused. 11 Years

Background : Shwapna, coming from a poverty stricken family lost her parents at a very early age. Her elder brother, a day-labourer, could barely support Shwapna and her sister. Her other brother was an apprentice in a shop. An orphan, Shwapna is loved by most people of the village.

Personal Experience : At the age of 11, her paternal cousin Shoeb seemed to be very affectionate towards Shwapna. Every one thought it to be natural and genuine affection of one cousin for an orphan cousin. The ulterior motive of the cousin was not suspected at all which gave him free access to the household and more so to Shwapna.

"I was then about 11 years old. One night this cousin entered the room and began to tell me words of love. Then he held me and stated caressing, pushing me down to the bed and stating to undress me. He then told me that if I resisted he would kill me. I was so scared that I went Along and afterwards suffered from great pain. A few days later I had my periods. I didn't tell others but my aunt (chahchi) knew about it."

"My cousin used to give me a lot of gifts and would come to my room almost every night. He would also tell me that he would marry me one day. At that time I didn't know that one became pregnant if one had sex. The first signs appeared when went to visit my Ruma khala's (maternal aunt's) place and started vomiting there. But even I didn't know. But my chachi started to talk about the changes in the body. When my chachi (paternal aunt) asked me, I told her everything. Learning that I had said it all, my cousin ran away. My aunt wanted to take me to the thana hospital for an abortion but the people stopped this and sent me to my maternal grandfather's place instead. The salish tried to get me married to my cousin but he ran away. He was fined Take 40.000 but the family paid only 10,000. Because I was already 6 months pregnant, an abortion wasn't considered safe. I had a baby which I left behind in Dhaka clinic."

When I am Rumane I feel terrible and suffer in silence. So I try to keep myself busy with household chores. Perhaps that's how I will spend the rest of my life. The boy has married but there are no marriage proposals for me. I am known as a bad girl. People don't blame me fully but still say that I should told my chahchi before it went too far. Actually, whenever a proposal comes, somebody goes and tells it to the boys' family and the marriage prospect disappears. Mothers don't let their younger girls mix with me. I don't go out of the house. I have no friends.

"The matter even came up during the marriage of my brother. But because the marriage was within the family, it went ahead. I never visit my brother's in laws family. But that cousin of my mine is very happy. He is already a respected man of the community."

Observation : Shwapna lives with her brother's family now. She is always despondent and fully aware that she may never get married. Within the family, she is made to feel "cheap and dirty", more so by her elder brother's wife. Her brother still retains affection for her but there is nothing that he can do to change the situation. She refuses to discuss this tragedy of her life realizing that the backlash might adversely affect the family.

Ruma : A relative Talks About Shwapna :

Background : When Ruma, a housewife was asked whether she knew about any incidents of female oppression, she was candid enough to admit and relate the experience of her niece, Shwapna who was aged 11 at the time when she was abused.

Shwapna, was the daughter of Ruma's elder sister. She had lost her parents at a very early stage of her life. A cousin (paternal) of Shwapna was affectionate towards her and the family felt that the cousin was being nice to a poor orphaned relative.



She said that her cousin, would enter the home at night and have sex with her niece. He would do it by threatening her. She was 11 years old then. One day while visiting her aunt's place. She got up and started to vomit." I didn't know that she had already had her period. A few days later, what I had dreaded came true. Her paternal aunt came with her and said that Shwapna was a bad girl and she was leaving her with me. "She is now pregnant, You do what you can."

"We then asked Shwapna who was the father of the child and she mentioned the name of her paternal cousin. His mother denied this, saying that her son could do no such thing. When we went to ask the boy, we found that he had already run away. The boy's mother had actually tried to get her an abortion but the villagers had opposed it."

"A salish was held but when the boy's family found out that there was a plan to get them married, they hid the boy. Subsequently, the salish sat without the boy and decided to fine the boy Taka 15,000 for the abortion and 25,000 for the marriage. By then Shwapna was six months pregnant. But no abortion took place because of her advanced state and she had a child in a Dhaka clinic. Leaving the child behind Shwapna came back to the village. She has been paid a total of taka 10,000 only and no more. A few days ago, the boy got married but Shwapna did not. Nobody wants to marry her."

"If such a thing happens to my daughter, I will keep it a secret. Its because the events got known that Shwapna isn't getting married now. The boy is married and has a family now. Slowly, people will forget it all but nobody will forget the unmarried Shwapna. The salish should have been more strict. They should have taken some action instead of just fining the family. Money can't solve all the problems. They should have insisted on the marriage. Now the salish has made a her a bad girl."

Observations : When Ruma was speaking she became very emotional and asked," Can you do anything. Can you solve the problem?. The girl was only 11 when it happened. She still sits and weeps even now." The village Shalish, made it worse by giving it an exposure which left Shawapna branded as a "bad girl". Ruma further felt that the village elders could have enforced a marriage with the cousin. The elders however, let matters lie, leaving Shwapna a physically and emotionally scarred person.

#### Case Study : Rural Girl. 9

Suriya Begum

Age When Abused. 11 Years

Background : Suriya's two elder brothers are married and live in separate household. One sister is married. Two other brothers collect tin-scraps, broken glass etc, and sell them. 3 younger brothers and sisters do not go to school and Suriya herself has never been to school. Land erosion by the river has taken their house and now the family lives in a make shift accommodation on the roadside. The stark poverty of Suriya's family is quite obvious.

Personal Experience : Suriya had a physical relationship with her paternal cousin Bulbul, resulting in pregnancy, when she was 11 years old. Suriya's cousin came from a family which was economically far better of than her's. The cousin would bring gifts for Suriya, mostly cosmetics and nobody would mind because he was so well off and so kind towards the impoverished family.

Meanwhile, one day he expressed his love for Suriya. She wasn't interested in the beginning but she liked his gifts and the attention he paid her. But although she wasn't keen to be romantically

involved with a man so much older than her she ultimately gave in. She thought that it would be all right if she agreed to be romanced by him and it ended in marriage. One day, her cousin held her tight and said that marriage proposal from the boy's family would be arriving soon. "Hearing this I would mix more freely and easily with him. One night, he called me to his room. By then everyone was asleep. Before I understood anything, he started to caress me. I was taken in by his action and we met physically. After we would have met physically occasionally."

"Three months later my pregnancy became obvious. Then my other beat me and asked me who was responsible. When I named my cousin Bulbul, he left the house. My family wanted to call a salish but my cousin himself was missing. So my father took me to Dhaka and I had an abortion. I was not quite twelve years old."

"When the affair first started I used to feel shy but also used to enjoy the whole thing. But later when he ran away and I had to face the world, I suffered a lot. No marriage proposals come for me. I am left alone. I couldn't even go to the village at one period but now at least I can walk around. But people don't mix with me. The children say that their parents have told them not to mix with me. I am a bad girl. Matbars also say that the boy wasn't at fault. I was. But was it so? How old was I? What did I understand of the whole matter that I am being blamed alone and as a noshto?"

Observations : Suriya requested that all the names be kept secret. Not hers, her parents or of any member of the family. There appears to be no respite from suffering for her.

Case Study : Rural Girl, 10

Nasrin

Age When Abused. 12 years

Background : Nasrin's elder two brothers work in shops and one sister is married. The younger brother goes to school. They are extremely poor but have managed to purchase a radio. A next door neighbour has a TV where Nasrin goes to watch particularly, Bangla films and drama.

Personal Experience : Nasrin's family has been chased away from their own village by a powerful family whose son Mazhar tried to abuse her. They were so powerful that they could stand up against any family in the village.

The matter started when a boy belonging to the powerful family started to tease Nasrin on her way to and from school. She would always try to avoid him but he kept on pestering him and insisting that he take the gifts that were being offered. And she kept on refusing. One day, he forced some candies into her palm and went away.

A few days later, he was again standing on the way and calling her. When she didn't listen he came near and tried to drag her away. She started to scream and a man passing by saw the whole matter and informed the boy's father what the son doing.

"The boy's father then called my father and said, "Why should my son try to grab your daughter. Is she the only pretty girl around? Surely your daughter must have done something. Its all her fault. You must leave the village at once with your daughter."

"The boy also threatened my father. He said that its because of his daughter that his reputation was tarnished. He threatened to throw acid on my face. Hearing this, my father, became scared. Who would look after us if anything happened?. Plus, my father doesn't stay with us all the time. So we became very scared and decided to leave the village as we had been asked to."

"I was very scared when the boy was trying to drag me away. I thought he was going to kill me. My mother says that unless I had screamed he would have done something horrible, it saved me."

"The events are well known in the village and many people blame the boy but they don't have the courage to confront him. They are a very powerful family. If they want to take revenge, they will spread lies about a girl in the family and she will have difficulty in getting married. Since coming to this village I keep to myself. I haven't got admitted to any school. I am still scared of him. Suppose he finds me and throws acid?"

"Mother says not to worry but remain careful. I rarely go out. I am too scared of boys especially in lonely places."

Observations : They have come to this village only a few months and are still settling in. But the sense of terror is very much with her. She is almost paranoid about the opposite sex. This case more than any other displays the power of the rural elite and the absolute helplessness-social, physical and sexual-of the rural poor.

Case Study : Rural Girl. 11

Neela

Age When abused. 12 Years

Background : Neela's elder sister is married and her younger sister works as a domestic held in a household has arranged for her sister to go to school. Her mother was abandoned by her father and she brought up her children by doing embroidery & sewing work. They have a radio but no T.V. Neela does like to watch TV and movies.

Personal Experience : A boy Taher would come regularly to their house and his talks, particularly with her, would border on romance. Her mother was skeptical of the boy's visits as she herself had fallen in love with Neela's father, only to be abandoned in favour of a younger woman. She taught her daughters to be careful of men.

One afternoon, when nobody was at home, the boy suddenly came to their house. He locked the door and tried to force himself on Neela. Luckily for Neela, before things got out of hand her mother arrived. The boy unbolted the door and fled. Neela's mother chastised her for keeping the door open and once again warned her of dire consequences.

Case Study : Rural Girl, 12

Shonali

Age When Abused. 12 Years

Background : Shonali studies in Class VIII. Her elder brother is in commerce. An elder sister is married. Incidentally, all the other brothers and sisters are studying in schools. She is very keen on reading story books and like a normal teenager likes to play games. The family is more or less well-to-do, having a radio with a cassette player. They do not have a TV in the house since there is no electricity in their house. TV does hold an interest for Shonali and as such she goes to a neighbour's house to watch TV programmes.

Shonali has two close friends who are also her class-mates. A room is kept aside in their house for guests so the inmates don't have to share space.

Her father and elder brother are very fond of her. Her maternal grandfather cracks suggestive jokes which embarrasses her. On being asked whether she has seen any "romantic situations" in the village, she stated that she had. A girl in the village and an affair with a local boy. For some reason the girl broke off the affair. This led the boy to threaten her that if the relationship was not revived he would kidnap her. Shonali's elder brother on learning his from his sister, strongly advised her to stay out of the whole situation. He further cautioned Shonali that any involvement would have an adverse effect on her and the family.

Personal experience : When Shonali was asked whether she, herself had been involved in a situation like the one she narrated, Shonali confessed that when she was 12 years old, a cousin Kawsar would visit them often. He was very fond of her and indulged her with gifts. The cousin Kawsar was 20-22 years old and Shonali quite liked his company and would often go out on walks with him. The age difference between Shonali and her cousin was of advantage to the cousin, since no one in the family thought anything could be amiss in such a relation where the age difference was much. It masked his intentions.

One day, while Shonali was studying, her cousin dropped by. Shonali requested him to sit down. Instead of sitting down, her cousin closed the door and before she could realize what was happening, he embraced her and started fondling. In the meantime, the cousin had managed to pull her down on bed. In desperation, Shonali bit his hand and as he let go, she ran out. The cousin followed her out and left the house.

This incident destroyed the trust she had in her cousin, and in the process, she has developed a strong dislike for men in general, Shonali regrets not having disclosed the whole episode to her family. This has allowed the cousin to continue visiting them though Shonali makes it a point not to speak to her cousin. Her mother has noticed the change of behaviour in Shonali towards her cousin but hasn't said anything. This betrayal of trust by her cousin has caused Shonali mental anguish and her whole attitude towards males has gone through a disturbing change. She still cannot get over the fact that the cousin whom she trusted, had, all the time harboured intention of abusing her.

Observations : Shonali incident happened at a very tender age, which has left a lasting impression on her mind. She is very much aware that, had the matter been exposed, most probably she would have been blamed. This in one moral scar she would not be able to bear and her schooling would also not be affected.

Case Study : Rural Girl, 13

Kaniz

Age When abused, 12 Years

Background : Kaniz's elder brother is a farmer. Two other brothers are apprentices in shops. Two younger brother and sister are in school, though Kaniz is not studying. She loves chatting and going around the village. Kaniz's family is affluent (by village standards). They have a radio but no TV. She goes over to her paternal uncle's house and watches TV. Romantic scenes on TV appeal to her. Kaniz also likes the songs on the radio. She has two close friends. Her friends also do not go to school. Being the elder daughter, Kaniz is much loved by her father and her brothers. Despite her age, Kaniz loves to play with cooking utensils and arranges impromptu picnics for her young play mates.

Personal experience : When asked whether she has any knowledge of romantic escapades, she confirmed one incident. A boy and a girl of the village were involved with each other.

Unfortunately the boy was unemployed while the girl came from an affluent family. The girl parents broke up this "pairing" when the boy's father came with a formal proposal of marriage. Later the boy managed to get married, that too with a sizeable dowry. In spite of his own marriage, the boy ensures that the girl to whom he had proposed suffers by creating such situations that proposals for her marriage are aborted.

Kaniz was then asked whether she herself had any romantic involvements. Kaniz said that a year earlier (she was 12 years then) she had gone to visit her maternal uncle's house. Her maternal cousin Arif, aged around 20-21 years, was affectionate towards her and would give gifts to her. This was the first time she was visiting her uncle all by herself. Kaniz was equally fond of her cousin and would comply with his requests for errands.

One night Kaniz's cousin beckoned her to his room. Since they were so friendly, and therefore not apprehending anything untoward, she went across to his room. On entering the room, Kaniz's cousin, bolted the door. Kaniz, naive that she was, thought that her cousin wanted to tell her a secret. The illusion was shattered when he forced her on to the bed and started fondling her. She was shocked, and she started sobbing so vehemently that he let her go. She kept quiet about the incident, but strongly insisted on being sent back home the next day. Otherwise, she said, she would leave on her own. Her aunt's behaviour made Kaniz feel that her aunt had come to know what had happened the night before. After this episode she completely stopped going to her uncle's house. The cousin too stopped coming to Kaniz's house.

On returning home she narrated the whole incident to her eldest sister-in-law and she in turn apprised Kaniz's parents of what she had learnt. Kaniz's mother forbade her to visit her uncle's house and she also stopped visiting her brother. The experience has left Kaniz with a deep dislike for men, though her confiding in her sister-in-law helped ease her mental agony.

Observations : It took 4 days for the interviewer to gain Kaniz's confidence, Kaniz is basically an intelligent person, good looking, smart and articulate. She did not want to discuss the affair in the presence of her family so she came over to the interviewer's residence. Kaniz was only 12 years old when she had experienced the abusive incident.

Case Study : Rural Girl, 14

Rosey

Age When abused. 12 Years

Background : Rosey studies in Class VII. Three of her elder brothers are married and live in separate house. Three of her sisters are married. One brother works as an apprentice in a shop. Rosey does not have much interest in studies but has to study on her mother's insistence. Rosey, not being a good student, likes to chat with friends and roam around the village. Rosey's family is reasonably comfortable. She does not usually go to other people's house to watch TV and even when she does want to see a particular drama as her mother disapproves. Rosey's family has a radio and she likes to listen to songs. She has seen films in movie halls and likes "romantic scenes"

Rosey has two close friends, one of whom goes to school. She has next door neighbour who is married and is Rosey's older friend. Being the youngest, Rosey gets a lot of affection. Her brother-in-laws are also affectionate but one of them tends to exceed the limits of affection. Rosey does not approve of this brother-in-law's (dulabhai) overt display of affection which at times gets to be physical.

Personal experience : Rosey was asked whether she had any knowledge of female oppression. She admitted that she did. She recalled the case of her parents' decision to get her third sister, who was barely 12 years, married off to her eldest brother-in-law who had become a widower. The brother-in-law in his forties. Rosey' third sister vehemently opposed the proposal and when things came to a head, threatened to commit suicide. Her third sister has been married off elsewhere now and has a son. Her widower brother-in-law has also married but does not visit them any more.

When Rosey was asked if she had any personal experience, she expressed surprise, that we were not aware of her experience. She further stated "Every body seems to know to my unfortunate story". On being told that in reality her experience was unknown to us, she was quite candid in recounting her experience.

She was 12 years old when she got involved with Dipu, a friend of there brother. The boy was about 24-25 years old. The boy would frequently visit their house and had developed an excellent relationship with all the members of her family. And then one day, the boy told Rosey that the only reason for his frequent visits to their house was she. According to Rosey's statements the boy was desperate for her and even wanted to marry her. Rosey reciprocated his feelings and in the process, the frequency of the boys visit to their house increased. Rosey reciprocated his feelings and in the process, the frequency of the boys visit to their house increased. Rosey and the boy started going out quite openly, she believing that he was her husband to be Rosey was confident, based on his declarations that the boy after all would be marrying her.

In Rosey's house, during opportune moments, the boy would be physically close with her but Rosey drew the line when it came to full penetrative sex. As it was expected that Rosey and the boy was going to get married, the family apparently approved their going steady.

But once the parents of the boy got to know of their son's involvement with Rosey, they arranged their son's marriage elsewhere and in great haste. Rosey felt rejected and confronted the boy. The boy, to Roseys shock stated that he could not disobey his parents. Rosey's misfortune was further compounded when the boy stated that Rosey was a passing fancy and he never really intended to marry her. This shattered her. When Rosey's mother asked the boy the reason behind playing around with Rosey, the boy left without answering.

Rosey's open romancing with the boy was seen by many villagers but at that time Rosey was indiscreet. This indiscretion was due to the fact that Rosey felt all along that she and the boy would be married. But Rosey now has to listen to all the nasty remarks and insinuations. Some even told her mother, on her face, that she had instigated her daughter to entice a rich man's son. The boy has now married and leads an ideal life. The girl has to hear criticism and taunts from all.

Rosey knew fully well the financial disparity between her family and tat of the boy's was substantial, but being in love, she thought that it did not matter, It did.

Observations : The episode of Rosey happened when she was only 12 years old and the boy was around 24-25 years. It is obvious that the boy played around with a young girl's emotion. Rosey's mother was not contemplating her marriage during that period. The mother is now hoping that after some time, when memories of Rosey's episode becomes dim to others, a marriage may perhaps be arranged.

Case Study : Rural Girl. 15

Lucky

### Age When Abused, 6 Years

**Background :** Lucky comes from a poor family, her father is almost illiterate. But after years of unemployment, he is now employed abroad. The only entertainment that they can afford is a radio. Lucky has seen Bangla films on TV in a neighbours house. Two of her younger brothers study in the primary school while her other siblings are too young to go to school. Lucky presently studies in class III. She has a weakness for chocolates and loves playing games with her friends.

**Personal experience :** Lucky related the story of a girl in the village who is friendly with a lot of boys. The villagers do not approve of it. Lucky was raped when she was only 6 years old, is still childlike and naive. She narrated her experience of rape, by a paternal cousin Mintu aged around 20-22 years.

This cousin, aware of Lucky's weakness for chocolates, offered her a chocolate and lured her into a mustard patch. The patch of ground was so dense with vegetation that one could not see anything from outside. Once they had reached there, he undressed her and himself and then raped her. Then he left her lying on the ground, bleeding profusely.

Lucky's mother noticed her absence and went searching for her. Finally she heard groans coming from the mustard patch where she found her daughter lying on the ground and bleeding badly. Her mother thought that she had been knifed and her daughter was dying. She started to scream and neighbours came who carried Lucky to her home. A village doctor administered necessary medication. "I was sick for a long time. When they asked who had done it, I named my cousin. In the meantime the cousin fled and was not seen in the village, for a long time. But he is back now."

A village Salish was called and it was decided that Lucky's paternal uncle would hand over, in writing, a plot of land in favour of Lucky. To escape the wrath of the villagers, her uncle willingly did so. But later on, it was transpired that the land which he handed over did not belong to him and the documents were false. But the uncle's family is very powerful so they couldn't do much about it.

Lucky still has nightmares of her traumatic experience and on many nights wakes up screaming. Villagers do not blame Lucky and her rapist cousin Mintu has been branded as a scoundrel but the trauma remains. Lucky has become a cause of concern for her mother, who often wonders how she will get her daughter married, Lucky has promised to herself that when she grows up she will punish the boy.

On asking Lucky's mother about the incident, she recounted more or less what Lucky had said. Lucky's mother further said that the village salish had decided the issue. The uncle had hoodwinked the salish but his wealth and power had allowed him to remain unscathed even after cheating the salish.

**Observations :** Lucky is presently 9 years and was raped when she was 6 years. Time has not healed the mental scar and Lucky's mother reported that her daughter over the years has become more ill tempered. If she wants anything, she has to have it now, otherwise tantrums follow.

### Case Study : Rural Girl. 16

Sultana

Age When abused, 12 Years

Background : Sultana's family is financially well-off. Her father owns large tracts of land which he cultivates. Her eldest brother has passed his School S.C. and is in business. The sister elder to her is married. Sultana studies in Class VII while her younger sister studies in Class IV. Sultana's family does not own a TV but have a radio. She however likes to watch TV programmes at a neighbour's house and quite likes "romantic scenes". She has one class friend who is also her class mate. Sultana is liked by all but most by her father and elder brother. She does not like her elder brother-in-law because of his tendency to crack lewd and suggestive jokes.

Personal experience : Sultana reported that on their way to school some boys tease them and use bad language. None of them dare to confront them since they are known "Mastans". Guardians of the girls also keep silent fearing the safety of their daughters as well as the possibility of being insulted by these young boys.

On being asked whether Sultana had any experience of being accosted by a boy, she replied in the affirmative. According to her, when she was 12 years old, she was friendly with a boy Habib, who was a relative by marriage. The relationship was such that no body questioned it. He would visit them and she would also go to their house. They would talk a lot and one day the boy declared his love to her, which she turned down. But later she relented and reciprocated the emotions offered.

On one occasion when she went to the boy's house, he closed the door and they talked for a long while. Nothing physical happened. A few days later the Habib invited Sultana to his house where she went. She was unaware that nobody was present in the house. This time the Habib immediately closed the door and embraced her. This led to fondling and ended with physical union.

Sultana was caught unaware and she retrained from shouting since that would lead to other people knowing about what was happening. She came back to her house and did not go again to the boy's house. The day of occurrence caused her great mental grief and she cried a lot. The boy again approached her but she rebuffed him, feeling that if the boy genuinely loved her, he would not have done what he had. She felt hurt and betrayed that the boy had broken her trust.

The boy then started spreading stories amongst his friends that she was girl of loose morals. After having a good time with him, she was now pretending to be a good girl. This hurt Sultana very much and she started despising him.

Sultana added that now she did not trust any boy nor does she mix with them. The boys' friends pass lewd remarks about her and also threaten her. The boy's friends have also warned her that they will kidnap her and in the process she is very scared to go out. Sultana said that even today she regrets that incident and at times thinks of committing suicide to end it all.

Observations : The incident happened a year and a half ago and this was the first time she disclosed it to someone. Sultana requested that her tragic incident be kept secret since she did not want to disgrace her family.

#### Case Study : Rural Boy. 1

##### Tipu

Age When Abused. 9 Years

Background : Tipu's family is very poor. Their village has a population of 4,000 with a literacy rate of 20%. Most of the villagers are involved in agriculture. There is only one government primary school. Tipu is too poor to go to school. The floods of 1995 which destroyed the



standing Aman crops has further impoverished the family. Tipu helps his father in the field during the day. At night he looks after a general store/shop in the village. He earns Tk. 250/= per month for doing this job which is a big help to the family.

Personal experience : The incident of abuse occurred this way. One night around, 9 p.m., moslem (35), a resident of Tipu's village came to the shop and asked for a paan (betel leaf.) Tipu gave the paan but Moslem lingered on and after taking the betel-leaf, not proceeding towards his own home. Finally he said, "I will not go home tonight. I might as well stay here."

So Tipu made arrangements for Moslem to sleep in the shop along with him. Soon after Tipu dropped off to sleep. But he was suddenly awakened when he realized that Moslem was fondling his (Tipu') genitalia. Tipu, out of shame and anger, brushed said Moslem's hand but Moslem started fondling him again despite Tipu's protest. In fact Tipu's refusal made Moslem very angry. He threatened Tipu saying, "If you don't have sex with me, I will ensure that you lose your job. I will accuse you as a thief in the salish they will fine you Tk. 5000/=. You know fully well that the owner of this shop is my friend. So you might as well be quiet and do what I want you to do".

Tipu was fully aware that Moslem was a very influential man and so he felt that he had no option but to submit to Moslem's will. After the episode was over, Moslem again warned Tipu that no one should know of the incident or else there would be dire consequences in store for him. 4 Days later, Moslem again came late in the night and asked for a cigarette. Tipu gave him the cigarette through the shop window but did not open the door. Moslem was furious but ultimately went away. From then on Moslem did not bother Tipu as long as he worked in the shop.

The day when Moslem sexually abused Tipu, he was in a state of shock. Moslem's threats particularly that of the Tk. 5000/- fine by the salish was what made Tipu agree that night. Tipu could not afford to take the threat lightly since Moslem was also a village matbar and decided many cases in the village court.

Observations : Tipu is contemptuous of Moslem but also afraid of him. Tipu requested continuously that the affair be kept a secret from him. One the first day Tipu spoke only for an hour. Tipu was given a feedback on child molestation and the punishment it carries for the perpetrator. Tipu was quite surprised. He didn't know that such a thing was possible. (See Moslem's interview to learn about the mind of an abuser).

Case Study : Rural Boy. 2

Khokon

Age When Abused. 9 Years

Background : Khokon's village has population of 4,000 and the literacy rate is 20%. The primary school in the village is in a bad shape so he walks 9 miles to a school in the adjoining village. He studies in Class IV.

Personal experience : one of his uncle works in Chittagong. In 1995 the uncle came to the village to settle some land dispute. He was accompanied by his daughter. Bina aged 16 years. Bina was always friendly towards Khairul and give him a lot of gifts. On this visit she had brought a shirt for him. He obviously was delighted.

One day Bina asked Khairul to accompany her to the firewood shed. As he was very fond of Bina, he naturally followed her inside. Bina had also told him, "Come with me and I will show you something", which made him curious. The boy, in his ignorance asked her what was so

interesting but instead of answering his question, she went in. Once inside the shed, Bina asked him to keep quiet. Then, Bina embraced him and started kissing him.

Since Bina was very fond of him, the boy thought that this was his sister's way of showing her affection towards him. But the pattern of fondling changed and at this he became seared. She asked him to hold his breasts and fondle him. Khairul by this time was a bit angry and protested loudly. At this point Bina gave him a ten take note. Having got the money he also quietened down for the time being. "I will take you for a walk. That will be fun", she further promised. Although the boy was not keen to continue the session, the money changed his mind.

Next, Bina started fondling the boy again and put his hands on her breast. She asked him to fondle her genitals also. The boy was puzzled and insisted on getting out of the shed. He was offered another Tk. 10 as a pacifier which again worked. Then, Bina stripped the boy and then herself as well. Despite the boy's protests the young girl carried on and got him to do what she wished which was trying to have penetrative sex. She also asked the boy to hold her tight, the way she was holding him. "Dear cousin, please do as I ask and hold me tight and I will give you ten take more." Both being naked, she also started to rub herself against him. But the boy wasn't as interested as the girl wanted her to be and dept. saying he wished to go home. At one point he started to cry. At this the girl got angry and slapped him. This made the boy cry even more loudly. Seeing it wasn't leading further, the girl dressed the boy, put on her clothes and left the place. He left the place crying.

"The boy went back home and told his mother that Bina, his cousin had slapped him. The boy's mother was surprised at the incident and couldn't understand why Bina should do so. "you must have done something naughty so she slapped you" Although the boy kept protesting that he hadn't done anything, his mother didn't believe his innocence. He became very mad at this and finding his mother still not ready to believe his case, he retold her the entire episode including referring to the sexual acts in the shed.

Hearing the experience of her son, the mother advised the boy to keep quiet about the whole affair. She even said that if he told anybody else about the incident she would beat him. Later, She took Bina aside and scolded her. She also told Bina to stay away from Khairul. But she didn't tell the boy's father about the. Three days later Bina went home with her father.

Observations: The investigator talked to Khairul for two days. On the second day he recounted the incident. Khairul talked of his experience after being appraised of child rights etc, as well as telling him of an incident that the Investigator had been subjected to molestation too. This created a rapport and he told the incident in its entirety. The investigator reports that one could feel that by retelling his experience of abuse he was feeling very relaxed. The mother had felt that if the father came to know, he would start screaming and create a scene and the people next door would come to know. These people were their clean enemies and knowledge of the incident would have brought shame to her family. Bina was also a paternal cousin which might create complications within the family.

### Case Study: Rural Boy. 3

Tareque

Age When Abused. 9 years

Background: Tareque comes from middle class rural family. He studies in class III of the madrasa, an Islamic seminary. The Huzoor (Moulvi/teacher) of the madrasa, Rafiqul (47) used to like Tareque very much and would get him to run errands for him. When the madrasa would

close down for the day, the Huzoor call Tareque to his office. They would then go out and rafiqul, the Huzoor would call Tareque to his office. They then go out and Rafiqul, the Huzoor, would buy or Tareque tit-bits which he would like to eat.

Personal experience: Once the madrasa would became empty, the Huzoor would take Tareque back to madrasa and go to his office. He would lean back on his chair and ask Tareque to massage his body. Tareque, naturally would do as he was bidden by the Huzoor who would add that if he looked after the comforts of a Huzoor, divine blessings would shower upon him. One day while massaging the him, the Huzoor placed Tareque's hands on his genitalia. Tareque felt embarrassed and withdrew his hand. The Huzoor pulled back Tareque's hand and once again placed them on his genitals urging him not to embarrassed but massage it instead. "Don't be shy, you carry on with your work. "The Huzoor after some time told Tareque to go home but warned him "Do not tell anyone that you massage me. If you do it will be a grave sin".

This convenient arrangement of the Huzoor went on or month. People came to know of Tareque's service to the teacher but they did not disapprove since Tareque was extremely young and the Huzoor was very affectionate in paternal manner towards the young boy.

But one day, the Madrasa Head, came to the madrasa after closure time. He saw Rafiqul, the Huzoor, learning back and apparently sleeping with Tareque fondling Rafiqul's genitalia. The Madrasa Head called Tareque outside and told him "you have become such a bad boy. I will have you thrown out of the madrasa. Tareque was scared and flustered and confessed that whatever he had been doing were on the orders of the Huzoor. Tareque was then sent home by the Madrasa Head, who then woke up the sleeping Huzoor. The Madrasa head bluntly told the Huzoor to end what he had been doing with the young boy. The Huzoor kept quiet and didn't answer in defence.

Initially Tareque would be embarrassed to massage the Huzoor. The Huzoor allayed this embarrassment and fear by saying. "you must listen to what your father and mother say. you must also obey your Huzoor's orders. If you do go, you will prosper in life. Whatever the Huzoor tells you, it must be observed to the letter. By this sermon the Huzoor ensured that Tareque would do whatever he would be bidden to do. The Madrasa Heads intervention ended the abuse and Tareque did not encounter any such situations.

He was also influenced by his parents words who had said that he should listen to everything his teachers ask him. "If you don't we will beat you." Obviously the boy was following instructions.

Observations : Two days were needed to get the full story of Tareque. The Madrasa Head also corroborated the story. It seems that Tareque's desire to follow to the letter the instructions of his parents and his Huzoor, led to the situation. Although Tareque is shaken up he did talk after finding out that the investigator knew the story. He is a very young boy and supply of candy also helped.

Case Study : Rural Boy. 4

Kajol

Age When Abused. 14 Years

Background : In Kajol's village most of the people are involved in farming. There is a government primary school in the village. The abject poverty of Kajol's family prevented any of his siblings to attend school. The same reason has pushed his father to arrange a job for him in a farm. Kajol's employer is an IRRI (high yielding variety rice) rice cultivator and as such has a machine pump which is located in a pump house in the middle of the field. After a whole day's

work. Kajol sleeps in the pump house or machine-house (as it is known in the village). During the peak season, the pump has to run at night also.

Personal experience : One night around 9 PM, Moslem (35) came to the machine house and started chatting with Kajol. The small talk went on with Moslem asking him how much Sadek (the employer) paid him, whether Sadek's wife would give him regular meals etc. After some time, Sadek came around and he told Kajol to start the machine and water the crops. As Kajol got busy Moslem left the place.

But the next day around 9:30 p.m. Moslem came and found Kajol asleep. He woke Kajol up and asked him for a Biri (local cigarette). Kajol lit a Biri and gave it to Moslem. In order to shake off Kajol's sleepiness Moslem carried on smoking and started talking. Kajol also lit a Biri for himself. Moslem started talking about movies, blue-films, pornography etc. During the chatting session Moslem surreptitiously started massaging Kajol's arms and legs. Both began to feel quite relaxed with the message. Soon afterwards Kajol felt Moslem play with his genitalia. He felt uneasy and protesting asked "What are you doing?"

Kajol also removed Moslem's hand but Moslem soothingly said "You will like it very much and after you like it once, you will want to do it often. Moslem promised to Kajol that he would take him to town to watch pornographic films. Moslem suddenly tugged at Kajol's lungi and soon enough they were engaged in physical sex. After the act was over, they washed themselves and Kajol made no reply to Moslem's question "How was it?" He smiled in reply instead. This has been going on for quite some time and kajol apparently had shed all inhibitions about having sex with Kajol.

The IRRI project had ended and the pump is not required to be operated at night. Kajol has also stopped sleeping in the pump house. The pump house, being in a desolate area, was an ideal meeting place. Another place could not be found like that but they have met a couple of times in the field. Moslem has developed a strong liking for Kajol and once in a while gives him money.

After the initial embarrassment, Kajol has quite enjoyed his relationship with Moslem. His only fear is that his employer Sadek might find out and may sack him for his sexual relationship.

Observations : Kajol is an introvert and the investigator needed 4 days to find out about the incident. From his statements its clear that he is still having sexual relations with Moslem. Kajol insisted that his secret be kept, otherwise he might lose his job. I feel that Kajol quite likes his relationship with Moslem and he shall continue it. Moslem being an influential man in the area has given Kajol the shelter to carry on.

#### Case Study : Rural Boy. 5

Raju

Age When Abused. 9 Years

Background : Raju is studying in Class IV. During the winter of 1995, a cousin sister of Raju came visiting them. She was 17 years and her name was Rashu. She was extremely fond of Raju as was Raju of her. Raju smother arranged for them to be in the same room at night and allowed them to sleep under the same quilt. At night Rashu held Raju very close to her. Raju felt that his Rashu apa was very affectionate towards him. This re-assured him and he did not think anything was wrong about Rashu holding him that way.

Personal experience : The next day Rashu went walking about the village along with Raju. She would also fondle his genital and say. "That's your little chilli." He didn't mind because he thought she was just teasing him. On the second night, as he slept in bed, he found out that she was playing with his genitals. He says that he wasn't interested and tried to turn around and go back to sleep but she kept on and held him tight. Then Rashu promised Raju that she would buy him a red ball if he went along. After saying this Rashu kept quiet for a while holding him. Soon she started fondling Raju's genitals. Next, she took off his pants. She also took her own clothes and guided Raju shand on to her genital area and made him masturbate her. As this disturbed Raju, Rashu again promised that she would buy him a red ball. It worked and Raju did as he was told.

The next day, Rashu did buy him a red ball and Raju was thrilled. On the third night Raju's mother also slept in the same room so there was no scope for Rashu to do a repeat with her cousin. The next night the room was occupied by the two of them and a repetition of what happened on the second night occurred. Rashu further warned Raju not to discuss the incident with his parents since they might beat him. She also warned him not to talk about their relationship to neighbours or friends because they would make fun of him. On the fourth day Rashu left for her village and Raju has not had any other disturbing incidents.

Observations : Raju confessed his incident after 3 days of interview and inter-acting. Raju's parents are very strict and he is very afraid of them. He wanted to tell someone about what was happening but if he did he was seared he would be beaten up by his parents. Rashu was married in August, 1995.

#### Case Study : Rural Boy. 6

Farid

Age When Abused. 10 Years

Background : Due to acute poverty Farid is not able to go to school. Farid's family own 3 cows and 1 milch Cow which is a major source of income.

Farid's main work is to take the cows out for grazing. He goes out in the morning and returns home in the evening. It was not possible for Farid to come home for lunch since, if left unattended, the cows could stray into other farmers fields or might be lifted. Farid's elder brother brings his lunch to the field. There are canals around the fields and Farid has his bath there. On most occasions, in the afternoon most of people in the fields go home for lunch and Farid feels quite lonely. Since the cattle have to be grazed, Farid is in the field every day and has to have his lunch there.

Personal experience : One afternoon, a man named Alam, was clearing the straw in the field. Alam is a distant cousin of Farid. On seeing Alam, Farid went across to him and started chatting to ward off the loneliness of the afternoon. Alam suggested to Farid that they go fishing in one of the rivulets and said "I will give you all the fish that we catch". Farid was quite happy with the suggestion and accompanied Alam. Once they reached the swampy area, Alam started masturbating and exposing himself to Farid. Alam asked Farid to do the same. But Farid wasn't interested and was so embarrassed that he didn't want to come near even. But then, not finding Farid keen, Alam pounced on him and started to anal penetrate him. Farid kept shouting and protesting but because it was so desolate an area, nobody heard him. Finally, Alam pushed Farid down, held him pinned to the ground and raped him.

After it was over, Alam was nice to him and kept saying affectionate words. He also caught some fish and gave them to Farid but Farid refused. Alam meanwhile asked Farid not to discuss the incident with anyone. Farid kept quiet. Farid's elder brother came with lunch for him but Farid was too embarrassed to disclose what had happened. But he kept getting more and more angry. In the evening Farid returned home and declared that he would not take the cattle for grazing anymore. When his mother asked him the reason, Farid disclosed everything that had happened in the afternoon. Farid's mother told him to keep quiet until his father returned. Meanwhile, Farid kept on saying that unless something was done, he wouldn't take the cattle to the field the next day.

When Farid's Father came home she told him what had happened and also Farid's threat not to go the field the next day. His father became very angry and called Alam in. He shouted at Alam for what he had done to Farid and demanded that he apologize. Alam, seeing no other alternative, begged forgiveness from Farid.

The matter was however hushed up since the parents did not want Farid to be subjected to taunts by others. Alam also promised not to misbehave with Farid, anymore. This pacified Farid to a certain extent.

After this incident, Farid developed a strong disgust for Alam and would not speak to him. Farid's mother warned him not to discuss the incident with his friends also because that would subject him to humiliation.

Observations : Three days were needed to get the full information of Farid's incident. Farid is essentially a very good boy and obedient to his elders. Farid is especially obedient to his mother. His father decided against a complaint to the village elders since no justice would be for the coming and their prestige would be lost in the process. This was the reason of Farid's father dealing with Alam directly. This is also one case where the abused doesn't take the matter in good spirit but fights back and makes even his reluctant parents take some action.

#### Case Study : Rural Boy. 7

Ekram & Faruque

Age When Abused. 13 & 14 Years

Background : None of the fathers of the two boys involved are literate nor are the two boys. Their job is to graze cattle and they are very friendly with each other. When the Aman crops are harvested, these two boys spend the whole day in the fields grazing cattle and pass their time chatting. Their topics are both mundane and vulgar.

Personal experience : In early 1995 when these two boys were grazing their cattle they came across Motiur (25) who was also grazing his cattle. Motiur was quite popular since he knew a lot of vulgar jokes and could make his friends laugh while telling the stories.

In the afternoon most of the farmers had left for their homes. Motiur was still telling one vulgar story after another much to Ekram & Faruque's amusement. Soon enough Ekram and Faruque also wanted to go home. But Motiur desisted them and told them to go home later. Motiur had in the meantime been fondling his genital area and exposed himself to both the boys. At this, both were embarrassed. Motiur suggested that they too do the same as he had done. Motiur was considered a Guru (teacher/leader) by both the boys and they would listen to him on most matters. Listening to Motiur, these two boys followed Motiur's actions.

Motiur went to a close by place and from a flock of sheep brought with him a sheep and took the animal to an old pump house. He instructed the two boys not to come into the pump house and in the event of anyone coming, they ought to start singing, thus warning him.

Motiur indulged in bestiality, and then, one by one the two boys also did the same. After this, all three of them felt quite exhilarated and after some time left for their respective houses. The next day, they would have carried on, but the presence of too many people prevented it. On the third day they again managed to indulge in bestiality. Ekram and Faruque were particularly happy and enjoyed it a lot. This sexual deviation became routine and continued for 5-7 days.

One day when Motiur was missing, Ekram and Faruque decided to go ahead with what had become their routine entertainment. Ekram got hold of a sheep and took the animal to the pump house. The sheep started bleating very loudly. A fellow villager, Kalam was defecating near a rivulet. He heard the commotion, but the boys were unaware of his presence. Kalam proceeded to the pump house but Ekram saw Kalam and warned Faruque. They let go the sheep and started running away. Kalam immediately realized what these two boys were up to and he also gave chase. He caught hold of Ekram and after giving him quite a few slaps threatened to tell his parents. The threat of Kalam disturbed the boys very much and they realised that if Kalam did tell their parents both would be subjected to a severe beating.

Ekram & Faruque went towards their houses but first located their guru, Motiur, and told him about the afternoon's incident, Motiur told them not to worry and that he would tell Kalam not to open his mouth. The boys felt a bit reassured. That night when Kalam tried to persuade Motiur not to disclose what he had seen in the afternoon, he refused Kalam's request.

Motiur reported to Ekram and Faruque his failure to dissuade Kalam but still felt that a way out was possible. Kalam had a weakness for money and Motiur suggested that the boys collect some money and beg forgiveness from Kalam. The two boys contributed Tk. 20 each and with Tk. 40 met Kalam. They gave the money to him and begged forgiveness. Kalam took the money and promised them that he would not disclose the incident to anyone. The boys feel much relieved after that.

The field level sexual activities stopped them for a money only. soon after Ekram started going to their cattle-shed and would indulge in sexual activity with a calf, Faruque followed suit. He acquired a new friend and together would indulge in the same activities. Now its becoming popular in their school.

Ekram & Faruque seem to be hooked to sex with animals. Motiur's introduction to this deviant sexual behaviour was unknown to them nor did they talk about it. Now it seems that they have chosen bestiality as a source of sexual satisfaction.

Observations: Ekram and Faruque conveniently pass the blame on to the other. on being reassured that their matter would be confidential, they told of their shared experience. They have no sense of guilt and no intention to give up what they have been doing to obtain sexual satisfaction. But the critical reason for including this case is that adults can introduce children to negative habits including sexual ones and in this process violate their rights to grow up without becoming involved in such socially unacceptable practices.

Case Study: Rural boy. 8

Bakul

Age When Abused. 10 Years

Background: Bakul is a student of class IV. They are two brothers and one sister with Bakul being the eldest. Shahida, (29 years old) lives next door. She was married when she was 20 years old. While married, she developed an illicit relationship with her husband's nephew. As a consequence, her husband divorced her. Since her divorce, Shahida has been living in her father's house. Shahida's brother tried to get her married but have failed. She has an infection in her nose which emits a very foul smell. This causes all her proposals to fall through. Shahida's brother have set up a small shop, in their own courtyard for her. Meanwhile, she has been having sexual relationships with the village boys. Shahid uses the shop as a place to entice young ones into sexual relationships with her.

We were informed by a villager-Hamid-that before her marriage, he and his friend both had a sexual encounters with her. Like in all villages, this is only partly a secret and for all her past put together, Shahida has been branded as a women of loose character, a seriously noshto meye, Her victim in this case was Bakul, a ten year old boy.

Personal experience: Bakul was always being pampered by Shahida and she in turn would use him to keep her shop tidy. In February, 1995, Bakul was given chocolates by Shahida which made the boy very happy. She also added that, "Today I am going to show you how to behave with a wife when get you married. Do you know how to behave with a wife?"

Bakul replied in the negative and Shahida assured him that she would do all the coaching. Bakul did not take seriously what Shahid was saying because Shahide was joking with him. But after some time of his arrival, Shahida closed the door of her shop. Then she lay down on a bed and took bake on her top promising more chocolates all the time. Shahida then made Bakul fondle her breasts and genitals. Soon after this she stripped Bakul of his clothes and she too stripped herself and began foreplay including genital manipulation.

Although Bakul says she didn't enjoy this, the lure of candies helped Bakul to continue. The encounter ended after Shahida was satisfied. She gave Bakul the full box of chocolates and told him to take as many as he wanted. Bakul was very happy. Shahida cautioned Bakul that he was not to disclose to anyone the "husband and wife" game they had played. She further enticed him by saying that anytime he wanted to have chocolates, he could come to her. After cuddling and kissing Bakul some more, she let him go. Shahida used Bakul thrice. Shahida would make sure that nobody would be in the house or had gone for a bath before having sex with Bakul.

Bakul says that after his initial hesitation, he would participate in these encounters because he knew that it would let him get chocolates. Furthermore, there was less suspicious because Shahida was much older and had seen held Bakul when he was an infant. There was less suspicious also because he would come to their house to play and then after all, they were cousins. This arrangement suited Shahida as well as Bakul.

Observations : Bakul came out with his story after 2 days of persuasion. The sexual relationship is still on and Bakul has no regrets about it. He has also turned into a candy and snacks freak, a habit which Shahida regularly sustains.

Case Study : Rural Boy. 9

Karim

Age When Abused, 9 Years

Background : The perpetrator of sexual abuse is a woman called Shahida (29). She has sexual relationship with other young boys including one mentioned in another case study, that of Bakul.



Experience : One day Karim wanted to buy a balloon which his mother refused. Karim threw a fit at this and began to cry. Just then Shahida, the shopowner had come to their house to change a Tk. 100/= note. Seeing Karim's tears, she told him to follow her to the shop. When she reached the shop, she gave him a balloon. Karim was very happy. Then she asked him. Will you do what I ask you to?" A very happy Karim said, "Yes".

So Shahida too Karim inside and made him sit opposite her. Then she lifted her clothes and made the boy masturbate her. As the balloon was all that mattered to Karim, he did as he was told. Shahida, however told him not to mention the incident, if he wanted more red balloons.

The gift of 2 balloons, didn't last long and Karim was back to Shahida for more. That day she was busy with customers and told him to come back later. Karim felt a bit disappointed but returned to the shop hoping to get the balloons. Seeing him Shahida closed her shop and repeated the same sexual encounter ploy. She again gave him the balloons. The balloons mattered most to Karim and what he had to do to get them, did not matter. The relationship goes on.

Karim's initial hesitancy is not present anymore and the arrangement of sex for balloon is still on. Karim has not disclosed this association with Shahida to anyone, which suits both parties.

Observations : 4 days were required to collect the information from Karim. Shahida's history has been discussed in an earlier case-study. Obviously, she can manage to getaway and she knows that. Her victims are growing up learning that toys and candy in return for sex is possible with a little bit of caution on the way to make it safe although both her sex partners mentioned are under ten years of age.

#### Case Study : Urban Girl. 1

Asma

Age When Abused, 12 Years

Background : Asma is the 14 years old daughter of a jeep driver, who lives with his family in one of the slums of Dhake. He has five children, Asma being the fourth. Her eldest sister Runu is married. Hamid, one of the brothers, drives a baby-taxi. Her second sister Mahmuda is a divorcee, working in a garments factory. She also used to work in the same factory but now she has left job to please her boy friend Nipun, who is about 18/19 years. Previously she had another boy friend, called Shaheen, but now Shaheen goes around with another girl Poly. Nipun's family is educated and quite well-off compared to her's. So she is keen to marry him and ready to do whatever he says. He presented her with a silver necklace and promised to buy her a three-piece shalwar suit for the Eid festivities. She lied to her mother and said that the necklace was a gift from her friend Mila.

Personal Experience : Asma loves to watch movies and dramas. One day she was rushing back home after work to watch a drama on T.V, when a burqa clad woman started to follow her. She stopped Asma saying that she was her mother's friend and according to her wish, she was there to take the girl to meet a prospective bridegroom. Asma did not believe the stranger and quickly ran to a police post which they happened to be passing by. The police caught hold of the woman and gave her a terrible beating including stomping on her. They let go of Asma after writing down her name and address. On returning home she asked her mother if she had organized any meeting with anyone but her mother didn't know any such woman.

On being questioned whether any older man had ever made any sexual overtures to her, she related the following incident. One day she had accompanied her friend Shely, Shely's sister Mira

and Mira's brother-in-law, Khaleque to the cinema. There, he deliberately sat between Asma and Shely, with his wife Mira sitting to her sister's left. When the lights went off he leant towards her, groping in the dark and started to fondle her. This made her feel sick yet she could not scream and create a scene. Returning home, she couldn't bring herself to tell anyone. Finally, five days after the incident, she told her sister. Her sister gave her a severe scolding and warned her to keep away from that man. "If people get to know all this you will have problems getting a groom." So she has dutifully kept it a secret from all.

Since she is a fair skinned and pretty girl, she receives a lot of attention from men. Lablu, popularly known as Lablu, is a notorious hoodlum of that neighbourhood who constantly harasses girls. He waits for them at the tubewell site where Asma and her friend Latifa also go to fetch water. One day he flashed himself to them. They ran away. Her mother also knows about this Lablu but none dares to report him to the authorities because he could knife anyone anytime.

## Case Study : Urban Girl. 2

Latifa

Age When Abused, 12 Years

Background : Latifa lives in a peri-slum area of Dhaka. She studies in class V. Her father is an office jeep driver, and her eldest brother drives a baby taxi. Four younger brothers are school goers. The family income is about 6,000 taka per month. They own a radio but no television set. Her father pays a rent of Tk. 800 for the house they stay in.

Personal Experience : Latifa and Asma are good friends. They move around a lot together and like her friend, has been subjected to harassment by local thugs like Lablu, who often flashes himself and makes indecent proposals. Its part of their life.

There was another boy in their neighbourhood called Manik, who first seduced and then deserted her. She first met him at the tubewell site where Asma and she used to go to fetch water. When he winked at her she pretended not to see it at all and left the place. But in the evening when she went a neighbour's (Safique) house to watch TV, Manik also turned up over there. He sat down next to her and while watching TV took his chance and pinched her. Another day while she was carrying home water from the tubewell site he drenched her completely. She slapped him and straight walked home.

But Manik didn't let the matter end there. He also waited for an opportunity and publicly humiliated her. She was so miserable that she burst into tears. As she walked to her friend's home in that frame of mind, Manik followed her into the house she had entered. Then he locked the room they were in and began to pacify her with words and apologies. He told her that she was the love of his life and that is way he showered so much attention on her. That he desperately wanted to marry her. Simultaneously he started to caress her body. Latifa was won over by the words and caressing and soon after, they had sex. Twelve years old Latifa succumbed to the worldly Manik's charms. Next, Manik kept saying that, if people are to marry, they must learn to come close to each other and as a consequence convinced Latifa that she was having a physical relationship with the person she was going to marry. Manik was good with words and Latifa fell for it.

But very soon her dreams of marriage crumbled when he left her in the lurch and suddenly vanished from that area. Her family was not aware of anything that was going on. Latifa is now in a state of shock. She had never thought that Manik's declarations was a standard method used to convince young girls to have sex without putting up too much resistance.

Observations : Latifa and Asma visited the Investigator together and talked for six days. Manik's betrayal has disgusted Latifa and now she only has hatred for him. She keeps herself busy with housework and the 12 year old girl's trauma level is obviously very high. Except with her friend Asma, she hasn't shared the painful secret with anybody else, at least none from the family.

### Case Study Urban Girl 3

Nafisa

Age When abused, 12 Years

Background : Nafisa is the daughter of a struggling rickshaw-puller, who barely earns Tk 3000 per month. He has six children. Her mother is a housewife busy looking after the large brood. the three younger children are too young to attend school. Nafisa, the third child is a student of Class 111. Her older sister Rashida works in a garments factory and older brother Neamat Hossain works in a shop. She is 12 years old.

Personal experience : Rashida was married to a man called Abul Hossain, who used to live near their old house. He had been making passes to Nafisa even before his marriage to her sister. Anytime he found her alone, he would not miss the chance to grab her in an embrace, fondle her breasts or put his hand inside her clothes. She tried her best to keep out of his clutches but reaching an end of her patience complained to her sister. Rashida took her husband to task and they had a big row over this. Abul Hossain already had two other wives whose existence he had kept a secret when he proposed to Rashida. He had a roving eye for girls with rich parents whom he could exploit for dowry money. Rashida, threw him out of the house in disgust and fury after the incident. She also asked Nafisa not to tell their mother or anyone else about it because it would hurt her a lot.

Two other boys have been paying attention to her but she has ignored both. She reported one boy to the school teacher who punished the boy for making passes. Both the sisters have a bad opinion about men in general. On the way to work, they have to pass men who make lewd remarks. They have learnt to ignore it. Their mother has also asked them to ignore Abul Hossain if they see him on the way to work.

Observations : She talked to me for two days. She still comes to the office to talk. She told me not to divulge her secret to anyone as people would think badly about her. This case study is a significant example of the dulabhai syndrome, which is a form of family level sex abuse. Incidentally, this is one case where neither of the sisters allowed abuse to continue to sustain a marriage. However, Abul Hossain is hardly a model husband and may have contributed to Rashida's decision to end the marriage because of her low sense of his worth.

### Case Study Urban Girl. 4

Nina

Age When abused, 11 Years

Background : Nina is the daughter of a rickshaw-puller. He has six children. The eldest boy Zafar is a madrasa student in Narayanganj, the second daughter, Rehana is a garments worker and the youngest Nina works as a maid servant. The younger three children stay at home. Her mother is a housewife.

Personal experience : Amongst Nina's close friends are Selina and Salma. Nina thinks Selina is a flirt while Salma is a good girl. All three girls are in their early teens. Nina and Salma have seen their friend Salma sleeping with Rahman, her boy friend.

About a year ago a boy named Sabu became interested in Nina but she did not respond to him. One day he blocked her way home and touched her breasts right in front of a number of people. She was so mortified with shame that she ran weeping to her mother. Hearing her experience, Nina's outraged parents complained to Sabu's guardians and he was punished by the informal legal justice system, the shalish. Sabu's uncle took the initiative and organized the salish. Since then he does not disturb her and avoids her but still she is scared of him, fearing his revenge. Everyone lauded her prompt action, including her friend Selina.

Observations : Nina is still paranoid about any man touching her or even attracting attention. At her work place she covers herself with a black dupatta inspite of the absence of any male in that workplace. She is afraid of there own sexuality and because of the public humiliation. She experienced, is deeply traumatized. She sees the entire matter of being a girl as something to be scared and embarrassed of.

Case Study : Urban Girl. 5

Binu

Age When Abused. 8 + Years

Background : Binu comes from an affluent family. Her father, owns a pharmaceutical factory. Their residence is a huge rented house. Their own house is being constructed now. The monthly family budget is about Tk 25,000 putting them in a high income bracket.

Binu studies in Class IV and her younger brother Rokon goes to nursery class. Her mother stays at home and is very anxious about the children's welfare, especially about her pretty little girl. She personally accompanies the children to school to make sure nothing happens. Binu is ten years old.

Personal experiences : Her mother, concerned about Binu getting good grades in school had employed a male teacher on the advice of another guardian as house tutor. He was about 30 years old, an University post-graduate degree holder. His name is Sohrab. After a year or so of studying under him, Cynthia shocked her mother one day when she said that though she did not have breasts like here, the teacher insisted on tickling her there. On being questioned further by the frantic mother as to how long it had been going on she replied. "For a long time."

When Binu's father returned home, her mother told her about the abusive behaviour to the house tutor. The parents decided to sack the teacher the next day which they did without allowing the girl to meet him anymore.

Observations : Cynthia appears to be unaffected by the abuse. She misses the teacher because he was good to her and used to bring little gifts. As there was no violence and not much beyond caressing, she doesn't appear to be seriously traumatized.

Case Study : Urban Girl. 6

Shathi

Age When Abused. 14 Years

Background : Shathi is 14 years old but looks older because she is well built. She is non literate because her father, does not allow her to attend any school. He thinks going to school makes a girl "clever and rebellious". He can no longer work as he is paralysed. Now his older son pedals his rickshaw to make a living. Shathi's second brother works in a shop. Her sister Rokeya is married.

Personal experience : Shathi spends most of her time at home. Sometimes she and her friend Ruby play in the graveyard, which is quite far from her house. One day while playing there, they saw an influential landlord's son Zakir, along with fore others, forcibly drag a girl to that isolated spot. Then they did some "bad things" (gang rape) to her. Shathi wanted to flee the spot but her friend was smarter and asked her to remain silent. "If discovered watching, we might be killed by those people." After the rapists left the place they went closer and found the raped girl weeping. On seeing them, they girl accused them of cowardice by not running off to get help for her. They found her bleeding profusely. The two friends became really scared after observing the incident.

In her previous neighbourhood where she lived, there was a rickshaw puller, name Zabbar, who professed his loved his loved for her. But her brothers didn't want his sister to marry a rickshaw puller. They want her to marry a jeep driver. So she kept away from him. yet one day he managed to get her alone with her alone with the help of her friend Ruby. He tried to caress her but she threatened to scream and create a scene. Taking advantage of the situation Shathi fled away. Terrified of being punished for having gone into a situation where she might have been molested, she has never told her mother about the incident.

Observations : Shathi's case is significant because it shows the explicitly the high degree of urban sexual violence. Not only did she observe a gang rape and nothing happened to the rapists but the helplessness of the victims are also projected. She herself was a victim and was set up by her friend, another example of shifting loyalties in the urban poor scene. That she can't even share the traumatic experience which also displays the fear girls have of being confined at home by their parents because of such possibilities. Parents can't protect the girl children much, they can only keep them in. This fear drives many girls not to share the experience in the urban sector with their family.

Case Study : Urban Girl. 7

Selina

Age When Abused. 12 Years

Background : Selina is the only daughter of a truck driver, working for the Government. He is a dope addict and his wife is a dope pusher. He goes away on official trips for three or more days in one go. Her mother does not come home before 2 o'clock at night. Most of the time she is left to her own devices. Her friends include Mahmuda and Selina, who are also her confidantes. She is 13 years old.

Personal experience : Taking advantage of the fact that her mother does not come home till late, the landlord's son Rahman entered their house. Selina thought he had some business to attend to but the man simply took advantage of the situation and forced her to have sex him. After this she would make nocturnal visits regularly to their house.

When Selina had protested against it, he forced her to sleep with him by holding a knife to her throat. Terrified she gave in and hid the fact from her mother all the time. But one day, when after having sex, she bled a lot and was in great pain, her mother realized what was going on. Then Selina told everything to her mother got Selina treated by the doctor but she did not tell her

father anything she also sought out Rahman and warned him to keep away from her daughter. He does not dare to come near Selina anymore. Renu has left her old job. Now she works part time in a house and is home by dusk. She also spoke to her husband about moving to another place. Many of their neighbours knew about Rahman and his sexual activities. Sometimes Selina feels disgusted with her self but she is still paranoid about Rahman retaliating. Her mother has advised Selina that if Rahman tries anything the next time, she should brandish a knife and tell him she intends using it.

Observations: Selina disclosed these facts to the Investigator on the third day. Her friends Mahmuda and Salma had given hints about this. Lalil's mother is a tower of strength, an unusual example of standing up to violence and challenging it. Its possible her profession as a soft drug peddler has given her insight in to the attitude of bullies or its just that she a brave woman. But she has stood up and must be noted for her role in making her child's life as tolerable as its possible for her to do.

#### Case Study: Urban Girl. 8

Sara

Age When Abused. 13 Years

Background: Sara is the thirteen year old. Two of her older sisters got married, left for their husband's home after three months and were never seen again. Some people whisper that sheer poverty forced her father to sell his daughters. Sara thinks her brother-in-law might have sold them into prostitution. This incident took place about 6/7 years ago. Her sister Jobeda died of bullet wounds in the 1971 war. Another sister Momena is married, Parveen works in the garments factory, and Firoza is a maidservant. Sara collects trash from other people's homes and deposits in the trash bin, for doing which, she is paid a small sum of money by each family.

Personal experience: One day about a week ago while she gone to a particular house to collect the trash, a man opened the door. When she went into the kitchen to collect the garbage, the man Aabu Taher, who had opened the door grabbed and raped her. There was nobody else in the flat at that time. After the incident she suffered pain, pain had an infection and ran a high temperature. she did not tell her mother anything about being raped. One day, when she was at the municipal tap site to collect water, she started to bleed badly. Asma who was also there saw the bleeding and told her to go home through lane less traveled by people while she brought the water to their house.

When Asma reached their house, she found Sara,s mother scolding her but Sara then told her mother what had happened. Hearing this, Sara,s mother told them to keep the matter a secret. Sara bled for two days and was almost dead when she was removed to the hospital in a comatose state. The hospital authority recognized the symptoms of rape and wanted to call in the police. But the urban poor are scared of the police and they left the hospital with medical prescription as soon as possible. They treated her at home and was a little better though weak when she was interviewed.

Observations: fearing a scandal would effect Sara's marriage prospect the family has hushed up the affair, inspite of her mother knowing the identity of the rapist. this is a standard response. She comes from a family in especially difficult circumstances where daughters are possibly sold and the family lives on the edge of commercial sex. They are so impoverished that staying is a nightmare. Being abused only adds to that.

## Case Study : Urban Girl. 9

Saleha

Age When Abused. 11 + Years

Background: Saleha is about 12 years old. Her father works in a iron rod shop. Earning around Tk 4000. She is youngest daughter and attends school like her older brother and sister. They live in a cramped one room tenement flat whenever guests drop in, both the sister have to sleep over at a friends place. They have to share one toilet facility with seven other families. which poses a great problem for the girls.

Saleha is in love with Faisal but they are keeping it a secret. Faisal has said that if Saleha doesn't marry him. He will knife himself to death There are a few others who pay attention to the pretty girl but she prefers to ignore them Saleha has a number of friends at school of both sexes. Aasma and Latifa are her close friends. she thinks ill of Latifa,s older sister, Firoza, who goes out if given money Saleha doesn't know if Firoza enjoys sex or not "but Firoza certainly loves money".

Saleha is 12 years old but thinks of herself as a grown-up. Faisal has told her that when he gets a job and she is a bit older, they will marry.

Personal experience: Saleha lives in a world where violence is only a breath away. Attending to toilet needs at night is fraught with danger. One particular night Saleha had to go to the bathroom alone because her mother was unwell. while there a big built curly-haired man jumped her. Clamed shut her mouth with a rough cloth, dragged her into a empty room next to it and raped her. The man told her that if she told anyone about it, she would be knifed. He emphasised his threat by holding a knife at her throat. Petrified with fear she managed to make it back to her room. When her mother asked if any thing Was wrong, she answered in a daze that she had seen a ghost.

Although she had to go alone as alone as her mother was too unwell that day, she doesn't venture out at night anymore. She is very scared to go to the toilet unaccompanied at night. Following the incident she suffered lower abdominal pain and urinary infection. Her mother advised her to drink lots of water and rest. At that time her age was 11 years 4 months .She was pre-pubescent when she was raped. she had her first menstruation two mother after being raped.

Observations: Saleha lives in a state of terror. She has a felling that the man is watching her she even thinks that she saw the man once but it was dark when she was raped and so she is not sure. She can't forget the and the accompanying threat. She wants to tell her mother but she doesn't have the courage to say so.

## Case Study : Urban Girl. 10

Ferdousi

Age When Abused. 10 Years

Background: Ferdousi comes from an educated and affluent family. Her father is a graduate and her mother has completed high school. Her father owns five shops and they have a number of properties in Dhaka city including at posh areas like Gulshan and Banani. At present they reside in a four storied flat.

Ferdousi is 10 years old and studies in class 11 in a kindergarten school. She loves to watch cable TV and play with her younger brother, Zia whose age is there.

Personal experience : Previously she used to enjoy playing with her father's employees, Khalil and Mizan, who regularly came on errands to the house she used to visit her father at the shop and Mizan would sometimes take her there. One day while she was going with Mizan to her father, the rickshaw they were moving in changed directions. She became scared and asked Mizan what was happening Mizan said that he was happening Mizan said that he was going to his friend's place for a short while and then he would take her to the shop. But the rickshaw waded through the lanes and by lanes of the area and ended up at a strange house. Ferdousi found it empty and when she asked about what was going on, Mizan said that his friend would soon be coming. Meanwhile let's play, "said Mizan suddenly he took off his clothes in front of her and said that they would play wonderful games which she would enjoy very much but she started to cry in sheer fright and kept on crying. It became so much a scene that Mizan had no option but to take her home.

Observation : Since that day on, she avoids these employees and prefers to go only with her mother. Her mother was a bit concerned at her sudden change of behaviour as she used to be an extrovert but it didn't become an issue in the family. She hasn't shared the experience with anyone. She prefers to quote her mother who says, "My baby is now a big girl. She knows what is good and bad for her."

Case Study: Urban Girl. 11

Alea

Age When Abused. 11 Years

Background: Alea works at a garments factory. She lives her maternal uncle's family. She is unwanted there because her uncle can't afford to her and so he is an extra burden on his impoverished family. But there is no other place for her to stay in Dhaka. She hails from Faridpur district where her father is a vegetable vendor. Her mother, is housewife. Her eldest stepbrother looks after her maternal grandfather's cattle. Alea used to live with her stepmother. Her sisters, Saleka and Monowara are married to farmers living in the village. Her younger brother Zahirul goes to school and the youngest, Rabiul stays at home. It is hard for her poor father to feed so many mouths. Therefore about eight months ago she decided to come to the city to seek a suitable job.

Personal experience : Alea, who is 11 year old got a maid servant's job getting minimum wages. Her mistress would constantly find faults in her work and verbally abuse her. Khalil, another servant, working at the same place would sympathize with her and occasionally buy her chocolates.

One day when her mistress went out for shopping, she locked up the house while instructing Alea to stay on the rooftop till she (the mistress) returned. But Khalil easily found her there, found her all alone and vulnerable. He approached her and started small talk and she made declarations of great affection. While this was on, he suddenly tugged at her clothes, tore the string which held her clothes on her waist, making her nude. Before she could manage to gather herself, Khalil jumped on her and raped her.

On her mistress's return she tearfully narrated her experience but instead of receiving any sympathy she was reviled for not fleeing to the landlord's house. Khalil the rapist hardly received any scolding. But because she had told the mistress of the house, Khalil began to threaten her with physical violence. "I will tear you into pieces", he kept saying. It terrified Alea to no end adding to her already agonized mind.



After that day her movements used to be strictly monitored as if she was responsible for provoking Khalil into raping her. Her mistress not only scolded but frequently also beat her. Finding the situation intolerable and being scared of Khalil's constant threats, she decided to quit and came back to her uncle's house.

She was naturally not welcomed back. Her uncle soon got her a job in a garments factory. Alea is working there to pay for her upkeep at her uncle's. She earns about TK. 400/-, but this meagre amount is not sufficient according to her aunt. She cannot expect a higher wage as she is only 12 years old. She did even get her periods when she was physically abused. Now that she has started menstruating it is a great problem to take care of personal hygiene, because there is only one bathroom shared by the inmates of five houses. One has to queue up for one to two hours to one get a chance to use it. Therefore she waits till she reaches the factory to take care of her needs. But when she spends longer time in the toilet she is reprimanded by the factory supervisor as well.

Observations: Alea is thoroughly disgusted with her life. Once she returned to the village but her father beat her and forcibly sent her back. She is scared to work as a maid servant again. A friend offered her a job in a different factory paying TK. 500/-, where she would have to make sweet talk with male workers, but she is not willing to. She knows what happens in the end.

#### Case Study : Urban Girl. 12

Pruma

Age When Abused. 12 Years

Background: Pruma is a cute, 12 years old girl, a daughter of a senior government officer, residing in the Govt. colony. As both her parents work and long hours at that, she spends a lot of time at the neighbouring apartments. She is a bubbly loveable girl welcomed everywhere. Her favourite person is one Rabea Apa living in one of the downstairs flat, to whom she sometimes goes to her help with her homework.

Personal experience: One day she went down to Rabea apa's flat in the morning around 11 Am., to seek her assistance for some maths problems. The door was opened by Rabea's second brother Hiron, who had recently qualified as a doctor. He is generally known to be a quiet, well-behaved person.

He asked her inside the flat and as Pruma headed towards the bedroom, he asked her to sit down and that Rabea, who was then in the toilet would soon be with her. When Pruma sat down in the bed in his sister's room, he followed her there and sat down close to her on the bed. Beginning you feel a bit uneasy she moved a bit away but he also moved and then grabbing her hands burst into tears proclaiming to be in love with her. "Pruma, I have been in love with you for a long time. Please don't refuse me. If you don't marry me, I shall die."

Pruma was thrilled and felt a shiver going through her hearing such words but she didn't lose her senses. She said, "Please leave my hands. Apa will be coming soon. "Although a child she knew what it was all about. She had also seen a lot of this stuff on TV. It was then that Hiron replied that nobody was in the house. All had gone out. By the time he had also locked themselves in.

Pruma tried to get out but Hiron kept saying that he felt deeply towards her and if she didn't reciprocate his love, he would swallow poison and die. These declarations and accompanying caresses had its impact on Pruma's mind and slowly she gave in.

An hour later, after the sexual act was over, he took her to the toilet, washed and dressed her. By then she was bleeding heavily. With great difficulty and pain, she managed to climb the stairs and reach home. By then blood had soaked her panty and was trickling down her legs. Their housemaid happened to notice it and immediately the king that Proma was having her first period promptly got her a sanitary pad and a fresh panty her mistress's drawers and instructed the girls how to use it. Proma's entire body was then racking with pain. The maid informed the mother as soon as she came in about what she thought had happened.

Her mother came into her room and told her that everything would be all right. That it happened to every girl at her age and the rest of the facts about menstruation. Hearing her mother, Proma was relieved. It meant that her mother did not suspect anything. Proma already knew about menstruation from her friends. The following days she spent in sheer agony as she ran constant temperature and suffered excruciating pain in her lower abdomen. During this time Rabea had visited her twice to commiserate.

A few days after the incident, Hiron's came and gave the family a wedding card. Hearing that Hiron was marrying shattered Proma's small world of illusions. When her mother asked when the bride was seen and approved and all this was arranged, it was revealed that on the very day Hiron had abused Proma, his family had gone to finalise his marriage with the girl of his choice. Shocked beyond belief, Proma asked if Hiron really wanted to marry or not. When Rabea said Yes, Proma "but he said that he only loved me." The elders burst into laughter hearing her words and Rabea embraced her and said, "But we all love you ". Her abusive experience was lost in the meaning and perception of words to the unsuspecting. Now Proma abhors men like Hiron.

Observations: Proma does know about relationships and love and sex but she can't connect to abuse and betrayal. Her experience with Hiron has seriously traumatized her and made her aware of the naiveté of the family regarding a girl's sexuality, a common affliction amongst rural and urban population segments.

### Case Study: Urban Girl. 13

Shamima

Age When Abused. 10 Years

Background: Shamima is a 12 years old girl who formerly worked as a domestic help but now goes to a school run by a local NGO. She is determined about gaining a proper education which will enable her to be independent and ensure for her a better future than her mother's who is called Jahanara. Her father is a push-cart puller, who suffers from chronic gastritis which prevents him from working regularly. Her younger sister, who is not keen about studying works in a garments factory for a salary of Tk. 300 and this money helps the family survive. Her mother is a domestic servant.

Personal experience : When Shamima was young she used to accompany Jahanara to her place of work. Gradually she grew up and learnt to do the household chores independently.

The mistress of the house had a brother whom Shamima used to address as "Azad uncle". One day when everyone had gone to the market and she happened to be as one in the house he called out to her to fetch him a glass of water. Apparently he was supposed to be sleeping so he did not go out with the rest of the family members. A bit startled by his call and presence, she was hesitant to enter his room.

But he rushed out and dragged her into the room and tore his dresses. "If you shout, I will kill you," screamed the man. By that time she was naked and in absolute terror. He embraced her so tightly when abusing her that it hurt her incredibly.

On returning home she told her mother the partial truth that he had fingered her panty so she wouldn't want to go back to that house again. Her mother grasped the teal situation and didn't force her to go there or say any more.

Earlier, Jahanara used to leave her behind at home when she went to work, delegation some household tasks for her to complete. One of them was to collect sawdust for use as fuel, from the sawmill in the neighbourhood. She used to go there with a friend. One day the sawdust mill manager took them to a room at the back, where he bade them to rest on a makeshift bed while he went to a nearby hotel to get some buns for them. After they finished eating, they grey-bearded manager tried to force them to fillet him. She refused to do it and ran away. On the other hand her friend agreed to for a payment of five taka only. Shamima avoids that place like plague now. When the incident occurred, she was eight years old.

While commuting to school she faces teasing by the neighbourhood teenage boys. She hates such behaviour and doesn't pay any attention to them but feels sad at times. She maybe a poor girl but not a pathetic creature. Her will to rise above her present position is indomitable.

Observations : She confided the incidents to me after four days. She strongly advocates that such men should be locked up in jail. She is young but displays the spirit many urban girls have of undergoing trauma but is still fighting it.

Case Study : Urban Girl, 14

Mehar

Age When Abused. 10 Years

Background : Mehar is a 11 year old girl living in the slums with her mother, step-father and a baby sister. Her father left her mother to marry a second time. Later he expired. Her step-father did want her, so she was sent to stay with her maternal uncle in the village.

During her stay there she was molested by Azad, nephew of her aunt, to whose hut she had to carry cooked food sometime. She did not like him touching her, but she was scared to report him. Her aunt would have thought she was making up stories and definitely beat her. One day when her mother was visiting she disclosed the shocking truth. Her mother spoke to her about it but she alleged that since Mehar had not complained about her nephew's behaviour earlier, how could she have known it.

Mehar also mentioned that her cousin sister, whom she calls pari Bu, used to visit that boy too. and since she was in love she would allow him to touch her intimately. That boy promised to marry her Aunt. for which she got severe beating from Pari.

Mehar's mother decided to take her back to Dhaka, if it meant incurring the wrath of her husband. Mehar would help to look after her baby step-sister, Majeda, while her mother took part time jobs maid-servant for the up keep of Mehar sadly narrates, "My step-father does not want me around. He beats me for no reason if I put down Majeda from my lap. I am only 10/11 years old girl little girl myself How can he expect me to carry around a 2 years old heave child girl all day". About her mother she says "My mother is good although she occasionally vents her temper on me. My mother is very keen to give me proper education. She comes home from work in the afternoons so that I may get the opportunity to attend school.

Once her mother was sick and couldn't go to work. There was not a morsel of food for her to eat. The male neighbours tried to take advantage of her plight. Mehar had tears in her eyes as she related this. One vile man sporting a prickly beard in particular would wait in front of a shop on her way to school, to entice her by offering to buy bread. Even with hunger gnawing at her entrails she refused his offer as lust clearly shone in his eyes, rudely reminding her of her ordeal in Pari Bu's house. She never mother about this because she fears she will not be allowed to go to school which in turn means more hours of torture carrying Majeda. Her good friend Shamima walks to school with her.

#### Case Study: Urban Girl. 15

Shafia

Age When Abused. 9 years

Background : Shafia is a 10 years old minor, daughter of a caretaker named Shamsuddin. She is the youngest amongst six brothers and sisters. One of the brothers drives a baby taxi, and the other works in a shop. The family income about Tk 10,000/ per month; and they reside in a semi-detached house. Previously they lived in the Badda slum area. Off and on Shafia works in garments factories; and in between she visits her married sister .

Personal Experience: This incident took place about a year ago when she was only nine at that time. Commuting to Tongi unaccompanied was not difficult for her. close to her home in Badda slum there is a bus stand from where she took the Tongi bus. On the return journey she had only to walk a short distance along the railway track to the bus stand to catch the bus to Dhaka. After a while she noticed an elderly man following her along the track. with a gold chain in his hand. Flashing the chain at her he used to accost her "Marry me; I will present this chain to you." Shafia was taken a back at the leering words, which sounded to her more like a proposition than a proposal, of marriage. Sensing his bad motive, she started shorting for help to attract public attention. Fortunately some members of the public came to her rescue; caught hold of the offender, and gave him a sound beating.. After an hour or so a kind gentleman put on the bus to Dhaka. While on her back home she suddenly caught sight of the same person who had accosted her riding on the same bus. She was scared but did not panic, but took extra precaution not to be seen by him. She never told her family about this incident, anticipating restriction on her out side movements to ensure her security.

She is self-confident about being able to care of her self in any situation. her confidence arose from an inner strength as result of her mother's teaching. Long ago, in the search for livelihood when her mother used to go out and leave her at home with the other children to fend for themselves in the slum. The mother warned the children not to give any chance to any person to do any mischief-- show the shoe and shout for help.

Shafia's family is financially better off due to her older brother's income, and they no longer live in the slum. The monthly rent of their house is taka 2,000 PM. It is sparsely furnished, with a black and white television set, and a radio. On asked to give her opinion on the males in the family, she responded "A man will be man; but some men are different. They are good like my brothers. Her opinion about her father: "He is not too bad. Previously she used to beat my mother but now faced with my brother's ultimatum to leave the house he stopped the beating, but the abuse continues.

Observations: Shafia is a self-confident and assertive girl competent enough to take care of herself under any adverse circumstances.

## Case Study: Urban Girl. 16

Miss X1

Age When Abused. 13 years

background : Miss X1 is 22 years old. She passed out from the Dhaka University and is now working for a bank. Her income range is around Tk, 10000. Her family is very well established. She stays with her parents, of and on, till last year (1994) but since then has totally separated. She stays with a family which has had a long standing dispute with her own family this hope to embarrass them. She has one brother.

Personal Experience : X1 is a victim of multiple sex abuse. Her earliest memory records that her father used to play with her genitals and she would feel pleased about it. She thought that this was her father's way of showing love. She was not in any psychological conflict with her father's behaviour.

When she was about ten years old, her father began to engage in sexual foreplay and end in orgasm though not inside. A year after this began she had her first period. During this time, an old domestic aide helped her, explaining what had happened. Seeing all that blood, she had thought that she had cut herself or that she or that she had a terrible disease. When she told her mother she was supportive of her situation. For a year after she had her first period her father didn't touch her. During this period she was uneasy because she didn't understand what was happening to the father-daughter relationship.

When she was about 13 years old she did very well in the exams and her parents threw a party to celebrate. Amongst the many relatives that came were her uncles and aunts of whom she was very fond of. One of the uncles, her mother's brother who was a resident outside the city stayed back and she spent that night talking to him. She told him that her father didn't like her as he used to before. Her uncle, after sometime began to caress her and later she also responded and they had penetrative sex which wasn't entirely unfamiliar because of what her father used to do. She thought that's how men showed love. She also imagined her uncle to be her father whom she missed a lot. Her bleeding was surprisingly low and she was not afraid.

Subsequently, she had further such sessions with her uncle during that stay. After he left, her father came to her room at night and told her that she was a good girl. Then they had sex. X1 says that her father must have had come to know that she had sex with her uncle.

In the next five years she had sex alternatively with her father and soon after her father taught her to use anything or didn't say anything, she says. (This couldn't be confirmed).

When she was eighteen, she had a crush on a college student who lived next door and they began to meet. She also began to go out with him and enjoy a normal. However, her father came to know about this and this led to a number of scenes. She was also beaten up by her father. The boy's parents were informed and her mother kept her locked up. After sometime, it was decided to send her away to her cousin's house where she was expected to be "safe".

At that place, she was sexually abused by her uncle but her aunt found it out and sent her away. She understood from her conversation that her uncle had relationship with other young people before. For the first time she felt very confused about it all.

She was sent by the aunt to another aunt's place. Here she told her aunt everything who screamed and fainted hearing her story. She then told X1 that what she had done was wrong and she must never talk about to anyone. It was a question of family honour. During these discussions, X1

realized, (she was actually suspecting this after her relationship with the boy) for the first time, that others don't necessarily experience sexual relationship with fathers and uncles. She began to think of herself as "sinful and hateful". She also began to develop a strong resentment against her parents (both) for not protecting her. The aunt is question would sleep with her in the same room. She was a window.

She didn't see her parents for a year and began to work for an NGO in Khulna, where she was staying. She also got admitted to a college. Later she moved to Dhaka and was admitted to a College university and she did well in her exams and was working at the NGO at the same time. Here she read some documents on incest and had a nervous breakdown and was in shock for days. She spent time in a hospital. After her return, she felt almost uncontrollable hate for her father and uncle and even for her mother who she thought should have told her.

She also developed sexual attraction for the same sex and avoided male company. All this time she had been staying with a colleague with patches of short duration stays with her parents. This friend left after being married to a Bangladeshi in USA. She was desperate to find another place to stay because she didn't want to stay with her parents. Finally she found a place with another colleague who was looking for a flat sharer. She later began to feel romantically attached to her also.

At that time her parents brought a marriage proposal but she declined. They kept insisting but she refused and then said that she wanted to "marry" her flat mate. Her parents and brother flew into a rage and beat both up. Next day, her brother came and with the help of two friends dragged her away. She was kept locked up and told she would be allowed to go out only if she agreed to marry. She stayed this way for two weeks.

Later she was brought to the psychiatrist who took her case study. She told the doctor that because of how the males had treated her, it would be impossible to live with a man because she hated all men.

When her refusal continued, she was again locked up. When the matter came to the notice of the neighbour with whom she stays now, they made a lot of noise (go get even with this family it seems) and she was allowed to come out. She has been staying with them since then.

Observations : The doctor contacted her and she agreed to meet the Investigator. She confirmed the story and seemed normal except when discussing her incestuous relationship. Considering what she has gone through, she seems to have psychologically survived but her trauma level is very high. Her friend is also missing.

She told me that she would only have a relationship with women because men exploit children. Her apparent "deviant" behavior is the result of her sexual abuse, the doctor confirms.

When asked if they are pedophiliac or not, she doctor says that pedophiliacs generally tend to have sex with children but in this country many adults have sex both with very young children and also adults and it would be difficult to pin such people down with definitions and categories. However, the father's behaviour shows suppressed pedophilia which got a vent although the relationship was incestuous. The uncle's behavior is more conventional and is commonplace.

The doctor believes that the borderline between childhood and adulthood is very thin in this country and this leads to many such relationships. Without sexual education this can't be combated.

Miss. Xb

Age When Abused. 12 Years

Background : Xb (12) was studying in an English medium school when she first experienced sex. She knew about it from books and TV but the ideas were vague. She had two brothers and a sister. They were much older than her and she grew up sort of alone. She was an indifferent student and her parents were not happy with her exam results.

Around this time, a private tutor was appointed for her. He was from the village and apparently a distant relative. He was given a separate room to stay next to the servants. Her mother told her that he was a poor relative and she should not mix with him as an equal. She was practically told to look down upon him.

Personal Experience : She therefore made it a point not to study properly under him and made his life miserable. She humiliated him and threw things at him. One day this man broke down and began to cry. She was shocked and began to laugh but when he went on crying, she felt bad and started to, first apologize and then stroke his hair. She then felt an erect penis against her. After sometime the man went away to his room and later returned.

She was very excited by his erection because she felt that he was attracted to her which meant she was very beautiful and so on. Later they began to be friends and she began to study hard and together would finish the work quickly. Her exam grades improved and she and the house tutor became friends. They also continued to engage in "mild and passive" caressing.

One day, when her mother was asleep and her father was in office and other servants asleep, the man asked her to make his room beautiful. She was thrilled and went to his room and she didn't know when the room was locked. He started to caress her openly and then kiss her. She became scared but he put his hand on her mouth and told her that she would tell his mother that she was his friend, which he had been forbidden to be. He had penetrative sex and she bled. After sex, he helped her clean up and told her everything would be all right.

She fell sick the next day and was diagnosed as having urine infection. She had fever and the tutor also looked after her. During the nights he sometimes fondled her but she didn't resist because she didn't know what to say. She had become friendly and that would make her mother unhappy.

After she got better her studies declined and when her parents became angry, the tutor threatened to tell her parents.

"I will go but so will you." So out of fear she began to study again and once her grades improved her tutor realized and forced her to have sex again. This continued for two years. During this period, she never told anyone and nobody suspected him. They thought he was too poor to even think of doing anything with a wealthy man's daughter.

A young servant later came to know when she saw both and she began to blackmail her. She began to steal things to give to her. She was so terrified of the situation that she wrote a letter to her mother explaining all and one day drank some insecticide. That's how the parents found out.

Her father beat up the tutor and threw him out and then had her checked to see if she was pregnant or not. She had her periods before she met the tutor so there was a chance but it proved negative.

She dropped out of school and couldn't face anyone believing that everyone knew what had happened. She was however helped when her sister came from abroad and had seen such cases

been treated. She took him to a doctor where she first told someone everything and later was in her care for a year.

Observations : She feels that unless her mother scared her so much, she would have told her about it and this wouldn't have gone so far. Unfortunately, it was otherwise. She has a deep sense of being unclean and can't stand any meters related to sex.

She also believes that children should be told about the danger from older men. Her abuser was married with children and well past forty. Lack of communication between children and parents can create walls which appear to assist abuse creating situations.

#### Case Study: Urban Boy. 1

X3 Ratul

Age When Abused. 8 years

Background: This is a recollection of memory. The person is socially well established and has connections with both the national and international world. He studied in of the more posh schools of Dhaka and remembers going to school in a chauffeur driven car. His brothers and sisters all studied in the same school. He experienced early puberty. He is very articulate, has a sound knowledge of rural credit issues and appears generally well balanced.

He was aware that TL was conducting some work on sex education and made good natured fun of it all. He never boasted about his sexual adventures but never discussed sex with any seriousness, even when the discussion had turned serious.

After the "child abuse" episode on sex education was broadcast by BBC, he called the TL up on telephone and began to weep. Subsequently, the story emerged.

Personal Experience: It appears that he used to live in a joint family including his uncles and their family. He used to be very friendly with an uncle who was the immediate younger brother of his father. This brother used to call him and fondle him about the "uncle" was wearing only a towel which he thought was natural. However, his mother was warning him about the "uncle" and asked him to play more with the cousins. But since this uncle was a good story teller, he preferred his uncle's company. At that time he was about eight years old.

One day, in his room, his uncle began to tell his story accompanied by actions. He was enjoying the story and his uncle was telling him how people are tortured in jail. It was very dramatic and he was enjoying the charade and then he realized that his uncle was wearing only a towel which he let fall exposing himself to the boy. He also encouraged him to fondle his penis. The boy found the experience unusual but not arousing.

This game continued for days. Later they would both become naked and play such games. It was during one such game that his uncle made hem have anal sex. Subsequently, his uncle also tried anal penetration but he cried out and he was allowed to let go. His uncle gave him many gifts and asked him to stay quiet. The uncle was a bachelor and a very wealthy businessman.

One day while they were both playing, the father entered the room and seeing both became very curious but his uncle, shouted at is brother to leave which he did. After this incident, his mother took him away to her father's place and left him there. He was not given any reason for this change of address but told that he had been a very bad boy. He was filled with shame.

While staying here, the boy began to have sexual games, like the ones he had with his uncle, with another boy who used to stay in the house. This was done secretly and nobody came to know. His



mother also didn't tell anyone why the boy had been kept at this home. His grand parents thought that he had become "bokhate" and had stolen money or something and never suspected otherwise. A few months, later, his father got a job in the middle east and they left for he work. He met his uncle just once who gave him a toy as a gift.

While in the middle east he had sex with the other boys in the school and this was considered more fun than anything else. His friends joked about it but nobody felt ashamed. He returned to Bangladesh after many years and began to work for an agency. As an independently wealthy person, he can lead a life of his own but he told us that he can't have sex with women although they arouse him. He can only have sex with men and after having sex, he feels shame.

Observations : Having heard the BBC sex education series series he realized that he had been abused and for the first time felt that something had been lost. He feels a great sense of shame and hurt and feels that he is "abnormal" but he can't leave his present sexual pattern because he is aroused only when he feels ashamed. He has only same sex partners.

On that day he said that he would lie to kill his uncle. He wasn't serious but he is deeply disturbed.

Case Study : Urban Boy. 2

X4 Shanu

Age When Abused. 11 Years

Background : He is 11 years old. He used to work as a domestic aide in a house where his mother had worked before. His mother left one bandha job and took chuta kaj to earn more so he took the job. His father deserted the family a year back. He has three brothers and two sisters. Sometimes they stay in the villages, sometimes they with her mother in the city.

The family that he worked for comprised the husband, wife and two kids, one boy and one girl. He was close to the girl's age and they were friends sort of. The boy was very small. He did all the work that he was asked to do and given food to eat. The salary was paid to the mother directly so he doesn't know how much he was getting in cash.

After the child would return from school he would play with her the games she had learnt from school. This time of the day, the afternoon, was very pleasant. Later he prepared tea and did other work when the girl started to do her homework.

He would also notice that the husband and the wife would fight a lot though he doesn't know on what subject. The fights would terrify the girl and they would run and hide in some corner of the house away from the screams. It was actually a sort of a game. During this time she and the girl held each other and sometimes touched each other's genitals.

Personal Experience : When the schools closed for the summer vacation, the husband went home for a holiday to his village home and took the daughter with him leaving the small child behind. One afternoon, the wife asked him to press her legs which he used to do before anyway. However, that day, after sometime, she kept pulling her clothes up and then finally fully exposed herself.

He knew what it was all about because he had heard about it from other servant boys. He was scared but couldn't do anything. She asked him to come close and then undressed him and started to manipulate his genitals. Then she made him straddle her and penetrate which he did. This went on for the entire afternoon.

Afterwards, the acts varied but for an entire month, he was forced to have sex with her. He hinted once or twice to his mother but remembered the wife's warning that he would be thrown out and put inside jail and so didn't elaborate.

When they used to have sex, she behaved nicely with him but later, even ten minutes later, she treated him bad and even beat him. She didn't change her behaviour because of their relationship.

This went on till the husband returned and continued albeit irregularly as long as he worked in the house. He later left to work as a tempo helper which was also organized by his mother. He says that he thinks that his mother probably was forced to or willingly had sex with the man of the house and so the cause of the fights.

He has become a rude working child and uses foul language all the time as we talked to him.

"Who are you that you have come to talk to me? Who are you bhadroloks (gentleman)? If... your wives so I am more important than you are. You gentlemen are impotent and so you think of so many things and stay in nice houses but see what you do." He was both very sanctimonious and angry. But he calmed down enough to tell the story.

He feels that he has committed a crime and by doing so he will go to hell. He heard this from a was (public religious sermon). Now he doesn't hesitate to steal money and palm off false notes to his customers. "Everyone's a criminal", he said.

Having experienced sex once, he now has sex with whoever he gets a chance to have. They could be his friends, street girls or the cleaning women in the cheap restaurants who take 10 from him for a masturbation.

Observations : For his age, he is a strangely cynical person with a growing reputation for violence and said that, his parents, the husband and wife and all others will go to hell. And that includes himself. The experience has made him an unsocial so much so that he is on the verge of constant violence. His language is peppered with filthy words and although he has no problem earning money, he appears too unstable in all other aspects of life.

Case Study : Urban Boy. 3

X5 Hasan

Age When Abused. 8 Years

Background : Hasan is eight years old and shy looking. He was put in touch with the study team by his uncle who was also having him treated for piles. Apparently he had bled a number of times while defecating and this led to a medical exam by his uncle. When his uncle talked to him, he was very reticent. His uncle, felt that the TL, who has some CEDC (sexually abused) plus counselling experience might learn if the boy was being abused. The uncle was very suspicious that sexual abuse was taking place.

Hasan, whose parents had divorced lived with his mother and uncles who were upper class. Coming from a close knit upper class family, his uncles were very protective of the sister and did their best to make sure that she was taken well care of him. They had provided a car and a driver for the sister and the nephew. The driver was the boy's only friend.

Personal Experience : TL spent a few hours everyday with Hasan and Hasan immediately responded with confidence and trust. In the house, Hasan was pitied and everyone felt that he was the boy without a father. As a result Hasan had become withdrawn and couldn't mix with anyone in the family as their equal. He was a special child. The family was so over protective

that, the mother had gone and asked the school principal to take special care. The result was that Hasan had no friends at home or at school. Except their driver Makbul.

Makbul was in the family for over twenty years, graduating from a houseboy to a servant and then a driver. He was fully trusted. He took Hasan to school, took his snacks and brought him home. He lived in the same premises in a room of his own with TV and all.

Hasan had become extremely emotionally dependent on Makbul at this point. "He was my best friend. He took me out. He talked to me. He spent time with me." Its possible that in the absence of a father, Mokbul was being a surrogate one to Hasan.

Mokbul, the driver, carried tiffing to the boy at school. Hasan had permission to go to the car and have his snacks sitting inside.. There, while Mokbul tucked his shirts in, played withhis genitals. Later, after school, he would go to Makbul's room where this would be continued.

It was during the weekends, when people in the house slept late that Makbul's sexual advances became increasingly explicit. It went from mutual masturbation to anal sex. Although. Hasan says that he didn't enjoy it, he didn't want the sessions to stop because later they would talk and he would hear stories from the older man.

They had more than one session of anal sex and regular sessions of other kinds of sex. However, when the bleeding became ovvious and the doctor was consulted and later the whole thing came out. Hasan's mother was told and Makbul was sacked. No charges were brought against him. Hasan's mother was hysterical for a few days but recovered.

Observations : When we talked to Hasan he seemed disturbed but was more unhappy about his loneliness than having being sexually abused. Makbul, a much older person had taken advantage of the emotional vulnerability of the young boy and acted this way.His uncle told us that Hasan is seriously emotionallly disturbed and the impact on his mind may well be permanent. As he realizes that the personhe thought was his friend also abuse him,the trauma will increase even more. Hasan is already aware that something serious has happened and suffers from a sense of guilt and fear for having done something bad, though he doesn't understand the full implication of the events.

#### Case Study : Urban Boy. 4

Mahmud

Age When Abused, 12 Years

Background : Mahamud works in an aluminium products factory as a helper. He is paid take 1000 per month. Plus he gets his lunch free though he has to clean the plates after everyone has had their meals. He is a skilled worker and hence his wage is relatively high. He has been working at vavious factories for the last two years that is since he has come to the city.

He is 12 years old and was staying in the village with relatives. But they were poor and when a distant relative went to see him, his uncles sent him to Dhaka to his mother. He has a sister who was staying with his mother and a brother still at the village. When he came to Dhaka, he found that his mother is a commercial sex worker. He hates her for being a CSW. His father had deserted them years before right after his six year old daughter was born. He fantasizes about his father and believes that he is away on a trip to middle east and will bring them a lot of gifts. That he actually loves them.

Mahmud stays in a mess where he is like a glorified servant. He has to do the beds, clean rooms (2) and fill in the water drum and jugs.

personal experience: Mahmud's life is lived on the edge of constant sexual abuse and often that edge is crossed. The mess members are older city white collar workers of the lower income group. They have all left their family behind and stay in the city and suffer the standard difficulties of separation from families. He is often asked by his mess mates to press their body. In fact, he has to do it almost every day even if it's for ten minutes. But they also ask him to masturbate as well. He knows that the options aren't that many and he does. He gets cash and gifts of different sorts once it's done. The mess members know what Mahmud does to all of them and they take it easily. But doesn't have sex with them and nor are they interested in body touching either.

"Don't have much of a choice because I have a safe place to stay give me money and other things which are very useful. Sometimes they give me perfumes and cosmetics. I sell them at the market. I am saving all the money I can."

"My food and shelter is free. So what sort of choice can I have. They think they own me because of the gifts and the food. But they don't misbehave with me. They know that can approach me very easily because my mother is a prostitute. They think a prostitute's son is also a prostitute. But I didn't know she was a bad woman till I came to the city. I stayed with her for only a week, then I got a job and came away. I have learnt to work well. I can always make a living."

"There are many pretty women in the city but I don't look at them. I don't like women. Or men. The people in the mess go to prostitutes, to women like my mother." He has no sense of enjoyment. He hates sex, he says, neither men nor women.

"I am saving money to go back to my village and bring back my brother. He is alone and scared. He must have stopped studying. With the money I have saved, I will buy a van and together we will sell chatpatti on the road and not work where I have to masturbate people whenever they want."

Observations : He is a very sensitive boy. His sudden discovery of his mother's profession has traumatized him. It has made him desensitized towards sex, in fact hostile. He hates doing what he does and can't connect the fact that his mother had to take the profession when she had few alternatives. His emotional roots now center around his younger brother. His factory owner swears he will support Mahmud if he really wants to do business. His sexual trauma is related both to do what he does and also to what his mother does.

Case Study: Urban. 5

Hashem

Age When Abused. 12 Years

Background: Hashem's father is a clerk in a government office. They stay in a low status government residential colony. He was in fact born there. He knows everywhere in the area. He has 2 brothers and one sister. He comes home from school around 3 p.m. and is without any parental watch till 5 p.m. His mother too is a clerk working in a local bank. During this free period, he roams around the area as he wishes. He is very intelligent and book hungry.

Personal experience: He is 12 years old and had puberty a year back. He was introduced to sex by one of his colony friends who had sex with an older woman in the area. This woman gives sedative to her two young children and has sex with his friend and others. Now Hashem too has sex. In return he gets gifts and can watch VCD, things he doesn't have at home.

Hashem is not a typical or a traditional young boy. He is quite familiar with the issues of sex and also his implications. He certainly knows about AIDS but not STD. Strangely enough, STD is a joke with many kids in the colony. But AIDS is a frightening diseases.

" In this colony many have people have sex with each other. This is the same with all people of the city. I know that some people talk about me because we go to her house in the afternoon. Many people any things about her. But that is because she doesn't know how to keep secrets. There are others like her right here. Many older people do it to older people. Pradip and I are young so people know or talk about us. But there are many like us. Do you know that Abid chahcha had a man beaten up because he suspected his wife. She is such a nice person. Many people were happy because his marriage was unhappy because his wife was pretty. In the evening, everyone comes home and fights. What do they fight about?."

The first time he had sex with the woman, she was very nice to him. His friend took him to the lady and then after saying, "he is willing", went away. Soon he was in bed and the lady did every thing. He enjoyed it. He also knew that religion forbids it. Hashem seems confused. He likes books, chocolates and movies. He doesn't think the bargain he has with the lady is bad. Her husband stays away for long period and she has this kind of a life. He knows the husband from his childhood. He was not afraid but felt strange. he felt he was committing a crime but he knew it was too late.

" For a few minutes of work I get much. I like books. See the books I have read. I have read English and Bangla books. She has a good library. She can get any book I want. WE often watch movies together and we don't watch blue films all the time. I have seen good films. Goopy Gayene, Braveheart, Robin Hood. Is it so bad, what I do? Is it worse than selling " hawai cigaretttes (brown suger)."

Observations : He thinks if his parents find out they will beat him but not leave the colony. They can't afford private renting of a house. Hashem is a difficult case and one certainly wonders whether he is being abused or not in a typical sense. But, precocious or not, as a 12 year old, he is being manipulated into having sex lured by what he likes. This is a standard practice of older women abusing young boys. While young girls are either victimized through declarations of love or violently abused. But young boys get candies or toys. With girls it generally stops after having sex. Hashem has a sense of doing something wrong but he loves, the movies, the books, the quality toffee so much that he is willing to be abused. He has moments of confusion or guilt but return to a convenient arrangement. Comparison with Mahmud is interesting also.

Case Study : Urban Boy. 6

Rahim

Age When Abused. 10 Years

Background : Rahim is 10 years old and an only child. His father works in the Middle East and they have bought a flat with money but they don't stay there. His father's parents stay there. His father has invested money in a business. His uncle also works there. His mother works in a private company and saves all the money that is sent by her husband. She has become a mistress of the boss of the company in which she works. The boss of the company spends nights with her.

Personal experience : One day the boss came and not finding his mother started to talk to him. As they talked he went and closed the bedroom door and after caressing him all over undressed him. He didn't like it at first he says, but didn't know what was happening. He was also sexually

aroused and accepted his advances. The man masturbated him. Then he made him masturbate. This became a regular practice.

Soon his mother came to know about it and she and the boss had a shouting match but it ended after the boss made threats about telling her husband. She wanted to preserve her marriage. Slowly both became involved. Rahim didn't like this but he had no option. Since his mother didn't mind, he had no one else to turn to. He wasn't allowed to visit his grand parents.

Thus the man continued to have sex with both. This arrangement went on till the landlords suspected what was happening but went on till the landlords got wise to the situation and threatened to throw the women out. Later, the man raised the rent and all was quiet. The man became increasingly more interested in Rahim till one day, Rahim fell sick. When he got well, he was away from school for months and dropped out. He hasn't yet completed the primary grades.

Subsequently, they both contracted STD and came to a doctor for treatment. the doctor found the boy emotionally disturbed but such situations are common in such cases. The relationship in on.

Observations : The boy is traumatized and the doctor feels that gives the relationship pattern the boy's mind is at risk of a breakdown. She also feels that the man is exploiting the absence of the father and abusing him. The doctor very strongly told the mother that the son might kill himself and she will be responsible if that happens. The doctor reported that the mother wept while the son sat quietly and said nothing.

#### Case Study : Urban Boy. 7

Motaher

Age when abused, 10 Years

Background : Motaher is 11 years old and an only son. His father died when he was very young and he has vague memories of him. He was brought up in his maternal grandfather's house. When he was 10 years old, his uncle would take him out regularly and in his car they roam all over Dhaka. He was very fond of his uncle. His uncle also used to give him a lot of comics and candies. He was a happy boy then. But his trauma started after his uncle got married.

Personal experiences : His uncle got married and he had a lot of fun during that week. many relatives also came. But soon after the marriage ceremonies were over, the girl went away to her father's place and his uncle was divorced within weeks. He doesn't know why but nobody talks about his uncle's marriage in the family. He thinks that there was something wrong with his uncle. His uncle would remain disturbed the whole day and not talk to anyone. One day he suddenly asked him to accompany him to a movie. There while he was watching the movie, his uncle started to caress him and later on, his uncle took his hand and put it on his genitals. Then he played with his own and asked him to do likewise. This went on all along while the movie went on. after it was over his uncle bought him a toy car and told him not to tell anyone about it. He agreed not to.

Motaher was terrified because his uncle would take him out almost everyday and do the same thing. In fact, they go out at least thrice a week. He also takes him to other places including restaurants and does the same thing. Basically, he has to cope with both the physical needs and the emotional burdens of his uncle. He considers his uncle's behaviour as very abusive and has come to dislike his uncle very much. He understands that his uncle's divorce has upset him and that is why the problem has begun." Refore the lights go out, he talks about how successful he is with girls. Then he makes me do all those things.

One of the reasons why he can't say anything to anyone is the fact that his mother and he are both dependent on the family. She works in a private company as an executive but it isn't enough to sustain the life style they have become used to. He is scared that if he tells anyone, they will be thrown on the streets as his mother's salary is not enough to keep both going. He has told no one except our informant who is a relative.

His studies have suffered and his health may suffer but at this moment he appears to have few options. He hasn't told anyone senior because he isn't sure of the consequences.

Observations : The investigator knew about the case because the informant had sought assistance after hearing that he knew about AIDS. The informant was worried that the man could pass on his diseases if he had any. His personal opinion was that the uncle couldn't have proper sex with women. When we talked to the young child, he was so terrified that conversation was difficult. His great worry was that the uncle would find out and they would have no place to go. There was not much that could be done given the realities of the case. The level of the boy's trauma was high and he didn't seem worried about the abuse but the consequences of that. Obviously this was a case where the boy was a victim of socio-economic blackmail, more like that of Masud in the rural scenario. We also met the uncle who seemed a slightly nervous man who appeared constantly embarrassed because of some reason or other. As if everyone knew of his divorce and the circumstances concerning it. It appears that an unstable man will unhinge a young boy through sexual abuse.

Case Study : Urban Boy. 8

Selim

Age When Abused. 13 Years

Background : Selim is 13 years old. His father is a mid-level businessman. He studies in a kindergarten type school in one of the mid level localities of Dhaka. His mother too is a schoolteacher and enthusiastic housewife.

His cousins came for holiday from Chittagong and stayed for a long time. They were two brothers and a sister. Their ages were 12, 14 & 18 years old. He has one sister. His uncle/aunt left after spending a week but his cousins stayed on. They would play all kinds of games after school was over.

Personal experiences : One day after coming home from school he found his mother had gone out so they all had fun and played many games. While hiding under a table, his 14 year old cousin brother started to play with his genitals. He also played with his cousins. He had done this before at school. They both ejaculated and found it fun.

This sexual relationship with his cousin brother continued for days. He would come from school and after lunch, would hide somewhere and play like "olders". One day he entered the room where the cousins slept, looking for his brother, when he saw his 18 year old cousin sister, masturbating. She was first scared, then screamed at him. He was very scared and just stood there not knowing what to do next. Suddenly, she got up and locked the door and told him to undress. He was terrified at this she told her that he was worried that his mother might come home anytime and then they would both be in trouble.

He can't explain why he did it but may be out of fear, he suddenly told her about his sexual activities with her brother. Hearing this she was very interested and made him tell her everything which he did. Later she masturbated him and let him go.

He slept in his own room because his kid sister sleeps with his parents and the servant boy sleeps with him. But he as away and that night she came at night and made him have sex. Although he felt very guilty he was aroused and went an having sex with her for days.

He was terrified that he would be punished if his parents knew about his relationship with his cousins. His studies suffered immensely and he became generally terrified of both her brother and the sister. she asked him to stop having sex with her brother and he did after sometime. She controlled him considerably. Nobody of course suspected because she was already in college.

Later, this cousin got admitted to a local college in Dhaka and decided to stay back in Dhaka. Soon, the brothers went back. One night she said, they should use condoms. When he put it on, he was surprised, he screamed out and they mere caught by his parents who came to see what was wrong.

His parents beat both of them while they were still in that state. She was sent back home after three days. But her parents were not told because he was also involved and his parents had promise to act as guardians. Since, it was all within the family, little could be done anyway. Hewas constantly punished by his parents. Ehey fight all the time and he is offer the cause of the fight. He feels terrible and is reaching the point of breakdown.

Observations : He told all this to his school friend, who tlld his older brother who informed the TL. He is an emotional wreck and is already effected by partial impotence at this age. He said his sex life has destroyed his family. Till the parents intervened, the matter was not so serious but once the adults intervened, the situation changed and became devastating. It appears that the relationship with the brother was less abusive and like most other cases of is sexuality which young post puberty children experience. But the sister was an adult who know the score though 18 doesn't mean its a full mature person. Nevertheless, this king of relationship pattern may begin from exeriments but end up as abusive situations not just within the parameters of the relationship but in the broader context of the family itself.

Case Study : An Abuser.

Moslem

Age : 35 Years

Father: Sadar Pramanik

Resident of mashkipur village under Atrai thana in Naogaon district. Hailing from a middle class family, the fourth child among five brothers and one sister, he is by profession a cattle dealer and one of the village headmen. The village population is roughly about 4000 and the literacy rate is 20%. In the village there is a non-government primary school and a madrasa. He has studied unto Class VIII.

Around the age of 27 years he was afflicted with a spinal disease. He tried many kinds of treatment but could not find a permanent cure. At times he remained pain-free for a few months but the suffering renewed itself. In order to get rid of the intolerable condition he decided to try an unorthodox remedy advised by some people including a "kibiraj" (faith-healer), and approached Altaf a 20 Year. old youth to engage in anal sex with him. Altaf unhesitantly agreed to fulfill his needs and for the next two years they carried on a gay relationship bight in the middle of the village, meeting in utmost secrecy between the haystacks behind the living quarters. Then Altaf got married and refused to service Moslem anymore which made him seek out other victims to give him sexual gratification What started as pain therapy ended in addiction



to unnatural sex practices. the victims of such abuse were mainly adolescent boys and menservants. The reason being small boys are easy to trap and servants can be intimidated. Till now he has abused seven or eight young victims and at present is engaged in gay relationship with three boys simultaneously.

Method of Paedophilia : First he targets an innocent victim, whom he seeks out when the boy is alone in the fields or out on the verandah, in the early evening or at night especially in the summer season. In our villages boys and men folks occasionally sleep outside in the cool of the night. He, then, sits down beside the targeted victim and begins massaging his body all over. At the same time he tells juicy sexy titbits to excite the boy. Gradually he starts masturbating him and subsequently coerces the victim to service him. Moslem knows his pedophilic nature should be controlled but he cannot help himself at this stage.

Observations: I came to learn about Moslem's sexual aberrations on the very first day but it took me five days to get him to disclose the dark secrets. When I advised him to change he confessed to enjoying such acts too much to give it up, although he promised to try but cannot guarantee anything. Nearly everyone in society looks down upon him but does not have the courage to publicly condemn him as he is a village headman and all the five brothers are notorious "lathials".

#### Glossary of Terms (Bangla)

1. Noshto Meya: Similar to Kharap Meya; "Noshto" means rotten so a noshto Meya means a rotten girl. The implication are that she has behaved in such a way pertaining to sex that she has to be ostracized. A girl who has had a sexual encounter only once would be liable to be called a noshto meya, if it becomes public, just as much commercial sex worker would be. So noshto meya would mean a girl/woman who has stepped out of the acceptable line of socio-sexual behavior. There are no synonyms for boys/men in the Inaguage to mean the same.
2. Salish, shalish etc. : Informal justice system which proliferates in the rural areas. Both spellings are used in this report. This institution is largely controlled by the elite and is useful to maintain social equilibrium in favour of the powerful.
3. Samaj : It means society, clan, kinship groups, civil society etc. Meaning depends upon use but in this report refers to the various social institutions which provides the souree for value structures to develop.
4. Bongsho : Family in an extended sense. Clan and kin, both partilineal.
5. Chachi, Chahcha: paternal Anut and Uncle.
6. Mami and Mama : Maternal aunt and uncle.
7. Bhabi : Brother's wife especially olderbrother's
8. Khala and Khalu : Mother'ssister and her husband.
9. Dulabhai : Older sister's husband.
10. Guru : Leader and teacher.
11. Bhadrolok : Gentleman. A term of respect, some times used derisively.
12. Matbar : Village leader and elder.
13. Desh : Village home. Also means country as in Bangladesh.

14. Chuta kaj : Part time work. Domestic aide.

15. Dandha Job : Full time work. Domestic aide.