AN OPINION POLL OF CHILDREN ON SAFETY IN MAHARASHTRA

MAHARASHTRA

PLAY IT SAFE

2016

**"The father of the- nation practices and preached ahimsa.
If only my drunken father could do that in my home too"**

I feel unsafe at school as there are no bathrooms and toilets. (Sandhya, Age 12 years, Kharola, Latur)

WHERE TO FIND WHAT

Lise Grande (erstwhile UN Resident Coordinator), Minar Pimple (erstwhile Regional Director, Asia Pacific, UN Millenium Campaign), Rani With Priyanka and Louis George Arsenault (UNICEF Representative for India).

MY WORD ON MY WORLD

My name is Rani Ananta Wagmare. I am 16 years old and I am the fifth girl child of my family. I live in Gova, a village in the Roha Taluka of Raigad I belong to the Katkari tribe of Maharashtra.

I have been a part of the **NINE**IS**MINE** campaign for a couple of years now. I participated in the 'My World Survey' in the lead-up to the framing of the new Global Goals to end poverty, to reduce poverty and to save the earth. After that, I was involved with UNICEF for the launch of the mobile version of the 'My World Survey' in Mumbai, alongside Priyanka Chopra. I was also part of the process of children across India, framing the Children's Manifesto, in the run-up to the general elections in 2014.

During my interactions with **NINE**IS**MINE**, UNICEF and the Centre for Social Action and from the people around me in my hostel and school, I have often heard about child rights. I have even heard about the existence of the rights to protection and safety. But my own life and the lives of my friends, tell a different story. I see that there is little safety for children growing up.

I am glad that UNICEF, **NINE**IS**MINE** and Mumbai Smiles have decided to conduct this unique Opinion Poll on child abuse where they are asking the children to speak about their experiences. I have heard and read about children being hit and abused and even hurt sexually, and I know that there is lots of information on the subject, but I have never seen any statistics and data on the subject which has been gathered by talking to the children themselves.

I was happy to be a part of this Opinion Poll. I enjoyed sharing my experiences and speaking openly about the violence, that I have faced personally in my life, and that I have witnessed in my neighbourhood. The exercise was designed to give us, children the courage to speak openly.
 I know that my friends and I came away more informed about the realities and with a strong resolve to break the silence around abuse.

We look forward to using the results of this Poll to bring about change at many levels, especially in the current culture of silence. I believe that we could use this information to empower ourselves and to improve the standards of safety in our own lives and also in the lives of all the children of Maharashtra. The information would also help us to claim our right to active participation as citizens of today.

I like the title of this Opinion Poll. It suggests that all children of Maharashtra at least, if not of all of India and the world, require our policymakers and parents in fact, all adults to leave no stone unturned to ensure the safety of each child, and therefore, there is a need for them and us to 'Play it Safe'.

Rani
Roha, 2016

THANKS A TON!

In Africa there is a saying, "It takes a whole village to raise a child." This would mean that bringing up a child and ensuring his/her safety needs to be the joint responsibility of the entire community.

This 'Play it Safe' Opinion Poll on violence experienced by us children in Maharashtra, has been a wonderful affirmation of the above. So many people, organisations and officials have come together to make this report possible. I wish to thank them all.

Firstly, I would like to thank our three principal partners in this project. UNICEF-Mumbai, you were our back bone. You provided us the nec essary funds and your valuable wisdom. Mumbai Smiles, you extended the crucial organisational back-up for this project. And our very own **NINE**IS**MINE** team, you coordinated and designed this platform for us to exercise our right to participate.

We have read about the Government in our text books and in newspapers but have always felt cut off from it. This exercise has revealed to us that the people who work in the Government offices do share our concerns and are willing to support us in our efforts. We would like to thank all our elders working for the Department of Women and Child Development, Tribal Development Department and the MPSP (Education Department) for all the assistance and guidance through the process of preparing this report. Thank you to all the protectors of Child Rights in the Child Welfare Committees and the District Child Protection Units of the eight districts of Maharashtra, for extending your support throughout this project.

We are very grateful to all the NGOs who work for children and their rights. We would like to thank organisations such as the Centre for Social Action, Mumbai, SPARSH – Centre for Participatory Learning, the Gramin Samsya Mukti Trust, Yavatmal, SACRED, Jalna and Bharati Vidyapeeth University, the Social Science Centre, Pune for adding value to this project by guiding us and contributing your support through your experience and your grass-root connections.

Travelling into our villages and schools some of which are located in distant inaccessible places – must have been a difficult task. We thank the investigators for taking on this commitment and bringing this tool right to our doorstep. Thank you Sr. Mary Colaco (Raigad), Rachele D'silva (Raigad), Chetan Gosavi (Mumbai), Kavita Chandak (Mumbai), Darshini Padvi (Nandurbar), Eknath Jaising Dhanka (Nandurbar), Sonali Salunke (Pune), Ankur Lokre (Pune), Santosh Raghunath Shangarwar (Chandrapur), Priya Bandu Deotale (Chandrapur), Daulat Poghe (Jalna), Jyoti Pagare (Jalna), Ziya Sayed (Latur), Sujata Mane (Latur), Chanda Shriram Akuldar (Yavatmal), Rahul Devidas Pradhan (Yavatmal). To make this report more child-friendly, we sought the help of our peers from Delhi to illustrate our ideas and the data collected. Thank you, Joel Samuel, Hriturik Kant and Kalpana for the illustrations. Thank you, Animesh Garg, Ishaan Watts, Jimmy,

Mallika V (17 years)
NINEIS**MINE**
Child Advocate

SIMPLY SAID

The silence of violence

To identify, record and track the violence that children experience, UNICEF, **NINE**IS**MINE** and Mumbai Smiles conducted an Opinion Poll called 'Play It Safe'. The aim was to work towards creating safe spaces for children, within homes, schools, institutions and their communities, by encouraging the children to speak up and break the silence around child abuse. The Poll sought the opinion of the children, as well as that of various stakeholders, in order to understand better the challenges and to design with children effective interventions to defend children's rights and to protect children from abuse and exploitation.

Despite the legal and policy framework for children in India, this study shows that their safety and protection still needs to be addressed. The lack of safety can have lasting implications on a child's growth and development. Though there is much data on the subject of violence against children, this unique Opinion Poll invited the children themselves to speak about the violence that they have faced or have witnessed others being subjected to.

The poll was conducted with children in schools (41.63%), out of school (38.95%) and those in KGBVs (2.04%), Ashramshalas (5.8%) and Institutions (11.58%).

Children's participation in decision-making affecting their lives has been identified as a key requirement for realising children's rights. The children must be as meaningfully involved as the adults in promoting and strategising in any action regarding their safety. As they are the victims, the children's first-hand narratives, it was felt, can help create a deeper understanding of the issues and lead to empathy with the children. This can result in definitive action by both children and policy-makers in formulating guidelines and policies on safety for children, as well as establishing the standards of care.

I feel unsafe at home as my grandmother or mother fights a lot at home. (Saumya, Age 16 years, Yavatmal)

How We Did It

The Opinion Poll was conducted with 5000 children within the age group of 13–17 years. The children were given a questionnaire to elicit information on various forms of violence, physical (hitting, corporal punishment and so on), psychological (being humiliated, fear of violence, witnessing violence, discrimination, verbal abuse and so on), economical (forced to earn, violence at workplace, not being paid and so on), sexual violence and neglect (deprived of medical attention when at the institution).
Children were invited to share their experiences through a questionnaire and were also encouraged to speak about the violence they faced through storytelling. Other forms of sharing were sessions of free expression where children used drawings, poems and compositions to talk about their safety in homes, schools and communities.

What We Found

The Poll revealed that children of all ages, sex, family background, religion and caste suffer abuse, in one way or another, increasing the likelihood of physical, behavioural, social, cognitive, attitudinal, emotional, sexual and reproductive problems. The children were found to be vulnerable to multiple forms of violence that include physical, psychological, sexual, and economic violence, and also neglect. What makes matters worse is the fact that these children live in a society that experiences a multitude of volatile conflicts and, therefore, **violence against children is not viewed as a serious human rights violation.**

A majority of the children who gathered the courage to complain about the violence that they faced, say that the persons contacted did nothing to deal with their concerns. But 15.26% of the children stated that their confidants did confront the persons responsible for the abuse.

Child care and protection means ensuring the children's physical, emotional, sexual safety and well-being, as well as providing for shelter, food, nutrition, healthcare, education, access to basic services (drinking water, toilets, electricity, playgrounds for recreation), and safeguarding their legal and human rights. According to the findings of this Poll, these elements are missing in the settings that they live in. What came through was that children face violence within their homes, in schools, in institutions and in the community. **They face physical, sexual, psychological and economic abuse and neglect at all levels.** These experiences, in the long run, would perpetuate a cycle of violence, as children who feel rejected tend to act in disruptive, disrespectful and violent ways.

A. Forms of Violence reported by Children

Children surveyed reported five forms of violence: physical, sexual, psychological and economic abuse and neglect. The extent of these varied within different settings (home, school, institutions, the workplace, and the local community – see section C below, for more details) and within different groups of children, depending on their gender, level of ability, social group, or district (see section B below).
Children reported that they experienced physical violence at home, in school and in their local communities.

For far too many children, violence **begins within their homes, and begins early**. The scale of the problem is hugely worrying. Children disclose feeling particularly defenseless and perturbed by the physical assaults by their mothers (25%) and fathers (21%). As many as 25% of the children have been slapped, while others have been beaten (17%), hit with objects, have had their ears twisted, have been kicked (6%) or even been inflicted with burn wounds (2%). Violence within the homes endangers the children greatly as it is hidden and ignored and, therefore, seriously threatens their rights to a healthy and fulfilling life.

While 68.27% of the children say their homes make them happy; 11.16% of the children say it makes them sad. Another 6.73% of the children feel afraid in their homes, 6.65% of them feel nervous, 6.35% angry and 2.76% helpless.

The teachers, the non-teaching staff and the older students are largely responsible for acts of **violence inflicted in school**. Children are at risk of being subjected to violent punishments by those in positions of authority over them. Boys, it was found, are subjected to far more physical and psychological abuse (59%) than girls. The girls face challenges in the form of being ignored (52%) or discouraged from studying (64%) or negatively compared to others (52%). The picture that emerges is that the schools are imposing discipline with degradation rather than with dignity.

The nature of violence in schools ranges from children being hit with an object (16.60%), made to stand outside the class (14.77%), being slapped (5.57%), having their ears twisted (4.75%), to being beaten (2.28%).

64.95% of the children affirm the teachers' pro-active offers of help, and 56.48% say that the teachers encourage the children hugely and channelise their individual merits. But on the flip side, 58.85% children hold teachers responsible for psychological violence of varying degrees (See Table 8).

The Poll also revealed that a large percentage of the children live in **fear as they have to navigate several hurdles to get to school**: stray animals (33%), groups of men standing on their way to school (20%), lonely patches on the roads (17%), addicts that they encounter (18%), the presence of liquor shops (10%), and streets filled with people inclined to crime.

The data gathered shows that **children feel unsafe in the community** and the reasons for this are: fear of physical harm (17%), inaccessible toilets (21%), fear of sexual harassment (21%), fear of being accosted by addicts (22%), poor lighting (15%), and the fear of inappropriate touch.

Children also reported sexual abuse in homes and schools.

The fear of **sexual harassment** and abuse is very real for both boys and girls. It is more disturbing when children are subjected to this brutality **at the hands of trusted adults within their own homes and community**. Almost ten per cent picked out fathers while others mentioned brothers (8.5%) uncles (7%) and grandfathers (6%) as perpetrators of sexual abuse at home. In a startling disclosure, 6% of the children state mothers as the offenders, while others implicate sisters (4%), grandmothers (3%) and aunts (3%).

The loss of confidence and belief in the people closest to the child can instill feelings of fear, suspicion, uncertainty, and emotional isolation. And, the impact of sexual violence is disastrous – physically, psychologically and socially, not only for the children but also for their families and communities. This includes increased risks of illness, unwanted pregnancies, psychological distress, stigma, discrimination and difficulties at school.

The children interviewed revealed knowing other children who have been raped (8%); forced to watch pornography (7%), kissed without their consent (7%), made to pose for vulgar photogarphs (4.5%), forced to expose their genitals (3%) and made to look at or touch someone else's genitals (3.5%) as some of the **forms of sexual abuse experienced at home**.

Sexual abuse is a reality **in schools** as children admit to being aware of their friends being sexually violated by people. Some children (35%) are aware of children having been subjected to vulgar language or who have been forced to watch pornography (6%) or who have been kissed against their wishes (6%) or who have been raped in school (5%).

Children (22.40%) identify perpetrators of sexual abuse in schools to be male students, male teachers (12.47%), female students (7.56%), female teachers (4.80%), principals (3.31%), peons (4.43%) and watchmen (3.31%).

B. Violence suffered by different Groups of Children

This Poll sheds light on the embedded societal beliefs that boys are physically stronger than girls and that beating and lashing them would help them grow into men of worth. Of the reasons for not informing anyone of the abuse and gender reveal that boys experience more shame (65%) as compared to girls (31%), are more afraid to talk about the abuse (51%) as opposed to girls (48.5%), and are threatened with more force (74%) as opposed to girls (19%) and feel isolated and do not have anyone to confide in (50%) as opposed to girls (45%). A higher percentage of the boys (57%) are mistreated as compared to 40% of the girls. However a higher percentage of boys (65.5%) informed others of the abuse as opposed to the girls (32%)

62.24% of boys said that children should ignore physical and psychological abuse, and 60.40% said that they should accept it as normal. When asked about confronting the perpetrator on physical and psychological abuse, the girls were more vociferous on the issue of confrontation (57.30%), while the boys had no firm opinions on the issue.

Data also reveals that 24% of the people who knew about the abuse did nothing, whereas 16% of the people confronted the abuser. Many children were asked to ignore the abuse (11%) or to keep it a secret (4%) and only in 3.5% cases the police was informed. A large percentage of the boys (62%) also felt that children should ignore the abuse, and many (60%) said that children should accept it as normal.

Children seldom report violence against them to the authorities for fear of repercussions (35%), feelings of shame (16%), lack of anyone to talk to (16%), and threats (8%). Of those who chose to report it, for a majority of them (32%), no help was forthcoming.

This Poll also shows significant violence against **children of the socially marginalised groups**. The caste break up of those made to stand outside the class reveals that more students belonging to the SC (9.5%), were made to do so than the General Caste (9%), the ST (8%) and the OBC and other castes (8%). However, in terms of physical violence like being slapped or beaten or having their ears twisted, more children from the General Categories are abused than their counterparts belonging to ST, SC and OBC categories. This trend is repeated in terms of those children who face humiliation in schools as suggested by the data that 5% of the children of the OBC and the other castes (SBC), 4% of the General Caste category, 4% of the SC and 3% of the ST have experienced humiliation in schools.

The analysis of psychological abuse in school on the basis of caste shows that 3% of the children from the General Caste category and the OBC and other castes, respectively, are threatened with failure; whereas 3% and 1% of the children belonged to the SC and ST categories respectively. Of the children abused in the institutions, 33% belonged to the General Caste category, 13% to the SC, 26% to the ST and the NT, 13% to the OBC; 15% chose not to respond to the question of caste, either because they do not know which caste they belong to or they do not want to specify it.

A comparison of the physical and psychological abuse between the **urban and the rural** areas shows, that of the children who faced the different forms of corporal punishment in schools and at home a larger percentage was from the rural areas. For example of the children who were hit with an object 72% were from a rural area, whereas only 28% were from an urban area. A higher percentage of children from the rural areas are kicked (71%), have their

ears twisted (75%) and are scarred with burn wounds (79%); as opposed to a lower percentage of children from the urban areas who experience the same (29%, 25% and 21% respectively).

However, the findings with regard to **abuse in the institutions**, shows that the children's experience of abuse from the urban areas is higher, as compared to the rural areas. Children in urban areas (76%) are criticised and blamed for things that they are not responsible for as opposed to 24% experiencing the same in the rural areas. 72% of the urban children are shouted at, as compared to the rural children (28%).

Children with disabilities also suffer from inadequate support and cultural and social prejudices that relegate them to lives on the margin. Violence against them exacerbates their alienation and needs to be addressed. This Opinion Poll observed that 15% children with disabilities are slapped, 16% have their ears twisted and 13% complain of being hit with an object. They are also punished by subjecting them to beatings (12%) and there are those who are made to stand outside the class (9%).

Children with disabilities stated that they experienced psychological abuse in school, in the form of being threatened with bodily harm (20%) and being locked up in a room (20%), while 15.19% were compared negatively with others, 14.29% were criticised and 12.79% said abusive language was used against them.

C. Violence experienced in the Workplace and the Local Community

Children are most vulnerable **at their workplace** and are susceptible to exploitation and violence. 13% fear being verbally abused by employers or of not being paid (11%) or of losing their jobs (10%). Other children dread the consequences of not completing the work on time (9%), and a few panic about being touched inappropriately (7%). Not having proper toilets (5.5%), fear of being bullied (5%), afraid of the family being harmed (4%) and no proper lighting (3%) are the other concerns of working children. Many of them (44%) talk of feeling unsafe while commuting to work.

Of the 49.77% of the children who professed to work 61.38% said they did for their family members. 19.44% stated that they were employed by non-family members. 27.36% of those who worked for non - family members said that they were not paid, and 5.53% had no idea whether they are paid or not. While the majority of the working children (63.35%) get a day off, 21.62% children are denied a day off, again a clear infraction of their rights.

The data shows that children, below the age of 18 years, who are meant to be in school, are **out of schools**, and a majority of them (55%) say that they are engaged in household chores. More than 48% of the children said that they spend their time watching television while the rest say that they play sports (34%), loiter (32%), gamble (14%), indulge in addictive behaviours (12%), play video games (12%), participate in gang activities (11%) or just do nothing (10%). Only a miniscule percentage of the out of school children are involved in vocational training pursuits.

Children stated contributing to the family income (35%) helping with the household chores (35.09%), failure (24.96%), losing interest in school (20.42%), an unpleasant experience (11.64%) and having the responsibility to care for younger siblings (21.40%) while parents are away at work, no school in the neighborhood (20.21%) and travelling long distances and marriage (3.72%) as reasons for not continuing their education. Children also shared that some of their parents were against their going to school, and that they were, instead, forced to give up their education and work; disability was a hurdle for one child and another had no clothes to go to school.

The data gathered on the reasons for children feeling **unsafe in the community** shows the reasons to be: fear of physical harm (16.5%), inaccessible toilets (20.5%), fear of sexual harassment (21%), fear of being accosted by addicts (22%), poor lighting (15%), fear of inappropriate touch/molestation (11%), the presence of bullies (10%) and the threat of harm to family (8%)

When asked if they knew of children who were sexually abused by the people in their community, 36% of the children say that they know children whose sensibilities have been violated by the use of vulgar language against them, by being kissed forcibly (9%) and raped (9%)

Children pinpointed the perpetrators of abuse in their local community to be: unknown people (38.48%), shopkeepers (9.42%) and conductors and drivers, and 27.88% of the children say they do not know or cannot tell who the perpetrators of sexual abuse in the community are.

The foremost finding of this report is that there is widespread violence against children which is worrying in its severity and character. It delineates how violence against children is constructed, manifested and executed in private and public spaces. The report needs to be taken as a warning for action and to send out a signal that violence against children is unlawful and indefensible.

On The Safe Side - Going Forward

While the findings of this report help ascertain the causes, extent and kinds of violence against children (as perceived and experienced by the children), it also helps determine the children's perception and expectations of a safe place and to identify the perpetrators. The data also reveals the opinions of various stakeholders on this issue (the Government authorities, statutory bodies, private school authorities and NGO representatives) and helps assess the systemic strengths and shortcomings.

The larger intent, of course, is to challenge and change the existing social and individual attitudes that accept violence as 'normal' and mobilise those who work in the field, as well as all sections of the family, educational institutions, communities and societies, to act to prevent violence against children.

23.72% of the people who knew about the abuse at home did nothing, whereas 16.03% of the people confronted the abuser. Many children were asked to ignore the abuse (11.15%) or to keep it a secret (3.85%) and only in 3.51% cases, the police were informed. An astounding 46.47% of the children chose not to comment on this question.

The following recommendations propose the next steps to be taken, in accordance with the children's evidence presented in this study:

1) Many children speak of the **lack of basic amenities** such as toilets, lighting, libraries, playgrounds and inadequate healthcare within schools, institutions and the community. These are the basic rights of the children and need to be ensured. Others talk at length of the fear they feel while going to school, institutions and workplaces. Living in fear is a gross violation of their rights and **puts their present childhood and their futures under threat.**

Only 50.69% children pass their classrooms as being good, 39.21% say lighting at school is adequate, 37.42% approve of the toilets, 38.23% say that there are libraries, 50% like the teaching and playground facilities and 40.70% are happy with the counsellors.

2) All those who work with and for children need to be made aware of the violation of child rights that exists at all levels, (the physical and psychological

abuse, sexual abuse and neglect, economic violence and the lack of amenities in their environment) and need to become involved in **creating child-sensitive mechanisms and procedures for reporting and investigating incidences of violence** so that the perpetrators do not enjoy the impunity they do now. There is a need to safeguard the rights of children and protect them from abuse and exploitation by creating an environment where children are respected, empowered and active in their own protection.

3) These findings can be used to change attitudes and practices by **creating** awareness about the rights of the child **and** by **designing reformed roles of the caregivers**. Parents need to be educated that violent and humiliating forms of disciplining children are not acceptable and schools and institutions need to be sensitised to the harmful impact of corporal punishment. Prevention of violence against children needs to be given priority and **alternate mechanisms of disciplining children** that are respectful of children's dignity and self-worth need to be promoted.

4) **In cases of sexual assault**, there is need for far more sensitivity and the **focus must be on recovery and rehabilitation.** Speaking up on this abuse is not easy, or a real option for these children. As violence silences through fear and trauma, shame and isolation, and through the normalisation of abuse, instilling and spreading a culture of safety and mutual respect has to be used to break this silence. **Children should be involved in developing confidential mechanisms** for reporting to better understand how these can work. Their first hand experiences will help formulate better policies.

> Children seldom report violence against them to the for fear of repercussions (35.11%), feelings of shame (15.82%), absence of anyone to talk to (15.82%), and threats (7.96%).

5) **Girls, children from socially disadvantaged castes and tribes and those who grapple with disabilities,** face more violence in childhood and experience shrinking spaces in adulthood. They have fewer choices and opportunities. They live with unequal power relations and inconsideration with regard to education, health, nutrition, leadership and resources through their lives. More than physical violence, these children face psychological violations that can be hugely debilitating. The time to embed positive and gender-equal values is at this stage of the children's lives. If this opportunity is missed, the perceptions and practices that accord less value to them begin to settle in.

6) Ending violence in the lives of children from these vulnerable groups, by **halting discrimination against them** and by ensuring their complete barrier-free and equal participation in society, is an urgent priority. Economic and social programmes and policies that address poverty, inequality and exclusion would effectively harness the potential of each child. This would create enabling conditions for the children's all-round development and regulating the work conditions of child labour.

7) Violence against children perpetuates a cycle of violence. There is a need to **develop alternative mindsets and masculinities** that are mindful of women and children's dignities. The consistent use of physical violence, particularly on boys, by the social institutions of home, schools, establishments and the community lends legitimacy to their use of violence, in turn, to resolve conflicts and enforce discipline in their lives. This fuels violence-prone hegemonic masculinities, where boys feel entitled to use force when they transition into adulthood.

8) Children have the right to express their views, and have their opinions integrated into the implementation of policies and programmes meant for them. There is a need to amplify children's voices, concerns and solutions for a world that is free of assault on them, by bringing them in as a central force for

thought and action. **Children should** in the spirit of participation **be actively involved in advocacy** and lobbying at all levels and with all stakeholders for changes towards the creation of a violence-free society. There is an urgent need to promote informed advocacy among the varied duty-bearers and stake-holders.

9) **The children need to know their rights.** Familiarity with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, particularly Article 42 based on the knowledge of their rights, would be particularly helpful.

10) Programmes and policies have to be created **to address poverty, gender discrimination and other forms of inequality** (disability, urban-rural divide) which undermine an egalitarian society.

11) **Strengthening the children's abilities** to develop resilience and harness their potential to the fullest is also crucial.

12) **Information based on the data from this Poll has to be provided to everyone** involved in challenging violence against children, be it the Government, child rights and human rights organisations or individual activists.

This Opinion Poll is among the very few in the country that has listened intently and predominantly to children, taken their voices and opinions into account, and helped them to envision a world free of violence towards them. And it is hoped that it would **stimulate new thinking, open up dialogues, galvanise fresh approaches and investments, allow for critical realignments and delineation of priorities, and promote informed advocacy among these audiences.**

It is time to safeguard the rights of children and protect them from abuse and exploitation by creating an environment where children are respected, empowered and active in their own protection. Children have the right to express their views, and have their opinions integrated into the implementation of policies and programmes meant for them.

Some of the further recommendations emerging from this Opinion Poll are the need to

- Collect synergies and an integrated approach to child protection.
- Collect systematic and disaggregated data collection on issues related to children's safety.
- Conduct detailed further research on violence against children and children's participation in child protection strategies.
- Provide counselling and legal aid through accessible public systems.
- Strengthen national coalitions and movements that promote and protect child rights

We are excited about the potential of this Poll to favourably transform the lives of the children by providing them with the relevant data on violence. The results of this Poll, and the action that it can lead to, holds the promise of children themselves playing a significant role in creating an equitable and inclusive world. Adult defenders of child rights and duty-bearers too now have relevant and up-dated information from the primary stake-holders towards creating a world where children are treated with respect, listened to and where they have choices and opportunities with violence-free futures opening out to them.

Nandurbar

Mumbai
Suburban

Mumbai
City

Raigad

Pune

Jalna

Latur

Yavatmal

Chandrapur

BACKGROUND

Experiencing and witnessing violence at a young age has its consequences. Children who survive abuse often suffer long-term physical and psychological damage that impairs their ability to learn and socialize, and makes it difficult for them to perform well in school and develop close and positive friendships. There is also a tendency that children who experience or witness violence could perpetrate violence in adulthood.

This view of children being part of the present was introduced and enforced mainly by the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The CRC is the most comprehensive human rights treaty and legal instrument for the promotion and protection of children's rights. Although there are provisions protecting child rights in other international human rights instruments, the Convention is the first to articulate the entire complement of rights relevant to children – economic, social, cultural, civil and political. It was also the first international instrument to explicitly recognize children as social actors and active holders of their own rights.[i]

This Convention has changed the way the children are viewed and treated – i.e., as human beings with a distinct set of rights instead of as passive objects of care and charity. The importance of the CRC can be drawn from the fact that it effects one third of the world's population across countries, continents and communities- namely children.

Children represent the next wave of parents, grandparents, caregivers, teachers, doctors, police officers, judges, community leaders, politicians and decision makers. Therefore, it is important to make efforts to address violence affecting the children today, as it will have a direct bearing on future families and societies.[ii]

India is home to the largest number of children in the world. Nearly every fifth child in the world lives in India. There are about 43 crore children in the age group of 0 – 18 years; 16 crore of them in the age group of under 5 years and about 27 crore in the age group of 6 – 18 years.[iii] Despite a substantial percentage of the population being under 18 years of age, and in spite of the existence of a number of laws and provisions for child protection, the vulnerability of this population towards violence still remains.

Traditionally in India, the responsibility of care and protection of children has been with families and communities. Such families, which are essentially patriarchal in nature, seldom realise that children are individuals with their own rights.[iv]

Children are a section of the population who are dependent on adults and, therefore, are more prone to being subjected to violence. Some of these kinds of violence tend to get neglected under the pretext of it being 'in the best interest of the child' and therefore legitimate violence. In order to effectively address violence against children, it is important to get a realistic picture of its prevalence. The last study conducted in India was in 2007 by the Ministry of Women and Child Development on Child Abuse in India.[v] Therefore, with no recent data on the subject, specifically for Maharashtra, this Opinion Poll was undertaken to assess the number of children who experienced violence, witnessed violence, and how children react to violence. The study was conducted in eight districts within the six divisions of Maharashtra.

The issue of violence against children is a complex question and can be looked at from various perspectives. This Opinion Poll focussed mainly on identifying the violence against children in their immediate environments such as homes, schools, institutions, work places and the community. It included questions on physical, psychological, economic and sexual violence as well as neglect, experienced or witnessed by children.

This Opinion Poll was exploratory in nature and aimed to understand the children's current experience of safety. It also sought to understand the violence children are subjected to or have witnessed in Maharashtra, with the aim to work towards creating safe homes, safe schools and safe communities. The findings, it is hoped, would help to formulate Guidelines and Policies on Safety for Children as well as Standards of Care. The data obtained from this Opinion Poll can be used as a medium for awareness and sensitization among the various stakeholders working on child protection and also spark discussions and dialogue amongst them, it can also be used as a tool used by children themselves for advocacy towards influencing policies and systems that would make their world safer and inclusive The awareness, discussions and sensitization that take place as a result of the Opinion Poll would, thus, help to develop strategies that are child friendly interventions for safe homes, schools and communities.

I feel unsafe at school as students throw stones while fighting. (Kundan, Age 14years, Karjat Raigad)

The education system needs to change. Children are just made to sit with books; they are restless and need a way to vent out their energy. (Sr. Selma Administrator, FIAMC Bio – Medical Ethics Centre, Mumbai)

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Overview

The World Report on Violence against Children (Pinheiro, 2006), brought to light the fact that children experience violence in the following settings:

- At home
- At school or other educational settings
- In institutions
- In the workplace and
- In the community

Acknowledging the crucial effects of violence on children, the End Violence Campaign was launched by the UNICEF in 2013. The initiative builds on growing public consensus that violence against children can no longer be tolerated and that it can only be stopped by the collective efforts of ordinary citizens, policy makers, governments and international stakeholders.[vi]

The United Nations Secretary General's study on violence against children, the first comprehensive global study on all forms of violence against children, confirms that such violence exists in every country of the world, cutting across culture, class, education, income and ethnic origin.[vii] This kind of a status only goes to show that violence against children is often socially accepted and is sometimes legal.

The results of a survey on the child-friendliness of the South Asian Governments (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka), was published by Save the Children, HAQ: Centre for Child Rights, Plan International, CRY: Child Rights and You, and Terre des Hommes, Germany, in collaboration with a large number of researchers and contributors from each country in South Asia and beyond.[viii]

The report assesses the efforts of these governments towards implementing the commitments made at the United Nation's Convention on Rights of the Child (UNCRC). It also objectively measures the contribution of the South Asian governments and the non-state actors to the creation of child-friendly societies. Based upon the quantitative data feeding into a composite index and complemented by detailed country-level information, the report provides key information and direction for a more focussed government action and exhorts more effective non-governmental advocacy to improve and change the lives of children in South Asia.[ix]

Since the year 2000 the Governments have been putting in place a basic enabling framework of laws, policies and institutions for the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and child rights in general. However, the countries that have done the most towards putting in place an enabling structural framework for children, have not always been able to ensure the education, health and protection outcomes which were expected, nor have they necessarily promoted the children's voices in the decision-making at the local and the national levels.

Much more remains to be done to ensure the children's legally enforceable rights to health, education and protection. Strong mechanisms are needed to make the new laws, policies and institutions more meaningful entitlements for the children.[x]

Children's participation, in decision-making affecting their lives, is identified as a key requirement for realising children's human rights. As part of the general principles of the CRC, child participation should, therefore, be promoted in all law and policy-formulation affecting children, as well as in practice.[xi]

There is no one universal definition of children's participation. Joachim Theis (2001) looked into various writings on children's participation and concluded that child participation is an 'amoeba term' being used in relation to a wide range of situations, including children singing at adult conferences, children answering the questions of adult researchers, children educating other children or children forming their own organisations and also influence decisions and impart change and prevent abuse of others. Possibly, because the concept of children's participation draws upon different sources and has taken different routes, there is no unanimity about its meaning among child rights activists and researchers. The term is increasingly being used in the context of 'political participation' (to distinguish itself from 'participation' in the broader and blurrier sense), and a number of other terms – 'citizenship' and 'protagnism' are being used to overcome the overuse and misuse of 'participation'.[xii]

Child Rights

The CRC could be considered the document, the framework and the event that brought the concept of children's participation to the centre-stage of the development discourse. But many of the related ideas and practices precede the CRC. They emanate from the contemporary praxis of pedagogy, child psychology and sociology and are contributing to the efforts by creating a distinctive conceptual entity that is further defined and legitimised with reference to human rights and the law.[xiii]

Framework for Protection

In South Asia, India has done the most towards establishing an enabling legal and policy framework for children, closely followed by Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. The collaboration between the Governments and the non-state actors has strengthened the legal and policy framework for children. Particularly, the efforts of India, Nepal and Bhutan have been most significant.[xiv]
Despite the legal and policy framework for children in India, their safety and protection still needs to be addressed as the lack of safety can have lasting implications on a child's growth and development.

Punishment of Children

Punishing children is regarded as normal and acceptable in all settings – whether in the family or in institutions. It is often considered necessary so that the children grow up to be competent and responsible individuals. It is widely used by teachers and parents, regardless of its evident lack of effectiveness, and potentially deleterious side-effects. The very ineffectiveness tends to result in an escalation spiral, which then leads to both a culture of rationalisation by those in authority and a passive acceptance of the situation as evidence of 'caring' by children. So pervasive is the justification of corporal punishment

that a child may not think her/his rights have been infringed upon. Even if the punishment hurts, the child does not realize the importance of reporting the incident. Therefore, there are layers of beliefs and practices that cloak corporal punishment under the guise of love, care and protection, when it is actually an abuse of authority that harms the child.[xv]

What is Corporal Punishment?

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child defines corporal punishment as any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of discomfort, however light. Most involves hitting ('smacking', 'slapping', 'spanking') children, with the hand or with an implement – a whip, stick, belt, shoe, wooden spoon, etc. But it can also involve, for example, kicking, shaking or throwing children, scratching, pinching, biting, pulling hair or boxing ears, forcing children to stay in uncomfortable positions, burning, scalding or forced ingestion (for example, washing children's mouths out with soap or forcing them to swallow hot spices).[xvi]

Corporal punishment does not only mean physical violence against the child, but also verbal insults, humiliation and causing loss of self-esteem.[xvii]

Children are subject to corporal punishment in schools; institutions meant for care and protection of children such as hostels, orphanages, Ashramshalas, and juvenile homes; and even in the family setting.[xviii]

In keeping with the provisions of the RTE Act, 2009, corporal punishment could be classified as physical punishment, mental harassment and discrimination.[xix]

Negative Consequences of Corporal Punishment

When adults use corporal punishment, it teaches the children that hitting is an acceptable means of dealing with conflict. The more the children are hit, the more is the anger they report as adults, and consequently, the more they hit their own children when they are parents, and the more likely they are to approve of hitting.

Corporal punishment leads to adverse physical, psychological and educational outcomes – including increased aggressive and destructive behaviour, increased disruptive behaviour in the classroom, vandalism. It could also lead to poor school achievement, poor attention span, increased drop-out rate, school avoidance and school phobia, low self-esteem, anxiety, somatic complaints, depression, suicide and retaliation against teachers. All this emotionally scars a child for life. There is a co-relation between corporal punishment meted out to children and the maladaptive behaviour patterns in later life, such as aggression and delinquency.[xx]

We must consider…

Impact of Maltreatment on a Child's Development

Recent research has provided more information about the neurology and development of the brain during the first years of life. At birth, the brain is the most immature organ in the human body and continues to develop as a result of nature or genetics and through environmental experiences. Thus, life events can have positive or negative consequences on the development of the brain.[xxi]

Mal-treated youngsters tend to develop brains that are attuned to dangers. At the slightest threat, the children will anxiously look for any signals that indicate further abusive attacks. These early experiences of stress form the templates in the brains in which fear responses become fixed. The brain becomes tuned for the purpose of survival. The result is that these children are constantly in a state of high alert which would assist them to avoid further mal-treatment, but

would certainly impact their optimal development, physically, emotionally and behaviourally. The youngsters would also be at great risk of having learning difficulties. Other long-term effects could be the reduction in the opportunities to experience comfort, support, and nurturance, which are necessary for secure relationships.[xxii]

LOOKING AT SITUATIONS

Children in School

One of the success stories in the developing countries in the past 15 years has been the increase in the enrolment of children in primary schools. However, little attention has been paid to how the children experience school. It is also not known to what extent corporal punishment is being used.[xxiii]
For most children who are in schools, this (violence) is an unfortunate everyday reality, traumatic enough to push them out of school.[xxiv]

Children at Home

Most children spend their early and crucial years of development at home. Their experiences here, both positive and negative, contribute largely to the person they become.
Punishment in the Family: A study conducted among girl children and their parents in Delhi in the year 2010, reveals that 'scolding' is the most used mode of punishment. It is reported by more than 90 per cent of the respondents with no rural-urban difference. Restriction on movement is reported by 20.05 per cent of the girls, where 12.82 girls in rural areas report movement restriction while 28.19 percent girls report in urban areas. 18.44 per cent of the mothers in total report where in rural area it's at 12.82 per cent and urban area is at 24.21 per cent and 14.82 per cent of the fathers' report where 8.72 are from rural area and 21.59 are from the urban area. According to 38.12 per cent of the mothers, 32.11 per cent of the fathers and 15.69 per cent of the girls, the boys in the family are 'slapped'. Slapping is seen to be more of a rural phenomenon (rural/urban: 41.80/34.10) when seen as mothers' assertion. With fathers, rural/urban differentials are negligible. With girls, it is more an urban opinion (7.81/24.85).[xxv]
Girls say that more abusive language is used for the boys (23.53%). It is more common in the urban families (27.88%) than in the rural areas (19.79%). Abusive language is more often used by rural mothers (7.94%) and urban fathers (10.30%).[xxvi]

Children in Institutions

An estimated 31 million children in India, aged 0-17 years, are orphaned and abandoned according to recent statistics from the UNICEF. Research proves that orphans who do not receive proper care turn to crime and are vulnerable to child labour, prostitution and other violations. Domestic adoption rates are abysmally low at 5964 children, 2011 (Jan'11 to March'12) out of which 629 were inter country adoption. A report by a leading newspaper daily (Hindustan Times) in 2011 suggested that there are close to 30.35 lakh orphans in the north zone of the country, consisting of Delhi and other surrounding states.[xxvii]

Very few orphanages and shelter homes in India offer adequate care. The UNICEF's estimate of 11 million street children in India is considered to be a

conservative figure, with100,000 in Delhi alone.

'Children in need of care and protection', as described by The Juvenile Justice Act 2000, are those who are either homeless, found begging/working on the streets, lost, orphaned, abandoned, neglected, abused, have an incapacitated parent, a victim of war/social unrest or national calamity, under threat of life, displayed anti-social behaviour, suffering from terminal diseases, mentally/physically challenged and with no support. [xxviii]

It is often these children who are in need of an alternate support system in the form of institutionalised care. Institutionalisation is the placement of children in institutions, such as orphanages and residential child care.[xxix]

Crimes against Children

There was an increase of 24 per cent in crimes against children in 2011 over 2010. The states of Uttar Pradesh and Delhi together accounted for 47.6 per cent of the kidnappings and abduction of children reported in the country. According to the National Crime Records Bureau in India, a child goes missing every eight minutes out of which almost 40 per cent of them are not found. According to the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights, the cases of child abuse in India have gone up by an unbelievable 117 per cent in the last four years. This is what raises concern over the vulnerability of children in India; especially for those who lack their first line of protection their parents.[xxx]

Effects of Institutionalisation on Children in the Indian Setting:

Children and adolescents in child care institutions in India are just as much at risk, if not more, of developing mental health problems as other children are in institutions across the world. A study of the mental health status of children in orphanages at Bangalore by Suman Somen, K. (1986) examined the mental health status of 300 children living in institutions in India, because of lack of parental care. These children were then compared to 150 children from low-income families. Their mental health was evaluated using the scale developed for the assessment of the 16 indicators of mental health.

    A. The results indicated that children living in institutions suffered more from poor mental health, with 33 per cent of them having behavioural problems related to parental deprivation and early life institutionalisation.

    B. A study by Taneja et al. (2002) was the first of its kind to develop an intervention programme of structured play, hypothesising that such an intervention would accelerate psycho-social development. The results of the study did prove the hypothesis. Therefore, the above study has a serious implication for future research and practice. Once established, these interventions can be incorporated into the regimes of caregivers, social workers and children. Apart from this, future research, specifically in India, needs to concentrate on mental health outcomes of institutionalisation with respect to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and symptoms of Post-Traumatic Syndrome (PTS), so that interventions can be developed accordingly, and can be designed to be culture-specific at the same time.[xxxi]

    C. The UN Study on Violence against Children identified care institutions as one of the five settings where violence against children occurs. It says: "These children are at risk of violence from staff and officials responsible for their well-being. Corporal punishment in institutions is not explicitly prohibited

in a majority of countries. Over-crowding and squalid conditions, societal stigmatisation and discrimination, and poorly-trained staff heighten the risk of violence. Effective complaints, monitoring and inspection mechanisms, and adequate government regulation and oversight, are frequently absent. Not all perpetrators are held accountable, creating a culture of impunity and tolerance of violence against children. The impact of institutionalisation goes beyond the experience of violence by children. Long-term effects can include severe developmental delays, disability, irreversible psychological damage, and increased rates of suicide and recidivism". (Report of the independent expert for the United Nations Study on Violence against Children. Sixty-first session, Item 62 (a) of the provisional agenda* Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Children. A/61/299)

Tribal Children and Ashramshalas

In India, tribal people are often called adivasis and the Government recognises them as Scheduled Tribes (STs). Because of their isolation and socio-economic backwardness, STs are the most disadvantaged section of society.[xxxii]

In 2011, the tribal population in Maharashtra was 10.5 million, constituting 9.35 per cent of the total population of the State. Numerically, Maharashtra has the second largest tribal population in the country, after Madhya Pradesh, accounting for 10 per cent of the total ST population in India.

There are 47 tribes in Maharashtra and some of the major tribal groups are the Bhils, the Gonds, the Mahadeo, the Kolis, the Pawras, the Thakurs, and the Warlis. There are also three particularly vulnerable tribal groups (primitive tribal groups); the Katkari (Kathodi), the Maria Gond and the Kolam.

Each tribe is an endogamous group and their interaction with other tribes and also with the general population, is very limited.

• A study titled, 'Evaluation Study on the Kasturba Gandhi BalikaVidyalaya', was conducted by the National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog. The study covered 50 KGBV schools in 50 Districts across 18 States and carried the views of students, teachers and parents, giving an insight into the real problems that exist on the ground. The study revealed that the KGBVs are grossly violating the norms pertaining to admissions, appointment of teachers and infrastructure. As per the report, while many KGBVs are being operated from rented campuses, one-fourth of them don't have boundary walls, raising concerns about the safety of the students. The appointment of temporary and unqualified teachers, on a stipend as low as Rs. 5,000 a month, the inadequate number of female teachers and the lack of principals are issues that exist across the States. Most schools don't disburse the mandatory Rs. 100/- per month scholarship among the students.

• The Aayog has recommended a separate and independent authority for the management of the KGBV Scheme. It noted that though the KGBV Scheme was merged with the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in 2007, the functioning of these schools in most states is based on multiple models and is yet to be streamlined. It also suggested that the schools adhere to admission norms by correct identification of out-of-school and drop-out girls. The fortification of safety norms, the appointment of permanent teachers, improving the quality of education, the extension of schools upto class 10 and 12 in a phased manner, are among other suggestions put forth in the report.[xxxiii]

• In Maharashtra it was found that the State didn't utilise 40 per cent of the funds released by the Centre in 2012-13, the period which was taken into account for the study. This was despite the fact that of the 43 schools in the State, 22 didn't have their own buildings. "Of the Rs. 96 lakhs that was released, only Rs. 80 lakhs was spent and Rs.16 lakhs lapsed which could have been used to construct at least 15 KGBV schools in the rural and tribal areas," said an official.

- Of the over 4,100 girls enrolled in the KGBV schools in the State, nearly half (44.8%) belong to the STs, followed by SCs (18.4%). Minority students constitute only 1.7 per cent of the total enrolment, states the Maharashtra Government's data. This is despite the fact that only a few schools are set up in minority concentrated areas.[xxxiv]

Children Out-of-School

Many students in public schools today experience difficulty adjusting to school and acquiring the social and academic skills necessary for pursuing advanced education and training. As a result, the opportunity for students to function successfully as adults in their work and family roles, is being jeopardized.[xxxv]

Poverty and welfare dependency become a way of life for many, especially for females and their children; almost half of the families on welfare are headed by a school drop-out (Bowen, Desimone, & McKay, 1995; Schwartz, 1995). For others, the future is even bleaker; for example, poor academic achievement has been associated with higher mortality rates, higher incidence of suicide, increased criminal behaviour, higher incidence of intravenous drug use, and more frequent admissions to the state mental hospitals (Rumberger, 2004).

Dropping out may be the culmination of chronic school failure, a result of poor social and academic performance while a student is in school. The failure of a child in school has consequences for society as well as for the individual, including the loss of national income, lower family and individual incomes, higher unemployment, earlier involvement in sexual intercourse, higher risk of sexually transmitted disease, increased likelihood of school-age pregnancy, increased use of, and demand for, social services, increased crime, reduced political participation, and higher health care costs (Manlove, 1998; U.S. Department of Education, 2001).

Helping to keep students in school and to promote academic success are critical steps toward promoting greater and more competent adult-role performance. These aims have important implications for children, the family system, the community, the economy, and the general well-being of society.[xxxvi]

Assessment of Vulnerability: A profile of school failure

Although no student is immune to school problems, certain students are more vulnerable to academic problems and poor psycho-social adjustment in school. One may identify specific demographic groups in which membership has been empirically shown to be a risk marker. Racial and ethnic minority youths, as well as youths from the lower socio-economic families experience higher rates of academic failure and dropping out. Students who are members of more than one of these groups may be at even greater risk of school failure due to the cumulated risk factors.

Drop Outs -- Delhi study

The reasons for not being able to continue their studies, 35.14 per cent of the girls with higher urban percentages (28.57%/43.75%) say it is because of financial constraints within the family. From the girls who have dropped out, 33.78 per cent say that there was no teaching in the school. The R/U differentials are quite wide with higher rural percentages (38.10%/28. 13%). In the opinion of 24.32 per cent of the girls who had dropped out, the reason for them giving up their studies was household work. Interestingly, rural representation is less (14.29%) than urban percentages (37.50%).

Children at Work

The prevalence of child labour is not a recent phenomenon. Even in ancient times children were put to arduous labour in houses and fields at an early age. The performance of tasks such as tending of cattle, collection of grass and fuel, taking care of younger siblings by children, relieves the adult members of the family for more productive work and also financially.

However, being in the labour, such children are denied educational opportunities; their physical, mental and intellectual development is hampered. Working

children generally remain unskilled, underpaid and under-privileged throughout their life and their physical and social mobility becomes restricted. The vicious and cumulative cycle of poverty, ill-health, under-employment and unemployment also is strengthened.[xxxvii]

The employers prefer to have children work for them as they are more agile, are amenable to discipline and control and are cheaper and more adaptive.[xxxviii] According to a report prepared by Bachpan Bachao Andolan (BBA), over 5,000 child labourers have been rescued in India in the last five years. Several steps are being taken by the Government to deal with this issue. For instance, the Bombay High Court has directed the State Government to take pro-active steps to ensure that there is no bonded or child labour employed in brick kilns.

Children with Disability

The preamble of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) emphasises that, "Persons with disabilities include those who have long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments, which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others".[xxxix]

The children who live with a physical, sensory, intellectual or mental health disability are among the most stigmatised and marginalised of all the world's children. While all children are at risk of being victims of violence, differently-abled children find themselves at significantly increased risk because of stigma, negative traditional beliefs and ignorance. The lack of social support, limited opportunities for education, employment or participation in the community further isolates such differently-abled children and their families, leading to increased levels of stress and hardship. These differently-abled children are also often targeted by abusers, who see them as easy victims.[xl]

The amount of research available on this section of the population is extremely limited, particularly for differently-abled children in the developing world; current research indicates that violence against differently-abled children occurs at least 1.7 times more than the annual rates compared to their non-differently-abled peers.

Abuse faced by differently-abled children in a violent household: While many parents are violent towards children where no disability exists, when a differently-abled child lives in a violent setting, his or her disability often serves to compound and intensify the nature and extent of the abuse. For example, a mobility impaired child may be less able to flee when physically or sexually assaulted. A child who is deaf may be unable to communicate about the abuse he or she faces to anyone outside his or her household, unless these outsiders speak sign language or understand the home signs that the child uses. And when the abuser is the one interpreting the child's statement to someone outside the household, this further limits the child's ability to report abuse or ask for help. A child who is intellectually impaired may not be savvy enough to anticipate a parent's growing anger or know when to leave the room to avoid being struck.

Neglect as a precursor to violence: Parents may respond to the stress of caring for a differently- abled child with neglect rather than active violence. However, when this neglect involves denial of food, medicine and other life sustaining services, it must be considered as a form of violence.

Violence inside the classroom faced by children with disability

Teachers: Differently-abled children are often beaten, abused or bullied by teachers, particularly non specialized teacher who do not understand the limitations of these children. Children with intellectual disabilities and children with hearing impairments are particularly at risk, but reports worldwide find that all differently-abled children are potential victims. Sexual abuse by teachers is also widely reported for both male and female students.

Fellow students: Teachers that humiliate, bully or beat children not only directly cause harm to the child, but model such behaviour for other children in their classroom, who may follow the teacher's lead in physically harming, bullying and socially isolating the targeted differently-abled child. Sexual abuse by fellow students is also a concern and is often linked to physical violence and bullying behaviour by such classmates.

School staff: Individuals who work as teacher's aides or attendants for differently-abled children, or help transport, feed or care for such children, are often underpaid, overworked and largely unsupervised.

Community Based Violence

Children with disability are also a part of the wider community and unfortunately here as well, they are at an increased risk for violence.

• Stigma and prejudice encourage some members of the community to see differently-abled children as easy targets of rage, anger or sexual aggression.

• They are at an increased risk because they are physically vulnerable and in some cases, emotionally needy.

• Also importantly, differently-abled children are vulnerable because the current system of protection which societies have in place for other children, are inaccessible to, or unresponsive to many differently-abled children.[xli]

What is Child Sexual Abuse?

According to the World Health Organisation, Child Sexual Abuse is the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or that violates the laws or social taboos of society.

Child Sexual Abuse is evidenced by an activity between a child and an adult or another child who by age or development is in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power, the activity being intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person. This may include, but is not limited to:

a. The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity.

b. The exploitative use of a child in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices.

c. The exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials.[xlii]

One major controversy is related to the age of consent. Sexual contact between two adolescents or between an adolescent and an adult is also considered illegal under the POCSO Act, 2012 under which an act of sexual encounter with a person under 18 years is an offence, irrespective of consent or the gender or marriage or age of the victim/the accused.[xliii]

Another controversy is with regard to the provision of mandatory reporting. The proponents of mandatory reporting have a simple argument; imposing an obligation is the only way to detect all cases of abuse because children do not have the resources to protect themselves.[xliv] The reporting becomes troublesome when a close family member is involved. Incidents that were previously handled by family therapy and would now involve the police. This would complicate the matter (may lead to increase in family conflict or may cause a breakdown of the family). The trauma of the removal of the child from the scene to a hospital or a shelter home would cause social difficulties.[xlv]

Perpetrators of Child Sex Abuse

Most people imagine abusers to be shadowy and frightening strangers. Whereas, in fact, most often, these abusers can range from family members to acquaintances and someone the victim trusts explicitly. Rarely are abusers complete strangers.[xlvi]

Therefore, Child Sexual Abuse can take place in the family – by a parent, step-parent, sibling or other relative. It is almost always by someone the child knows: friend, neighbour, childcare giver, teacher, etc. The Study on Child Abuse conducted by the Ministry of Women and Child Development of the Government of India in 2007, found that in most cases, the perpetrator was known to the child.[xlvii]

Consequences of Child Sexual Abuse

Child Sexual Abuse leads to a range of physical as well as emotional/mental health consequences. These depend on a number of factors, such as the duration of abuse, the age of the child and the type and availability of support.[xlviii]

The long term effects of Child Sexual Abuse can be devastating.[xlix]

a. Mental health problems: anxiety, fear, depression, poor self-esteem, alcohol or drug abuse, self annihilation.

b. Traumatic sexualisation: in which a child's sexuality is shaped in a developmentally inappropriate and interpersonally dysfunctional fashion. For example, aversion to sexual contact, aggressive sexual behaviour.

c. Child rearing difficulties

d. Stigmatization: the negative connotations, for example, the badness, shame and guilt that are communicated to the child about the experiences which then become incorporated into the child's self image.

e. Social dysfunction: delinquency, criminal behaviour, acts of violence to self or to others.

f. Feeling of powerlessness/ Feeling of betrayal: children discover that someone on whom they are vitally dependent has caused them harm and the child faces trust issues, where they find it hard to trust anyone around them.

Violence against infants and younger children is a major risk factor for psychiatric disorders and suicide. Preventing violence against children, therefore, contributes to preventing a much broader range of non-communicable diseases.[l]

Previous Studies Done on Child Sexual Abuse (CSA)

• The Statistics on CSA in India

In 2007, the Government of India published its first report on CSA.

• This Report reveals:

- Of the children interviewed, over 53 per cent reported having faced some form of CSA.

- Over 57 per cent of these were boys.

- 72 per cent said they did not report the abuse to anyone.

- Only 3 per cent reported CSA to the police.

- 48 per cent of the boys and 39 percent of the girls interviewed said they had faced some form of CSA.

- 15 per cent of these children had faced severe forms of abuse, defined in this study as 'oral sex, sexual intercourse, making the child touch the offender's private parts, or making the children take off their clothes and looking at them or taking their pictures'.[li]

The study conducted by Sarita Sahay, in 2010, on the subject of sexually abused girls and their family members in Madhya Pradesh, explores the responses to and the handling of the cases of sexual abuse of girls by their family members. An attempt has also been made to analyse the impact of the unusual behaviour of the parents on the emotional well-being of the victims and the coping strategies they adopt to come out of and deal with the situation. This study compared the data obtained from among tribal and non-tribal populations. This data indicates that cases of attempt to rape were high in a tribal society, as compared to a non-tribal society.

Social Scientists[lii] find that the punishment given by the family members of the girl might be severe. In a case of incest, however, his punishment would not be severe. His family members would punish him with a sympathetic heart. In addition, they would not like to take the matter outside the home and he would not have to face any embarrassing situation in the society. The abusers take advantage of such social norms.

This study also revealed that the girls, who were abused, suffered from various personality disorders. The most common among them was that they became either very shy or very aggressive. As part of their coping strategies, it was found that some of the victims tried to escape from the abusers at home by spending more time in the houses of their friends or in the libraries of their school or college. Some of them cried in lonely places. A few strategies were self-destructive, such as not eating, not wearing woollen clothes when cold and trying to cause harm to others such as shouting and slapping younger siblings. Very few victims adopted healthy coping strategies.

Whether it was the case of outside sexual abuse or of incest, it was the girls who suffered the consequences of unsupportive and impractical attitudes of family members. In some cases, it was also found that the family members of the victims blamed their daughters for the abuse, saying that it was their fault because they were born as girls. It was their destiny to suffer.[liii]

Finally

In spite of several focussed initiatives being taken to address the various needs of children in India, it is very evident from the research and information mentioned above, that a great deal needs to be done to improve the conditions in the realms of child survival, child development and child protection. In order to deal with children's issues in a holistic manner, there is a need for collaborated efforts between the Government, the NGOs, the parents, schools, and the community. Most importantly, children need to be included in these efforts even as they work towards seeking pro active solutions for a violent free future.

In this context, this report is a ground-breaking entry of children's views into the child protection discourse in India, and important research on which policy-makers and legislators, especially at the State level, can act to strengthen a framework for children's safety.

The report consists of an introductory section [a child's testimony (pp 1 – 2), acknowledgements (pp3 – 4), and an executive summary (pp 5 – 12)], and then a detailed analysis of the findings of the survey (pp 13 – 128). This detailed section contains a literature review (pp 13 – 51), an outline of methodology (p 52), a glossary (pp 53 – 56), further methodology (pp 56 – 59), the aims of the survey (pp 60 – 61), a detailed analysis of the findings (pp 62 – 118), recommendations (pp 118 – 121), a conclusion (pp 122 – 126) and the abbreviations used (p 127).

HOW WE DID IT

Introduction

This chapter details the methodology of the Opinion Poll including a description of the sample, tools of data collection, the procedure adopted, the plan of data analysis, the scope and the limitations of the study and so on.

The Purpose Of The Poll

This Opinion Poll was designed to understand the nature of violence against children in the State of Maharashtra. The state has six divisions — Amravati, Aurangabad, Konkan, Nagpur, Nashik and Pune. Within these divisions, the districts of Chandrapur, Yavatmal, Jalna, Latur, Nandurbar, Raigad, Pune and Mumbai were selected for this poll.

Sampling Design

The Poll was conducted with approximately 5000 children within the age group of 13–17 years from the eight districts listed above and was distributed between the selected districts as follows:
- In School-- 250 per district (8 Districts).
- Out of School -- 250 per district (8 Districts).
- Institutions -- 75 per district (8 Districts).
- KGBV -- 50 per district (from the Districts of Jalna and Nandurbar)
- Ashramshalas -- 100 per district (from 3 Districts of Chandrapur, Nandurbar and Yavatmal).

Therefore, the sample was distributed on the basis of the following classification:
- In School – 2000
- Out of School -- 2000
- Institutions -- 600
- KGBV -- 100
- Ashramshalas -- 300

I. The Key Concepts And Their Operation Definitions

a. Child

The UNCRC defines a 'child' as a person below the age of 18 years, unless the laws of a particular country set the legal age for adulthood as younger. In India, the definition of a child differs in the various legal provisions that are in place for children. For instance, after amending Article 21, the Constitution of India defines the age of free education and child labour. According to Article 21, the minimum compulsory age of education is fixed as 14 years. Likewise,

Article 24 prohibits children below the age of 14 years from being employed to work in any factory or mine or engaged in any other hazardous

employment. The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929 defines a child to mean a person who, if male, has not completed twenty one years of age, and if female, has not completed eighteen years of age.[liv]

However, for the purpose of this Opinion Poll, we have considered the definition of a child according to the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, which is a person who has not completed 18 years of age.

b. Third Gender

The Supreme Court of India passed a judgement on April 15, 2014, creating the 'third gender' status for hijras and transgender. The Bench clarified that its verdict pertains only to eunuchs and not other sections of society such as gay, lesbian and bisexuals (Mahapatra, 2014). Therefore, third gender in this study refers to those who identify themselves as neither male nor female.

c. Classification of Age

The age of the children has been classified as follows:
i. Below 13 years of age
ii. 13 – 14 years of age
iii. 15 – 17 years of age

d. Nuclear Family: This type of family includes a nuclear pair, i.e., the head of the house and spouse, with or without unmarried children.[lv]

e. Joint Family: It includes both lineally extended and collaterally extended families.

i) Lineally extended family – Head and spouse with married son(s)/daughter(s) and their spouses and parents with or without other not currently married relation(s) (OR) Head without spouse but with at least two married son(s) and daughter(s) and their spouses and/or parents with or without other, not currently married relations.

ii) Collaterally extended family – Head and spouse with married brother(s)/ sister(s) and their spouses with or without other relations [including married relation(s)] (OR) Head without spouse but with at least two married brother(s)/ sister(s) and their spouses with or without other relations.[lvi]

f. Others: This type of family refers to families which are neither nuclear nor joint. For example, children who are living with their grandparents or with their siblings, children living with their uncle and aunt or with their parents and uncle/aunt and so on.

g. Guardian

A 'guardian' according to the Guardian and Wards Act, 1890 means a minor for whose person or property, or both, there is a guardian. For the purpose of this Opinion Poll, a guardian, therefore, refers to the person who looks after the person and property of a child who has no living parents.

h. Disability

According to the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, 'Person with disability' means a person suffering from not less than forty per cent of any disability as certified by a medical authority. As per the Act, 'Disability' means – Blindness, Low vision, Leprosy (cured), Hearing impairment, Loco-motor disability, Mental retardation and Mental illness.

However, for the purpose of this study disability means – Visual, Speech and Hearing impairment, Loco-motor disability, Learning disability and any other disability, excluding mental retardation but children may have included challenges in studies as well

i. Employed

The Oxford dictionary defines the term 'employ' to mean give work to (someone) and to pay them for it. Therefore, in the context of this study the term 'employed' refers to children who work for a payment which could be in kind, money or to clear a debt owed.

j. In-School Child

An in-school child refers to a child who is studying either in the upper primary section, secondary and higher secondary section of a school.

k. Out-of-School Child

A child who is out-of-school refers to a child who has dropped out of school or who has not attended school in the current academic year, despite being enrolled.

l. Institutionalised Child

An institutionalised child refers to a child who is living in an institution recognised by the Government. However, for the purpose of this study, institutionalised children refers only to those children classified by the Juvenile Justice Act, 2000 as being children in need of care and protection and does not include children in conflict with the Law.

m. Physical Abuse

Physical Abuse is defined as non-accidental trauma or physical injury caused by punching, beating, kicking, biting, burning or otherwise harming a child. Physical abuse is the most visible form of child mal-treatment.

n. Psychological Abuse

Psychological Abuse/Emotional Abuse can be seen as a failure to provide a supportive environment and primary attachment figure for a child so that they may develop a full and healthy range of emotional abilities. Emotional abuse is also the act of causing harm to a child's development. Examples of these acts are restricting movement, threatening, scaring, discriminating, ridiculing, belittling, etc.

o. Child Sexual Abuse

Child Sexual Abuse refers to the involvement of a child in any sexual activity that: the child does not understand; the child is unable to give informed consent to; the child is not developmentally prepared for and cannot give consent to; and violates the laws and norms of society.

As defined by the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012, sexual offences include penetrative sexual assault, non-penetrative sexual assault, sexual harassment and the use of a child for pornography.

p. Neglect

Neglect is stated to occur when there is failure of a parent/guardian to provide for the development of the child, when the parent/guardian is in a position to do so (where resources are available to the family or caregiver; distinguished from poverty). Mostly neglect occurs in one or more areas such as: health, education, emotional development, nutrition and shelter.[lix]

For the purpose of this Opinion Poll, the term 'neglect' refers to the medical neglect on the part of the institution staff towards children they are responsible for.

II. Sampling Technique

For this Opinion Poll the children were chosen based on convenience sampling which is a type of non-probability sampling technique.

III. Tools of Data Collection

The tools of data collection used were as follows

a. Questionnaire for the children

The questionnaire was designed to elicit information on the following forms of violence, viz. physical (hitting, corporal punishment and so on), psychological (being humiliated, fear of violence, witnessing violence, discrimination, verbal abuse and so on), economical (forced to earn, violence at workplace, not being paid and so on), sexual violence and neglect (deprived of medical attention when at the institution). The questionnaire also obtained information about the perpetrators and whether children are talking about being abused.

This questionnaire was developed keeping in mind the different settings the children are in. Therefore, there was variation in the questionnaires depending on the setting.

b. Child Friendly Stories

Fictional stories were created to be used as a medium for the children to understand the themes and to be able to relate to and thus, talk about their own situations.

c. Session of free expression

In some of the sessions, children were given the opportunity to express their thoughts on their safety in homes, schools and communities through various mediums, such as drawings, poems, compositions, stories and so on.

d. Questionnaire for Stakeholders

A brief questionnaire was provided to the stakeholders (teachers, institution staff and so on) to elicit their understanding of how safe the children were in their homes, schools and communities.

IV. Procedure of Data Collection

The tools of data collection, once finalized, were translated into Hindi and Marathi (for Mumbai).

The investigators selected to collect the data were given an intensive training on the tools of data collection and guidelines for child protection. Mock sessions were also conducted to be able to assist the investigators to deal with challenges that might arise during a session.

In a session, the data was collected with around 25 children or less depending on the availability and keeping in mind the need for representation of the District. Children were gathered in the settings they were in, for instance, the session with school children was conducted at a school, children who are out of school were gathered at an NGO or a community centre and so on.

The session began with an ice-breaker followed by an introduction to the study and the organisations involved in conducting the study. The children were given the story books; however, the investigator narrated the relevant stories, following which the children filled up the relevant questionnaire. The investigator explained each question and went step by step with the children.

Once this process was completed, the investigators distributed a resource kit to the children, which detailed the children's rights and the investigators also informed them of the existence of the 1098 and how to use the helpline. Children were also given a stationery kit and refreshments in the form of a packet of dry fruits each.

To ensure confidentiality, the questionnaires obtained from each session were put in an envelope and sealed in the presence of the children. This envelope contained the details of the setting and the district where the poll was conducted. Children were given codes instead of names to protect their identity.

V. Data Processing and Plan of Analysis

For the purpose of processing and analysing, the data was entered into a Microsoft Excel sheet. The variables were analysed with the help of Excel, and statistical procedures such as frequency tables, bar diagrams and pie charts were used to interpret the data.

VI. Scope of the Study

Children are a section of the population who are dependent on others and, therefore, are more prone to being subjected to violence. This Opinion Poll seeks to understand the violence that the children in Maharashtra are subjected to or have witnessed, with the aim to work towards creating safe homes, safe schools and safe communities.

The issue of violence against children is a complex question and can be looked at from various perspectives. This Opinion Poll focussed mainly on violence that the children face in their immediate environments such as homes, schools and in the community. Some of this kind of violence tends to get overlooked under the pretext of it being legitimate violence. This Opinion Poll was conducted with the intention to identify the violence and to create safe homes, safe schools and safe communities for the children. It included questions about physical, psychological, economic and sexual violence as well as neglect experienced or witnessed by children. This Opinion Poll was exploratory in nature.

VII. Limitations

The limitations of the Opinion Poll were the following:

a. The Opinion Poll covered only eight districts of Maharashtra, hence, the opinions of children from the other districts were not represented.

b. There were more than one team doing the data collection and although there was a training conducted for the investigators in an attempt to control the variation in the data collection process, the standardization of data collection was difficult.

c. The tool used in this Opinion Poll was a questionnaire and, therefore, it was difficult to ensure that the participants responded to every applicable question. Hence, there were many questions for which the responses were not given.

d. Since the questionnaire was answered by the children themselves, there were differences in comprehension of the questions and, therefore, contradictions in the responses given.

e. Children with severe disabilities were not a part of the study.

VIII. To What End (Conclusion)

Finding Children's Experiences of Violence and Making them Count

This Opinion Poll systematically attempts to understand, record, and track the violence that the children are subjected to in Maharashtra based on the data received from the children themselves. This is because their first-hand narratives can help create a deeper understanding and discernment of issues and lead to empathy with the children and thereby result in some definitive action.

Investing in Child-Centric Interviews and Child-Initiated Action

The emphasis is on hearing the children's version of violence in all the settings in which they spend their childhood–in homes and families, in schools, in institutions, in care and in the judicial system, in workplaces, out of school and in the community. The rationale of the study being child-centric is:

 - The belief that children's experiences must be the critical starting point of any understanding of their problems and must be the frame of reference of this exercise as they are the victims of violence. And, the conviction that the children must be as meaningfully involved as the adults in promoting and strategising any action regarding the violence against them.

 - The rise in the scale and severity of the violence against children in Maharashtra (as well as the country), is a problem that is both endemic and pervasive. Every fifth child in the world lives in India. Within this huge demographic group, there are a staggering 43 crore children in the age group of 0-18 years, 16 crores children in the age group of under five years and about 27 crore children in the age group of 6-18 years (Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD, 2011). A substantial number of them are subject to some form of violence. It is important to know how many children are vulnerable and how so. This Poll uses Maharashtra as the starting point of the search.

 - The need for current data, as the last study conducted to assess the scale and severity of violence against children was in 2007 by the MWCD (Kacker, Varadan, & Kumar, 2007). With no recent data available, this Opinion Poll in Maharashtra has been chosen to kick start the update. The difference is that the centrifugal force of this Poll is the children and their voices and opinions. The Poll invests heavily in the children's current experiences of safety – or the lack of it – in homes, in schools, in institutions and in communities.

 - The need to safeguard their rights and protect the children from abuse and exploitation by creating an environment where the children are respected, empowered and are pro-active in their own protection. The partners are firm in their faith that these 'child-safe' environments guided by the principle of 'the best interest of the child' can be created by formulating guidelines and policies on safety for children, as well as standards of care.

 - The expectation that the data obtained from this Opinion Poll will heighten a nuanced understanding of the issues, spark discussions and dialogue between various stakeholders working on child protection and help develop child-friendly interventions and strategies for safe homes, schools and communities.

 - The keenness to promote a human rights-based approach to deal with violence against children that lucidly conceptualizes rights and obligations, and children's entitlement to demand State protection and redressal. This is because rights-based approaches mesh good development practices with human rights principles that have been evaluated as effective by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the CEDAW, Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other international treaties.
 - Participation is one of the key points of a rights based approval. This opinion Poll attempts to create a resource base from children themselves to us as data for their own child led advocacy at a later stage.

Objectives of the Opinion Poll

- Seek the opinion of children on the nature of violence experienced and witnessed by them.
- Identify the perpetrators, and understand the causes of violence, as perceived by the children.
- Determine the children's perception and expectations of a safe place and the areas where they feel safe (be it their homes, their schools or in their communities).
- Seek the opinion of various stakeholders to better understand the challenges and to design effective interventions.

A Collaborative Partnership

This Opinion Poll has been jointly conducted by three organisations: **NINE**IS**MINE**, Mumbai Smiles and the UNICEF (Mumbai).

New Delhi-based PRATYEK attempts to educate the children and their care-providers in the art of advocacy and justice with a focus on child-rights and earth-rights. It seeks to include tools and resources for advocacy and social justice skilling in school curricula, to raise awareness amongst children about advocacy and social justice and to raise children with a vision to groom compassionate, conscientious and pro-active 'kidizens'. **NINE**IS**MINE** is being convened by PRATYek.

Mumbai Smiles works with the poorest communities living in the slums of Andheri (East), a northern suburb of Mumbai. Its core areas of work are education, health and nutrition, socio-economic development, awareness and advocacy.
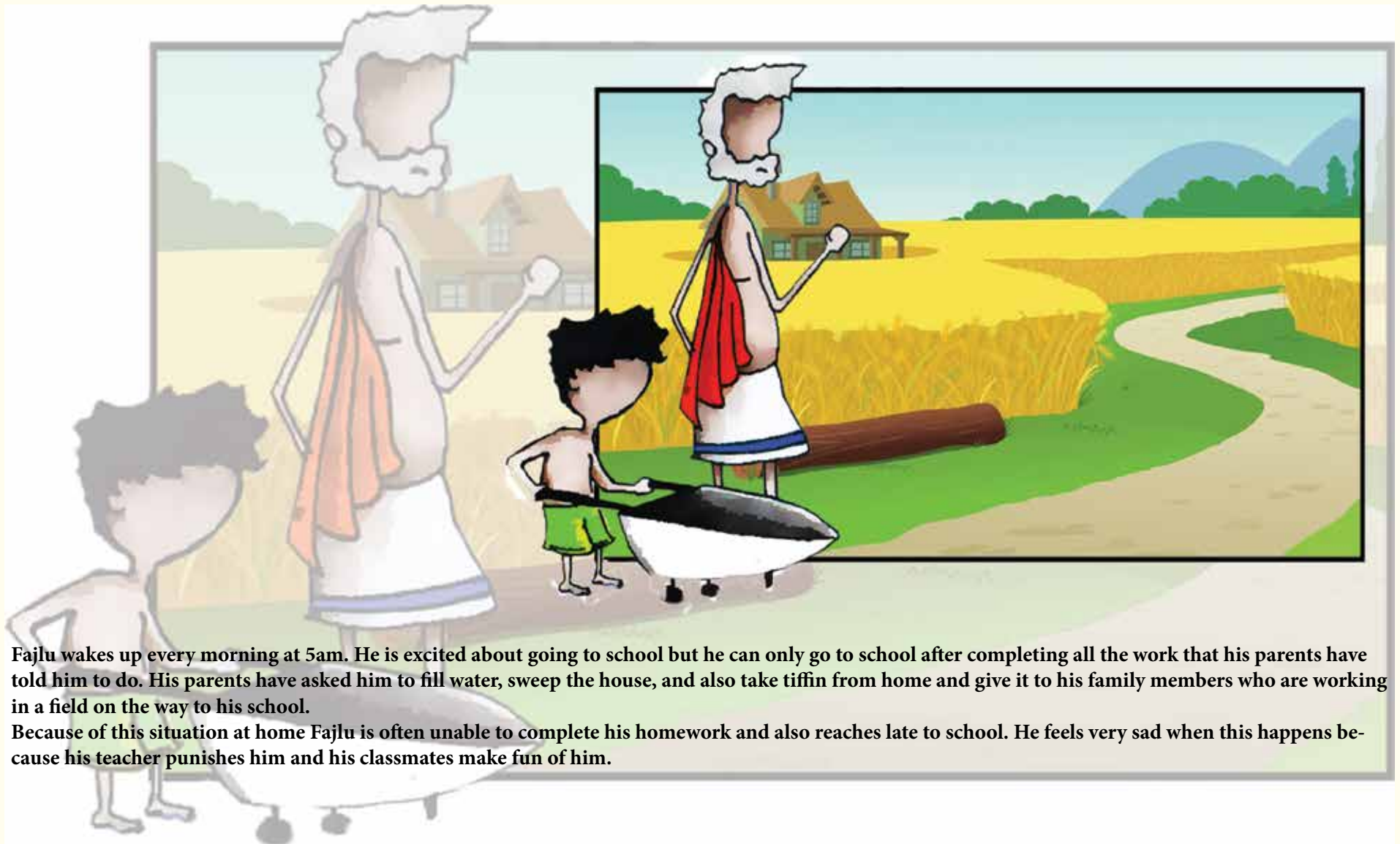
HIGHLIGHTS OF THE OPINION POLL

SCHOOLED INTO VOILENCE

Fajlu wakes up every morning at 5am. He is excited about going to school but he can only go to school after completing all the work that his parents have told him to do. His parents have asked him to fill water, sweep the house, and also take tiffin from home and give it to his family members who are working in a field on the way to his school.

Because of this situation at home Fajlu is often unable to complete his homework and also reaches late to school. He feels very sad when this happens because his teacher punishes him and his classmates make fun of him.

Schools are meant to equip children with learning, confidence, self-esteem, a sense of person-hood and social benefits. Instead, the data shows the prevalence of physical violence in the schools.

TABLE 1: Physical abuse in school

Negative treatment in school	Percentage
Hitting the child with an object	16.60%
Making the children stand outside	14.77%
Slapping the children	5.57%
Twisting the children's ears	4.75%
Beating the children	2.28%
No response	5.20%

N = 2945

The nature of violence in schools ranges from children being hit with an object (16.60%), made to stand outside the class (14.77%), being slapped (5.57%), having their ears twisted (4.75%), to being beaten (2.28%). The teachers, the non-teaching staff and the older students are largely responsible for such acts, and the boys are subject to far more physical abuse than the girls.

There is a very real danger behind resorting to corporal punishment by people in positions of authority over children. Physical violence against them, damages the children's health, prevents them from growing up safely, or from receiving the education that would equip them for the future. These acts could also very easily and surely perpetuate a cycle of violence, as children who feel rejected, tend to act in disruptive, disrespectful and violent ways.

A deafening silence: The small and silent victims of violence

TABLE 2: Reported physical abuse in schools

Reported Punishment	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	1156	53.03%
No	1024	46.97%

N = 2180

Violence is often hidden and unspoken. Children seldom report violence against them to the authorities (See Table 2). Their efforts are foiled by a number of issues: fear of repercussions (35.11%), feelings of shame (15.82%), lack of anyone to talk to (15.82%), and threats (7.96%). (See Table 3).

TABLE 3: Reasons for not informing anyone of the physical abuse in school

Reasons	Percentage
Afraid	35.11%
Ashamed	15.82%
No one to talk to	15.82%
Threatened	7.96%
No response	30.49%

N = 2099

A majority of the children (39.86%), who gathered the courage to complain about the violence that they faced, say that the persons did nothing to deal with their concerns. Encouragement comes in the guise of 15.26% of the children stating that their confidants did confront the persons responsible for the abuse. (See Table 4).

TABLE 4: Responses of the person, the child confided in, about the physical abuse at school

Response	Percentage
Did Nothing	39.86%
Asked the child to ignore it	20.75%
Confronted the perpetrator	15.26%
Asked the child to keep it a secret	6.65%
Informed the police	6.60%
No response	16.74%

N = 1894

Teachers: Enhancing children's self-worth or diminishing it?

TABLE 5: Positive treatment in school

Postive treatment in school	Percentage
Asked if the children need help	39.25%
Excused the children	34.02%
Held a dialogue with the children	29.98%
No Response	5.20%

N = 2945

Testaments of teacher support – for their efforts at building learning competencies as well as infusing a sense of self-worth among students – presents another positive note. Teachers are concerned with the children's academic struggles, say 39.25% of the children, and another 29.98% confirm teacher support when they are lagging behind in homework (See Table 5).

TABLE 6: Affirmative steps by the school authorities

Positive treatment	Percentage
Offer Help	64.95%
Encourage	56.48%

The children add to the teacher's claims, revealing that their warm and receptive attitudes have enormously helped curb psychological stress – 64.95% of the children affirm the teachers' pro-active offers of help, and 56.48% say that the teachers encourage the children hugely and channelise their individual merits.

But on the flip side, 58.85% children hold teachers responsible for psychological violence of varying degrees (See Table 8). The children say that they face humiliation at the hands of the teachers (6.71%), have their opinions rejected (5.09%), are threatened with failure in exam-inations (4.93%), face negative comparisons with other children (2.67%), and are criticised (3.54%), discouraged (1.48%), subjected to bad language (2.90%) and even locked in rooms (0.67%)(See Table 7).

Children are unsafe at school as the teachers beat them. (Laxmi, Age 13 years, Shahada, Nandurbar)

Corporal Punishment is very much prevalent in government schools. (Sr. Selma Administrator, FIAMC Bio-Medical Ethics Centre, Mumbai)

Table 7: Forms of Psychological abuse in school

Psychological abuse in school	Percentage
Humiliated	6.71%
Ignored	5.09%
Threatened with failure	4.93%
Criticised	3.54%
Subjected to bad language	2.90%
Compared	2.67%
Discouraged	1.48%
Threatened with bodily harm	1.35%
Locked in a room	0.67%
No response	4.12%

N = 2964

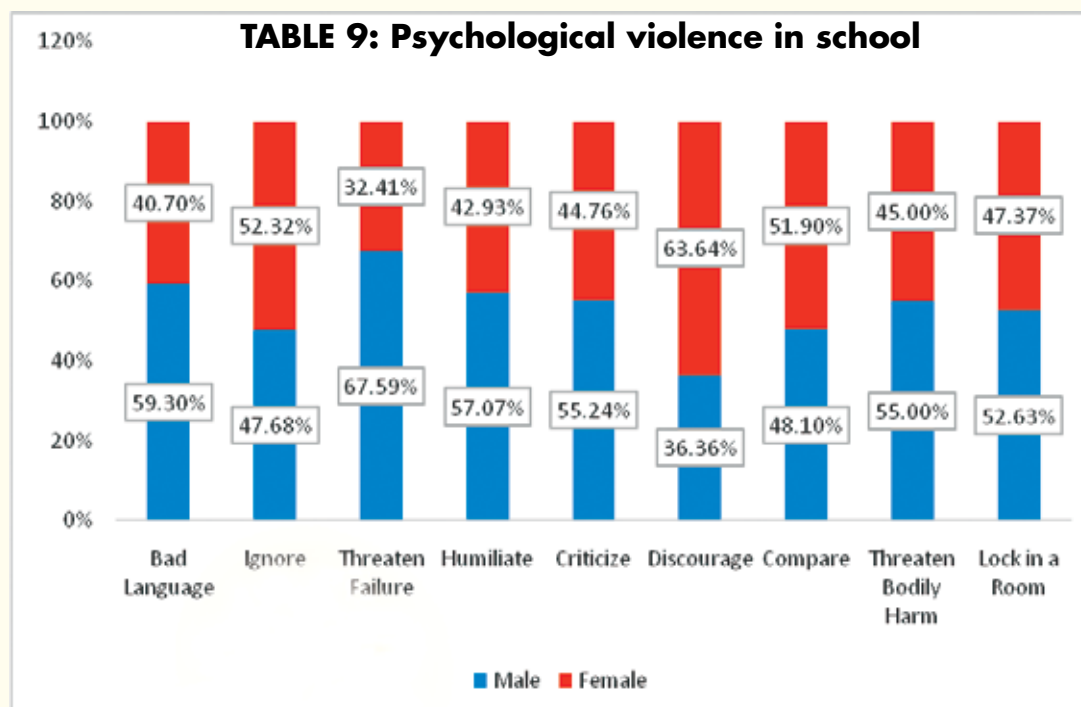**TABLE 8: Perpetrators of psychological abuse in schools**

Perpetrators	Percentage
Teachers	58.85%
Students	43.28%
Principal	15.54%
Tuition Teacher	9.14%
Peons	5.13%
Watchmen	2.70%
No response	12.17%

N = 2671

The fact that children are fragile and vulnerable, and depend on the teachers for their growth and development makes the case for their un-assailability a non-negotiable one. When the children's personal limitations are exposed publicly and harshly by the teachers that they look up to, they are in danger of developing a sense of worthlessness that could manifest itself as violence in later stages.

Psychological violence

TABLE 9: Psychological violence in school

	Bad Language	Ignore	Threaten Failure	Humiliate	Criticize	Discourage	Compare	Threaten Bodily Harm	Lock in a Room
Female	40.70%	52.32%	32.41%	42.93%	44.76%	63.64%	51.90%	45.00%	47.37%
Male	59.30%	47.68%	67.59%	57.07%	55.24%	36.36%	48.10%	55.00%	52.63%

The majority of the victims of psychological violence in schools are boys (59.30%) who are subjected to far more humiliation, threatened with bodily harm and are locked up in rooms. The girl victims (40.70%) confront challenges of being ignored by the teachers and the support staff (52.32%), being discouraged (63.64%), as well as being negatively compared with others (51.90%)(See Table 9).

Of the 43.28% children who held other students responsible for their psychological stress, 14.44% say that they fell prey to pranks, 7.96% say that they were tortured through labelling and taunting, 5.30% say that they were subjected to bad language and 3.95% say that they were blamed for things which they had not done. While 43.80% children indicate that they did not confide in anyone about the psychological abuse, 39.35% children say that they did.

TABLE 10: Reasons for not informing anyone of the psychological abuse in schools

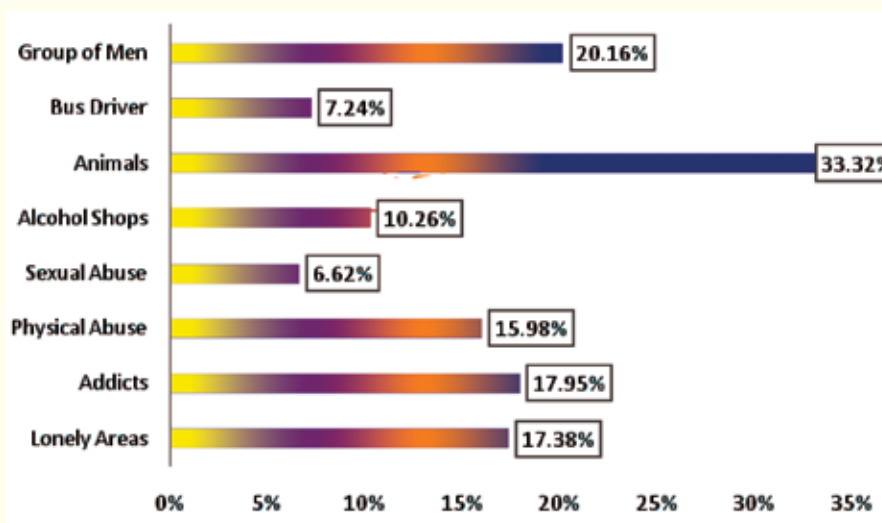| Reasons	Percentage
Afraid	28.57%
No one to tell	15.34%
Ashamed	13.28%
Threatened	7.70%
No response	41.17%

N = 1897

For a majority of the children (32.08%), no help was forthcoming. The reasons for their non-reporting to duty bearers include: fear (28.57%), they had no one to tell (15.34%), shame (13.28%) and threats issued not to tell anyone (7.70%)(See Table 10).

The picture that emerges is that the schools are imposing discipline with degradation rather than with dignity--instead of tapping into their potential to operate in an environment of trust, equality and tolerance, to counter such debilitating psychological after effects among children, and turning their precincts into transformative spaces (which lend children a sense of self-worth and belonging, and strengthen their resilience to handle insecurities).

Needed: a child-nurturing environment

TABLE 11: Reasons for feeling unsafe on the way to school

Children are unsafe in school as strangers are allowed to enter the School. To prevent strangers from entering there should be a compound wall surrounding the school. (Reema, Age 15 years, Taloda, Nandurbar)

Even more discouraging is the fact that children have to navigate several hurdles to get to school. A number of them feel threatened by stray animals (33.32%), others (20.16%) fear groups of men standing on their way to school, some are scared of the lonely patches on the roads (17.38%), and the fear of addicts is real for another set of children (17.95%). The presence of shops selling alcohol (10.26%), streets filled with people inclined to crime and the fear of sexual harassment, are other deterrents (See Table 11).

A child-friendly school environment is one that reduces the vulnerabilities of children to situations and actions that could lead to their neglect, abuse and exploitation. When rating the facilities and services designed especially for them, 50.69% children pass their classrooms as good, 39.21% say lighting at school is adequate, 37.42% approve of the toilets, 38.23% say that there are libraries, 50% like the teaching and playground facilities and 40.70% are happy with the counsellors (See Table 12).

TABLE 12: Ratings of facilities in schools

Facilities in school	Ratings				
	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Facility not available	No response
Classrooms	4.53%	30.21%	50.69%	0.86%	13.72%
Lighting	8.89%	30.29%	39.21%	4.51%	17.01%
Toilets	17.70%	25.57%	37.42%	4.30%	15.02%
Library	9.50%	21.50%	38.23%	13.22%	17.57%
Teaching	3.60%	20.27%	54.55%	2.06%	19.52%
Playground	5.83%	23.52%	52.45%	2.93%	15.28%
Counsellor	4.34%	15.60%	40.70%	18.07%	21.28%

N = 2916

Yet, note must be made of the 4.30% children who say there are no toilets in their schools, and 13.22% children who say there were no libraries in their school. And, it must be recognised that an analysis of these facilities is included in this violence-screening exercise as these facilities are rightfully theirs, and violations in their provision and quality, are deemed as deep infringements of their basic child-rights.

> *I feel unsafe at school as there are no bathrooms/ toilets. Good bathroom/ toilet facilities should be provided at school. (Tara, Age 12 years, Mumbai)*

Sexual abuse: Long term physical, psychological and social fall-outs

Sexual abuse is a scary reality in schools as children admit to being aware of their friends' rights to self-hood being violated by people. While some children (34.99%) are aware of children having been subjected to vulgar language, 6.07% children know of children who have
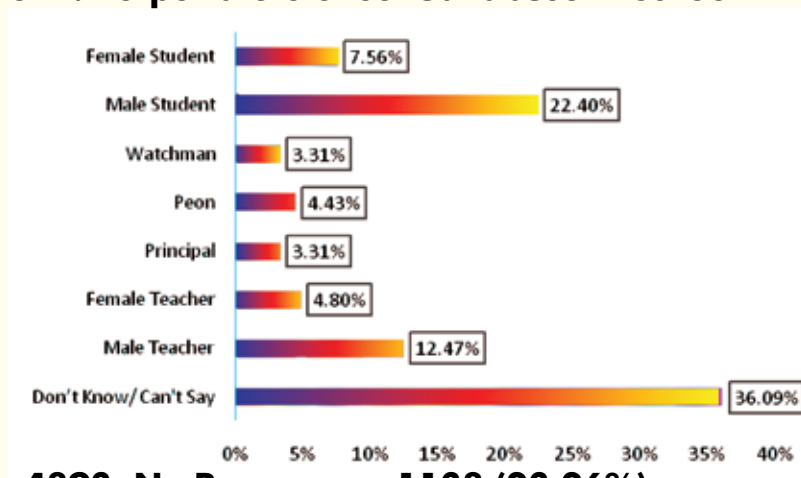
been forced to watch pornography, 5.89% know of children who have been kissed against their wishes, and 4.62% children know of children who have been raped (See Table 13).

TABLE 13: Awareness amongst children of sexual abuse in schools

Sexual abuse at school	Percentage
Don't know/Can't say	35.13%
Subjected to vulgar language	34.99%
Made to watch porn	6.07%
Kissed	5.89%
Raped	4.62%
Looked at/Touched	3.29%
Forced to expose	3.23%
Made to pose for photographs	3.21%
No response	19.97%

N = 4893

Table14: Perpetrators of sexual abuse in school

Female Student	7.56%
Male Student	22.40%
Watchman	3.31%
Peon	4.43%
Principal	3.31%
Female Teacher	4.80%
Male Teacher	12.47%
Don't Know/ Can't Say	36.09%

N = 4893; No Response = 1138 (23.26%)

Sexual violence against children erodes the strong foundation that children require for leading healthy and productive lives. Evidence also shows that sexual violence has long term physical, psychological and social impact, not only on the children but also on their families and communities. This includes increased risks of illness, unwanted pregnancies, psychological distress, stigma, discrimination and difficulties at school – making it imperative to curb such violence within schools.

As schools are advantageously placed to break patterns of violence by giving the children, their parents and the communities the knowledge and the skills to communicate, to change social assumptions and cultural mores, and resolve conflicts through dialogue, they must tap into this potential.

These young Kathkari girls are fighting societal pressure of getting married at a young age; which is a custom of their tribe. It is noteworthy to mention that there are parents who support their daughters who wish to pursue an education.
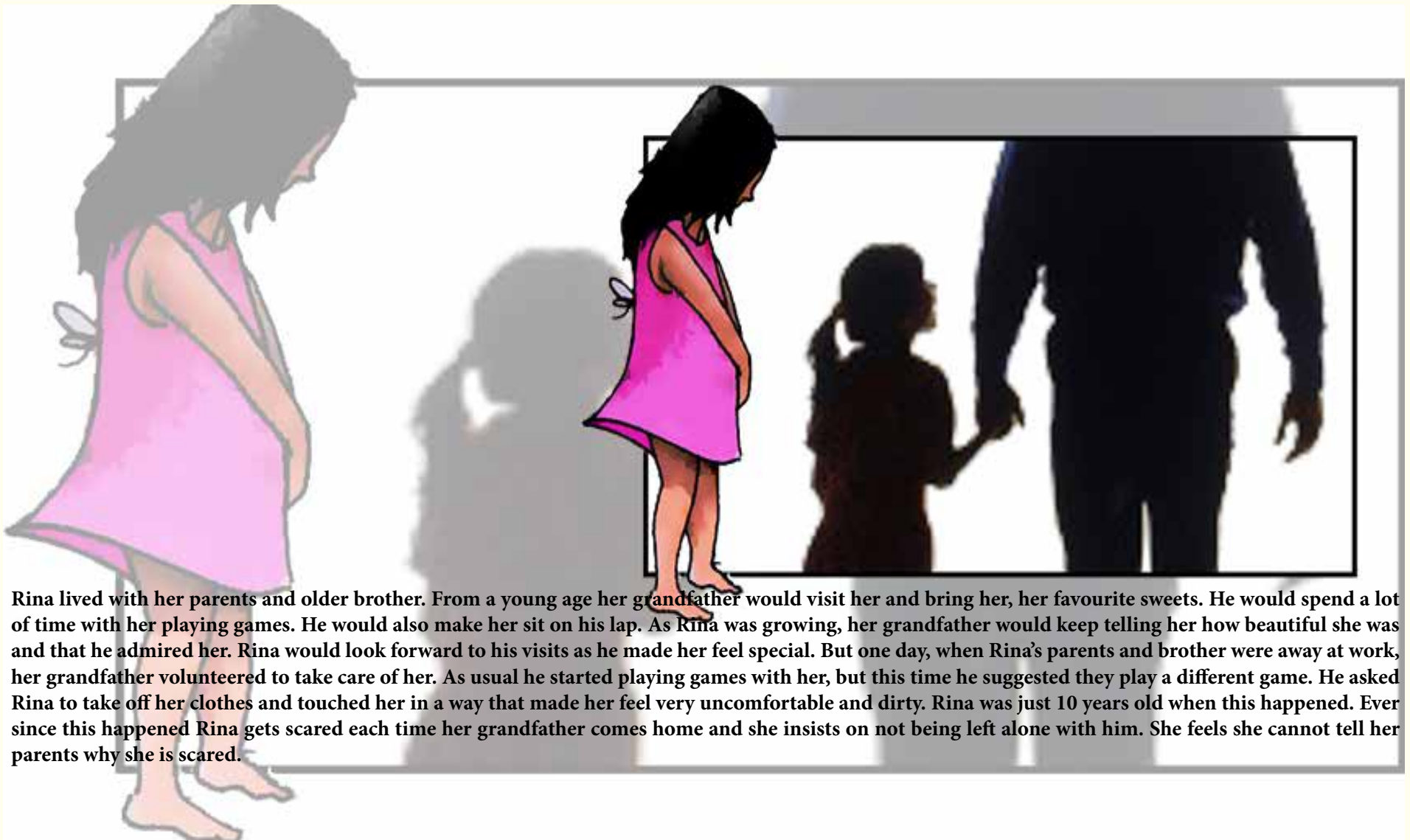
Name: Arjun. Class: 7th. Village: Boroll.

HOME IS WHERE THE HURT IS

Rina lived with her parents and older brother. From a young age her grandfather would visit her and bring her, her favourite sweets. He would spend a lot of time with her playing games. He would also make her sit on his lap. As Rina was growing, her grandfather would keep telling her how beautiful she was and that he admired her. Rina would look forward to his visits as he made her feel special. But one day, when Rina's parents and brother were away at work, her grandfather volunteered to take care of her. As usual he started playing games with her, but this time he suggested they play a different game. He asked Rina to take off her clothes and touched her in a way that made her feel very uncomfortable and dirty. Rina was just 10 years old when this happened. Ever since this happened Rina gets scared each time her grandfather comes home and she insists on not being left alone with him. She feels she cannot tell her parents why she is scared.

Home is a shelter from storms – all sorts of storms. But does it protect the children, its youngest inhabitants, from them?

TABLE 15: Emotions experienced when at home
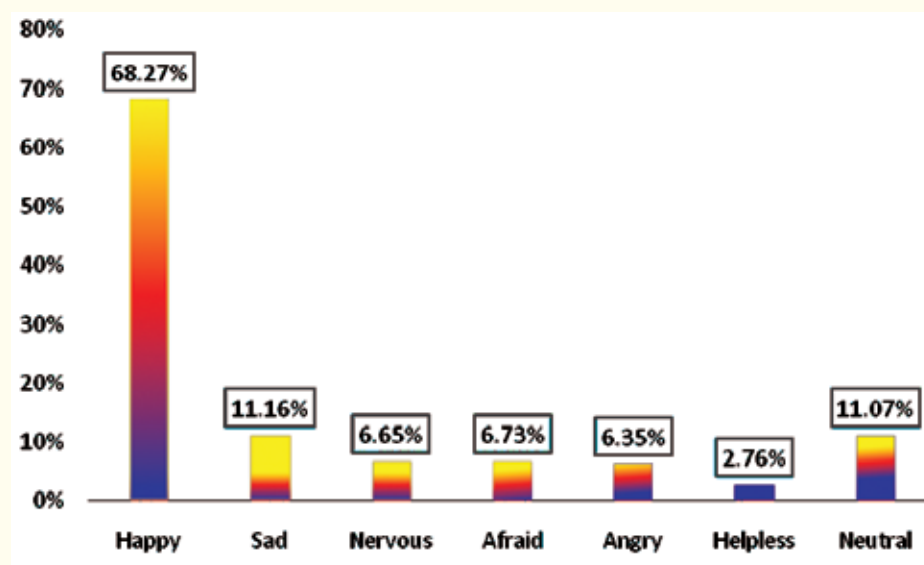
While 68.27% of the children say their homes make them happy; 11.16% of the children say it makes them sad. Another 6.73% of the children feel afraid in their homes, 6.65% of them feel nervous, 6.35% angry and 2.76% helpless. Girls express their angst more freely than boys, or the children of the third gender.

TABLE 16: Emotions experienced when at home (Gender-wise)

Emotions	Gender		
	Male	Female	Third gender
Happy	32.65%	35.09%	0.02%
Sad	4.99%	6.04%	0.00%
Nervous	2.89%	3.71%	0.02%
Afraid	2.62%	3.97%	0.02%
Angry	3.15%	3.17%	0.00%
Helpless	1.11%	1.58%	0.02%
Neutral	4.81%	6.12%	0.04%

Children's repeated exposure to violence within their homes is a cause of distress −25.36% of the children have been slapped, 17.15% have been beaten, 8.35% have been hit with objects, 8.23% have had their ears twisted, 5.88% children have been kicked and 1.56% have been inflicted with burn wounds. The reprimands for boys are far more severe and intense. Children living in joint-families (as opposed to nuclear families, or those headed by single parents), feel the onslaught of the abuse far more strongly. The opinion poll showed that majority of the children (57.25%) live in a joint family, 28.99% live in a nuclear family, more than six per cent of the children have single-parent households and 1.94 per cent of the children did not have a family.

TABLE 17
Relationship between physical abuse and type of family

Physical abuse	Type of family				
	Joint	Nuclear	Others	Single parent	NA
Slapping	57.52%	30.68%	4.62%	6.92%	0.26%
Beating	56.64%	32.52%	4.55%	5.71%	0.58%
Kicking	61.78%	24.84%	6.05%	6.05%	1.27%
Hitting with an object	60.00%	27.09%	5.32%	7.34%	0.25%
Twisting of ears	60.64%	28.71%	3.96%	6.19%	0.50%
Burning	57.65%	30.59%	7.06%	2.35%	2.35%

Homes have the greatest potential for protecting children from all forms of violence during their childhood. Yet, it is clear, that for far too many children, violence begins within their homes, and begins early. The scale and spread of the problem is hugely worrying. And, this endangers the children greatly as it is hidden and ignored and, therefore, seriously threatens their rights to a healthy and fulfilling life. It is the ultimate barrier to their progress.

Terrified within their own homes and of their loved ones

Children disclose feeling particularly defenseless and perturbed by the physical assaults by their mothers (24.75%) and fathers (20.78%), as they are their custodians of care and protection. They say that they are often also assailed by siblings (10.26% by brothers and 5.96% by sisters), grandparents (5.94%), uncles (2.21%) and aunts (1.19%). (See Table 18)

TABLE 18: Perpetrators of physical abuse at home

Perpetrator	Percentage
Mother	24.75%
Father	20.78%
Brother	10.26%
Sister	5.96%
Grandfather	3.46%
Grandmother	2.48%
Uncle	2.21%
Aunt	1.19%
No response	17.05%

N = 4885; NA = 1898 (38.85%)

Research points out the adverse impact of disciplining children by using corporal punishment. It triggers aggressive behaviours, aggression, depression, anxiety and anti-social behaviour. It, of course, essentially also violates the children's dignity, physical integrity and the right to have a home that is safe, secure and free of violence.

TABLE 19: Informed any one of the physical abuse at home

Informed anyone	Frequency	Percentage
No	1151	38.35%
Yes	1040	34.66%
No response	810	26.99%

N = 3001

While 34.66% of the children did inform other family members, friends or teachers about the abuse, 38.35% kept quiet and 26.99% of them chose not to answer the question (See Table 19).

There are some fathers who drink alcohol and then sell their children off. (Isha, Age 15 years, Saoli, Chandrapur)

TABLE 20: Response of the person the child confided in, about the abuse

Responses	Percentage
Did nothing	23.72%
Confronted the perpetrator	16.03%
Asked to ignore it	11.15%
Asked to keep it a secret	3.85%
Informed the police	3.51%
No response	46.47%

N = 2053

Child victims of violence in homes simply aren't a priority. Data shows that 23.72% of the people who knew about the abuse did nothing, whereas 16.03% of the people confronted the abuser. Many children were asked to ignore the abuse (11.15%) or to keep it a secret (3.85%) and only in 3.51% cases, the police were informed. An astounding 46.47% of the children chose not to answer the question on what the person they confided in did, or did not do (See Table 20). There is also an urgent need to amplify the voices of the children, enabling them to stand up for their own rights. It is also clear that the children need to have access to mechanisms that are designed to allow them to report abuse at home safely and, in confidence. If they cannot be safe in their homes, they are surely not safe in the society.

Verbal offensives: Serious threats to children's emotional and psychological well-being

Verbal offensives mounted against children are equally grim. They include shouting (27.15%), subjecting them to bad language (13.57%), calling them hurtful names (19.43%), blaming them for things they are not responsible for (9.03%), criticizing them (6.47%), making unfavourable comparisons with other children (5.44%), ignoring/rejecting them (4.95%), issuing threats (2.42%) and locking them up in a room (1.23%)(See Table 21).

TABLE 21:Psychological abuse at home

Abuse	Percentage
Shouted at	27.15%
Subjected to bad language	13.57%
Called hurtful names	9.43%
Blamed	9.03%
Criticised	6.47%
Compared	5.44%
Ignored	4.95%
Threatened	2.42%
Locked up in a room	1.23%
No response	18.44%

N = 4870; NA = 1944 (39.92%)

Alarmingly, the family members most responsible for the verbal misconduct towards children are the mothers (34.84%), the fathers (28.72%), siblings (28%), grandparents (11.92%), uncles (5.43%) and aunts (4.03%)(See Table 23). Boys bear the brunt of such abuse, and the intensity of the verbal mal-treatment is greater in joint families as opposed to nuclear families or those headed by single parents.

TABLE 22: Psychological abuse and type of family

Psychological abuse	Type of family				
	Joint	Nuclear	Others	Single parent	NA
Using bad language	62.09%	24.64%	5.85%	6.79%	0.63%
Shouting	58.22%	32.80%	3.89%	4.61%	0.48%
Ignoring	55.27%	31.31%	6.07%	5.75%	1.60%
Calling hurtful names	64.86%	24.32%	4.73%	5.81%	0.90%
Criticising	59.87%	23.95%	7.12%	8.74%	0.32%
Blaming	60.05%	29.79%	3.70%	6.00%	0.46%
Comparing	57.36%	26.42%	6.79%	9.06%	0.38%
Threatening	55.81%	29.46%	6.20%	5.43%	3.10%
Locking in a room	68.85%	16.39%	8.20%	4.92%	1.64%

TABLE 23: Perpetrator of psychological abuse at home

Perpetrator	Percentage
Mother	34.84%
Father	28.72%
Brother	16.70%
Sister	11.30%
Grandmother	6.11%
Grandfather	5.81%
Uncle	5.43%
Aunt	4.03%
No response	31.73%

N = 2928

While 29.07% of the children did inform other family members, friends, teachers, or a combination of such people, 36.56% of them kept quiet on the issue, and 34.37% of the children chose not respond to this question (See Table 24).

TABLE 24: Informed anyone of psychological abuse at home

Informed anyone	Percentage
No	36.56%
Yes	29.07%
No response	34.37%

N = 2883

The data on the corrective measures initiated by the people, in whom the child confided about the verbal abuse, shows that 22.71% of the people did nothing about the abuse. Another 13.51% of the people confronted the perpetrator; 10.56% of the people asked the children to ignore it and 4.82% asked the children to keep it a secret. However, a significant percentage of the children (52.29%) did not respond to this question (See Table 25).

TABLE 25: Response of the person, the child confided in, about the abuse

Responses	Percentage
Did nothing	22.71%
Confronted the perpetrator	13.51%
Asked child to ignore it	10.56%
Asked child to keep it a secret	4.82%
No response	52.29%

N = 2073

Many children find the pain and the misery of rejection and the attack on their self-esteem very difficult to bear, and in many cases, it can be even worse than physical violence. It is well established that psychological violence can result in anxiety, sleeplessness, nightmares, high activity levels, aggression and difficulties in concentration among children and also cause long term emotional and psychological impairments.

Children victimised by sexual violence in the place they should be and should feel the safest
Our data shows that the sexual victimisation of children within the homes is ubiquitous as a large percentage of children admit to knowing friends whose personal boundaries have been crossed.

Among the more horrific crimes, it is more disturbing when children are subjected to this brutality at the hands of trusted adults within their own homes. The loss of confidence and belief in the people closest to the child can instill feelings of fear, suspicion, uncertainty, and emotional isolation. And, the impact of sexual violence on children is disastrous – physically, psychologically and socially. The trauma of getting over the violation, physical injuries, health setbacks, mental agony, and social stigmatisation (which mostly means the violation needs to be kept secret) can completely overwhelm the child. It also dims the prospects of their future.

Children encounter bad language at home when they do not fill water; to prevent this, the Government should make provisions for water. (Meera, Age 11 years, Jalkoat, Latur)

TABLE 26: Awareness amongst children about sexual abuse at home

Sexual abuse	Percentage
Subjected to use of vulgar language	39.04%
Don't know/Can't say	38.03%
Raped	7.83%
Made to watch porn	7.03%
Kissed	6.83%
Made to pose for photographs	4.52%
Looked at/Touched	3.54%
Forced to expose	3.17%
No response	12.12%

N= 4885

The children we spoke to reveal knowing of other children who have been raped (7.83%); forced to watch pornography (7.03%), kissed without their consent (6.83%), made to pose for vulgar photogarphs (4.52%), forced to expose their genitals (3.17%) and made to look at or touched someone else's genitals (3.54%). A significant percentage of children (38.03%) distanced themselves from the issue, saying that they do not know of children who were being sexually abused or were not in a position to reveal any knowledge, and 12% children chose not to respond to this question, perhaps due to fear or embarrassment(See Table 26).

TABLE 27: Perpetrators of sexual abuse at home

Perpetrator	Percentage
Don't know/Can't say	40.96%
Father	9.95%
Brother	8.50%
Uncle	7.23%
Grandfather	6.40%
Mother	6.05%
Sister	3.90%
Grandmother	3.25%
Aunt	3.17%
No response	24.59%

N = 4893

Almost ten percent (9.95%) of the children picked out fathers as perpetrators of sexual abuse at home. Brothers have been identified as offenders by 8.50% of the children, and uncles and grandfathers are mentioned by 7.23% and 6.40% of the children, respectively.

In a startling disclosure, 6.05% of the children state mothers as the offenders, while 3.90% children say that sisters sexually abuse children as well. Grandmothers and aunts as perpetrators of child sexual abuse at home are mentioned by 3.25% and 3.17 % of the children. Around 40.96% of the children have maintained ignorance about information regarding who sexually abuses children at home and no response was given to this question by 24.59% of the children(See Table 27).

More than 49 per cent (49.63%) of the children say that they do not know if their friends have told someone about the sexual abuse. Around 10.23% of the children acknowledge awareness of their friends approaching someone for help, and 27.08% of the children say that their friends have told no one of the abuse(See Table 28).Thechildren's reasons for reticence in approaching people for help when they are sexually abused are plain: they are often blamed for the abuse, or their versions of the violation are disregarded, or they are pressured to remain silent because of the intense stigma attached to such violations, more so when it has the added stigma of being incestuous.

The results of this Poll provide enough evidence to show that there is a need for improved identification of those experiencing violence and the subsequent delivery of counselling, emergency housing, and legal/protection assistance.

TABLE 28: Awareness of whether the child informed anyone of the sexual abuse at home

| Informed	Frequency	Percentage
Don't know	2421	49.63%
No	1321	27.08%
Yes	499	10.23%
No response	637	13.06%

N = 4878

Children in this age group are the most misunderstood. There is a communication gap and they feel that the families don't understand what they go through. When children feel that nobody understands them it leads them to taking steps that could lead to more violence and exploitation. (Bharti Ali, HAQ, Delhi)

INSTITUTING FEAR OR HOPE?
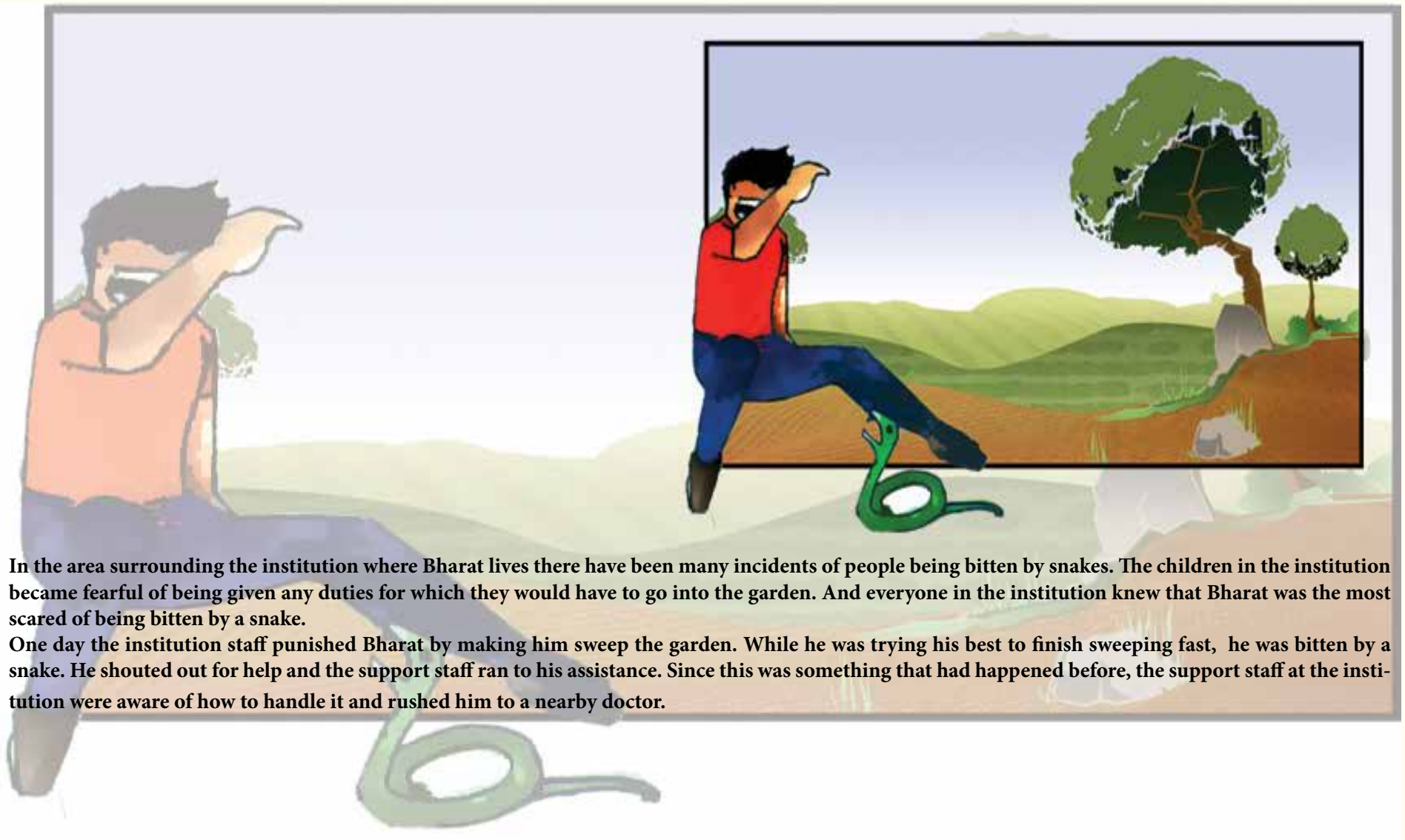
In the area surrounding the institution where Bharat lives there have been many incidents of people being bitten by snakes. The children in the institution became fearful of being given any duties for which they would have to go into the garden. And everyone in the institution knew that Bharat was the most scared of being bitten by a snake.

One day the institution staff punished Bharat by making him sweep the garden. While he was trying his best to finish sweeping fast, he was bitten by a snake. He shouted out for help and the support staff ran to his assistance. Since this was something that had happened before, the support staff at the institution were aware of how to handle it and rushed him to a nearby doctor.

Children in institutions and in other forms of care, are enormously vulnerable to violence as much of the care is State-administered, situated in far-off isolated places, leaving large possibilities for oversights. Despite this, a large number of children vouch for the responsiveness of institutions and their staff (62.09%), the space and time provided to uninterrupted study (19.01%) and for the recognition it extends to them (14.15%), a hugely welcoming trend.

TABLE 29: Physical and psychological abuse within institutions

Abuse	Percentage
Forcing the other children to help	16.37%
Subjecting children to bad language	8.03%
Shaming the child	7.07%
Name calling	4.86%
Criticising and Blaming	4.01%
Ignoring or Rejecting	3.48%
Negative comparisons	2.96%
Hitting with an object	2.75%
Shouting	2.64%
Slapping	2.53%
Injuring by burning	2.01%
Beating/Kicking	1.48%
Threatening bodily harm	1.48%
No response	12.67%

N = 947

Their negative feedback is regarding issues of children being forced to work at the premises (16.37%), psychological abuse (8.03%), being shamed (7.07%), subjected to name calling (4.86%), ignored or rejected by staff (3.48%), criticised and blamed (4.01%), compared unfavourably to others (2.96%), shouted at (2.64 %) and threatened with bodily harm (1.48%). They also complain of being subjected to physical abuse for non-completion of work, 2.75% have been hit with an object, 2.53% of them have been slapped and 1.48% of them have been subjected to beatings (See Table 29).

TABLE 30: Awareness of children being mistreated in institutions

Witnessed mistreatment	Frequency	Percentage
No	500	52.80%
Yes	360	38.01%
No response	87	9.19%

N = 947

TABLE 31: Experienced mistreatment in institutions

Mistreated	Frequency	Percentage
No	650	68.64%
Yes	210	22.18%
No response	87	9.19%

N = 947

While 52.80% of the children say that they do not know of any child who has been ill-treated within institutions, 38.01% say that they do, while 9.19% chose to remain silent(See Table 27). When asked specifically if they had suffered abuse within an institution, 68.64% of the children denied being mistreated, while 22.18% of the children admitted to being victims(See Table 28). They say that they have fallen prey to the abuse of the kitchen staff (16.06%), Superintendent (18.78%), Caretaker (14.25%), Probation Officer (11.31%), Counsellor (7.92%) and Social Worker (1.58%)(See Table 32).

TABLE 32: Perpetrators of physical and psychological abuse in institutions

Perpetrator	Percentage
Superintendent	18.78%
Kitchen Staff	16.06%
Caretaker	14.25%
Probation Officer	11.31%
Teacher	9.75%
Counsellor	7.92%
Social Worker	1.58%
No response	33.03%

N = 442

The children who informed someone of the abuse (34.30%) say that 27.41% of the persons did nothing about it, and 26.15% did something about it (13.39% confronted the perpetrator and 12.76% informed the police of the abuse). They say there were also some people who asked them to ignore it (12.70%) or to keep it a secret (6.07%)(See Table 30)

TABLE 33: Response of the person, in whom the child confided, about the abuse

Response	Percentage
Did nothing	27.41%
Confronted the perpetrator	13.39%
Informed the police	12.76%
Asked child to Ignore it	12.76%
Asked child to keep it a secret	6.07%
No response	32.43%

N = 478

TABLE 34: Reasons for not informing about the abuse in institutions

Reasons	Percentage
Afraid	31.18%
No one to tell	11.07%
Ashamed	10.13%
Threatened	5.71%
No response	41.80%

N = 542

The 37.40% children who did not inform anyone of the abuse say that the reasons are: fear (31.18%), no one to tell (11.07%), feeling of shame (10.13%), and because they were threatened (5.71%). A sizeable number of the children (41.80%) did not respond to this question (See Table 34).

> *Children in Ashramshalas are not taken care of; there is no sensitivity towards them. Also, the staff of these Ashramshalas do not keep the rights of the child in mind. These children are away from home so they need care and support. (Nutan B. Maghade, Asst. Programme Officer, MSCERT,PUNE)*

It is obvious that the young children lack the capacity to report within institutions. Other children fear reprisals by the perpetrators or interventions by the authorities that may worsen their overall situation. The long term effects of violence against children living within the institutions can include developmental delays, and irreversible psychological damage. There is a need to end adult justification of violence against children, under the guise of 'tradition' or 'discipline' or that it is in the best interest of the child.

Disenfranchised from healthcare

TABLE 35: Awareness about children who do not receive medical attention

Know any child	Frequency	Percentage
No	758	81.33%
Yes	104	11.16%
No response	70	7.51%

N = 932

Do children receive adequate and timely healthcare within the institutions that is an inalienable part of child rights and entitlements? Many children (11.16%) negate the claim of the institutions and say that they are not given adequate attention in terms of healthcare (See Table 35).

TABLE 36: Places where institutionalised children receive medical treatment

Place	Percentage
Government hospital	60.62%
Primary health centre	20.92%
Private hospital	19.21%
In-house doctor	15.67%
Home remedies	4.83%
Clinic	4.51%
Self prescription	3.22%
No treatment	2.47%
Local pharmacist	2.04%
Quacks	0.97%
NGOs	0.54%
No response	6.55%

N = 932

Statistics show that 19.21% of the children receive medical attention at private hospitals, 4.51% at clinics, 15.67% from in-house doctors, 4.83% through home remedies, 3.22% from self-prescribed treatments, 2.04% from the local pharmacist, 0.97% at centres set up by quacks and 0.54% at NGOs (See Table 33).

TABLE 37: Reasons for not receiving medical treatment

Reasons	Percentage
Noin-house doctor	23.49%
No PHC	16.83%
High cost	14.92%
No private clinics	12.06%
Possessed by an evil spirit	11.11%
No caregiver	9.84%
No response	30.48%

N = 315

Yet, the health needs of the children remain largely unmet. The reasons that children cite for non-treatment are the following: a). lack of doctors (23.49%), primary health centres (16.83%),and caretakers (9.84%), b). exorbitant medical costs (14.92%) and c). the predominant belief that the child is possessed by a spirit (11.11%)(See Table 37).

Are the facilities meant for children child friendly?

TABLE 38: Ratings of facilities in the institutions

Facilities in institutions	Ratings				
	Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Facility not available	No response
Dormitories	3.01%	21.27%	63.27%	1.93%	10.53%
Lighting	3.76%	17.40%	64.66%	1.93%	12.24%
Toilets	7.52%	19.98%	57.36%	3.76%	11.39%
Provision of pads	8.49%	11.49%	36.09%	11.49%	30.83%
Food	3.87%	21.05%	59.51%	2.58%	13.00%
Playground	10.10%	16.86%	50.27%	9.67%	13.10%
Vocational Training	11.17%	14.82%	38.24%	18.67%	17.08%
Counsellor	8.38%	14.07%	51.24%	7.84%	18.47%

N = 931

It looks like an ornament, but the Kathkari tribe believes it to have medicinal value. The necklace of thread and pieces of a certain tree is supposed to be able to cure jaundice.

The children's assessment of facilities meant exclusively for them, within the institutions for care and protection, are encouraging in some cases, and not so much in others: 63.27% of the children rate their dormitories as 'good'; more than 64% of the children say that the lighting available is satisfactory (1.93% of them, however, say that there is no lighting in the institutions); and 59.53% of the children say the food is good.

Discredit to services comes from the 7.52% of the children who give poor marks to toilets (while 3.76% say that they do not have toilets in their institutions), 8.49% of the girls who say that the provision of sanitary pads is poor (while 11.49% say they are not provided with any), 10.10% children who have a poor opinion of playgrounds (and an equal number of children say they have no playground) and from more than 18% of the children who say they do not have vocational training facilities and another 7.84% of the children who point to the lack of counsellors(See Table 38).

Sexual violations in institutional homes meant to protect, comfort and sustain children

The fact that many children are aware of their friends being sexually abused in institutions shows that the practice is widespread. It shows an utter lack of heed to the children's choices, control over their lives and bodily integrity, all seen as important and basic human rights. And, when perpetuated in care institutions, it exacerbates the children's isolation and loneliness, as the young in these institutions already lack anchoring in social and cultural moorings, making the need for regular inspections, legal mechanisms and counseling, urgent.

TABLE 39: Awareness amongst children about sexual abuse in institutions

Abuse	Percentage
Don't know/Can't say	50.11%
Subjected to vulgar language	23.58%
Kissed	5.25%
Shown porn	5.04%
Raped	4.29%
Looked at/Touched	3.86%
Made to pose for photographs	3.32%
Forced to expose	2.57%
No response	19.51%

N = 933

The forms of sexual abuse that children know of being perpetrated are: use of vulgar language against them (23.58%), forced viewing of pornography (5.04%), forced posing for photographs (3.32%), being kissed against their will (5.25%), being touched inappropriately (3.86%) and raped (4.29%) (See Table 39). The persons identified by the children for these violations are Superintendents (8.04%), Kitchen staff (5.47%), Caretakers and Probation Officers (5.04% and 4.93% respectively), Counsellors (3.43%), Watchmen (1.82%), Doctors (1.39%) and Social Workers (0.64%).

Some children (53.43%) say that they do not know or cannot say anything on this, and 20.58% of the children preferred silence on the question. Also, more than half the children did not know whether the children had spoken about these violations to anyone. On the other hand, 6.86% of the children were aware of their friends having confided in someone and another 12.43% of the children knew that their friends had not opened up to anyone.

TABLE 40: How should children respond when faced with situations of sexual abuse?

Responses	Percentage
Inform an adult	53.01%
Talk to friends	41.77%
Confront the perpetrator	28.49%
Ignore the incident	4.94%
Accept it as normal	3.05%
Don't know/Can't say	2.31%
No response	12.35%

N = 4882

When asked about what children who are sexually abused should do, 41.77% of them say that they should talk to their friends about it. Another 28.49% say that they should confront the perpetrator. And, a small percentage of the children say that the incident of abuse should be ignored and accepted as normal(See Table 40).

TABLE 41: Reasons why children do not talk about the abuse

Reasons	Percentage
Afraid	58.60%
Ashamed	33.94%
Threatened	22.24%
No one would believe them	20.85%
Think it is their fault	13.71%
No one to tell	12.95%
Dependent on the perpetrator	5.17%
Not wrong	4.19%
Don't know/Can't say	3.06%
No response	12.72%

N = 4874

Children, when asked for opinions on why children do not disclose that they have been sexually abused, say that the reasons are fear (58.60%), shame (33.94%), dependence on the perpetrator, and facing blame instead of receiving support(See Table 41).

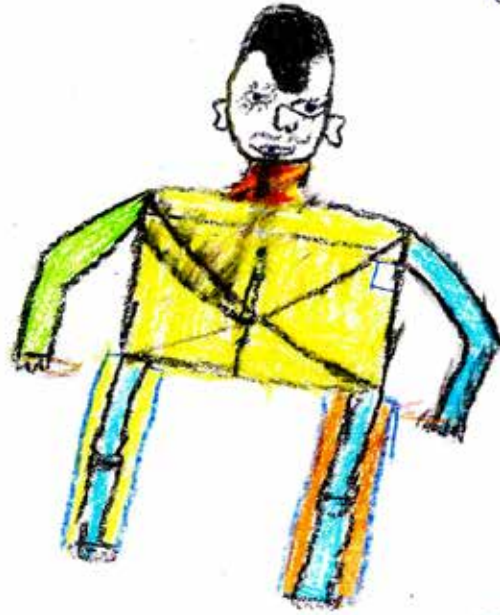*When teaching girls in KGBV's about their rights and about good touch – bad touch, they said that they had never learnt about these before. There is a need to have sessions with children on these issues not only in schools and institutions but also at the village level. (Nutan B. Maghade, Asst. Programme Officer, MSCERT, Pune)*

नगेश
वर्ग - ८वा (E)
गत - कुमठा खुर्द

Name: Nagesh. Class: 8th.
Village: Kumta.

PAINFUL WORK
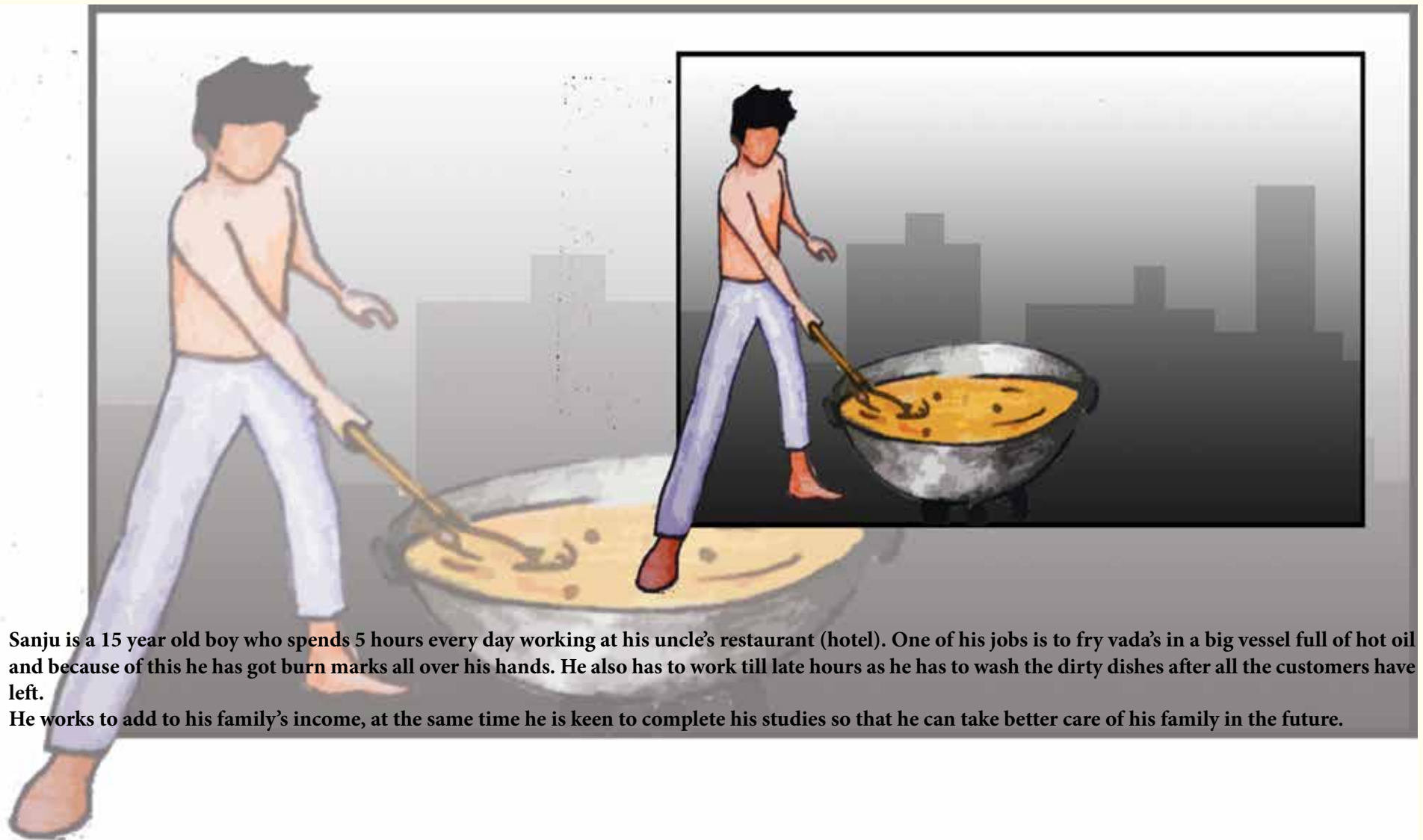
Sanju is a 15 year old boy who spends 5 hours every day working at his uncle's restaurant (hotel). One of his jobs is to fry vada's in a big vessel full of hot oil and because of this he has got burn marks all over his hands. He also has to work till late hours as he has to wash the dirty dishes after all the customers have left.

He works to add to his family's income, at the same time he is keen to complete his studies so that he can take better care of his family in the future.

The Government's argument of not considering a total prohibition on the employment of children is the country's social fabric and the socio-economic conditions. Justifying the amendments, it said, "In a large number of families, children help their parents in their occupations such as agriculture, artisanship, etc., and while helping the parents, children also learn the basics of the occupation." But child rights activists say that the children should focus on education till the age of 18, if they are to be empowered in the right and truest sense.

What do the children say? Around 25 years back, BhimaSangha, a union of, by and for the working children, drew attention to the concerns of the working children. It upheld that no policy or decision regarding the children's present or their future should be taken without their consent. In 1996, BhimaSangha, with the support of the International Working Group on Child Labour, held the first International Meeting of Working Children in Kundapura, Karnataka. On this historic occasion, the International Movement of Working Children adopted the Kundapur Declaration, drafted by working children from 36 countries. They demanded of the states and the international agencies that the children be consulted, their initiatives recognised, and their products not boycotted; that their work be respected and made safe; that they have access to appropriate education, professional training and quality healthcare; that poverty be addressed aggressively; that rural development be prioritized to stem the rural-urban migration; and, importantly, that exploitation of their labour be brought to a halt.[ix]

TABLE 42: Working Children

Working children	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	1963	49.77%
No	1921	48.71%
No response	60	1.52%

N = 3944

TABLE 43: Awareness about children who work

Know a working child	Frequency	Percentage
No	1931	49.02%
Yes	1856	47.12%
No response	152	3.86%

N = 3939

Our data shows that 49.77% of the children, in the sample population, work and that 47.12% of the children in this Opinion Poll know other children who work(See Tables 42 and 43).

Why are these children put to work? To supplement the family's income, to help clear a family debt owed or to assist a family member? A disaggregation of the data shows that a majority of the children, 61.38%, work for their family members, whereas 19.44% are employed by non-family members(See Table 44).

TABLE 44: Employers

Employer	Percentage
Family	61.38%
Non-family member	19.44%
No response	19.19%

N = 2382

TABLE 45: Type of work that children are engaged in

Working children	Percentage
Fields	36.02%
Farms	17.49%
Domestic work	17.32%
Shops	14.59%
Restaurants	3.95%
Factories	2.56%
Selling	2.27%
Brick kilns	0.88%
Business	0.67%
No response	15.43%

N = 2379; No response = 367 (15.43%)

Of the children who work outside their homes, 36.02% of them work in the fields, 17.49% at farms, 17.32% as domestic workers, 14.59% at shops, 3.95% at restaurants, 2.56% in factories, and 2.27% sell items in markets. Many others work at brick kilns and construction sites, or as distributors of newspapers, as tailors, and some even have their own businesses (See Table 45).

Fear of wild animals –scorpion, snakes, tiger etc. at the work place. (Veena, Age 15 years, Chandrapur)

TABLE 46: Are children paid for the work they do?

Paid for Work	Percentage
Yes	49.23%
No	27.36%
Don't know	5.53%
Debt	2.99%
No response	14.89%

N = 2405

While 49.23% of the children say that they are paid, 27.36 per cent of them say that they are not, and 5.53% have no idea whether they are paid or not (See Table 46). While the majority of the working children (63.35%) get a day off, 21.62% children are denied a day off, again a clear infraction of their rights (See Table 47).

TABLE 47: Do the children get a day off in the week?

Day off	Percentage
Yes	63.35%
No	21.62%
No response	15.03%

N = 2461

While the debate on whether child labour is appropriate as per the law rages, what is required is an approach that focusses on the children's rights and which addresses the causes of child labour, primarily poverty.

Addressing the fears and violence against children in the workplace
Children are most vulnerable at the workplace and are susceptible to exploitation and violence.

TABLE 48: Reasons for feeling unsafe on the way to work

Reasons	Percentage
Animals	39.57%
Physical harm	35.27%
Lonely road	32.17%
Presence of addicts	30.25%
Sexual abuse	25.56%
Alcohol shops	21.26%
Groups of men	19.35%
No response	27.55%

N = 1256

Cast adrift in an alien outside world, children speak of their anxieties with candour: 39.57% have misgivings about stray animals wandering enroute to work; 30.25% have qualms about colliding with addicts; 32.17% are afraid of the lonely stretches on the roads; 17.08% of the children say that they are afraid of being physically harmed, 21.26% feel unsafe due to the presence of alcohol shops on the way to work; 13.27% of them fear being verbally abused, 11.12% voice apprehensions of not being paid, and 9.59% of them say that they are afraid of losing their jobs (See Table 48 and 49).

Other children dread the consequences of not completing the work on time (8.83%), and a few panic about being touched inappropriately (7.16%). Not having proper toilets (5.51%), fear of being bullied (5.23%), afraid of the family being harmed (3.83%) and no proper lighting (3.32 %) are the other concerns of working children. Many of them (43.64%) talk of feeling unsafe while commuting to work.

Working children's views – if they are deployed in ways that enable policies and programmes to address issues of child labour– could be an effective way to tackle economic violence against children.

I feel afraid of being treated badly at work. (Mangesh, Age 13 years, Badnapur ,Jalna)

TABLE 49: Reasons for feeling unsafe at work

Reasons	Percentage
Physical harm	17.08%
Verbal abuse	13.27%
Fear of no pay	11.12%
Fear of losing job	9.59%
Consequences of incomplete work	8.83%
Inappropriate touch	7.16%
No toilts	5.51%
Bullying	5.23%
Harm to family	3.83%
Lighting	3.32%
No response	15.99%

N = 3940; NA = 1889 (47.94%)

सुब्राककर जूकाराम
वग हवा नूकडे (अ)
गाव अरो
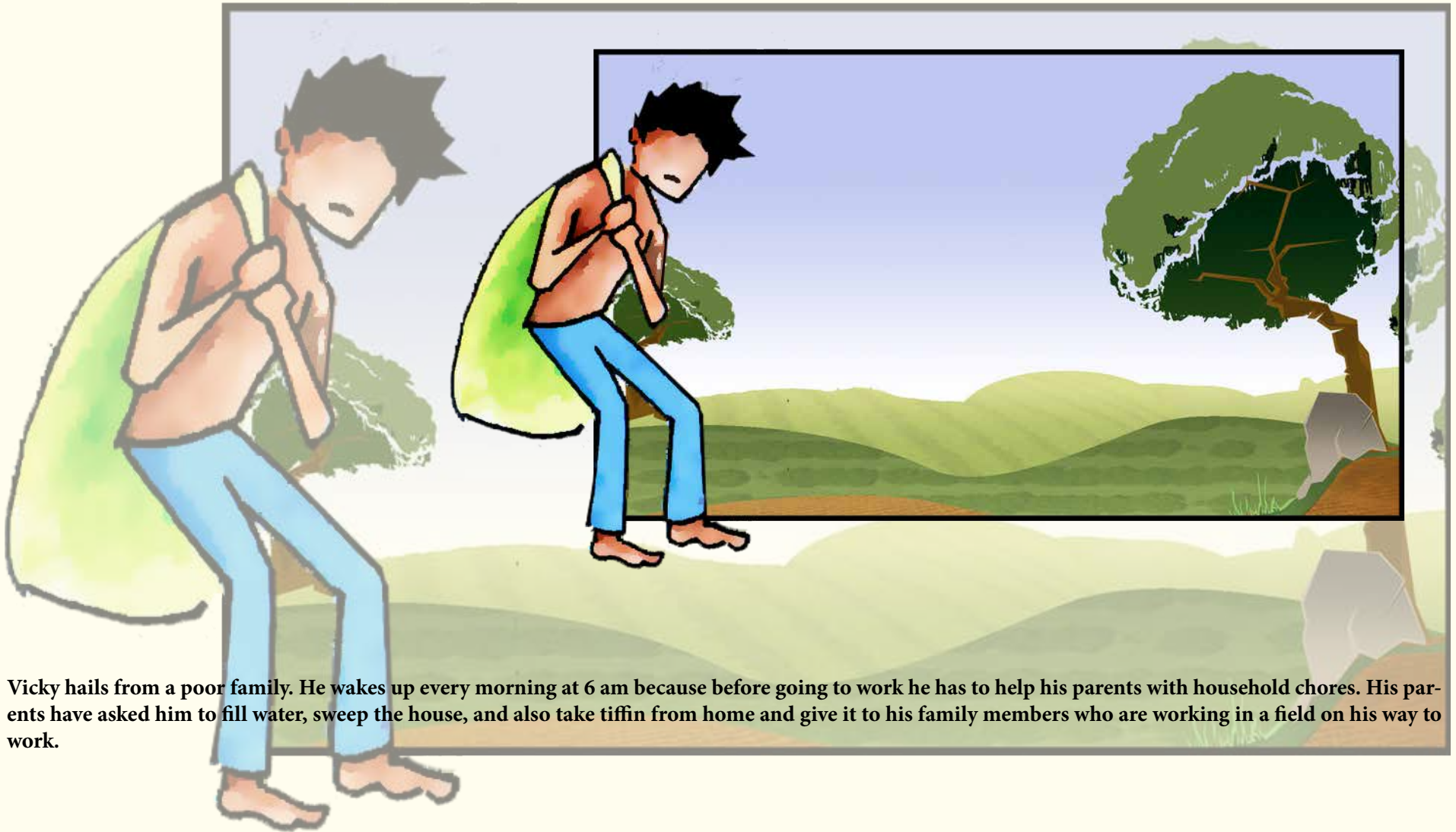
Name: Sumavkar Nakuram. Class: 8th. Village: Aaro.

OUT AT LARGE

Vicky hails from a poor family. He wakes up every morning at 6 am because before going to work he has to help his parents with household chores. His parents have asked him to fill water, sweep the house, and also take tiffin from home and give it to his family members who are working in a field on his way to work.

The 'Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act' or the 'Right to Education Act (RTE)', ensures free and compulsory education for children between the ages of 6 and 14 in India under Article 21A of the Indian Constitution. India became one of 135 countries to make education a fundamental right of every child, when the Act came into force on 1stApril 2010.Only a miniscule percentage of the out of school children are involved in vocational training pursuits.

TABLE 50: Reasons why children are not in school

Reasons	Percentage
Contribute to family income	35.69%
Household chores	35.09%
Failure in exams	24.96%
Care of siblings	21.40%
No interest in studying	20.42%
No school nearby	20.21%
Unpleasant experience in school	11.64%
Marriage	3.72%
No response	10.08%

N = 1855

The findings of the Poll also reveal the reasons why the children are not in school. More than 35% of the children stated contributing to the family income as being one of the major reasons for dropping out of school. Others (35.09%) had to contribute by helping with the household chores, while 24.96% of them cite failure as a reason for not continuing their education. Losing interest in school (20.42%), an unpleasant experience (11.64%) as a deterrent and having the responsibility to care for younger siblings (21.40%) while parents are away at work, were the other reasons (See Table 50).

It is pertinent to note here that 20.21% of the children cited no school as a reason for not continuing with their education. These are situations where there are no schools in the neighborhood and travelling long distances for education involves putting children at further risk and parents opt not to take this risk. Another important reason for children dropping out of school is marriage. Although a small percentage (3.72%) has stated this as a reason, it is still a very significant number. Children also shared that some of their parents were against their going to school, and that they were, instead, forced to give up their education and work; disability was a hurdle for one child and another had no clothes to go to school.

It is interesting that there are laws in place to tackle most of these hurdles and to assist the children in completing their education; yet the gap in the implementation remains.

Something needs to be done to retain children in school. RTE is only up to 14 years; that is 8th standard. A minimum of 10th standard is required. However, at the same time quality education needs to be imparted.

The education system has not been able to attract the children. Even with regard to vocational education, it requires the child to be a minimum of class 10th to be able to get admissions. The others that do not have this requirement aren't attractive enough. (Bharati Ali, HAQ, Delhi)

Name: Vaibhav. Class: 8th. Village: Neelanga.

COMMUNAL VIOLENCE

Farzana is a 12 year old girl and lives in an institution. Along with the other children in the institution she follows a time –table which involves cleaning up the dormitory, washing clothes and so on. The institution staff allow her to go to school only after she finishes her duties.
Farzana likes going to school because she has made friends in school. She also looks forward to the art and craft class as she has always loved drawing.

TABLE 51: Reasons for feeling unsafe in the community

Reasons	Percentage
Fear of addicts	21.92%
Fear of eve-teasing	20.82%
Toilets at a distance	20.49%
Fear of physical harm	16.55%
Inadequate lighting	15.07%
Fear of inappropriate touch	10.83%
Presence of bullies	9.11%
Threat of harm to family	8.47%
No response	13.64%

N = 4876; NA = 1767 (36.24%)

The data gathered on the reasons for children feeling unsafe in the community shows the reasons to be: fear of physical harm (16.55%), inaccessible toilets (20.49%), fear of sexual harassment (20.82%), fear of being accosted by addicts (21.92%), poor lighting (15.07%), fear of inappropriate touch/molestation (10.83%), the presence of bullies (9.11%) and the threat of harm to family (8.47%)(See Table 51).

TABLE 52: Awareness of children about sexual abuse in the community

Abuse	Percentage
Exposure to vulgar language	35.63%
Don't know/Can't say	32.84%
Kissed	9.36%
Raped	8.71%
Forced to watch porn	7.99%
Forced to pose for photographs	4.93%
Looked at/Touched	4.60%
Forced to expose	4.31%
No response	17.95%

N = 4892

When asked if they knew of children who were sexually abused by the people in their community, 35.63% of the children say that they know children whose sensibilities have been violated by the use of vulgar language against them, by being kissed forcibly (9.36%) and raped (8.71%)(See Table 52).

TABLE 53: Perpetrators of sexual abuse in the community

Perpetrator	Percentage
Unknown	38.48%
Don't know/Can't say	27.88%
Shopkeeper	9.42%
Conductor/Bus driver	8.11%
Vegetable vendor	5.44%
Tuition teacher	4.25%
No response	18.17%

N = 4893; No Response = 889 (18.17%)

Children pinpointed the perpetrators to be: unknown people (38.48%), shopkeepers (9.42%) and conductors and drivers, and 27.88% of the children say they do not know or cannot tell who the perpetrators of sexual abuse in the community are(See Table 53). There is often under-reporting by the children who are assaulted by the community members because of the fear of social ostracism retaliation, abandonment, and because of not knowing that it is a crime and not knowing to whom they could report. These issues must be addressed.

> *People do not talk about safety of children in homes and in villages.*
> *(Nutan B. Maghade, Asst. Programme Officer, MSCERT,PUNE)*

Laws and policies on violence against children are often undermined by the communities because the people don't believe the violence to be unlawful. The key to change, then, is to attempt to shift popular opinion and practices, and making it clear that violence against children is a problem. And, that, in fact, it is everyone's problem and also everyone's responsibility to end it.

Awakening personal and collective responsibility, and making vertical connections between the public and private spheres, in order to infiltrate all levels of society and make people question their assumptions, could be the starting point. If this shift could be achieved on a meaningful scale in the ideas and beliefs of individuals, community leaders, and public opinion, violence against children would be understood as the aberration it is; and there would be popular pressure to implement legal and policy measures against it.

The building of child-friendly communities (by supporting the delivery of basic infrastructure and services), ensuring that communities support peoples' solidarity and common values (that are mindful of people, especially children's rights and dignity), and increasing social safety nets and safe public places, could also be promising solutions. These measures could effectively address the challenges of the weakening of social environments and community cohesion that threatens the lives of many children with violence.

नाम ⇒ सतिश सेठे
वर्ग ⇒ ८ वी
गांव ⇒ पेडशी

Name: Satish. Class: 8th. Village: Pedshi.

BATTLE OF THE SEXES

Chandni is 16 years old and lives in an Institution. Being the oldest, she is given the duty to clear up the activity room after every session. One day after the tailoring class, she was clearing the room when the watchman sneaked in and closed the door. He then inappropriately touched Chandni. When Chandni tried to scream for help, he covered her mouth and threatened to spoil her name if she told anyone. Chandni was afraid of what he would do and so she did not tell anyone.

Understanding the causes and consequences of gender-based violence against children

The findings of this Poll show that gender-based violence largely occurs in the process of raising children. Children face violence within their homes, their schools, the educational institutions and the communities in the form corporal punishment as an educational and disciplining tool.

The violence takes on a gendered hue as physical punishment is more severely and persistently used upon boys, while the girls suffer an excessive amount of psychological abuse (to restrain their freedom and ensure their conformity to traditional gender stereotypes).

It also brings to light the deeply entrenched societal beliefs that children are inferior and of less worth than adults, and the fact that parents are well within their rights to subject their children to violence.

This Poll sheds light onthe embedded societal beliefs that boys are physically stronger than girls and that beating and lashingthem would help them grow into men of worth.The Poll also offers incisive insights into how violence-prone masculine identities are constructed. Socially constructed gender identities (as described above), encourages the boys to use violence to resolve conflicts, both in their boyhood and when they transition into adulthood. The Poll clearly indicates that many boys keep quiet about the violence that they suffer, as they view it as legitimate.

Such perceptions and practices eventually spiral into gender inequalities and biases, leading to violence. Girls and boys are socialised into gender roles that place them within unequal structures of power. While in their childhood, both boys and girls are treated equally harshly, but as they grow up and their choices, rights and opportunities are hugely restricted, the girls suffer far more. This Poll underlines how the girls hem themselves within boundaries and keep silent on the abuse for several reasons such as fear, shame, dependence on the perpetrators and the belief that they will be blamed and labeled as liars.

And, it is important to understand that gender cuts across all the other categories – socio-economic background, caste, race, culture and disability. And, that it impacts the children's physical, psychological, sexual, and social growth and well-being.

TABLE 54: Percentage of children who go to school (Gender-wise)

Gender	Children who go to school
Male	47.15%
Female	52.05%
Third Gender	0.03%
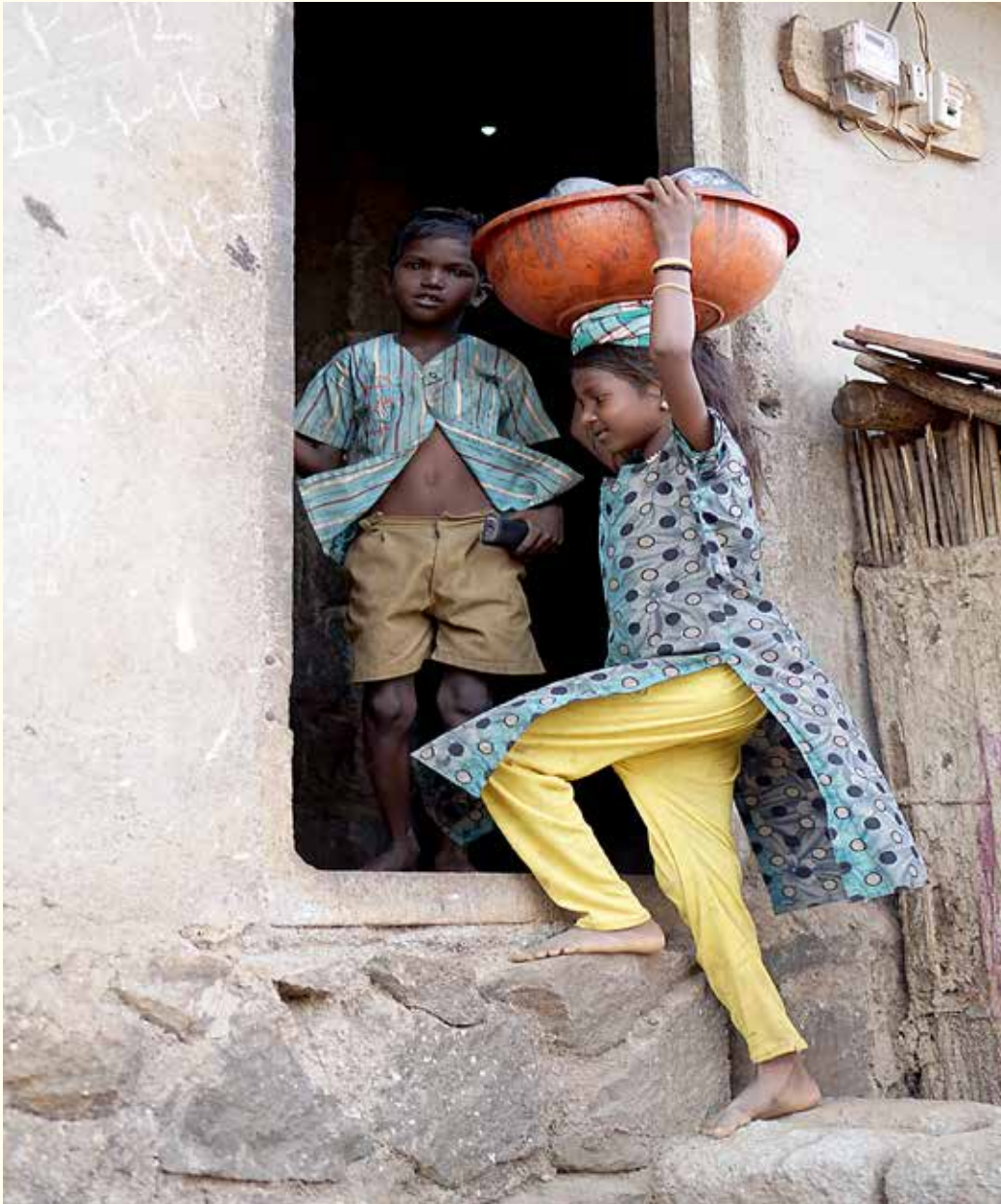
There is gender discrimination at home. (Deepti, Age 12, Ambedkar Vasahat, Pune)

The Opinion Poll's significant findings on gender:
• Girls and boys are almost equally represented in the Opinion Poll. The percentage of girls is 52.02% and of the boys is 49.98%. Children of the third gender comprise 0.10%.
• The Opinion Poll uncovers the fact that fewer boys go to school (47.15%) as compared to girls (52.05%).

TABLE 55: Physical abuse in school (Gender-wise)

Physical abuse	Percentage		
	Male	Female	Other
Made to stand outside	55.63%	42.99%	0
Slapped	62.80%	34.79%	0
Hit with an object	55.01%	43.56%	0.20%
Beaten	74.63%	23.88%	0
Had their ears twisted	67.83%	30.00%	0

TABLE 56: Psychological abuse (Gender-wise)

Psychological abuse	Male	Female
Subjected to bad language	59.30%	40.70%
Ignored	47.68%	52.32%
Threatened with failure	67.59%	32.41%
Humiliated	57.07%	42.93%
Criticized	55.24%	44.76%
Discouraged	36.36%	63.64%
Compared	48.10%	51.90%
Threatened with bodily harm	55.00%	45.00%
Locked in a room	52.63%	47.37%

TABLE 57: How should children respond to situations of sexual abuse? (Gender-wise responses)

Response	Male	Female	Other
Talk to friends	48.21%	50.86%	0.15%
Talk to an adult	47.06%	52.01%	0.15%
Ignore it	62.24%	36.10%	0.41%
Accept it	60.40%	37.58%	1.34%
Confront the perpetrator	41.70%	57.30%	0.22%
Don't know/Can't say	41.59%	55.75%	0.00%

• A study of the data on physical and psychological abuse in schools and gender reveals that the boys are subjected to far more physical and psychological abuse. They receive threats of failure in exams (67.59%), humiliation (57.07%) and threats of bodily harm (55%). Girls, on the other hand, have to withstand and bear with being neglected, discouraged and negatively compared to others (See Table 55 and 56).

• A study of the gender and the children's opinions on how children, who have been sexually abused, should respond reveals that a majority of the girls were of the belief that children should talk about the abuse to their friends, and/or inform an adult about it. While some boys agreed, a larger percentage of them (62.24%) said that children should ignore it, and 60.40% said that they should accept it as normal. When asked about confronting the perpetrator, the girls were more vociferous on the issue of confrontation (57.30%), while the boys had no firm opinions on the issue (See Table 57).

• On comparing the variables of gender and the reasons why children do not report sexual abuse it is seen that fear is the major reason why girls and children of the third gender don't report abuse. Boys, girls and children of the third gender also identify shame to be a reason (49.33%, 49.70% and 0.24%, respectively). Being made to feel that it is their fault is what stops 46.41% of the boys, 52.40%of the girls and 0.30% children of the third gender, from lodging a complaint. Not having anyone to confide in restricts 55.31% of the girls, 43.42% of the boys and 0.48% of the third gender. A sizeable number of girls (61.32%) say that they maintain silence as they feel they would be disbelieved, and almost half the boys say that they do not report abuse as they don't think it to be wrong; 1.96% of the children of the third gender agree. And, being dependent on the perpetrator is the reason 51.59% of the girls and 47.22% of the boys cite for being silent (See Table 58).

There is not enough response from the system, with regards to sexual abuse of boys. There is an assumption that boys will take care of themselves. (Bharati Ali, HAQ, Delhi)

TABLE 58: Reasons for not informing others about sexual abuse (Gender-wise response)

Reasons	Male	Female	Other
Afraid	44.78%	54.13%	0.14%
Ashamed	49.33%	49.70%	0.24%
Would be considered at fault	46.41%	52.40%	0.30%
No one to tell	43.42%	55.31%	0.48%
No one would believe	37.40%	61.32%	0.30%
Threatened	49.63%	49.82%	0.09%
Not wrong	53.43%	42.16%	1.96%
Dependent on the abuser	47.22%	51.59%	0.00%
Don't know/Can't say	37.58%	62.42%	0.00%

TABLE 59: Abuse faced in institutions (Gender-wise)

Abuse in the institution	Male	Female
Subjected to bad language	59.21%	40.79%
Name calling	69.57%	30.43%
Ignored or Rejected	66.67%	33.33%
Forced other children to help	58.71%	41.29%
Shamed the child	53.73%	44.78%
Injured by burning	52.63%	42.11%
Criticized and Blamed	31.58%	65.79%
Negative comparison	39.29%	60.71%
Beaten/Kicked	50.00%	50.00%
Shouted at	44.00%	56.00%
Threatened with bodily harm	57.14%	42.86%
Slapped	54.17%	45.83%
Hit with an object	61.54%	38.46%

A comparison of the physical and psychological abuse according to gender (undertaken to understand the gender difference in the experience of abuse in institutions) reveals that in most cases a higher percentage of boys experienced abuse than girls. However, with regards to being criticised and blamed and being negatively compared with others and with being shouted at, a higher percentage of girls experienced this abuse than the boys. Children of the third gender did not mention abuse in institutions (See Table 59).

TABLE 60: Mistreatment in institutions (Gender-wise)

Gender	Children mistreated in institutions
Male	57.14%
Female	40.00%

TABLE 61: Informed of mistreatment in institutions (Gender-wise)

| Gender	Informed of mistreatment in institutions
Male	65.54%
Female	32.20%

TABLE 62: Reasons for not informing about abuse in institutions (Gender-wise)

Reasons	Male	Female
Ashamed	65.45%	30.91%
Afraid	50.89%	48.52%
Threatened	74.19%	19.35%
No one to tell	50.00%	45.00%

• A study of the relationship between children who are mistreated and their gender reveals that a higher percentage of the boys (57.14%) are mistreated as compared to 40% of the girls. And, data reveals that of children who told of mistreatment and gender, a higher percentage of boys (65.54%) informed others of the abuse as opposed to the girls (32.20%) (See Tables 60 and 61).

• Of the reasons for not informing anyone of the abuse and gender (done to understand the gender differences in why children do not inform others of the abuse that they go through) reveals that boys experience more shame (65.45%) as compared to girls (30.91%), are more afraid to talk about the abuse (50.89%) as opposed to girls (48.52%), and are threatened with more force (74.19%) as opposed to girls (19.35%) and feel isolated and do not have anyone to confide in (50%) as opposed to girls (45%)(See Table 62)

ORIGINAL SIN
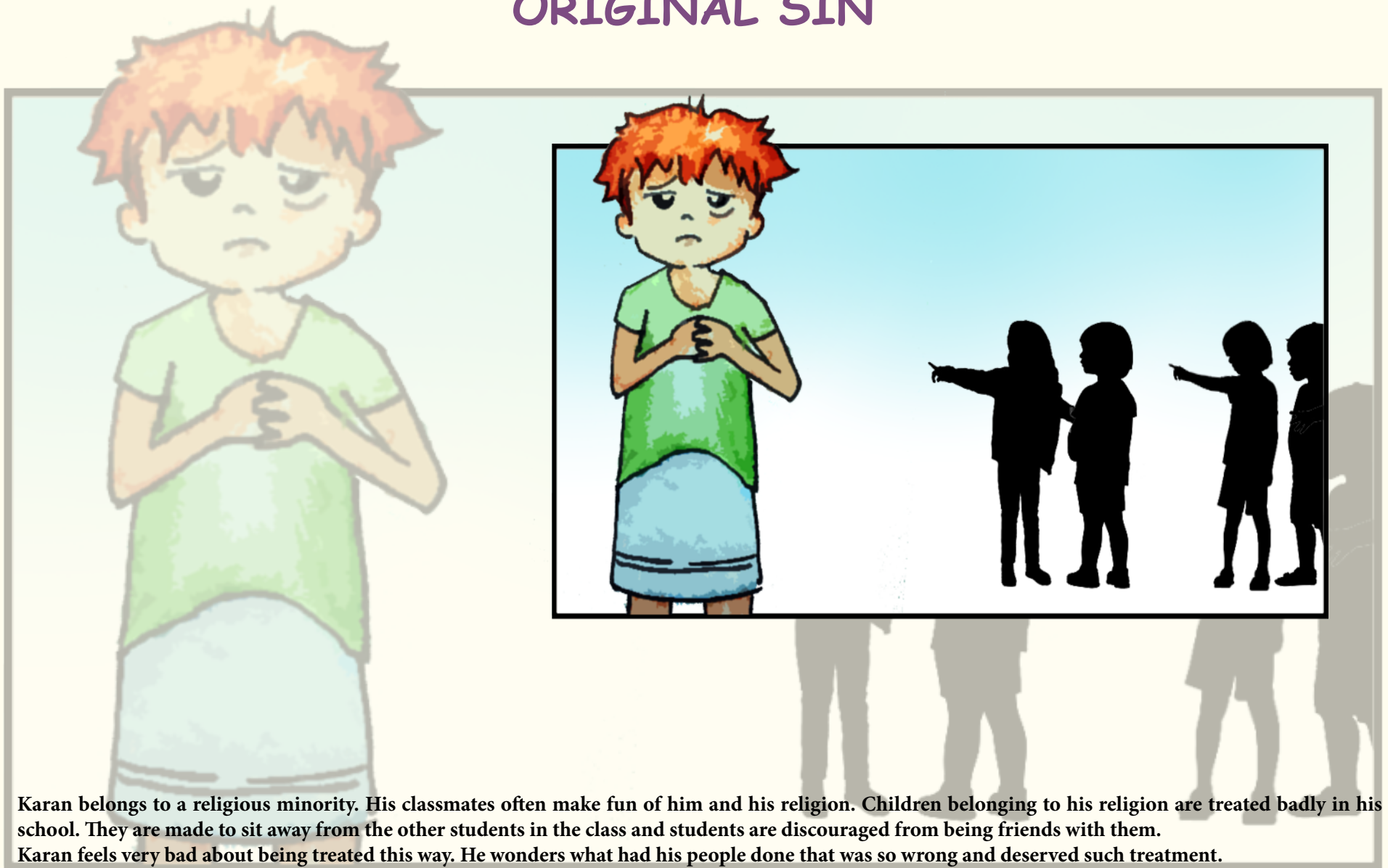
Karan belongs to a religious minority. His classmates often make fun of him and his religion. Children belonging to his religion are treated badly in his school. They are made to sit away from the other students in the class and students are discouraged from being friends with them.
Karan feels very bad about being treated this way. He wonders what had his people done that was so wrong and deserved such treatment.

Cast away by the caste system?

The abolition of caste and untouchability are well inscribed within the tenets of the Constitution, but caste continues to be the predominant structuring principle of the Indian society, and is used to assess a person's status in society.

Today, many members of the Other Backward Classes (OBC) are discriminated against on the basis of their caste, and the members of the Scheduled Castes (SC) and the Scheduled Tribes (ST) categories suffer even more from this discrimination as they continue to reel under the prejudices of the practice of untouchability, particularly in rural environments. Many schools still practice untouchability during school meals, forcing the children from the SC and the ST groups to eat separately from their classmates.

Opinion Poll's significant findings on caste and tribe:

TABLE 63: Caste and Tribe

Caste	Frequency	Percentage
General	1720	37.00%
Scheduled Castes	842	18.11%
Scheduled Tribes	837	18.00%
Other Backward Classes	633	13.62%
NT	48	1.03%
SBC	6	0.13%
VJ	8	0.17%
Kalaar	1	0.02%
No response	554	11.92%
Total	4898	100.00%

• Thirty seven per cent of the children, in the Opinion Poll belong to the General Caste category, while 18.11% are from the SC, 18% from the ST, 13.62% from the OBC and 1.35% from other castes including Notified Tribes (NT), Special Backward Classes and VJ.

TABLE 64: Physical abuse in school (Caste-wise)

Physical abuse	General	SC	ST & NT	OBC and other castes
Made to stand outside	9.30%	9.50%	8.02%	7.26%
Slapped	4.24%	3.68%	2.82%	2.63%
Hit with an object	12.09%	10.33%	6.10%	10.36%
Beaten	1.34%	1.54%	1.36%	1.56%
Had their ears twisted	3.60%	2.85%	2.94%	2.78%

The table above shows an analysis of physical abuse in school on the basis of caste. The break up of punishments that the children undergo according to the caste they belong to is: made to stand outside the class General Caste (9.30%), the SC (9.50%), the ST (7.77%), the OBC and other castes (7.61%). The percentages of children being slapped, hit with an object, beaten, and suffering on account on their ears being twisted, vary but they have the same gradation as described earlier.

TABLE 65: Psychological abuse in school (Caste-wise)

Psychological abuse	General	SC	ST & NT	OBC and other castes
Subjected to bad language	1.86%	1.90%	0.45%	1.70%
Ignored	2.85%	3.33%	1.92%	2.94%
Threatened with failure	3.02%	2.97%	1.36%	3.25%
Humiliated	4.42%	3.92%	2.49%	5.26%
Criticised	2.38%	2.14%	1.36%	2.32%
Discouraged	1.05%	1.31%	0.68%	0.93%
Compared	1.98%	2.02%	0.79%	1.24%
Threatened with bodily harm	0.76%	0.95%	0.34%	0.93%
Locked up in a room	0.58%	0.48%	0.11%	0.31%

The analysis of psychological abuse in school on the basis of caste shows that 3.02% of the children from the General Caste category and the OBC and other castes, respectively, are threatened with failure; whereas 2.97% and 1.36% of the children belonged to the SC and ST categories respectively. Children also face humiliation in schools say 5.26% of the children of the OBC and the other castes (SBC), 4.42% of the General Caste category, 3.92% of the SC and 2.49% of the ST.

TABLE 66: Informed of mistreatment in institutions (Caste-wise)

Caste	Children mistreated in institutions
General	33.15%
SC	12.92%
ST & NT	25.8 %
OBC and other castes	12.92%
No response	15.17%

The data of whether children have told someone about being mistreated and the caste they belong to, shows that of the children abused in the institutions, 33.15% belonged to the General Caste category, 12.92% to the SC, 25.84% to the ST and the NT, 12.92% to the OBC; 15.17% chose not to respond to the question about caste, either because they do not know which caste they belong to or they do not want to specify it.
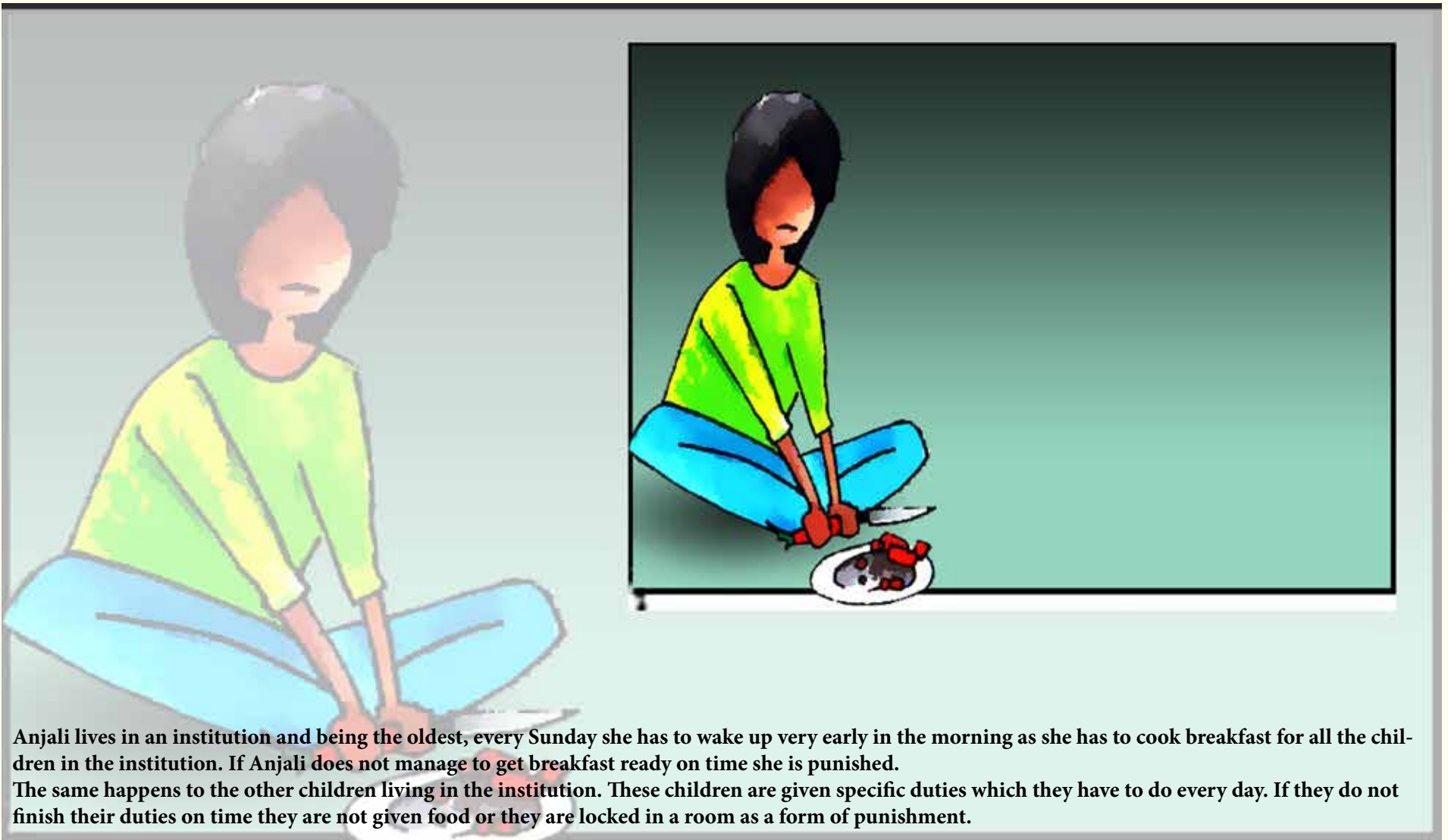
There are negative repercussions of child abuse on children and adolescent behavior.
(Sr. Selma Administrator, FIAMC Bio – Medical Ethics Centre, Mumbai)

STRICT DISTRICTS

Anjali lives in an institution and being the oldest, every Sunday she has to wake up very early in the morning as she has to cook breakfast for all the children in the institution. If Anjali does not manage to get breakfast ready on time she is punished.

The same happens to the other children living in the institution. These children are given specific duties which they have to do every day. If they do not finish their duties on time they are not given food or they are locked in a room as a form of punishment.

District evaluations: Seeing violence against children up-close

Exhaustive and deliberate study has been done for the eight Districts – to determine the extent of physical abuse in schools; psychological abuse in schools; physical abuse in homes; psychological abuse in homes, children's awareness of sexual abuse at home; children's awareness of child sexual abuse in schools; children's awareness of child sexual abuse in the community; children's opinions of how children who have been sexually abused should respond; the reasons why children do not report sexual abuse; and children who have been mistreated in institutions.

In many ways, the collating of data of children's experiences in each of the eight Districts in such a comprehensive manner lies at the heart of this Opinion Poll. The idea is to get an accurate, circumstantial and microscopic vision of the nature, and severity of the violations in these Districts.

Are children, together with the perpetrators of violence against them, accepting physical, sexual and psychological violence as an inevitable part of their childhood? What is the nature of the violence that children live with? Are they aware of their rights being infringed? Are they aware of the nature and seriousness of the violence? Why do they maintain silence? Are they aware that experiencing and witnessing violence at a young age has serious consequences? Are they aware that it hampers early child development, which can imperil their overall development? Are they exhibiting signs of such damage that is impairing their ability to learn and socialise, perform well in school and develop meaningful and positive friendships? These are some of the questions that the Poll seeks to comprehend in order to amplify the voices of the children.

Opinion Poll's significant findings on violence against children in the eight Districts:

TABLE 67: Physical abuse in schools (District-wise)

Physical abuse	District							
	Chandrapur	Jalna	Latur	Mumbai	Nandurbar	Pune	Raigad	Yavatmal
Made to stand outside	12.87	12.64	12.41	11.95	10.11	8.74	9.20	22.07
Slapped	16.46	14.63	15.85	20.12	12.20	6.10	6.10	8.54
Hit with an object	14.52	12.27	24.13	12.88	6.13	10.22	9.61	10.22
Beaten	10.45	5.97	16.42	11.94	20.90	7.46	7.46	19.40
Had their ears twisted	8.57	10.00	20.00	10.00	21.43	5.00	4.29	20.71

• An analysis of the data on physical abuse in schools district-wise was done to understand the kind of abuse the children undergo. It shows that children of Yavatmal are made to stand outside the class the most (22.07%), whereas the children of Raigad do not suffer as much (9.20%). Children in Mumbai are slapped more than children from other districts (20.12%), the figures for children in Pune and Raigad are 6.10%. A huge number of children from Latur (24.13%) say that they are hit with objects and in Mumbai 12.88% of the children admit to being hit thus. The children of Nandurbar experience a lot of beatings (20.90%) and the children of Jalna less so. Of those children who had their ears twisted, 20% were from Latur and 4.29% were from Raigad.

TABLE 68: Psychological abuse in schools (District-wise)

Mistreatment in school	Chandrapur	Jalna	Latur	Mumbai	Nandurbar	Pune	Raigad	Yavatmal
Subjected to bad language	13.95	12.79	9.30	10.47	10.47	13.95	11.63	17.44
Ignored	14.57	10.60	5.30	12.58	8.61	13.25	17.22	17.88
Threatened with failure	10.96	10.96	8.90	17.81	9.59	8.90	14.38	18.49
Humiliated	9.55	14.57	9.55	15.58	7.04	12.06	11.06	20.60
Criticised	13.33	15.24	13.33	8.57	4.76	19.05	11.43	14.29
Discouraged	13.64	25.00	6.82	6.82	6.82	4.55	6.82	29.55
Compared	12.66	13.92	5.06	24.05	1.27	16.46	11.39	15.19
Threatened with bodily harm	22.50	20.00	17.50	2.50	12.50	10	5	10
Locked up in a room	20	5	25	5	25	10	5	5

• A study of the data on the forms of psychological abuse in schools and Districts reflects that the children of Chandrapur (13.95%) and Pune (13.95%) have abusive language used against them, and the children of Nandurbar and Mumbai experience it as well but to a lesser degree (10.47%). Threats of physical harm have been issued to a large number of children from Chandrapur (22.50%) and Jalna (20%) but the children of Mumbai (2.50%) escape such ignominy. A majority of the children locked up in a room as punishment belong to Latur (25%) and Nandurbar (25%).

TABLE 69: Physical abuse at home (District-wise)

Physical abuse	District							
	Chandrapur	Jalna	Latur	Mumbai	Nandurbar	Pune	Raigad	Yavatmal
Slapped	6.78	7.91	5.65	23.24	12.67	13.56	16.55	13.64
Beaten	10.02	10.98	5.49	18.38	13.37	10.62	18.74	12.41
Kicked	6.62	6.62	5.57	13.59	27.18	18.12	17.07	5.23
Hit with an object	7.35	8.58	4.66	20.83	19.12	10.05	22.55	6.86
Had their ears twisted	5.22	7.21	5.97	15.42	22.64	5.22	24.13	14.18
Burned	9.21	5.26	14.47	7.89	32.89	17.11	7.89	5.26

• An analysis of the data on physical abuse at home District-wise reveals a higher degree of abuse within the homes in Mumbai, Nandurbar, Pune and Raigad. The children from Mumbai report being slapped (23.24 %), whereas slapping of children is relatively less in Latur (5.65%). Children are relentlessly beaten in Mumbai (18.38%) and the children of Nandurbar are kicked regularly (27.18%). In contrast, the severity of beatings is less (5.49%) in Latur as is the intensity of the kicking in Yavatmal (5.23%). Children of Raigad get objects flung at them (22.55%) while this crime in Latur is not so severe (4.66%). The ears of children in Raigad are twisted with unfailing regularity (24.13%) whereas children from Chandrapur and Pune suffer less from such a fate (5.22%). Extreme punishment – one from burning – is meted out to the children of Nandurbar (32.89%).

TABLE 70: Psychological abuse at home (District-wise)

Psychological abuse				District				
	Chandrapur	Jalna	Latur	Mumbai	Nandurbar	Pune	Raigad	Yavatmal
Subjected to bad language		13.92	8.62	6.05	10.14	18.46	11.20	19.67 11.95
Shouted at	6.96	6.66	3.71	20.27	13.84	14.60	19.52	14.45
Ignored	10.79	6.22	13.28	11.62	21.99	9.54	20.75	5.81
Called hurtful names	6.97	6.32	6.10	18.30	26.36	5.45	21.13	9.37
Criticised	8.25	3.81	5.71	15.87	29.52	13.33	19.05	4.44
Blamed	7.05	3.41	8.41	19.32	21.59	8.64	19.55	12.05
Compared	6.42	7.17	6.04	26.79	24.53	4.15	16.98	7.92
Threatened	9.32	3.39	10.17	26.27	24.58	2.54	16.10	7.63
Locked up in a room	13.33	0	10	13.33	43.33	3.33	11.67	5

• The analysis of the data of psychological abuse in homes, district-wise shows that the children of Mumbai, Nandurbar and Raigad face high amounts of psychological abuse. The children of Raigad face abusive language (19.67%)and are shouted at (19.52%)the most, whereas the children of Latur are abused (6.05%) and shouted at(3.71%)but to a lesser extent. In Nandurbar, children express anxiety of being ignored and rejected (21.99%) and in Yavatmal the children complain of this less (5.81%). The children's experience of being called hurtful names (26.36%) and being criticised (29.52%) is higher in Nandurbar. Another form of abuse is blaming children for things they are not responsible for and the highest percentage of children experiencing this are from Nandurbar (21.59%), whereas children from Jalna are relatively unscathed (3.41%) by this form of violence. Threatening children and locking them up in a room are other forms of abuse. The children of Nandurbar face this frequently.

TABLE 71: Awareness of sexual abuse at home (District-wise comparison)

Kind of Abuse	Districts							
	Chandrapur	Jalna	Latur	Mumbai	Nandurbar	Pune	Raigad	Yavatmal
Use of vulgar language against them	12.25%	11.47%	15.18%	2.98%	12.25%	14.19%	10.68%	20.99%
Shown porn	15.99%	18.90%	13.95%	4.36%	24.71%	3.49%	2.33%	16.28%
Made to pose for photos	20.81%	12.22%	13.12%	0.00%	29.41%	2.26%	1.81%	20.36%
Kissed	16.47%	12.87%	16.77%	1.80%	22.46%	3.89%	6.59%	19.16%
Made to expose	22.58%	11.61%	13.55%	1.94%	27.10%	3.87%	1.94%	17.42%
Looked at/Touched	17.34%	9.83%	14.45%	2.89%	28.90%	4.62%	7.51%	14.45%
Raped	13.84%	15.67%	16.71%	1.83%	8.09%	6.79%	7.31%	29.77%
Don't know/ Can't say	7.20%	12.14%	6.50%	24.50%	14.62%	10.96%	16.60%	7.47%

• An overview of the data of children's awareness of sexual abuse at home reflects that more children from Yavatmal(20.99%) and from Latur (15.18%) are aware of children with whom people at home have used vulgar language. Only 2.98% of the children from Mumbai say they know of children who have been subjected to vulgar language. When it comes to children being forced to watch pornography by a family member, more children from Nandurbar (24.71%) say they know of children in this category. Only 2.33% of the children in Raigad know of such instances. Perpetrators of child sexual abuse ask children to pose for vulgar photographs within their own homes, say the children from Nandurbar (29.41%) and Chandrapur (20.81%). A point to be noted is that no child from Mumbai admits to know of children who have been asked to pose for vulgar photographs. There are 22.46% of children from Nandurbar who say they know children who have been forcibly kissed by a family member at home. From Mumbai only 1.80% of the children say they know of children who have experienced this at home. Among the children who responded to the question on whether they know of any child who has been forced to expose their private parts by a member of the family, 27.10% children from Nandurbar say they do, while only 1.94% children from Mumbai know of such children. Children also reveal that they know of children who have been forced to look at or touch someone else's private parts at home. Of these, 28.90% are from Nandurbar and only 2.89% are from Mumbai. When asked about their awareness of children who were raped by family members, more children from Yavatmal (29.77%) and Latur (16.71%) say they know of children who have been raped at home, while only 1.83% of the children from Mumbai say they know children who have been raped by a family member.

• A look at the data on the children's awareness of child sexual abuse in schools in different districts reveals that a significant number of children (21.38%) know of children with whom people in school have used vulgar language. Most of these children are from Yavatmal. In Mumbai, only 1.34% of the children know of such violations against their friends. Many children from Nandurbar (19.87%) say they know of children who have been forced to watch pornography by someone in school, whereas only 0.34% of the children from Mumbai know children

thus violated. Children from Mumbai and Pune say they do not know of children who have been forced to pose for vulgar photographs by someone in school and 1.74% of these children say

that they know of children who have been forcibly kissed. Many more children from Nandurbar are aware of such activities (25.35%). And 27.85% from Nandurbar also say they know of children who have been forced to expose their private parts by someone in school, and of children who have been forced to look at or touch someone else's private parts by someone in their school. An astounding 23.01% of the children from Yavatmal say they know of children who have been raped by someone in school. Only 1.33% of the children from Mumbai say they know of children who have been raped in school.

• Looking at the data on children's awareness of child sexual abuse in the community in different Districts reveals that the children of Yavatmal (23.01%) know of children with whom people in the community have used vulgar language. Fewer children from Mumbai know of this (3.96%). A sizeable number of children from Raigad (24.04%) say that they know of children who have been forced to watch pornography or pose for vulgar photographs by someone in the community (26.56%), while only 2.81% and 2.30% children from Mumbai and Pune respectively, know of children in the first category and 1.66% children from Mumbai and Pune know of children in the second category. Again, while many more children from Raigad (30.35%) say they know of children having been forcibly kissed by someone in the community. Of the children who were forced to expose their private parts by someone in their community (23.22%) and children who were forced to look at or touch someone else's private parts by someone in their community (25.33%), only 2.40% and 3.79% children respectively from Pune, and 3.56% children from Mumbai are aware of such a trespass. A staggering number of children (23.47%) from Raigad know of children who have been raped by someone in their community, while only 4.93% children from Mumbai say they know of children who have been raped by someone in the community. And, a large percentage of the children from Mumbai say that they do not know or cannot tell about child sexual abuse in the community.

TABLE 72: Responses of children to sexual abuse (District-wise)

Responses	Districts							
	Chandrapur	Jalna	Latur	Mumbai	Nandurbar	Pune	Raigad	Yavatmal
Talk to friends	12.46%	10.30%	9.22%	9.66%	19.62%	7.31%	15.11%	16.33%
Talk to an adult	7.84%	10.90%	9.97%	15.07%	16.89%	14.03%	14.53%	10.78%
Ignore it	19.50%	17.43%	11.62%	8.30%	13.69%	4.98%	9.96%	14.52%
Accept it	6.71%	10.74%	8.72%	4.03%	41.61%	0.67%	10.74%	16.78%
Confront the perpetrator	10.78%	9.63%	11.29%	12.87%	21.71%	7.05%	15.53%	11.14%
Don't know/ Can't say	3.54%	9.73%	18.58%	17.70%	21.24%	11.50%	3.54%	14.16%

• A look at the District-wise data on how children, who have been sexually abused should respond, shows that children from Nandurbar (19.62%) are of the view that children should talk about the abuse to their friends, while only 7.31% children from Pune support this opinion. On the other hand, children from Nandurbar (16.89%) say sexual abuse should be reported to an adult whereas only 7.84% children from Chandrapur agree with this. When asked if sexual abuse should be ignored by children, the responses were varied: 19.50% children from Chandrapur say 'yes' but only 4.98% children from Pune acquiesce; Nandurbar's children (41.61%) say children should accept sexual abuse as normal, while only 0.67% children from Pune agree. Children from Nandurbar and Raigad feel strongly about confronting the perpetrator of sexual abuse, while children from Pune are not so sure. Children from Latur (18.58%), however, seem undecided and do not know or cannot tell how children should respond to sexual abuse.

TABLE 73: Reasons for not informing about sexual abuse (District-wise comparison)

Reasons	Districts							
	Chandrapur	Jalna	Latur	Mumbai	Nandurbar	Pune	Raigad	Yavatmal
Afraid	10.12%	11.10%	10.29%	13.20%	16.70%	13.59%	13.94%	11.06%
Ashamed	8.34%	9.01%	9.67%	14.75%	20.62%	11.85%	17.23%	8.52%
Believed it was their own fault	13.47%	9.73%	8.53%	11.38%	7.93%	7.63%	16.77%	24.55%
No one to tell	9.03%	8.24%	9.67%	10.30%	28.05%	8.56%	18.23%	7.92%
No one will believe	9.25%	10.24%	13.09%	18.41%	10.73%	10.04%	19.29%	8.96%
Threatened	6.27%	10.42%	10.98%	19.93%	18.63%	7.66%	19.65%	6.46%
Felt it was not wrong	11.27%	10.78%	8.33%	10.78%	19.12%	7.84%	21.57%	10.29%
Dependent on the perpetrator	9.52%	6.75%	15.48%	17.06%	11.11%	7.54%	24.21%	8.33%
Don't know/ Can't say	4.03%	8.72%	10.74%	30.87%	0.00%	11.41%	12.08%	22.15%

• Children from Nandurbar and Raigad identify fear as the factor that stops them from reporting abuse. Children from Raigad are more vocal about other reasons and underline them to be: shame, threats and not having any responsible adult to confide in. Some children also say that they do not know or cannot say why children do not report sexual abuse. A majority of them belong to Mumbai.

• The data from the districts shows that among those who were abused/mistreated in institutions, 21.43% are from Jalna, 20.48% from Chandrapur, 17.14% from Yavatmal and 13.33% from Latur. The remaining districts had a smaller percentage of children stating abuse, that is, Pune (10%), Nandurbar (10%), Mumbai (6.19%), and Raigad (1.43%).

**TABLE 74: Abuse in institutions (District-wise comparison)**

Abuse — Districts

Abuse	Chandrapur	Jalna	Latur	Mumbai	Nandurbar	Pune	Raigad	Yavatmal
Use of bad language	19.74%	31.58%	3.95%	9.21%	1.32%	15.79%	0.00%	18.42%
Name calling	21.74%	15.22%	21.74%	2.17%	4.35%	17.39%	0.00%	17.39%
Ignoring	21.21%	6.06%	15.15%	3.03%	6.06%	21.21%	0.00%	27.27%
Forcing to help other children	9.68%	13.55%	5.16%	9.03%	52.90%	3.23%	0.00%	6.45%
Shaming	19.40%	23.88%	13.43%	13.43%	0.00%	7.40%	0.00%	22.39%
Burning	36.84%	15.79%	0.00%	5.26%	5.26%	0.00%	0.00%	36.84%
Criticising/Blaming	13.16%	21.05%	7.89%	28.95%	0.00%	15.79%	0.00%	13.16%
Making negative comparisons	35.71%	21.43%	3.57%	10.71%	7.14%	7.14%	0.00%	14.29%
Beating/Kicking	21.43%	7.14%	7.14%	7.14%	0.00%	7.14%	0.00%	50.00%
Shouting	20.00%	36.00%	4.00%	24.00%	8.00%	8.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Threatening harm	21.43%	21.43%	21.43%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	35.71%
Slapping	12.50%	20.83%	16.67%	12.50%	0.00%	16.67%	0.00%	20.83%
Hitting with an object	15.38%	19.23%	34.62%	3.85%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	26.92%

• Data reveals that there is a higher degree of abuse among children in institutions from Yavatmal, Chandrapur and Jalna, whereas children from the district of Raigad claim not to have experienced negative treatment in the institutions. Children from Chandrapur and Latur face the most abuse in terms of name calling with 21.74% each, as compared to Mumbai which reflects the least number of children (2.17%) stating the same. Children from Yavatmal (27.27%) face the most rejection and are ignored as compared to the children in Mumbai (3.03%) who face this form of abuse to a lesser extent. Fifty per cent of the children living in institutions in Yavatmal are being beaten and kicked. Other forms of abuse, such as criticising and blaming the child, drawing negative comparisons with others, threatening harm and so on, are rampant in institutions of Yavatmal, Chandrapur and Jalna; however, the same is experienced by children in Latur, Mumbai and Nandurbar to a much lesser extent.

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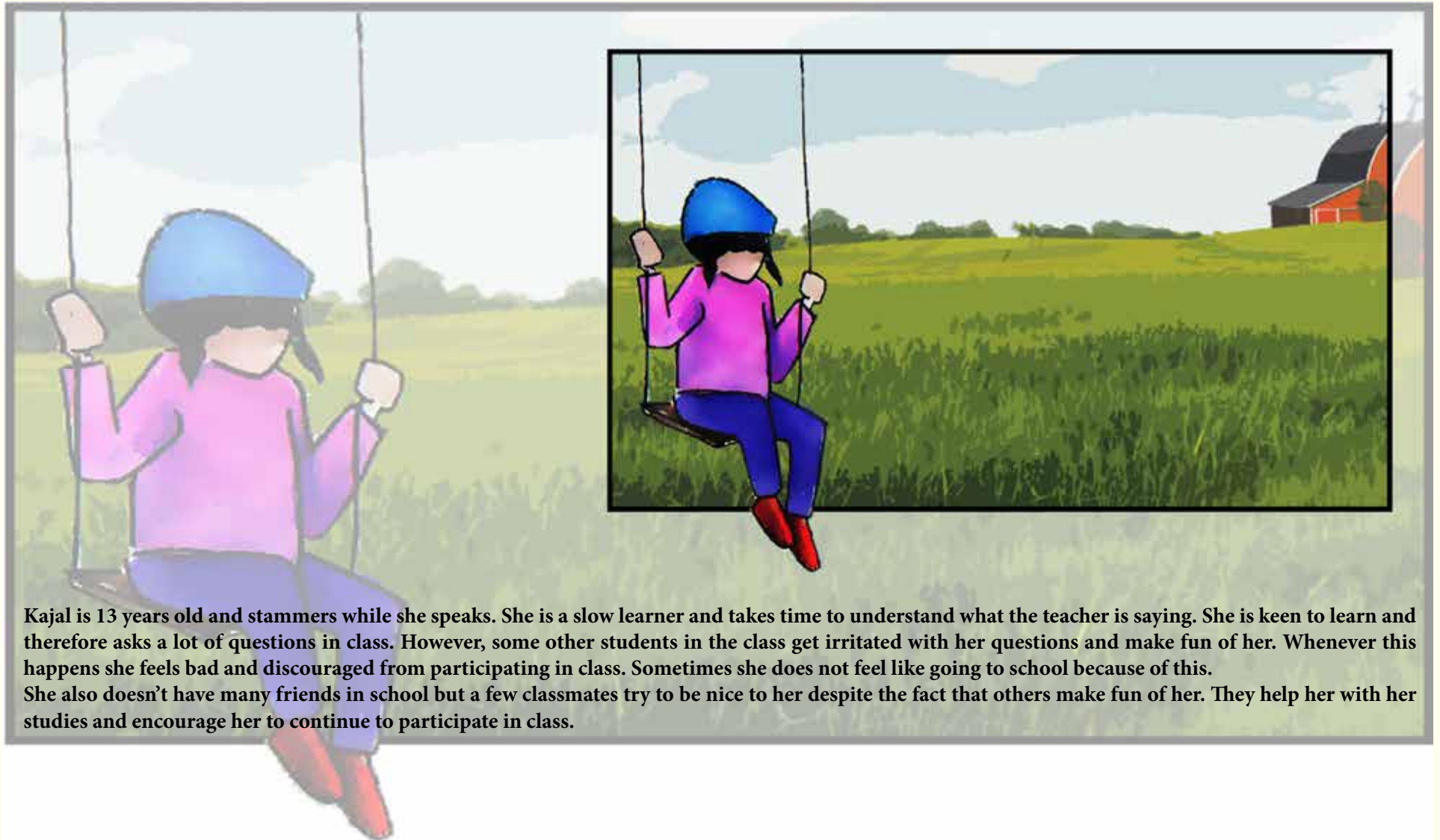
Kajal is 13 years old and stammers while she speaks. She is a slow learner and takes time to understand what the teacher is saying. She is keen to learn and therefore asks a lot of questions in class. However, some other students in the class get irritated with her questions and make fun of her. Whenever this happens she feels bad and discouraged from participating in class. Sometimes she does not feel like going to school because of this.

She also doesn't have many friends in school but a few classmates try to be nice to her despite the fact that others make fun of her. They help her with her studies and encourage her to continue to participate in class.

TABLE 75: Children with disability

Disability	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	502	10.25%
No	4396	89.75%
Total	4898	100.00%

TABLE 76: Type of disability

Type of disability	Frequency	Percentage
Visual	84	16.73%
Speech `	68	13.55%
Hearing	75	14.94%
Mobility	78	15.54%
Learning	316	62.95%

N= 502

The children were asked to specify any disability that they may have and the findings that emerge from this are subjective as it is based on the child's perception of the disability, especially the learning disability, of which the children may not have an accurate understanding. A significant percentage (10.25%) of the children stated that they had a disability and among these children, 16.73% were visually challenged and 15.54% had problems with their mobility. Children also had speech (13.55%) and hearing (14.94%) difficulties; while 62.95% said they were struggling with a learning disability.

TABLE 77: Physical abuse experienced by children with disability in school

Physical abuse	Children with disability	Percentage
Made to stand outside		8.97%
Slapped		15.25%
Hit with an object		12.68%
Beaten		11.94%
Had their ears twisted		15.71%

While all children are at a risk of being victims of violence, children with disabilities are at a significantly increased risk because of the stigma, the negative traditional beliefs and ignorance. This Opinion Poll shows that a significant number of children with disabilities were subjected to violence in different settings. It is observed that 15.25% children with disabilities are slapped, 15.71% have their ears twisted and 12.68% complain of being hit with an object. They are also punished by subjecting them to beatings (11.94%) and there are those who are made to stand outside the class (8.97%).

Twenty per cent of the children with disabilities stated that they experienced psychological abuse in school, in the form of being threatened with bodily harm and being locked up in a room, while 15.19% were compared negatively with others, 14.29% were criticised and 12.79% said abusive language was used against them. Children with disabilities also experience humiliation (10.55%), rejection (7.28%), threats (7.53%) and discouragement (6.82%).

TABLE 78: Physical abuse experienced by children with disability at home

Physical abuse	Children with disability
Slapped	11.38%
Beaten	14.32%
Kicked	17.42%
Hit with an object	15.93%
Had ears twisted	12.19%
Burnt	23.68%

Family is the primary caregiver for all children and more so for children with disabilities, as they would be overly dependent on the family members for support in their daily routine. Yet, the Opinion Poll reveals a significant percentage of children being abused either physically or psychologically at home. The findings show that 23.68% of the children who are being disciplined by burn wounds are children with disabilities; being differently-abled does not prevent them from being kicked (17.42%), hit with an object (15.93%), being beaten (14.32%), being slapped (11.38%) and having their ears twisted (12.19%).

Children with disabilities reveal that they are locked up in a room (31.67%) are threatened (17.80%) and they face rejection (17.84%), they are also criticised (17.14%) and blamed (15.68%) when things go wrong and are also referred to using hurtful names (16.12%). These are some of the other negative forms of disciplining used by parents which affect the child's psychological well-being.

TABLE 79: Physical and psychological abuse experienced by children with disabilities in institutions

Abuse in the institution	Children with disability
Subjected to bad language	15.79%
Name calling	23.91%
Ignored or Rejected	12.12%
Forced other children to help	7.74%
Shamed	7.46%
Injured by burning	10.53
Criticised and blamed	2.63%
Beaten/Kicked	7.14%
Shouted at	4.00%
Threatened with bodily harm	7.14%
Slapped	8.33%
Hit with an object	3.85%

Where the family is unable to care for a child, the State comes in to take its place. However, even in institutions, the children with disabilities face similar treatment as in schools or at home. They are ignored and rejected (12.12%), shamed (7.46%) and are spoken to in an abusive language. There are also a percentage of children in institutions who are slapped (8.33%), are beaten or kicked (7.14%) and are given burn wounds (10.53%). However, differently-abled children in institutions have not complained of being negatively compared with others.

It is important to note that the stigma attached to the disability, and not the disability itself, attracts the abuse that a differently-abled child goes through, be it in school, in the institution or at home. Disability needs to be viewed from the social model, where the disability does not lie in individuals, but in the interaction between individuals and society.

RURAL ATRO-CITIES

Jaya wants to become a doctor. Her first challenge is to make her family understand that she wants to continue her studies and not get married. Jaya is determined to change her fate and does not want to be married off at an early age. Her elder sister is supporting her. It was also her father's dying wish that she study and pursue her dreams.

There is a wide gap between rural and urban India with respect to technology, living conditions, economic empowerment, etc. Many in rural India lack access to education, nutrition, health care, sanitation, land and other assets and are trapped in poverty. This Opinion Poll sought to understand if this urban-rural divide exists with regard to the safety of children.

TABLE 80: Physical abuse in school (Urban-rural comparison)

Physical abuse	Rural	Urban
Made to stand outside	64.60%	35.40%
Slapped	57.32%	42.68%
Hit with an object	72.19%	27.81%
Beaten	71.64%	28.36%
Had ears twisted	65.71%	34.29%

A comparison of the physical abuse in schools between the urban and the rural areas shows, that of the children who faced the different forms of corporal punishment in schools, a larger percentage were from the rural areas. Of those children who were hit with an object 72.19% were from a rural area, whereas only 27.81% were from an urban area. Similarly, 71.64% of the children who faced beatings were from a rural area as opposed to 28.36% from the urban areas. Children who had their ears twisted, who were made to stand outside and who were slapped also show a similar divide between the rural and the urban areas.

TABLE 81: Psychological abuse in school (Urban-rural comparison)

Psychological abuse	Rural	Urban
Subjected to bad language	63.95%	36.05%
Ignored/Rejected	57.62%	42.38%
Threatened	54.79%	45.21%
Humiliated	62.31%	37.69%
Criticised	67.62%	32.38%
Discouraged	61.36%	38.64%
Compared	58.23%	41.77%
Subjected to bodily harm	57.50%	42.50%
Locked up in a room	55.00%	45.00%

A higher percentage of children from the rural areas complained of being humiliated (62.31%), criticised (67.62%), discouraged (61.36%) and spoken to in an abusive language (63.95%), as compared to children from the urban areas. The difference between the urban and the rural children facing rejection, being threatened, compared and being locked in a room is not vast.

TABLE 82: Physical abuse at home (Urban-rural comparison)

Physical abuse	Rural	Urban
Slapped	62.23%	37.77%
Beaten	68.38%	31.62%
Kicked	71.08%	28.92%
Hit with an object	68.38%	31.62%
Had ears twisted	74.63%	25.37%
Burnt	78.95%	21.05%

The findings show that an urban-rural difference exists in the physical and psychological abuse that the children are subjected to at home. A greater number of rural children face abuse than children in the urban areas. Children from the rural areas talk of being slapped (62.23%), beaten (68.38%) and hit with an object (68.38%) as opposed to 37.77% children of the urban areas being slapped and 31.62% being beaten and hit with objects, respectively. A higher percentage of children from the rural areas are kicked (71.08%), have their ears twisted (74.63%) and are scarred with burn wounds (78.95%); as opposed to a lower percentage of children from the urban areas who experience the same. The pattern with psychological abuse seems to be similar to the experience of physical abuse, with children from the rural areas experiencing more abuse than children from the urban areas.

TABLE 83 Abuse in institutions (Urban-rural comparison)

Abuse in institutions	Rural	Urban
Use of bad language	43.42%	56.58%
Name calling	36.96%	63.04%
Ignoring or Rejecting	42.42%	57.58%
Forcing other children to help	32.26%	67.74%
Shaming the child	37.31%	62.69%
Injuring by burning	52.63%	47.37%
Criticising and blaming	23.68%	76.32%
Beating/Kicking	64.29%	35.71%
Shouting	28.00%	72.00%
Threatening bodily harm	42.86%	57.14%
Slapping	33.33%	66.67%
Hitting with an object	38.46%	61.54%

However, the findings with regard to abuse in the institutions, shows that the children's experience of abuse from the urban areas is higher, as compared to the rural areas. Children in urban areas (76.32%) are criticised and blamed for things that they are not responsible for as opposed to 23.68% experiencing the same in the rural areas. Seventy two percent of the urban children are shouted at, as compared to the rural children (28%). There is a similar divide between the urban and the rural experience of the other forms of psychological abuse in institutions.

We assume that all abuse and violence takes place among the poor.
(Bharati Ali, HAQ, Delhi)

It is necessary that everyone behaves well at home. (Mangesh, Age 14 years, Dattapur, Yavatamal)

FOR SAFE KEEPING

Children in this Poll of the eight Districts of Maharashtra are clear that they don't count within homes, schools, institutions, Ashramshalas, KG-BVs, workplaces and the communities. They believe that if they did, there would be no violence against them.

Because the children are to be protected against violence and maltreatment, because there is need to prevent the impairment of children's health or development, and because there is need to ensure that children grow up with safe and effective care, the children must be involved in choices and decisions in matters that affect their lives. There is a need to draw on their experiences to enable them to feel in control of their lives and their futures.

This Poll can be pivotal to this transition, towards the inclusion of children. If the children's participation in planning, implementation and monitoring of actions, to stem violence against them, must be made real, the children need to know of their rights and entitlements as do the adults. A sensitisation to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, particularly Article 42 based on the knowledge of their rights would be particularly helpful.

The empirical, evidence-based findings of this Poll can be the basis for action that would enable violence-free lives for children. The foremost finding of this report, that there is widespread violence against children, worrying in its severity and manner, should be taken as a warning for action. The signal needs to go out that there is no defence for violence of any kind, and that it is unlawful.

And as the Poll aims at understanding how violence against children is constructed, manifested and diffused in private and public spaces, it can serve as the groundwork to design the reformed roles of the caregivers in families, in schools, in institutions, in workplaces and in communities; project non-violent ways of raising children and add value to existing work on violence against children. It is, therefore, important to review the knowledge of the rights of the child among caregivers.

This Poll can also be the starting point in the State, as well as across the country, to begin a movement to change attitudes and practices. By educating parents (that violent and humiliating forms of disciplining children are not acceptable and improving their parenting skills), sensitising schools and institutions (to ban corporal punishment and respect children's views and capabilities), prioritising prevention of violence against children (by identifying risk factors, and preventing violence before it happens), promoting alternate mechanisms of disciplining (that are re-spectful of children's dignity and self-worth) and enhancing the capacity of all who work with and for children as well as national coalitions on children's rights (by ensuring they are fully informed on this subject), a social movement of change can begin.

This active challenging of assumptions and practices, that perpetuate violence, can influence many people to become role models for change. They can help create awareness and sensitise people to the violation of children's rights that exists at all levels. This can help create a positive environment where change is possible. The messages will help people realise that violence against children is a serious social problem, one that is not acceptable, and that change in the current attitudes and practices, is both essential and needed.

As this Poll draws attention to the lack of investigation and reporting of violence by children and the impunity that the perpetrators enjoy, it signals a need for child-sensitive reporting mechanisms and procedures for investigating cases of violence, keeping the best interests of the children in mind. In cases of sexual assault, there is need for far more sensitivity and the focus must be on recovery and rehabilitation. Children should be involved while developing these mechanisms, to better understand how these confidential reporting mechanisms can work. Their first hand experiences will help formulate better policies. While the situation will not change just by formulating laws, developing a consistent legal and policy framework, prohibiting all forms of violence would certainly help.

Despite a multitude of adverse effects of sexual violence, most children who reported being aware of other children experiencing it, say they did not report the issue. In all likelihood, even fewer children seek services. Although the response to violence is seen to be that of law enforcement agencies, health sectors should integrate violence prevention and care into the routine activities. Counselling and legal aid are crucial components.

Focus on the economic and social inequities – programmes and policies that address poverty, gender discrimination and other forms of inequality (disability, urban-rural divide) and other factors which undermine an egalitarian society – could be an effective response to stop violence against girls, children with disabilities, the young belonging to socially disadvantaged classes. Strengthening their abilities to harness their potential to the fullest is also crucial.

Special attempts to protect the human rights of girls, address all manner of gender discrimination, and grooming them for roles of leadership, must be part of the violence-prevention strategy. This is because girls face heightened violence and neglect in the form of denial of nutrition, access to healthcare and education; and early and forced marriages. While this Poll had more girls in schools, this is not true of the scenario in the country.

Caste is a great divider in the State, as well as in the country, and instigates social exclusion. This Poll shows significant violence against children of the socially marginalised groups, though it does point to violence against children belonging to General Castes too. There is need to pay heed to this component as the picture in other States may be different and children of socially disadvantaged classes may face formidable violence and the paring down of their social, economic and political rights. It is well known that physical, psychological, social and economic

violence systematically permeates into the everyday lives of the socially disadvantaged people, where they are treated without dignity and as people undeserving of rights. It is, therefore, important to strengthen legal, social, political and economic mechanisms for them.

Children with disabilities also suffer from inadequate support and cultural and social prejudices that relegate them to lives on the margin. Violence against them exacerbates their alienation. A World Health Organization (2012) finding shows that children with disabilities are almost four times more likely to experience violence than non-differently-abled children. It says the factors which place people with disabilities at a higher risk of violence include stigma, discrimination, and ignorance about disability, as well as a lack of social support for those who care for them. The placement of people with disabilities in institutions also increases their vulnerability to violence. The need to protect the rights of children with disabilities and ensuring their full and equal participation in society is a pressing concern. (http://www.who.int/disabilities/violence/en/).

As the debate rages on child labour in the country – on whether work in all its forms and occupations, whether paid or unpaid, should be banned for children up to the age of 14 or whether the present amendment to the law is acceptable – urgent attention needs to be paid to ensuring quality education, addressing poverty, creating enabling conditions for the children's all-round development and regulating their work conditions.

A lack of basic amenities (water, sanitation and hygiene) and infrastructure (safe homes, schools, institutions and communities; electricity and healthcare) as highlighted by this Poll, are a serious infringement of child rights. Efforts should be directed at mainstreaming the children's development needs. We hope that this Maharashtra-based Poll generates interest, and a national will, to develop and implement systematic data collection and research on the issue across the country, placing the children's opinions and experiences at the centre. Data could similarly be disaggregated by each State and fed into the national data.

नाव : आदित्य

वर्ग : 7 वी

विषय : कला

Name: Adithya. Class: 7th. Village: Karjat.

ON THE SAFE SIDE

This concise summary version is complemented by a detailed Opinion Poll about the prevalence, nature, extent, response to and reporting of, multiple forms of violence faced by children within the settings of homes, schools, institutions, Ashramshalas, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs), out of schools, workplaces and communities in the eight Districts of Maharashtra.

They stand as examples of the children's belief in a collective future, a future where their lives are free of violence.

This is because the Opinion Poll is among the very few in the country that has listened intently and predominantly to children, taken their voices into account as it has their opinions, and their vision for a world free of violence towards them. The children's participation – the expression of their views and being part of the change process – is at the heart of this Poll's endeavour.

The Poll has talked to 4,898 children, between the ages of 13 and 17, and of all three genders, about the physical, psychological, economic, and sexual violence, as well as neglect, experienced and witnessed by them. And their opinions on child-friendly, safe environments have been actively sought to serve as a reference point for future strategic violence-preventive initiatives and as a possible base document for a toolkit – one that will ensure the safety of children, using practical guidelines, policies, as well as standards of care.

An appraisal of the violence in normal times and everyday lives of children in the eight Districts of Maharashtra

Why has the Opinion Poll put the children at the centre of its venture? Children are dependent on adults for their care and protection and this makes them vulnerable to violence and abuse by these or other adults. The eight Districts of Maharashtra were selected based on the presence of projects run by the UNICEF, as well as the presence of NGOs/supporting organizations to conduct the data collection.

This Poll stands evidence to the fact that normalisation of violence – its pervasiveness within settings meant to be protective of them, in the eight Districts, and perpetuated by the very people who should nurture them – takes away these children's integral rights to survival, health and well-being, care and protection, and to development and participation.

It is at the same time an exposition on how children who have suffered violence feel alone, unloved, unsafe, shamed and unable to change their situation. There is also enough evidence in the Opinion Poll to show that the exposure of children to violence in one setting is accentuated by violence in another.

This Poll's findings clearly indicate that children of all ages, sex, family background, religion, caste and within all Districts are afflicted by abuse, in one way or another, increasing the likelihood of their physical, behavioural, social, cognitive, attitudinal, emotional, sexual and reproductive problems.

A 'here-and-now' urgency is needed to curtail violence against children. This is essential to allow them to fully realise the benefits to their education, develop their sense of self-hood and self-worth for their overall development and at the same time, stymie their health, emotional and psycho-social impairments.

Acknowledging the real contours of violence against children and child care and protection issues in need of redress

This Poll's findings – that stems primarily out of the children's opinions, the majority of the children being between 15 and 17 years – is a conscious attempt to move towards an acknowledgement of the real contours of violence against children, and the true dimensions of child care and protection issues, based on the children's concerns, needs, priorities and rights.

The immediate aim is to gain clarity on the causes, extent and kinds of violence against children (as perceived and experienced by the children), determine their perception and expectations of a safe place, identify the perpetrators, as well as seek the opinions of various stakeholders on this issue (Government authorities, statutory bodies, private school authorities and NGO representatives) to gauge the systemic strengths and shortcomings.

The larger intent is to challenge and change the existing social and individual attitudes that accept violence as 'normal'; place safeguards through specially developed tools (in the shape of guidelines and policies on safety for children and standards of care as well as child-friendly interventions for safe homes, schools and communities); and mobilise those who work in the field, as well as all sections of the family, educational institutions, communities and societies, to act to prevent violence against children.

Core challenges emerging from the Poll findings

This Poll aims to provide information to everyone involved in challenging violence against children, be it the government, child rights and human rights organisations or individual activists. While the statistical details that capture the true measure of violence against children can be accessed through this summary report, and the more comprehensively tabulated analysis (category, district, gender, and caste-wise), we attempt to look at the core challenges that need redress in the light of the Poll's findings:

Violence is an inescapable reality with serious fall-outs, in the lives of the children living in these eight Districts, but there is no acceptance of violence as a serious human rights violation:

Violence against children is entrenched and institutionalised in varying degrees within homes, schools, institutions, Ashramshalas, KGVBs, workplaces, out-of-school arenas and the community in all the eight Districts studied. Social, cultural and economic factors combine to leave the children vulnerable to multiple forms of violence that include physical, psychological, sexual, and economic violence, and neglect. In a society that experiences a multitude of volatile conflicts, there is no acceptance of violence against children being a serious human rights violation. It is a violation that adversely impacts the children's physical, mental, emotional and economic well-being and compromises their overall childhood development (cognitive and language skills and social, cultural and emotional patterns). A decisive end to corporal punishment and the use of psychological violence as a disciplining tool can help these children step out of their diffidence and explore new worlds of opportunity. In particular, the seriousness of sexual violence against the young is masked. There is, therefore, an urgent need to increase the level of commitment and action to stop sexual violence against children, the brutalising consequences of which, often, stay with the children through their adult lives.

Child care and protection means ensuring the children's physical, emotional, sexual safety and well-being, as well as providing for shelter, food, nutrition, healthcare, education, access to basic services (drinking water, toilets, electricity, playgrounds for recreation), and safeguarding their legal and human rights. These elements are, however, missing in the settings they live in:

While some children say they are satisfied with the facilities they are extended, a considerable number of children point to how their homes, schools, institutions, communities and workplaces are dangerous places. Many children speak of the lack of toilets, lighting, libraries, playgrounds and inadequate healthcare within schools, institutions and the community. A lot of children talk at length of the fear they feel while going to school, institutions and workplaces. They fear lonely stretches, attacks by addicts and animals on the road, sexual violence, and groups of men who threaten and cause them harm, among other factors. This is a gross violation of their rights and puts their present childhood and their futures under threat.

Children ideally should not be a part of the workspaces, and certainly not those places that subject them to violence. But the truth is that children are part of the workforce in the eight Districts surveyed. This is a form of economic violence against them, one that has to be addressed: Children in the Opinion Poll say that they work in farms, as domestic workers, in shops, restaurants, and factories and many admit to their work conditions being deplorable. Efforts must begin with preventing under-age children from entering the workplace. There must be a movement for universal access to basic education and multi-pronged efforts in the areas of livelihood, human rights, labour, health and safety, and law enforcement, must also be initiated.

Challenging and changing norms that accept violence against children as normal is a formidable task: While there are variations in the levels and intensity of the widespread physical, psychological, sexual, and economic violence in all the settings and Districts (as recorded in this Poll), the challenge lies in making these violations visible and unacceptable. Challenging and changing the norms that accept violence against children as normal, is a formidable task one that can invite confrontation. This is because, like the issue of violence against women, this is regarded as a 'private' matter to be endured by the young and is certainly not considered a crime. Moreover, the belief that it does not warrant public attention or discourse is strong. And, almost always, individual acts of violence are socially supported – overtly or tacitly – in homes, schools, institutions, Ashramshalas, KGBVs, workplaces and communities. Hence, concerted efforts must be made to push the overarching and big idea that change is needed and that it is possible…that even the most embedded ideas can be shifted.

Breaking the silence by instilling a culture of safety and mutual respect:

Speaking up on abuse is not easy, or a real option for these children. The Poll shows barriers in the form of silence around the issue, the shame attached to it, the belief among children that their testimonies will be discounted as lies, the threats issued to the children, and inadequate enforcement of punishment for offenders. It is pertinent to note that a large number of children chose not to voice their opinions on many issues (which essentially means an under-reporting of violence), perhaps due to apprehensions and fears of being judged or punished. Attempts by girls to speak up are circumscribed by efforts to ensure that they fall into accepted gender stereotypes. Even boys are reticent. They, too, feel shame and the stigma. But many of them, who are abused, do not speak up as they accept violence as normal (due to learned behaviour, where attitudes and practices that support violence against children are played out at every level). As violence silences through fear and trauma, shame and isolation, and through the normalisation of abuse, instilling and spreading a culture of safety and mutual respect has to be used to break this silence.

Need to safeguard the rights of children and protect them from abuse and exploitation by creating an environment where children are respected, empowered and active in their own protection:

The three partners of this Poll are firm in their faith that 'child–safe' environments, guided by the principle of 'the best interest of the child' can be created by taking a few concrete steps. Firstly, there is a need for formulating guidelines and policies on the safety for children, as well as standards of care. Secondly, it is important to establish mechanisms through which children can report violence, one that all children are made aware of. Thirdly and more importantly, there has to be a concerted effort to change individual and societal attitudes; by mobilising all sections of the society--family, school, institutions, Ashramshalas, KGVBs and the communities to end violence; and encouraging them to join in on the efforts of the diverse regional, national and international organizations, which are working towards setting acceptable universal standards on the issue. All these efforts need to be integrated to sustain a long-term commitment to this process.

Girls, children from socially disadvantaged castes and tribes and those who grapple with disabilities, face more violence in childhood and experience shrinking spaces in adulthood. The opportunity to embed positive and gender-equal values is at its highest, at this stage of the children's lives:

More than physical violence, these children face psychological violations that can be hugely debilitating. As girls and children from socially marginalised groups and children with disabilities grow up, the space for choices, opportunities and development begin to close up, as these children are regarded to be citizens of lesser value. They live with unequal power relations and inconsideration with regard to education, health, nutrition, leadership and resources through their lives. The chance to embed positive and gender-equal values is at its highest at this stage of the children's lives. If this opportunity is missed, the perceptions and practices that accord less value to them begin to settle in. Ending violence in these children's lives, by halting discrimination against them, is an urgent priority.

Violence against children perpetuates a cycle of violence. There is a need to develop alternate mindsets and masculinities that are mindful of women and children's dignities:

While the other fall-outs of violence against children have been recounted, an insidious and often unrealised danger of abusing children is the perpetuation by them of the violence that they experience. The consistent use of physical violence, particularly on boys, by the social institutions of home, schools, institutions and the community lends legitimacy to their use of violence, in turn, to resolve conflicts and enforce discipline in their lives. This fuels violence-prone hegemonic masculinities, where boys feel entitled to use force when they transition into adulthood – a fact that has been corroborated by several other studies. This is how violent societies are born and how violence is ensconced across generations. This analysis strengthens the need to develop alternate mindsets and masculinities that are mindful of women and children's dignities.

Children have the right to express their views, and have their opinions integrated into the implementation of policies and programmes meant for them:

In the light of the disquieting findings of widespread physical, psychological, sexual, and economic violence in all the settings reviewed, this Poll underlines the need to amplify children's voices, concerns and solutions for a world that is free of assault on them, by bringing them in as a central force for thought and action.

We are excited about the potential of this Poll to favourably transform the lives of the children and save them from violence. As also the germinal role the results of this Poll, and the action that it can lead to, can play in bonding children and adults together in creating an equitable and inclusive world. A world where children are treated with respect, listened to and where they have choices, opportunities and violence-free futures open to them.

WHO ARE WE

I feel unsafe at home as my grandmother or my mother fights alot at home. (Ajay, Age 12 years, Shivani, Yavatamal)
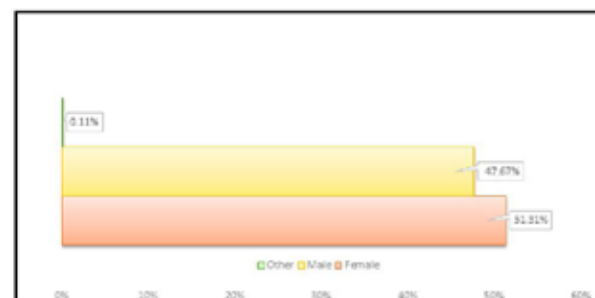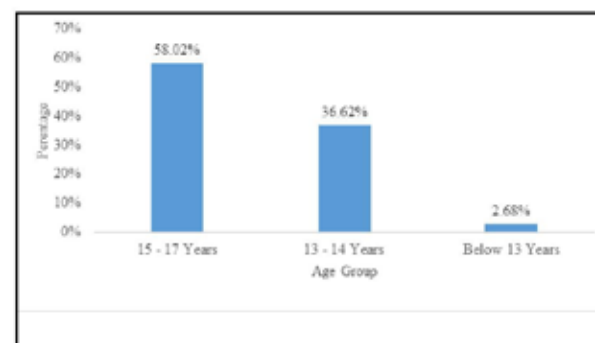
District Wise Composition

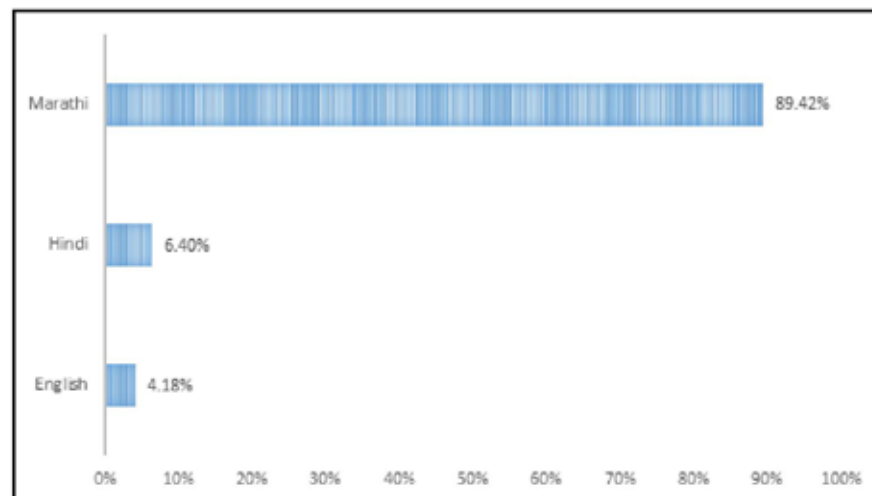| District	Frequency	Percentage
Chandrapur	613	12.52%
Jalna	587	11.98%
Latur	624	12.74%
Mumbai	599	12.23%
Nandurbar	599	12.23%
Pune	632	12.90%
Raigad	564	11.51%
Yavatmal	680	13.88%
Total	4898	100.00%

Sex of the Child

Age

Language

Marathi 89.42%

Hindi 6.40%

English 4.18%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%

Religion of the Children

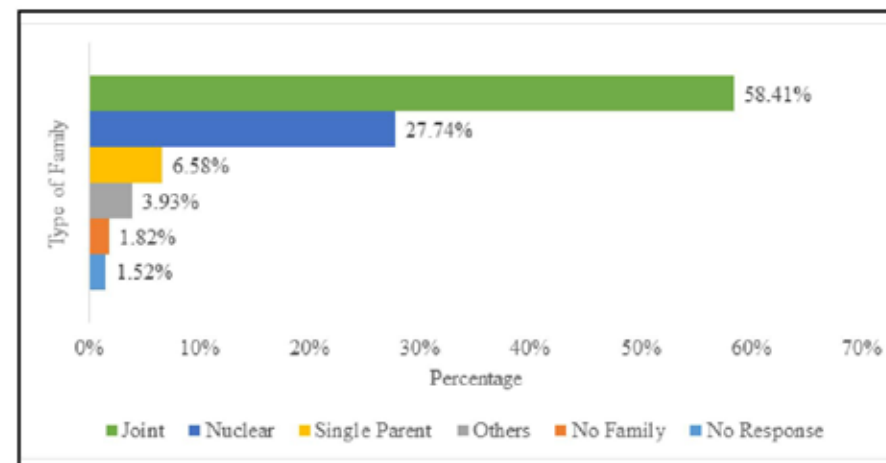| Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Hindu	3378	76.69%
Muslim	374	8.49%
Buddhist	369	8.38%
Adivasi	56	1.27%
Christian	50	1.14%
Jain	22	0.50%
Sikh	11	0.25%
Lamani	4	0.09%
Mahar	4	0.09%
Banjara	4	0.09%
Vanjari	1	0.02%
No Response	132	3.00%
Grand Total	4405	100.00%

Caste of the Children
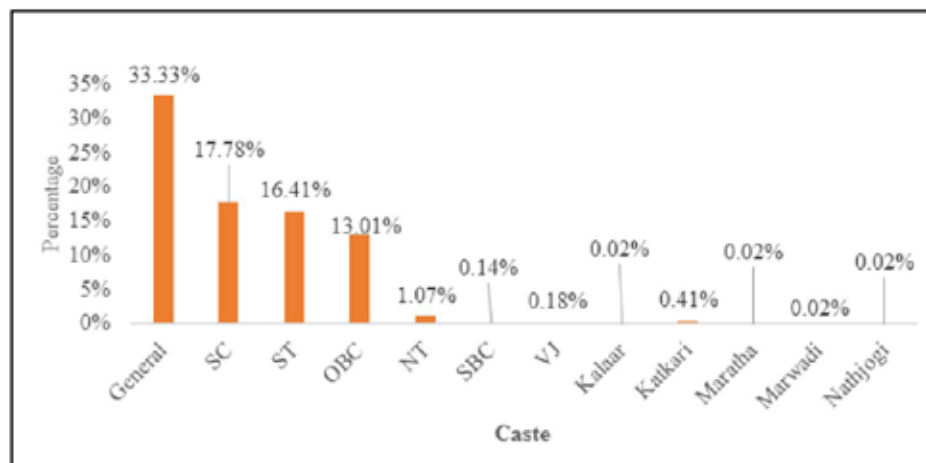
Type of Family

SHORT AND SWEET

BPL- Below Poverty Line

CSA- Child Sexual Abuse

EBB- Educationally Backward Blocks

KGBV- Kasturba Gandhi BalikaVidyalaya

NCPCR- National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights

NT- Nomadic Tribes

OBC- Other Backward Classes

RTE- Right to Education

SC- Scheduled Castes

ST- Scheduled Tribes

UNCRC- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child UNICEF- United Nations Children's Emergency Fund

VJ- VimuktaJati

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Play it Safe

AN OPINION POLL OF CHILDREN ON SAFETY IN MAHARASHTRA

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