

# **MALE SEXUAL ABUSE: A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY ON THE TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCES AMONG MEN IN KERALA**



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# **MALE SEXUAL ABUSE: A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY ON THE TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCES AMONG MEN IN KERALA**

Thesis submitted to St. Teresa's College (Autonomous), Ernakulam in fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Masters of Arts in Sociology**

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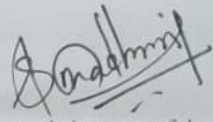
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### DECLARATION

I, Madhuri S, hereby declare that the thesis entitled "Male sexual abuse: A Sociological Study on the Traumatic Experience among the Men in Kerala" is a bonafide record of independent research work carried out by me under the supervision and guidance of DR Dora Dominic. I further declare that this thesis has not been previously submitted for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship or other similar title.

Ernakulam

March 2025

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# CHAPTER 1



# INTRODUCTION

What is gender? We often misunderstand the term gender with sex. But actually, both are not same. Gender is a solely constructed characteristics of women, men, girls and boys. When it comes to sex, it's a biological characteristic of a human being according to their reproductive organ. Gender is socially and culturally constructed. As per the WHO gender includes norms, behaviour and roles related to the idea of being women, men, girl or boy by the society we live. This also includes the relationship with each other. Gender concept tends to change over time and it arise from society to society. Gender generates inequality in society with its hierarchical nature.

Nowadays, sexuality and gender are the most sensitive and confusing concepts to understand. A man is typically known as an adult male human being who was assigned as male at birth. A woman is an adult human being who is identified as a girl child at the time of birth with the reproductive organ of vagina, uterus, fallopian tubes and ovaries.

As men and women are different biologically, they also face different kind of struggles despite of having different kind of struggles. The socially constructed roles and status of men and women are totally different. When we consider women in our society, they face wide range of challenges which is generated by many cultural and social factors. One of the main issues faced by women in our society is gender inequality. We are familiar with this term, that we are trying very much to eradicate the problem but its still there. Gender inequality can be seen mostly in the field of work, education, family etc. Pay gap between men and women is a serious issue even though we have laws for equal pay for equal work. Sill in our country women face issues to get education and proper facilities to study. Representation of women in political and organizational level is less in number. Lack of education becomes a barrier to women in our country to attain economic independence as well. One of the important as most discussed problem faced by women is the act of violence and abuse. Daily we see news about this kind of event through social and satellite medias and newspapers. Women face physical, emotional and sexual abuse within the home or intimate relationship even from a stranger. This leads to long term physical and mental health issues. Women are frequently get harassed in their workplace, public streets even schools which raises safety concerns about women in our society. In many part of our country, women and their health is neglected. Many of women have only limited access to reproductive healthcare including family planning, maternal care, and abortion services. Women in our country still face

menstrual stigma, where menstruation is considered a taboo. This leads to discrimination and lack of sanitary products and also affects their education and work.

Women always suffer from the pressure of society. Women struggle to meet social expectation when they are expected to fulfil the traditional roles of caregivers, which limits their career and personal development. When women fail to meet social expectations, they face social isolations, stigma/ exclusions.

We as a society, largely concentrate on the problems of women and we forget about men. They also face similar struggles as women. We live in a society where social expectation from men and mental health issues they are facing are huge. Men always face stigma related to the expression of emotions. They are socialized to suppress their emotions and never shows vulnerability which lead to strong mental health illness. The suicidal rate among men is higher than women due to the societal pressure and reluctance to seek help for emotional and mental problems which men only have limited access to support as they may not seek therapy/ counselling because of the stigma. Men always feel the pressure to be providers of family which is generated by traditional expectations. When they fail to meet this role, they feel stress and inadequacy. In our society, men are mostly taught to be tough and to have rigid norms of masculinity like never show the weakness and these things create unhealthy relationships. Our society always focus on the female victims of violence and try to ignore male victims. In many parts of our country particularly in certain communities or unprivileged areas, our healthcare industry and society focus on women's health largely which they seldom consider about the health and wellbeing of men. When we consider health of men, they have shorter life expectancy than women which points fingers towards the lifestyle of men that includes high rates of smoking, alcohol consumption, risky behaviour, and high rates of substance abuse. Men are less likely to seek medical check and healthcare due to the conditioning of being strong and stone. This avoidance leads to untreated health issues and chronic diseases. We usually see men often face biases in family courts regarding child custody of children. This means men are disconnected from their children. Fatherhood expectations are other dilemma faced by men in our society. They always need to fill the societal expectation of being strong and independent. One of the main issues faced by men in our country is the lack of legal support especially in the case of domestic violence and sexual abuse. Gender inequality typically centers on women but

men also face societal challenges which affects their mental, physical and emotional wellbeing. It is very important to give attention to the problems of everyone despite the gender they are identified with.

Male sexual abuse is one of less noticed and less discussed issues in our society. According to definition given by Cambridge dictionary, sexual abuse refers “the act of making someone take part in sexual activities against their wishes or without agreement”. In our society men also get abused. Any sexual action or activity which is forced or threatened against men can be called as Male Sexual Abuse. As per the research, atleast 1 in 6 men have been sexually abused or assaulted in the world. Research found that 36% of boys suffered from one or more incident of sexual abuse atleast once in their life. In Kerala, despite of having highest literacy rate and highest sex ratio, the problems of abuse are still increasing day by day. The male abuse rates are highly increasing as per the studies that have done recently.

Male sexual abuse is a problem which is usually unnoticed by the society and the legal system, and the reporting rates are also very low. What makes the Male Abuse go Unnoticed? The answer lies in the conditioning and cultural or societal expectations. Men are usually expected to be strong and masculine which makes them to suppress their emotions and not to express their vulnerability. The spread of the idea, toxic masculinity, that is men are not supposed to show their weakness and to be dominant are very stressful. Our society always focuses on women when it comes to emotional expression and vulnerability. However, men are not accepted in that way in our society. Men also get abused in public space, home and in the workplace. The problem is our society is not open towards men showing their problems. Societal expectations and judgements makes a man silent on their abuse. Sexual abuse faced by men are going unreported legally. We need to address this issue because the psychological and social struggle after the abuse faced by men are huge. Men who experience sexual abuse struggle with depression , shame, guilt and **powerlessness**. The trauma leads to anxiety and panic attacks. After abuse men may develop post traumatic stress disorder with symptoms such as flashbacks, emotional numbness and hype vigilance which affects their daily life, relationships and work. Abuse can impact a man’s sense of identity and feelings of inadequacy. Trauma survivors sometimes develop chronic pain conditions such as headaches, backpain which is linked to the stress of the abuse. They experience insomnia, nightmares, and other sleep related problems.

Men, who faced abuse also face problems of sexual dysfunction such as erectile dysfunction, difficulty in experiencing arousal or avoiding intimacy totally. After abuse, there is high chances that men turn to alcohol or drugs. Due to the stigma or fear of not being accepted or believed, many of the male survivors of sexual abuse withdraw from their social connections which leads to loneliness. Some men in response to the feeling of **powerlessness or violated**, express their trauma through anger or aggression. Men often face the problem with their sexual orientation after the abuse.

# CHAPTER II

# **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

A literature review is a comprehensive summary of previous research on a topic. The literature review surveys scholarly articles, books, and other sources relevant to a particular area of research. The review should enumerate, describe, summarize, objectively evaluate, and clarify the previous research. It should give a theoretical base for the research and help you determine the nature of your research. The literature review acknowledges the work of previous researchers, and in so doing, assures the reader that your work has been well conceived. It is assumed that by mentioning a previous work in the field of study, that the author has read, evaluated and assimilated that work into the work at hand.

### **SEXUAL ASSAULT OF MEN AND BOYS – RAINN (Anti Sexual Violence Organization)**

In this article, it gives a reality check on the cases of male sexual abuse. According to the study, men and boys also have the same reactions and struggles after the abuse like any other survivor. They feel extra pressure because of the social stigmas and stereotypes about being a man. One of the challenges faced by Men after the abuse while they are adult, they feel shame and self doubt and they thought about why they didn't fought back. Because of the ejaculation/erection during the assault many confuse them and they start to doubt their sexuality. Men who are sexually assaulted at their childhood or teenage and those who faced the abuse as an adult reacts differently to the act of the abuse. After the assault they do feel problems like anxiety, depression, post traumatic stress disorder, flashbacks and eating disorders. They tend to avoid people, question their sexuality, feel shame if they had an erection or ejaculation. This also affects their human relations, they tend to withdraw from their relationships. They also face the fear of judgement from society and disbelief from the people.

### **MALE VICTIM OF SEXUAL ASSAULT: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE – National Library of Medicine – National Centre for Biotechnology and Information.**

National library of medicine is an official website of United States Government. In this article, they address the barriers of reporting the abuse by men. They gives a deep analysis on the context. Men who are in doubt with their sexuality, are more likely to be the victims of assault by men. Men who are not identified as heterosexual also have the tendency to not report the abuse publicly. The stereotypes of society and the healthcare professionals that the men cannot be raped are also the reasons by the non reported assaults faced by men. Sometimes, men do not opt to complain or report the abuse because, the act done may not validate as abuse and it comes



from the lack of knowledge about the physiological reactions towards the assault. The article says that 95% of male sexual abuses are not reported. Here the article also mentions the behaviour of police, when it comes to the sexual abuse of the men, they are uninterested, unsympathetic, and also creates more traumatic experience to the victims. The problem of disbelief by the authorities is another problem faced by abused men.

**MALE VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ABUSE: IMPACT AND RESSILINCE PROCESSES, A QUALITATIVE STUDY – Lea Poirsin, Marion Robin, Gerard Shadili, Josianne Lamothe, Emmanuelle Corruble, Florence Gressier and Aziz Essadek**

On this research article, they have studied, how the act of abuse affected the mental, sexual and social well being of male adults. In United States of America, The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violation Survey (NISVS) of 2017 shows the report that 30.7% men report having being the victim sexual abuse and 60% male victims are abused before the age of sixteen. The traumatic impact after the abuse is closely related to the components of sexuality, in relationships, powerlessness, stigmatization. They feel the lack of masculinity after the abuse. As per the research, they found out that many of the participants suffer from depressive symptoms, suicidal thoughts, post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms. Some of them tend to stay away from romantic relationships because of the challenges they faced with an intimate or sexual act or sexual thought. People who faced the abuse lacks self esteem and confidence.

**MEN SURVIVOR'S PERSPECTOVES ON IMPACT OF CHILD ABUSE – Alankar Sharma**

The study explains the struggle and painful experiences of male survivors of sexual abuse and how they are affected when it comes to the relationship with others. This shows that the child sexual abuse that they faced affected their social life in multiple ways. They struggle with the element of masculinity. They faced struggles in their interpersonal relationship especially the relationships with the children. The study also identified, the male survivors tend to have the habit of alcohol consumption and use of illegal substances. The researcher found out, childhood abuse affected their sexual behaviour, they may have sexual addiction, hyperactivity, sexual inhibition. They also take part in unsafe sexual practices.

## **WHAT ARE MAJOR LAWS TO KNOW AGAINST HARASSMENT OF MEN IN INDIA**

### **– Maya Sreenivasan**

The article published in elearnposh.com gives an insight about the laws that protect men from sexual harassment in India. In the article, she mentioned the laws as section 377 of IPC criminalizes sodomy without consent. The law recognizes men as victims of rape. But this section is not relevant when the perpetrator is a woman. Other one is ‘the protection of children from sexual offenses Act of 2012 – which criminalizes sexual harassment of anyone under the age of 18. It is gender neutral in terms of perpetrator and the victim. The article also analyses the reason behind the unreported cases. The notion of society that how a man should act make men not to report the abuse because of the shame they may face. The stereotypes society keeps about the masculinity also make the affected men not to report the abusive experience. Toxic masculinity affected the mental health of men in our society. Another factor is that our society is not familiar with the idea of male facing sexual abuse. The situation where men are vulnerable is not accepted in the patriarchal society in a country like India. This made the situation more difficult to open up the abuse of men in our society.

# **CHAPTER III**

# **METHODOLOGY**

Research methodology refers to the systematic approach used to study the specific research issues. It is the structured process of the researcher to design a study that ensures the results are both valid and reliable and would indicate the research aim and objectives. This research methodology involves studying the various steps systematically taken by a researcher when studying a research problem as well as understanding the reason behind these steps. (Creswell, 2014)

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Sexual abuse is always a sensitive issue in our society. Despite of having enough legal protection for people from abuse, still abuse cases reporting high in number is very scary. Sexual abuses are always concentrated on women as women in our country are having a dangerous situation. However, we never talk about the male victims of sexual abuse. Social stigmas made them silent on the abusive experiences. The 52.44% of boys in our country experienced sexual abuse between the age of 5 to 8 yrs. In that 23% are severe cases of abuse. This research tries to study men who experienced sexual abuse in their life and tries to understand their feelings and trauma. I would like to gain society's attention to this topic, so that people can understand the male survivors and support them without any stigmas and judgements and also avoid situations of abuse in the society.

## **AIM OF THE STUDY**

This study particularly trying to understand the traumatic experiences of sexual abuse faced by men. This sociological research analyze the stigmas that exist in our society, which made the survivor silent and how the change can happen to support the survivors. This study brings attention to the less concerned and less discussed victims of sexual abuse.

## **OBJECTIVES**

### **GENERAL OBJECTIVE**

How the abusive experience affected men, and how the societal pressure of being men made them silent upon their assault.

### **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

- Analyze the patterns of behaviour of the abuser.
- Analyze the situation which generated a chance for an abuse.
- Analyse ever survivor faced confusion over their sexuality.
- Understand the survivor ever faced problems in his relationship because of the experience of abuse.
- Explore the support system that was available for the survivors to overcome the incident.

## **THEORETICAL DEFINITION**

- Sexual Abuse: The act of making someone take part in the sexual activities against their wishes or without agreement.
- Male Sexual Abuse: Any situation where another person (Adult, Peer) forces/coerces a male into unwanted sexual activity that may / may not involve touch
- Sexuality: Someone's ability to experience/ show sexual feeling.
- Survivor: A person who continues to live especially despite being nearly killed or experiencing great danger or difficulty
- Gender: The culturally shaped expression of sexual differences.
- Trauma: Severe and lasting emotional shock and pain caused by an extremely upsetting experience or case of such shocking happening.
- Relationship: A state of being connected through blood or marriage

## **OPERATIONAL DEFINITION**

- Sexual Abuse: The act of forcing for sexual activities or forced sexual behaviour against men.
- Male Sexual Abuse: Any sexual act that is forceful and unwanted without consent.
- Sexuality: Expression of sexual feelings.
- Survivor: A person who continues their live after experiencing sexual assault and difficulty.
- Gender: Socially constructed self-identity of a person.
- Trauma: Feeling of lasting emotional shock and fear on an experience.
- Relationship: A state of being connected through romance and marriage.

## **INDEPENDENT VARIABLES**

- Age
- Education
- Occupation
- Gender of the Abuser
- Marital Status
- Sexuality

## **DEPENDENT VARIABLES**

Sexual abuse experience among men in Kerala.

## **POPULATION**

In this study, population includes the men within Kerala.

## **SAMPLING METHOD**

- Snowball Sampling:

This study made use of snowball sampling method which allows the selection of participants who are difficult to access and those are stigmatized groups. This method made the data collection more feasible within the given time framework for the research.

## **SAMPLE SIZE**

- 7 Samples are used in this study

A sample of 7 cases of sexual abuse in Kerala has taken in this study for the research purpose. The study have done in-depth analysis of the traumatic experiences of men about the abuse they have faced. This study made a detailed exploration of the social stigmas faced by the male survivors.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN**

- Case Study

In this study, case study method is used as it provides in-depth and wide exploration of the experiences of survivors of sexual abuse. This study made a sociological analysis of the traumatic experiences and social stigmas faced by men in Kerala.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

Narrative analysis is used in this study to analyse and interpret the experiences of sexual abuse and to find the survival patterns.



# **CHAPTER IV**

# **DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

## **DATA INTERPRETATION**

### **CASE 01**

Sexual molestation is a traumatic experience that affects individuals regardless of gender. However, male survivors often face additional challenges due to societal stigma, disbelief, and underreporting. This case study explores the psychological, social, and legal implications of a male survivor's experience, highlighting the need for support and awareness.

Sexual molestation in childhood has long-term psychological and emotional consequences, especially when it remains undisclosed for years. Male survivors often face additional stigma, making it difficult to seek support or justice. This case study explores the experience of a 34-year-old male survivor who was sexually abused as a child and its lasting impact on his life.

#### **Case Background**

- **Name:** Unknown
- **Age:** 34
- **Place:** Kollam
- **Education:** +2 qualification
- **Occupation:** Spray painter (daily wage)
- **Marital Status:** Married, no children
- **Family Structure:** Nuclear family
- **Gender of the Abuser:** Male

#### **Case Study**

The abuse occurred when the survivor was **6 years old**, while living with his grandparents. The perpetrator was a **neighbour in his 30s**, well known to the family. The abuse took place **near his home** and happened **only once**. He came to the survivor and tried to talk to him casually at first and taught to him how to masturbate. At the time, the survivor did not understand the nature of the act; he was manipulated and forced into it. A few days later, unaware of the gravity of the incident, he **repeated the action with a relative**, who immediately scolded him and warned him not to do it again. Due to fear and shame, the survivor did not disclose the incident to anyone for **23 years**. He only confided to his **wife at the age of 29**, after their marriage.

Even today, the survivor feels frustrated and distressed while recounting the incident. He still experiences the **emotional burden of the** trauma. Whenever he encounters news or discussions about child abuse, he becomes **irritated and reacts violently** due to his unresolved trauma. The fear of judgment and social stigma prevented him from sharing his experience earlier. He strongly believes that **sex education is essential** to help children recognise abuse and protect themselves.

This case highlights the **lifelong impact of childhood sexual abuse** and the urgent need for **awareness, education, and support systems for male survivors**.

## **CASE 02**

This case study documents the experience of a 34-year-old survivor from Ernakulam, Kerala, to highlight the long-term psychological effects, the challenges of disclosure, and the importance of support systems.

### **Case Background**

- **Name:** Unknown
- **Age:** 34 years
- **Place:** Ernakulam
- **Education:** Degree in Engineering
- **Occupation:** Engineer
- **Marital Status:** Married, no children
- **Family Structure:** Joint family
- **Gender of Abuser:** Male

### **Case Study**

Age of the time of incident was when survivor was 9 years old. One day he went neighbour's home. And the abuser was there at his home. A forceful sexual act was attempted on the survivor.

One day when nobody was at abuser's home, Abuser took the survivor to toilet and touched his penis. He tried to escape from the abuser. But was forced to kiss and touch the penis. He was shocked and couldn't run away from the spot. Fear and confusion prevented him from discussing

the incident with anyone. He met the abuser again in later years but kept his distance and avoided conversation. The survivor experienced deep fear and confusion immediately after the incident, which persisted in his memory. He did not speak about the abuse due to fear of judgment, shame, and lack of awareness. In later years, he kept his distance from the abuser but did not attempt to confront him.

Unlike many survivors, he reported no confusion about his sexuality and no significant impact on relationships. He was unable to disclose the abuse due to societal taboos surrounding male victimization. No family or community platform encouraged boys to speak about such incidents. Cultural norms often portray men as strong and invulnerable, preventing them from admitting to victimhood.

As he grew older, he became aware of legal protections for male survivors and realised the severity of his experience. Despite the trauma, he did not experience major disruptions in his relationships. However, his inability to discuss the event early on might have contributed to emotional repression.

This case study highlights the long-term emotional burden of male sexual abuse survivors, the barriers preventing disclosure, and the importance of awareness and support systems. The silence surrounding male victimization must be broken to ensure that survivors receive the support, validation, and justice they deserve.

By improving education, legal awareness, and mental health resources, we can create a more inclusive and supportive environment where survivors like case 2 can heal without fear or shame.

### **CASE 03**

This case study explores the experience of a 26-year-old male survivor from Kollam, Kerala, who faced sexual harassment from a female stranger while traveling on public transport. The study highlights the psychological impact, social response, and the need for gender-inclusive sex education and legal awareness.

#### **Case Background**

- **Name:** unknown
- **Age:** 26 years
- **Place:** Kollam
- **Education:** Postgraduate (MBA)
- **Occupation:** Banker
- **Marital Status:** Not married, no children
- **Family Structure:** Nuclear family
- **Gender of Abuser:** Female

### Case Study

When survivor was 22 years old, he had a traumatic experience while traveling from his hometown to college. Abuser was a female stranger. The woman squeezed his penis, causing intense pain and shock. He was frustrated, humiliated, and in pain; he got off the bus immediately and took another one. He only shared the incident with his close friends, who were supportive and understanding. He still remembers the pain and the feeling of being insulted, but he was able to mentally overcome the experience. The unexpected nature of the assault left him stunned and the violation of personal boundaries in a public space led to anger and confusion. He did not discuss the incident beyond his close friends due to fear of judgment and embarrassment. Despite the trauma, he was able to cope and move forward without significant long-term distress.

### **CASE 04**

This case study deals with 23 year old man, resident of Angamaly, Ernakulam, who had to face an abusive behaviour from his acquaintance at the age of nine. This case stipulates about the safety during childhood which can lead to lifelong anxiety and distress.

### Case Background

- **Name:** Unknown
- **Age:** 23 yrs
- **Place:** Ernakulam
- **Education:** Degree Student
- **Marital Status:** Not Married
- **Family Structure:** Nuclear Family
- **Gender of Abuser:** Male

## Case Study

At the age of nine, the survivor had a horrible incident. He was playing at his uncle's house. The individual was known to one uncle's friend. Abuser approached him, stroked his penis in front of his friends, and showed them his penis as well. And the abuser forced him and his friends to masturbate. At the time, he was unaware that this was an abuse. He only discussed the issue with his brother. and brother was about to tell his parents, but he didn't because he was afraid. The survivor felt anxious and uncomfortable but was too young to comprehend. He did not report the incident to any adult figures due to fear of disbelief and shame. His friends were also victims, but none of them spoke about the event. The survivor experiences anxiety and distress whenever he encounters the abuser. He avoids conversations and interactions with the abuser. He never shared the incident with anyone except his girlfriend . He feared that no one would believe him because of his gender. The abuse did not cause confusion regarding his sexual orientation. He told his girlfriend about the incident. Her reaction was sadness and distress, which made him feel uncomfortable.

## **CASE 05**

This case explores the scenario of adult men getting sexually predated in the public transport system. This is an evident example of the safety concerns faced by men in our society. The case is about 28 years old degree holder working abroad who had to face the molestation in train.

### Case Background

- **Name:** Unknown
- **Age:** 28 years (at the time of study)
- **Place:** Kottayam
- **Education:** Degree Holder
- **Occupation:** Working Abroad
- **Marital Status:** Unmarried
- **Family Structure:** Nuclear Family
- **Gender of Abuser:** Male

### Case Study

When the survivor was 20 years old, he had a traumatic experience while travelling in the train. A male stranger in his 50s was sitting next to him. The abuser engaged in excessive conversation and attempted to get physically close. During the night, while the survivor was asleep, the abuser

touched his genitals. The abuser then tried to lure him to the toilet for further abuse. The survivor immediately reacted by slapping the abuser. He did not raise an alarm because he did not want to create a public scene. He felt ashamed and avoided sharing the incident with people on the train. The survivor questioned his masculinity after the incident. He struggled with the thought of why people engage in such abusive behaviour. The survivor initially felt disturbed and irritated. However, after a few days, he was able to mentally detach from the event and move on. The survivor continues to use public transport and does not experience anxiety or distress. When he disclosed the incident, his friends teased him instead of offering support. However, they were still curious about whether he had reacted to the abuse. The survivor believes that society does not take male victims seriously. He felt that if he had reported the incident, people might not have believed him or cared. He did not disclose the incident to family or authorities due to the fear of being dismissed.

Male survivors are often met with ridicule or disbelief, discouraging them from reporting abuse. Societal expectations of masculinity and emotional suppression make it difficult for men to express vulnerability.

## **CASE 06**

The case is about 29 year old married sportsperson, who faced the molestation at the hostel from the workspace colleague. The predator was his head coach. The case highlights about the safety concerns at the hostels and education institutions.

### **Case Background**

- **Name:** Unknown
- **Age:** 29
- **Place:** Kottayam
- **Education:** Post Graduate
- **Occupation:** Sports (Cricketer)
- **Marital Status:** Married, No Kids
- **Family Structure:** Nuclear
- **Gender of Abuser:** Male

### **Case Study**



A sexual molestation occurred while the victim was 14 years old. This incident occurred in the guys' hostel. The abuser, a 40-year-old male coach, was taking a bath at his hostel after practice when someone opened the bathroom door unexpectedly. It was the coach. The victim was naked at first, and the coach mocked him about his penis size before asking about his sexual life. Victim didn't realize the meaning of the question, so he simply smiled. The coach touched his penis and attempted to shake it, implying that he was attempting to force him to masturbate. When the victim grasped the coach's intentions, he just pushed and slapped him before fleeing. He told his father about the incident and filed a complaint against the coach at school. Only until this became an issue did the victim discover that the coach was sexually abusing several of the kids at the dormitory. He used to enter into the rooms of children at night and sleep with them, forcing them to oral sex.

The victim had no trouble with these difficulties. But he was ready to battle again, and he was aware of the injustice that had happened to him. A survivor claims that parents must care for their children while sending them to hostels and boardings.

## **CASE 07**

This case study focuses on a male survivor who was abused at the age of 8 by two older female relatives. The analysis explores the impact of early sexualization, trauma-related sexual behaviors, and emotional distress, emphasizing the need for greater awareness and support for male survivors.

### **Case Background**

- **Name:** Unknown
- **Age:** 28
- **Place:** Trivandrum
- **Education:** Degree Holder
- **Occupation:** IT
- **Marital Status:** Unmarried
- **Family Structure:** Joint Family
- **Gender of Abuser:** Female

### **Case Study**

The survivor was forced to touch his cousin's private parts multiple times. If he refused, he was threatened into compliance. The abuse was repeated over time and kept secret. Another cousin also molested him in a similar manner. Eventually, the perpetrators attempted to coerce him into intercourse. the time, he did not fully understand the nature of the abuse.

The survivor did not initially recognize that he was being abused. As he grew older, he realized the severity of the abuse, which led to emotional distress. He struggles with self-blame, confusion, and regret, despite being the victim. He experiences emotional turmoil, distress, and intrusive thoughts about the abuse. He feels deep discomfort and shame when reflecting on the past events. Due to premature exposure to sexual activity, the survivor experienced an increased sex drive during puberty. He developed an intense curiosity about sexual pleasure, leading to behavioral changes. The survivor struggles with understanding healthy sexual relationships. He finds it difficult to differentiate between coercion and consensual intimacy. His trauma has impacted his ability to trust and form intimate relationships. He feels distress when discussing his past, which affects his emotional well-being.

He fears that people will not believe him because he is male. He questions whether the abuse impacted his masculinity. He did not disclose the abuse to his family due to fear and stigma. He struggles with internalized shame and self-doubt, making it harder to seek help.

## NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

### SEXUAL ABUSE: THE GENERATED SITUATIONS

Sexual abuse is a huge issue faced by people in our society irrespective of the gender and age . It leaves long-lasting psychological and emotional problems to the survivors and their family. While analysing the abusive act , the importance of understanding the background situation of the case is very essential.This will lead to capture the better view of the case. Whenever an act of abuse take place the act of abuse closely connected to the time ,space and situations.Family structure of the survivors , the relationship of survivors with the perpetrator, the place which abuse took place need to understand for better analysis of the incident which is crucial in helping prevent incident of sexual abuse.

- Relationship between the Survivor and perpetrator

Relationship between the survivor and the abuser is essential to understand the cause and impact of the abuse . Cases are there When perpetrator is the family member, relative or a complete stranger are there. The relationship between the survivor and their family with the abuser need to be focused. When the abuser is the family member ,the depth of stress on the survivor regarding sharing the experience of abuse is huge .They usually feel unsafe in family space to talk about the assault. Abuser being a close known person to family or a family member led to the suppression of the abusive act that faced by the survivor. Out of the 7 cases that have studied, 5 cases of abuse are from the known people, which includes 2 cases of abuse from the neighbors, one from a close family member which caused long lasting anxiety to the survivor and another one is from a school hostel . The abuse from known people makes the survivor more stressed.Abuser make use of comfortable access of him to the survivor's family as a chance to abuse him. Survivors family structure and relations also need to be pointed here. Regarding the safety of male child, the carelessness of family's needs to highlighted which creates such violent incidents in society.

- Experience of Abuse : Age of the survivor

Survivors' age and the act of abuse faced by survivors have a close relation. Most of the male members of our society face such incidents of sexual abuse in their childhood as they are considered weaker to react to such acts. Children are not exposed to subjects like sexual assault and abuse in our society. The perpetrator makes use of the child's inability to understand the act of abuse. Family believes that male children are safe around in our society which is a myth. Family never understand what children says they avoid it when a boy child says about abuse and neglect it like children are always wrong.when abuse is faced by men above the age of 20, they are more likely to move on from the situation as they have knowledge about the act and situations. They never faced act of abuse from a close known person. In this study out of 7 cases , the cases that is below the age of 10 yrs is around 4 cases and all of them was an abuse from close family member or known person. One of these 7 cases is at the age of 14 yrs, and 2 cases are adult abuse.Grown up adult are more capable of understanding the abusive acts and reacts upon it .In case of children they feel shame ,fear , and guilt about the incident so that they won't share it to anybody which makes them traumatized for their life time.

- Unawareness of the act of abuse

Not being aware about the act of abuse is a serious and pathetic situation that faced by people in our society. Mostly this happens with children who face abuse ,they are not aware about the abusive acts , sexuality,and unwanted touch , They always feel safe around the family.Out of 7 cases taken in this research 4 of them were children while they faced sexual abuse . 4 of them never understood the act till growing up.which made them shameful and guilty on the incidents. All of them was below the age of 10 yrs as well. Regarding Other 3 cases one faced abuse at the age of 14 ,he was well aware of the act of abuse which made him react upon the assault. 2 of them were adults when they came across with the abusive experience which made them move on easier cause they had clear knowledge on the act of abuse .

The need to teach children about violent act of abuse , sexuality, and good touch and bad touch are noticed here. The family , educational institutions must educate them on such topics to prevent violent acts against children.

## 2 . IMPACT OF SEXUAL ABUSE : DOUBT IN SEXUALITY

Experiencing act of sexual abuse leads to long-lasting psychological and physical problems. Survivors sometimes face unwanted touch or forceful sexual act which leads to pain. Survivors feel chronic pain, some may feel sexual dysfunction and sleep disorders.Men who are sexually abused tend to develop doubt in their sexuality unlike women.Men feel shame and stress after incident of abuse.Those who faced abuse in their childhood more likely to develop anxiety and stress disorders while growing up.Men who experienced sexual abuse being an adult are understand the situation more easily and they handle the incident with full efficiency.Men who develop doubt in sexuality face problems in their sexual life as well married life.The gender of the perpetrator in case of male sexual abuse is crucial in understanding the doubt in sexuality.Here out of 7 cases studied 2 of them is an abusive acts by women .Doubt in one's sexuality after a sexual abuse also depends on the factors like their education, cultural upbringing, and socialization.

- Experiencing pain and pleasure

People who experience forceful sexual act or another sexual assault through touch may feel severe pain. Sexual abuse leaves chronic pain when it is a forceful act also which gives stress to the survivor. In public places survivors faced unwanted touch and grab which is sometimes very painful. Out of 7 cases that studied in this research 2 of them faced severe pain while experiencing the abuse. In those 2 cases one was in a public place and he could move on from it as he was an adult while experiencing the sexual assault. Another one was experiencing the act of abuse near to his home as he was a child at the time of the abuse, which made him anxious about the incident that he doesn't know what actually happened to him. Sexual abuses in childhood leave a confusion between pain and pleasure, when children are not aware about the sexuality and good touch and bad touch they didn't understand the meaning of the action as they only calculate the outcome of it which is either pain or pleasure. If the forceful act leaves pain they hate the abuser. If it is pleasure they continued the action which taught by the perpetrator in front of others or alone which made them feel shame about themselves in front of others. While growing up the first incident of experiencing pleasure is recorded as the abusive incident may lead to psychological struggles among men. This situation leads to questioning of sexuality. Cases studied here are not reflecting any data about having doubt in their sexuality.

- Impact on sexual life

Sexual abuse survivors' tend to have doubt their sexuality, especially men. This comes from experiencing pleasure while experiencing the abuse. Most of this kind of cases happens in childhood experiences of abuse. Out of 7 cases no one ever faced problems in their sexual life. People who faced abuse as an adult more likely to not have such confusions about sexuality as they know the meaning of the action of assault. The lack of awareness about sexuality is also a problem. They don't understand the act of violence at the young age. Even though they don't have problems in sexual life they are still feeling distress about the incident especially those who faced sexual abuse in their childhood.

## IMPACT OF ABUSE : ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIP AND MARRIAGE

In this study out of 7 cases, which includes 4 unmarried ( 1 case having committed relationship) and 3 married cases. All of them are sexually active. According to the cases studied they never felt problems in their sexual life or married life because of the abuse. But everyone equally shared

their embarrassment about the incident of sexual abuse. The one who have committed relationship faced struggles while communicating the experience of abuse to his girlfriend. For her it was very disturbing to hear which made him anxious at first. Only one of them shared the experience of abuse with his wife which was very calming for him as she was very supportive and kind. 2 of them never shared it with their partners as they are not comfortable to share those things. Not serious problems found in sexual life of men after the abuse here

## THE SUPPORT SYSTEMS : TRAUMA AND SURVIVAL

Sexual abuse creates long-lasting anxiety and panic issues among the survivors. Timely support system are needed to help them out. Society need to be supportive towards the discriminated, marginalized and stigmatized groups. Family, peer groups, partners can be great support system for the survivors. Better system of support makes the journey between the trauma and healing more easy for the survivors. The access to clinical helps like therapies, counselling also need to be focused in relation with survival and healing journey of a person who faced sexual abuse.

- Family as a support system

Family support is very crucial for the survivor to heal the trauma and survive the traumatic experience. Most of the time especially children who faced abusive acts from others scared to share their experience to their parents and family because of the fear of scolding and they believe family will not believe them on the incident. Out of 7 cases 5 of them experienced abuse in their childhood. Never told their experience of abuse to their parents out of fear. One of them only told this to his wife when he got married only. Only one case is here in this study as parents came as supportive pillar which was his father. Parental support gives the survivor more confidence and capacity to fight back against the abuse. One of these 5 shared the incident with his brother where he got adequate support but the survivor refused to share the incident with parents out of fear. Those who are abused sexually refused share the incident with parents. They are not approaching their parents for help which leads a question towards our parenting system and safe home environment. The survivor especially those who faced sexual abuse in their childhood believe that the relationship between the family of him and the perpetrator will lead to a situation of disbelief the incident if they open up about it. Out of 7 cases, 4 cases of abuse are

from the well-known people who is known their family also which questions the safety of male child in our society and make sense of the fear of survivors

- Clinical support and survival

Clinical supports like therapies and counsellings are very much usefull to people who are traumatized and depressed over the incident of abuse. Sexual abuse and sexual assault experiences leaves long-lasting psychological and emotional distress among the survivors. Out of 7 cases studied, no one ever approached for clinical help over their abuse trauma. There are two concerns related to this. One is the lack of knowledge about the clinical helps available for the survivors. Lack of awareness about clinical helps like therapies and counsellings generated a situation of suppressing the emotional damages within the survivors. Thing should notice here is that the Majority cases are experienced abuse in their childhood which is an age that they are not even aware about the act they faced. Lack of knowledge about the abusive act lead them be quite on the incident. Another concern related to medical support system is accessibility of clinical supports. Sometimes survivors are not getting access to the clinical help as they never says it to anybody and it's expensive also . Anxiety issues and distress mostly faced by the people who faced abuse in their childhood they were not aware about the act ,they never know about the clinical helps and never had accessibility to it.

## **CHAPTER V**



## **FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

This study has focused on the traumatic experiences faced by men in kerala. The study on traumatic experiences and survival leads towards the importance of focusing safety of male child's in our society along with girls. The findings shows that sexual abuse leaves severe psychological and emotional damages on men also .There is no gender disparity in this case. This study shows concerns about safety of children in their home and outside the home including their neighborhood.

#### • SEXUAL ABUSE AMONG MEN : THE FEAR AND SHAME

This study focuses on the abusive experience of men with shared experience from men in kerala.This study found that society is very stigmatized towards the victims of of sexual Abuse survivors.Men who have faced sexual abuse in their life ,never shared their experiences with anyone especially their own parents.They are sacred of judgements and shame. Most of the men's experience shows that they have been abused in their childhood.As children they were afraid to share their experience with others. They never shared experiences of abuse with their parents,most of them till date.They do beleive parents will never trust them on the incident of abuse.children who suppressed their anxiety and panics develop trust issues and anxiety problems. Adults who faced abuse are capable of sharing the experience with other but still not their parents. Here the importance of notice the parenting patterns in our society and their relationship with children.Men face fear of shame in sharing the abusive incident with others. ' being a man ' concept in patriarchal society made men silent on their abuse and let them suffer in the dark.

#### • GENERATED SITUATIONS OF ABUSE

Analysed situations of sexual abuse faced by men shows that in most of the cases abusive act or the perpetrator is the known person and happened mostly in a known place for the survivor. Sexual abuse from known person left trauma on people who faced it . They feel unsafe in their environment. The comfortable access of the perpetrator to the family of the survivor made a easy access for the abuser. Survivor fear that the relationship between the family and the

perpetrator may lead to the situation of disbelief about their traumatic experience. That the reason they won't share it with their parents. The safety of male child also needs to be focused as the concerns about girl child. The relationship between the family of survivors and the perpetrator creates huge stress on the survivor.

- SEXUAL ABUSE IN CHILDHOOD AND AWARENESS OF ACT OF ABUSE

This study found out that most of the sexual abuse cases are happened in childhood among men; which makes the act of abuse unidentified at the very young age. Children in our society is not exposed with the knowledge of sexual abuse especially male children. The lack of knowledge among children about the sexual assault, is a situation of misusing them by the perpetrators. The cases studied shows that childhood abuses are mostly done by the known people or a close relative of their family. The perpetrator makes use of the age of the child as they never shared the incident with anyone. Childhood sexual abuse among male child is less reporting in our society, which makes comfortable situations for the perpetrators. From these analysed cases the importance of sex education is also reflecting.

- DOUBT IN SEXUALITY: IMPACT OF SEXUAL ABUSE AND CONFUSIONS

The study done on the traumatic experiences faced by men in Kerala has found that no cases reflect doubt of sexuality. Those who faced abuse in their childhood were not able to understand the act of abuse and those who faced abuse in their adulthood never felt any confusion. As they have clarity about the act they have experienced. Survivors never understood the motive of the perpetrator about the action. Survivors always feel irritated while they talk about the incident of abuse. Children don't have exposure to the word sexuality and abuse at the very young age is also an issue which points towards the large percentage of unreported sexual abuses faced by male children. Those who have faced abuse in their adulthood were able to overcome the trauma of the incident because of the awareness about the act of abuse.

- ACT OF SEXUAL ABUSE : IMPACT ON ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

The study shows people who faced traumatic experiences of sexual abuse never faced problems in their relationship as in severe forms. The noticed factor in this case study is that the survivors was not ready to tell the experience with their partners not even any other person in relation with their family. Only few of them shared the experience with their partners. From this we can understand that survivors were not comfortable to share their traumatic experiences with their partners as they fear feel of shame. Only one person shared the experience with their partner only after marriage. Most of them prefer not to share the incident with anyone while some shared it with friends only. Men under this study never faced problems because of experience of abuse but they do feel discomfort sharing that with partners.

- SUPPORT SYSTEMS : KNOWLEDGE AND ACCESS

People who faced sexual abuse face a lot of psychological and physical struggles. Sometimes they are not being aware about the long-lasting issue that is related to the incident of abuse. This sociological study on men who have faced abuse have found out that most of the men faced or experienced abuse in their childhood. Childhood is an age where children don't have knowledge about the act of abuse and its depth. They lack awareness about the action of perpetrator. This situation stops children talk about the incident and getting help. Children mostly fear to share their experience with parents as they fear won't believe them. Adults faced abuse are aware about the act of abuse so that they could understand the action. Adults considered their peer groups as their comfortable zone. They also didn't want to share the experience with their parents. Children never understood the action of sexual abuse only while growing up they understand the depth of action which leads to worsen the trauma. Adults have comparatively easy and comfortable access to clinical helps like therapies and counsellings. Children are not aware about it and the access is also less. These situations lead to unreported cases of sexual abuses of male child's in our society. Here the study shows that as a support system, parents are failing in our society.

## **CHAPTER VI**

## **CONCLUSION**

This sociological study on traumatic experiences of sexual abuse faced by men in kerala, showed an undiscussed area of abuses faced by men .This sociological study analyses the stigmas that exist in our society towards survivors of sexual abuse especially men. This made them silent and suppress their abusive experiences. Study also focused on the survival experiences of men related to sexual abuse trauma and their survival. Our society being very stereotypical towards the survivors of sexual buse, that's why the cases reported about male sexual abuse is very less but happening largely in our society.

Here the understood reality is that. Like women men are also being abused sexually but it is less discussed.This study is an answer to the question why it is less discussed and less reported in our society. The concept of man created in our society made them fear the shame and guilt on the experience of abuse abusive act that they faced. The study shows that the perpetrator is mostly a known person or a close family relative makes things even worse. And the very important thing here should be noticed is that there are women also in the position of perpetrator which is very scary situation. Perpetrator being known to the family of the survivor poits towards the safety of our children in the society we beleive to be safe . In case of safety concerns male child is always neglected .but the need to care bothale and female child is necessary.

Most of cases of sexual abuse shows that perpetrator is the known person,which leads to long lasting psychological issues for the survivor and also slows down the survival or recovery speed. Most of the cases is child abuse which is very serious issue to discuss. Exploitation of our children needs to be stop. In childhood children lack the ability to understand the act of abuse which is used by the perpetrator. Here the study reflecting the importance of sex education in our society. Lack of knowledge about sexuality ,own body leades to the situations of unidentified abuses and unreported cases of children in our society. Education for the children and parents is essential about these kinds of areas of topic.

Men who have studied in this research mostly faced abuse in their childhood whichade them not identifying the act.only few of them shared their experiences with someone.those who faced abuse in their adulthood stage were able to understand the act and take action upon that. Moving on and survival was easy for them . In both cases survivors were not ready to share the incidents with their parents. The relationship between parents and children fragile. They fear of the

judgements of parents. The focus should be towards the relationship and parenting patterns that exists in our society made a way for suppressing the abuses of children.

Doubt of sexuality is commonly a response to sexual abuse faced by men. Here the studies shows that no one have faced the doubt over their sexuality. but the factor noticed in this study is that they were not able understand the action at the very young age as most of them faced abuse in their childhood. While growing up only they understand the action of abuse. They all faced struggle in sharing the incident of abuse with anyone else including their partners. Only very few of them shared the incident with their friends. As per the study they never faced problems in their relationship because of the abuse they have faced. But never shared the experience with their partners.

People who face sexual abuse suffer from a lot of psychological struggles like anxiety and panic disorders. It's very hard to survive all those with out any help while they are not talking about the abusive act they have faced. Most of them have faced the abuse in their childhood which made them unaware about the act. The abuse they have faced never shared with anyone especially the parents. They were afraid of the judgements and shame from the parents. The perpetrator is mostly known person is one of the reason for not Sharing the incident with their parents. Childrens are not comfortable with their parents to share such things. Those who faced abuse in their adulthood also never shared their experiences with their parents. Men always prefer not to share their experience abuse with anyone else because of the thought that they would be considered vulnerable. Parents are failing to be a great support system for their children . Men who faced abuse in their childhood Never shared it with anyone but those who faced abuse in their adult age they preferred their peer groups as comfortable. only few shared their experiences with partners . At the stage of adulting they were able to understand the issue and take action on it. but children who faced abuse ws unaware about the act first then they were not having knowledge about the clinical and therapeutical help for the trauma survival . The access towards therapies are less for alone children without parents. No one had the history of having clinical helps or therapies for the survival.

The sexual abuse faced by men in our kerala is a real problem that should be discussed with the abuses faced by women in our society. The need of changing stereotypical thought against men and consider their psychological struggles is also necessary. Most of the men have faced abuse in



their childhood. In kerala , the highest literate state in our country shows reports of pocso cases with high rate of male child abuse is very dangerous situation that exists in our society.

People should be aware of male sexual abuses also so that we can stop sexual exploitation of male child in our society. The topic should be discussed to help out the men who suffer in silence and will help to report cases on time to take action against the perpetrators.

# **APPENDIX**

## **QUESTIONNAIRE**

### **SOCIAL PROFILE**

1. Name ( case no )
2. Age
3. Gender
4. Education level
5. Occupation
6. Marital status
7. Children
8. Family type (nuclear/joint)

### **EXPERIENCE OF ABUSE**

1. At what age you faced assault?
2. At which place abuse/assault happened?
3. Who was the perpetrator?( Known/ stranger)
4. Was it a single incident/more than once ?
5. What kind of abuse you have faced ?( Unwanted touch/ forceful sexual act)
6. Were you able to understand that it was an abuse ?
7. Did you disclose the experience with anyone? If yes who was it ?

8. What was the reaction of the person whom you disclosed your experience?

## **IMPACT OF ABUSE**

1. How did the experience affect you?

a) depression

b) Anxiety

c) relationship issues

d) trust issues

2. Have you ever approached any professional for help? if not why?

3. Did you come across the same place or the abuser again what was your reaction?

4. Have you ever felt doubt in your sexuality after the incident?

5. Did you face any problems in your romantic relationship because of the incident?

6. How much the pressure of being a man made you to hide the assault against you ?

## **HEALING AND SUPPORT**

1 . What kind of support/ method would help the survivors to heal ?

2. Do you think abuses faced by men in our society is not getting enough attention? And why ?

3. Are you aware of the legal support for sexual abuse on men ?

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