Social Class and Its Impact on Maternal
Awareness of Child Sexual Abuse in Pakistan

By

Nadia Rafi Khan

2005

Haverford College Department of Sociology

Advisor: Professor William Hohenstein
# Table of Contents:

Abstract

1. Facts about Pakistan

2. Definitions and Myths Dispelled

3. What is wrong with CSA?

4. The Feminist Movement and Its Effects

5. Statistics and Outliers in Pakistan

6. Public v. Private

7. Single and Multifactor Theories

8. The Boston Area Study

9. Lack of Parent-Child Communication

10. The Pakistani Sample

11. Upper Class Mothers

12. Lower Class Mothers

13. Class Comparative Analysis

14. Conclusion
Abstract:

I performed a study in the summer of 2004 funded by the Kessinger Grant from the Department of Anthropology at Haverford College. I worked for a non profit organization in Islamabad, SAHIL, which has been working with the issue of child sexual abuse in Pakistan for the part seven years. Supervised by Ms. Manizeh Bano, the executive director, I carried out a social class comparative study examining social disparity in Pakistan and its effects on upper and lower class mothers’ awareness and attitude towards child sexual abuse. Using a piloted questionnaire I interviewed sixty two women from each sample and compiled and analyzed the data from the study. The purpose of this study was to see whether social class, education, status and financial status had any impact of the awareness/attitude of mothers towards child sexual abuse
1. Facts about Pakistan:

Pakistan is a country that has been created and in turn ravaged by war and strife. Partition from India in 1947 left it a broken country with few resources and a distraught people. Since then, it has fought a second war against India in 1965 and faced a secondary partition from East Pakistan (Bangladesh) in 1971. Since 1947, Pakistan has been fighting a virtually irresolvable war with India over the ownership of Kashmir, while of course; Kashmir is demanding its independence. The average income among a population of almost a hundred and sixty million is fifty dollars a month, while the average number of children per family is between five and six and the literacy rate of 35% includes people who can only sign their names.

“Pakistan, an impoverished and underdeveloped country, has suffered from decades of internal political disputes, low levels of foreign investment, and a costly, ongoing confrontation with neighboring India.”
http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/pk.html#Econ

The social disparity in Pakistan is similar to that of any other developing country which has the economic growth rate of 5.5 % (2003) and 35% of the population existing below the poverty line.

(http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/pk.html#Econ)

The age distribution in Pakistan is skewed because of the immensely high birth rate and high adult mortality rate. 40.2% of the population is less than fourteen years of age, while 55.8 is between 15 and 65 years old and only 4.1% is older than sixty five. For every 31 births per thousand there are only 8 deaths.

Being a country that is 99% Muslim has a significant impact upon social and moral values brought about by religious preconceptions and notions. When the rate of education is as low and quality as poor as it is in Pakistan, the ignorance is palpable. The
majority of the population suffering from poverty and deprivation need a means to deal with the lack of facilities, leave alone luxuries in their lives, and turn to a higher power as a source of solace. Understandably so, except they use the local Islamic religious leader to do so, who 95% of the time is an extremely limited and conservative individual preaching a very fundamentalist form of Islam. This Islam dispels normal healthy sexuality as a tool of the devil. When the normal is made abnormal, a clear path is made for sexual deviance.

2. Definitions and Myths Dispelled:

Child sexual abuse is defined as the ‘use of a minor for the sexual gratification of an adult’. It ranges from penetration (anal and vaginal), to showing a minor pornography to having an inappropriate sexual conversation. All categories of child sexual abuse are considered to be detrimental to a child’s healthy development. There are four categories to child sexual abuse, interfamilial, extra familial, institutional and stranger abuse. They are listed in order of their frequency and include adolescent abusers. A study done in 199 showed that 25% of abusers in child sexual abuse cases were themselves adolescents. (Hobbs et al).

Abuse, while a somewhat abstract and situation specific phenomenon does have some defining characteristics. All responsibility for the abuse lies with the perpetrator, who has to be at least five years older than the victim. The driving force behind the abuse is the sexual gratification of the abuser. A power, strength and/or age imbalance forces the child into acceptance. Abuse is usually secretive and collusive. The child is generally uncomfortable and wants the action to stop. In cases where there is willingness on the
part of the child, it is usually inspired by a lack of physical affection from family members.

The typical mythical profile of an abuser is the ‘dirty old man’ with his victim being a pre-pubescent girl. Another myth is that abusers are always strangers and members of the family or friends would never be involved in anything as degenerate or despicable as child sexual abuse. Secondly, it is often thought that only girls can be abused while statistics have shown that the data for instance of boys being victims is on the rise because of the recent reporting of such cases. Finally, abusers are often thought of as senile or mentally unwell individual while most often they fit the profile of a ‘regular’ person. While it is true that most abusers are men, women have been implicated in many instances of child molestation. 80% of reported cases report a known abuser. Child sexual abuse as a term evolves from the sacredness that goes along with sexual immaturity.

3. What is wrong with CSA?

There are two multifaceted arguments against child sexual abuse, both are moral confrontations. The first is the biological and psychological unnaturalness that goes with child sexual abuse. Taking the most typical case, a small girl’s vagina is physically too small for comfortable or even bearable penetration by a grown man’s full size penis. There is an attitude of innate human reaction of disgust towards child sexual abuse and all societies condemn sexual relations between the mature and immature. The second argument is that premature sexualization of a child is an unhealthy and unnatural occurrence leading to long term complications in his/her development. There is an age associated with sexual activity which is why child marriages, child prostitution and
sexual abuse are all stigmatized societal acts. There is a chilling perversion related to an adult deriving sexual arousal or taking a sexual interest in a minor. The somewhat controversial argument dealing with consent is also extremely valid, stating that children do not have the information required to make a conscious and educated decision related to any sexual proposals made by an adult.

4. The Feminist Movement and its effects:

The feminist movement in the 1960’s and 1970’s raised an awareness of child sexual abuse that patriarchal society had previously quashed. The movement felt that the reason for this lack of disclosure was male exploitation of society’s power structure. Women were more concerned with child welfare than men and their inclusion in politics and policy making brought the issue to an immediate forefront. There was a phenomenal jump seen in cases of child sexual abuse in less than a decade. There were 1,975 reported incidences in 1976 as compared to 22,918 in 1982. This was a result of a growing societal concern about the maltreatment and abuse of children, an increased comfort level in discussing sexual violence and recent publicity surrounding cases of child abuse. A little over a decade ago, there were no articles concerning cases of child sexual abuse in Pakistan, although the incidence was just as high, if not higher, than it is today. Even in a conservative Islamic society, positive action has been taken to highlight this issue.

Cross cultural studies of child sexual abuse are rare, especially in conservative developing countries like Pakistan because of the difficulty associated with collecting information related to sex. However, while a common myth is that developing countries suffer the most from this affliction because of illiteracy, religious misinformation and distaste for sexuality, the problem is universal and figures in the U.S are surprisingly
comparable to those found in countries like Pakistan and India. Studies performed in North America and the United Kingdom has shown that 54% of women have been abused in their childhood while that figure is between 50-60% in Pakistan.

5. Statistics and Outliers in Pakistan:

Child abuse statistics in Pakistan are more predicted than they are factual because of the treatment of the issue in the country. SAHIL, a Non Government Organization working with child sexual abuse for the last eight years estimates that 90% of cases go unreported. While there has been a recent increase in the last decade in the reporting and publishing of child sexual abuse related news, it is considered to be only a fraction of what is the reality. One of the main reasons behind this lack of disclosure is related to the social system and the importance of honor in Pakistani society. A woman’s worth in terms of marriage is completely dependant upon her being sexually inexperienced and untouched. Once she has been spoilt, she is no longer a desirable commodity. Families depend upon dowries and cannot afford to throw away an opportunity for receiving wealth. Reporting a case where a young unmarried girl has been molested not only is considered demeaning for the girl and the family but is a loss in financial terms.

There are certain cross cultural correlations that have been made between external factors and the incidence of child sexual abuse. Living without a mother, or living with a step mother shows a high correlation as does living without a father or living with a step father. Conservative family values, an unhappy marriage, an unwell mother and a low overall income have also proved to be positive correlates.

There is a significant societal impact of child sexual abuse. Short term effects are usually behavior problems, difficulty with societal integration and permitting abuse in a
close relationship. Long term effects are far more serious in terms of problems with metal health, a failure to maintain a healthy sexual relationship and the fact that a high percentage of abusers have themselves been abused at some point in their lives. Children rarely fabricate disclosures of child sexual abuse, especially at a pre-pubescent age since they have very little understanding of the event itself and are usually confronted with confusion. The problems usually associated with recognizing a victim of child sexual abuse lies within the adult who is not willing to accept the word of a child over an adult, especially in instances where the adult is a family member or friend. Numerous studies using prostitutes, drug abusers and adolescent runaways as subjects, have shown that sexual abuse in childhood is a common factor between many of the subjects.

“The evidence from research carried out in the last thirty years has placed child sexual abuse and neglect within the most serious health conditions affecting children”

_Bannon, Michael J. Protecting Children From Abuse and Neglect in Primary Care_ (2003) Child sexual abuse is one of society’s serious afflictions and will have long lasting effects on universal social stability. “Child abuse, as an act of commission or omission, which threatens a child’s well being, is determined by what is considered to be socially acceptable within society at a given time” _Bannon, Michael J. Protecting Children From Abuse and Neglect in Primary Care_ (2003)

6. _Public v. Private:_

The issue of child sexual abuse raises extreme questions related to the legitimacy of public intervention into private life. It crosses boundaries between the public and private spheres. One of the most important reasons behind the way abuse is treated in Pakistan. The police are not a trusted institution and the legal system is not considered to
be a legitimate enforcer of equality. When public service is incompetent, child sexual abuse becomes an issue dealt with on a personal private level. It is interesting to see then that upper class mothers would not consider consulting public services in an instance of child sexual abuse and would rather deal with the situation themselves in terms of revenge and vigilante justice. While most lower class mothers did consider turning towards law enforcement, they all indicated some disappointment in that being their only option.

In the U.S studies show 60% of women and 45% of men to have been sexually abused as children, 81% before they have hit puberty and 80% admit to the act having been committed by a family member. Does the high incidence of child sexual abuse make it a normal act? Studies have also proven that abuse in childhood leads to psychological trauma and depression which as effects show that child sexual because, regardless of its commonality can never be normative behavior.

7. Single and Multifactor Theories:

Child sexual abuse is a complex and convoluted phenomena that cannot be explained using single factor theories. There has been a progression of work and discussion on this issue, starting with Finkelhor’s precondition mode theory in 1984. He proposed four single factor theories, emotional satisfaction for the abuser in sexual actions with a child and emotional congruence; sexual arousal because of the child; sexual attraction to a child because of an inability to satisfy self with normal sexual activities, also referred to as blockage; and disinhibition or sexual deviance. Despite including social and psychological preconditions, Finkelhor’s theory was flawed because of its limiting view on the reasons behind abuse.
Hall and Hirschman’s quadripartite module, conceived in 1992 also had four components. The flaw here was that three of the single factors identified a very specific group of abusers. Physical sexual arousal upon contact with a child, inaccurate cognition that justifies the act in the abuser’s consciousness and affective dyscontrol; all target a specific model of the typical abuser.

Marshall and Barbaree’s integrated theory in 1990 emphasized the effects of childhood upon the personality and actions of an abuser. This theory deals with the traumas inflicted in childhood having a permanent and lasting impact on the individual including physical abuse, poor parenting, extreme and violent disciplinary enforcement and an inconsistency in impartation of sexual knowledge. This is considered by child sexual researchers to be one of the most developed theories because not only does it build upon Finklehor’s single factor theory but it provides a basic reasoning behind the actions of child sexual abuse. Unfortunately, this theory is also considered to be flawed because it excludes a section of child sexual abusers who fall into a pedophilic category who have come from normal backgrounds and have had healthy upbringings. This group is not small enough to be considered an outlier.

All three theories have been discounted on the basis that while they all deal with the creation of the abuser, none address the continuation of his/her actions. The do not explore the psychological reasons behind the gratification received from continuous abuse and different victims.

8. The Boston Area Study:

In 1979, Finklehor and his associates performed a study in the Boston area similar to the one I performed in Pakistan. While the Boston study was more for the purpose of
gaining information and data related to the instance and surroundings of child sexual abuse, the two studies are similar in their discoveries. One of the factors that the Finklehor study examined was the frequency with and way in which parents talked to their children about child sexual abuse. While parents found it easy to talk to their offspring about drugs, teen pregnancy and death, they often could not talk about a far more commonly occurring issue. 29% of the parents discussed the problem with their children directly while 31% resorted to more abstract explanations. These would often include more general warnings such as not talking to strangers, not walking in the neighborhood alone and never accepting food from strangers. This is identical to the way in which 98% of Pakistani lower class mothers discussed child sexual abuse with their children. In both cases, parents would not talk about an abuser as though it could be someone close to the child or an acquaintance.

Similar to Pakistani mother in both classes, mothers in Finklehor’s study were more likely to have sex related conversations with their children. While fathers did occasionally step in, 15% of the time, they would direct their energy towards the male child and would feel extreme discomfort if confronted by the female child.

Finklehor’s study discovered that variables such as education, income, age of parent, occupation and religion had no effect on the parent’s ability to talk to his/her child about sexual abuse. The only group that stood out as unusually comfortable with talking to their child about abuse was the group of parents that had been victimized as children themselves.
9. Lack of Parent-Child Communication:

The reasons why parents do not talk to their children in the U.S are surprisingly similar to those I discovered in Pakistan. However, the difference lies in which reason is more commonly attributed to the lack of information given. The leading reason in the U.S is that parents believe that their child is immune and protected and therefore will never encounter an abusive situation. Surprisingly, Finklehor discovered that half of the parents in his study thought that the incidence of abuse was one in ten girls while 47% knew of someone who had been abused, which negated the statistic that they themselves had hypothetically proposed. The primary reason in Pakistan is that parents (mothers) seldom feel completely comfortable talking about something of a sexual nature with their children. They will try and do so in a roundabout way, which will often confuse the child and if not that, will not adequately educate him/her on the danger of child sexual abuse. Many parents do not feel that they are equipped with sufficient knowledge, vocabulary or experience to talk to their children about sex and abuse. They are afraid that the child might question them or their experiences.

Often, parents will not want to unnecessarily scare their child and they feel that when they start talking about adults being dangerous and victimizing children, they fear that their children will no longer be able to have normal child-adult interactions.

Many parents feel that their child is too young to be given information of such a sexually deviant nature and find that the child is more receptive at a later age. Unfortunately, this moves in opposition with prevention techniques since younger children are more at risk since they are more vulnerable and when they have not been given any prior warnings, they are completely lost in an abusive situation.
All studies have found that when a child has been given a maximum amount of knowledge related to dealing with a precarious situation, he/she has handled it best and been able to prevent the event. There was an overlying lack of communication between parent and child in the Boston study similar to what I found in my cross social class sample.

The first two decades of child sexual abuse research was done predominantly with adults, (Finklehor’s work consisted of four child and twenty one adult case studies). Since 1985, researchers have been trying to target child victims for studies since preceding data is lacking in this dimension. Children for these studies have been chosen according to specific symptoms that they display indicative of being victims. Highly sexualized behavior is one of them, increased touching and insertion of objects into genitalia, excessive and public masturbation and using dolls to show sexual activities that they should not be aware of. Parents sometimes are unable to pick up these obvious abnormal behaviors, in many cases; it is because of a subconscious denial of the event.

10. The Pakistani Sample:

The sample size consisted of 62 mothers from each social class, upper and lower. This was determined by appearance of house, neighborhood and income levels. Thirty minute to one hour interviews were conducted asking a wide range of open ended and yes and no questions. The general purpose behind the survey was to gauge

a) their awareness of child sexual abuse  
b) their attitude towards the issue  
c) their own relationship with their child/children  
d) the average profile of an abuser  
e) their methodology in dealing with an instance of abuse  
f) the knowledge they had given their child/children related to the issue  
g) what class of society they feel CSA is most rampant in  
h) how they would react to an incidence in the family
i) their discussion of sexual changes and sexuality with their children
j) what gender they felt was predominantly affected
k) whether they would take legal action if there was a case in the family
l) whether they would consider using psychiatric help
m) whether they would like to see awareness raising institutionalized

These were just a few of the questions answered in the survey. The questions were meant to highlight whether education and financial status, basically the class difference would have any significant impact on maternal responses to these questions.

11. Upper Class Mothers:

18% of the sample did not have any female children. The opening question (that also functioned as a measure to how open their relationship with their daughter was) was to ask them if they were able to discuss menstruation with their daughter/s and if so, at what age did they find this appropriate. In Pakistan, a girl’s first period marks her entry into womanhood and this is the age at which she is often taken out of school, considered for marriage proposals, schooled in domestic tasks and warned about being touched by a man before marriage. Out of the mothers who had daughters, 84% had talked to them about menstruation openly.

A similar opening question was used concerning boys and their physical changes and puberty. While 15% did not have sons, all of the ones that did had themselves had talked to their son/s about puberty or had their husbands do so, usually because they were not all together comfortable with confronting male sexuality.

There was a full awareness of the existence of child sexual abuse across the sample and the media (television and newspapers) was responsible for 78% of this knowledge. There were only four self confessed victims of child sexual abuse in the
sample and only two of them were able to talk about their experience openly, of which one had been in ongoing therapy since the event.

32% of the target felt that the female child was sexually vulnerable, usually because of a general trend of abusers being male and a physical disadvantage. 34% felt that boys are more at risk for abuse because of their availability and the high rate of male child employment in Pakistan. This section of the sample felt that girls were protected and kept at home while boys were allowed to roam free as a virtue of their gender and were more available to abusers. The remaining 34% felt that both genders were at a risk for various reasons ranging from age being the source of vulnerability, not gender to both genders being equally available and desirable to abusers.

26% of the upper class sample excluded itself from being a vulnerable group because of its class status. This percentage felt that only lower/middle class families were afflicted by this problem while majority believed that abuse was not a class specific occurrence. When asked to profile a typical abuser, 16% believed that domestic help (which is extremely common in this sector of society) was responsible for the majority of cases. 13% felt that abusers were usually acquaintance, 5% varied between religious leaders (maulvis), teachers and strangers and 66% felt that anyone could fit the profile of an abuser.

When asked about approaching the authorities for help, 96% of the mothers vehemently declined saying that not only would their child’s shame be public but that nothing would be done and they would just be haunted by the case for years to come. The 4% that did want a case filed specified that it would only be to publicize the perversion of the abuser and to make sure that society would know about his/her behavior and that the
case would not serve to help them or the child cope with the situation in any way. These mothers had a very violent reaction towards the thought of one of their children being abused and many said they would resort to vigilante justice since they couldn’t trust authorities to deal with the situation adequately.

All of the respondents had talked to their children about child sexual abuse, even if it was in abstract terms without specifying body parts or specific actions. They all felt that their children were suitably prepared for a confrontation and that they would be able to successfully extricate themselves. The average age for this conversation was surprisingly low at five and a half years. 26% emphasized that it is important to have ongoing discourse about child sexual abuse with the child so at no point are they ever left off guard.

All the mothers in sample were very enthusiastic about having some form of preventive abuse education institutionalized in schools for secondary reinforcement and possibly to talk about the more technical aspect of abuse, that they themselves were not particularly comfortable with. Only 26% of the mothers said they would consider psychiatric assistance for themselves or the child in case of an incident of abuse.

Many of the questions asked were hypothetical since none of the mothers ever admitted to having dealt with one of their children being abused. Therefore, while it is possible to take stock in answers that were given, situational reactions, especially when it comes to offspring often differ to predictions.

12. Lower Class Mothers:

The questionnaire was exactly the same but translated into Urdu, Pakistan’s national language and in the verbal interview; Punjabi was often used as a means to
facilitate understanding and communication. The women spoken to were from four different areas in the Islamabad/Rawalpindi Township. They lived in communities that ranged from 100 to 20,000. 605 of the respondents lived in projects neighboring some of the richest areas of Islamabad and many of them worked as domestic help for the inhabitant of the bordering houses. The houses were small and ranged from one to 4 bedrooms. They had little ventilation, were often without electricity and many did not have functioning bathrooms. They were a contradiction within the self because while they did not have basic amenities, many had refrigerators, televisions and sound systems.

This sample was far more reserved about discussing sexuality and related material, even with their daughters and only 9% had vaguely broached the topic of menstruation with their daughters. Only 5% had talked to their sons, even more vaguely, about puberty and four mothers indicated that after the interview they would do so.

6% of the respondents denied the existence of child sexual abuse and refused to believe that it existed, let alone was a problem. 85% of the remaining 94% that believed that it was a problem had received their information from newspapers and television. The remainder had learnt from word of mouth and incidents that had happened in the community. 3% of the sample felt that abuse was only a small social issue, 115 felt that it was somewhat commonly occurring and 86% felt that it was a very serious problem that needed immediate attention.

There was only one interviewee who thought that males were more vulnerable to child sexual abuse while 54% thought that girls were far more prone. 40% perceived it to be a gender equal occurrence. 60% felt that class had no impact on the incidence of
abuse, 24% felt that lower classes were more vulnerable and 16% believed that it was a problem only for the rich and wealthy.

96% of the sample believed that anyone could be an abuser; several specified that in this context, they could not even trust their own families, which was not specified by anyone in the upper class stratum. Contradicting to the first sample, 82% of the lower class target believed that it would have to file a police case to receive any form of justice of recognition of an injustice. However, 40% of those agreeing to do so said they would but unhappily because even the police was not a satisfactory source of solace.

65% of this sample of mother had not talked to their children about child sexual abuse and none displayed any interest in doing so after the interview despite being given leaflets published by SAHIL about the importance of communication. The average age for communication about sex for this sample was specified at twelve years, while most cases of abuse occur in the 8-14 age group.

This sample also showed an across the board demand for educational institutionalization of information for children on abuse. Many mothers said they were not opposed to their children knowing about abuse, but that they themselves did not want to be imparters of that information since they felt uncomfortable doing so. They also felt that when it came to their sons, they were not effective disciplinary tools and were seldom taken seriously. Their children’s teachers had an authority that they could not measure up to and anything said by them would be taken seriously and enforced.

There was a dependency on the ‘brotherhood’ for help that was not indicated in the response of the upper class mothers. The communities of the second sample were close knit blocks where as families in the first sample were more secluded individual
units. The lower class mothers felt that their community would be very well equipped to deal with the situation and appoint appropriate retribution.

**Class Comparative Analysis:**

Lower class mothers are far less comfortable discussing sexuality and abuse with their children despite knowing that their children are at a high risk. What does this say about the social stigma surrounding sex in Pakistan that a mother would rather avoid the topic altogether than talk to her child about something that is a very real threat to him/her. While upper class mothers were far more likely to have an open conversation with their child/children, it is questionable as to whether the conversation really was open or just a muted and garbled set of instructions that consisted of telling the child not let anyone ever ‘touch’ him or her or to get into a car with strangers (two of the most frequent means to communicate the danger of abuse to children). When a child is shown a pornographic picture or is forced to have a sexual conversation (both recognized forms of CSA), how will he/she recognize those acts of symptoms of abuse and would he approach a parent for consultation?

While upper class mothers feel secure in the knowledge that their offspring is more protected than those of lower class households, they neglect one of the most important and less publicized factors that contribute to CSA in Pakistan, abuse by domestics and workers within the home. Most of my friends and cousins have been abused in their childhood and I can comfortably say that three quarters of the cases have been with a domestic worker.

While lower class mothers realize the risk they take when they send their children out at the early ages that they do, they seldom have a choice. Feeding an average of eight
mouths is a task almost impossible on a single income and they are willing to look the other way to be able to provide the family with basic amenities.

Both classes have been affected and educated by the recent escalation in news and media coverage of child sexual abuse. Media is one of the most influential and effective tools of providing information and the more the issue is publicized, the more awareness will be raised.

**Conclusion:**

As a society, Pakistan can take comfort in the fact that there is a very widespread awareness of child sexual abuse being a problem. There is full recognition of its multifaceted composition and all the actions that come under the label. Where the actual problem lies is in the inability of lower class mothers to communicate their knowledge, rudimentary that it may be, with their children. This is mainly because of the discomfort that a mother or father will feel while talking to their child about something sexual in nature. Taking this inadequacy as a precursor, it is important to slowly integrate some form of sexual abuse education into school curriculum. However, this is a complicated process because of religious strictures and Pakistani society’s innate belief that anything sexual is wrong, even when it is being used for self protection.

While not studies have been done to show the actual differences in the incidence of CSA amongst different classes, it is widely acknowledged by institutions such as SAHIL that children from poverty stricken families are more likely to be victims of abuse. This has to do with a number of variable reasons; poorer families are likely to be larger with the father working out of the house leaving the mother to monitor the children. She can not do so efficiently when she has housework, chores and cooking to do
in addition to supervising six or seven children. Boys from poorer families are sent into
the working world at a young age to maximize the family’s income. Many of these jobs
are apprenticeships at mechanic workshops, truck stops, waiters, errand boys and
dishwashers. These jobs bring them in unsupervised contact with many adults.

While the media has finally started covering child sexual abuse in detail it still
functions as a means to report cases. It is seldom being used as an educational tool. The
importance about communication between parent and child is seldom stressed, nor is the
importance of monitoring a child’s whereabouts. Similarly, the Pakistani media has not
done anything to correct the mythological appearance of the average abuser and correct
the misconceptions about gendered abuse.

The most important discovery of this study was the receptive attitude of mothers
in both social classes towards incorporation of abuse education into school curriculum.
Organizations like SAHIL can function as very effective tools for impartation in this
sense.