

The voices of the participants

Children

I am scared of my father, he hits me; he hits me with his hands and sticks... (FE, bangle industry) ... my brother abuses me, we punch each other when we fight; last time he hit me with a brick, it hit me here (pointing towards the forehead), it bled a lot ... I went to the hospital ... the doctor tied a bandage and gave some medicines (FGD, hotels & restaurants) ... my elder brother hits me when I ask for money from him ... he gets angry and hits so hard with his hands on my legs and head.. my older sister also yells at me when I don't help her (FE, bangle industry) ... I had a fight with my elder brother when we were playing, I was using abusive language so he started hitting me (FGD, hotels & restaurants) ... Whenever a child steals fruits or vegetables from the vegetable market, they hit with a metal stake to punish... whosoever steals gets their heads severely injured.. the owners hit and then walk away ... sometimes they get slapped, sometimes they get hit at places which causes them to die (FGD, migrants) ... we are scolded and pushed away when we go to fill water from their tap ... (FE, migrants)

Stakeholders

You know what is missing in our data and which will be massive is pornography, oral you wouldn't even find a case ... you should see that there are 8 forms of sexual abuse. Out of these forms which are not reported is oral sex, pornography, prostitution, voyeurism and exhibitionism. Only rape and sodomy cases are reported... what I am trying to say this is a very small type of what sexual abuse involves. Or touching, do you understand? There is no law as such for touching ... sexual abuse is a taboo, yes. Especially if it's a girl, they don't want to report. In fact what we have seen is a great rise in sodomy cases. In the past, the ratio was 2/3, one-third boys and two-thirds girls. But now it has increased in boys, probably because they are confident now that these are the boys, but for girls it is still a taboo ... (Sahil)

You see our cruel numbers, the cases are increasing ... We take it positively, we say that at least they have dared to come up, at least they have reported the case. That means they trust us now. I would like to share an incident with you to show you the difficulty we face. This is a case of a young girl, she was about 12, was sexually abused by her *mamu* (uncle), he attempted it once and then again. The mother saw something on her daughter's pants and started beating the girl not understanding what it was ... the *mamu* threatened that little girl that he would kill her little sister if she told anyone ... he was a married man. The girl only kept saying to the mother "don't leave me alone" and didn't say anything what had happened to her. Once mother took her to the *mamu's* house and left her there ... there were children around and the other brother around too ... the *mamu* managed to disperse everyone at home ... she was left alone with him and he abused her... the mother of the girl arrived on the spot. So she caught him. Her husband was a security guard, so she immediately reported and got that medical done and they came to us,

I don't know how the case came to us. Now the girl was 100% wanting *mamu* to be prosecuted and then jailed, and we also hoped that he is jailed because for a victim it's a source of worry if the person is not jailed. Anyway we filed a case, halfway between the case the mother came and said she wanted to forgive his brother, she touched our feet and hands, her brother was also doing the same, her son offered 500 000 rupees to us. How difficult it is for a person to choose and resist that kind of thing. Then they went to the court and give her statement that she wanted to forgive the brother. That's where the sensitive judge came, he said "this is a crime against society, I am not letting him go". And he got that man convicted for 25 years. (Sahil)

Dar-ul-amans are not known for the best protection anywhere. That's a big tragedy. Day shelters may be okay. I don't think that that any shelters are safe. Abuse has been occurring. It's not safe. It is very difficult and then you have the capacity to differentiate between peer sexual interaction, which is another thing, and abuse by the workers ... the perpetrators abuse and they go straight to jail, then it's a whole process, so first is a lower court and the session court, from there bail has to be rejected, then he goes to the second court where he can appeal, then the trial starts, then he goes through the whole process, and then you gain hope that there is a conviction. We have seen very good changes too. We have seen a number of sensitive judges who say no this is a crime and we are going to punish it. Another positive thing is that they are giving quick decisions; otherwise it can take up to 5 years. So we have observed noticeable improvements over the period of 20 years, things have changed now ... (Sahil)

We have observed once a case has happened it's a difficult situation. Usually they are not strangers; they are closer ones, relatives and family members ... for example if it's the grandfather or even a father who has sexually abused the child, it creates a situation where the mother might feel helpless, she can't do anything against them, where would she take her child? ... But I think even when you are making a referral list, the problem is that there is no organization that is working specifically for the rehabilitation of child sexual abuse survivors. There is a dearth of services. We did the best we could, we made a list but I think the more important thing that Aahung is focusing on is within schools, to work with teachers, work with parents, and really create this awareness about prevention. Because once it's happened, within a context, it's very difficult to seek the support ... yeah exactly, teacher has a referral guide. Most of the time they call the mothers, they tell them. Most of the time, the mothers do intervene. It depends. For example, in case father is the one who has abused, it is a difficult situation. Because in that situation, the mother often feels that she doesn't have a choice ... I think that's a deeper structural issue, that's where I think the gap is in Pakistan, and I think it requires an intervention with the government to make them realize. There is no structure, they will pass all the laws and policies, they don't have any problem in passing the laws and policies, right, but the problem lies in the

operationalization ... So I think that is the gap. People don't know where to report the case, if they have reported who is going to step in from the government to go and investigate each case. And in terms of accountability, and

those who are involved in abuse, what I think we can do is that the referral guide we have, I can share it with you. It goes beyond abuse, it also focuses on their future, who would be counselling them. (Aahung)