

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE: THE SOCIO-CULTURAL CONTEXT AND COPING STRATEGIES OF VICTIMS IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Introduction: Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) is one of the prevalent problems in the global world. It is an all-encompassing communal and collective distress that can affect members of the society directly or indirectly, and particularly, the victims' welfare and efficiency throughout their existence. Thus, this study investigated the socio-cultural context of child sexual abuse and identified the coping strategies adopted by the victims of child sexual abuse in five selected Local Government Areas of Lagos State, Nigeria.

Methods: Primary data were adopted for this study. Information were sourced using both questionnaire and interview tools. 1012 respondents, who were adolescents (Senior Secondary School students of 11-18 years) and adult police officers, non-governmental organization workers and health professionals, were engaged in the study area.

Findings: Majority (59.7%) of which were female, while male respondents accounted for 40.3%. Both descriptive and inference techniques were employed to analyse the data. The findings revealed that 85.3% of the respondents stated that their culture does not allow/permit child marriage. Also, 69.6% of the respondents affirmed that their culture allows the practice of polygamy family system. However, 15.3% of the respondents stated that polygamy is not fostered by their culture. Also, from the table, the majority of the respondents going by 65.7% stated that their culture frown at child marriage, while another majority going by 89.7 % stated that their culture allows/permit premarital sex. The coping strategies adopted significantly influence the victims of child sexual abuse (child support institution/hospital/rehabilitation center, receiving counseling from parent/guardian, counseling and routine checkups, and rehabilitation activities, physical and emotional support).

Conclusion: This study recommends enlightening initiatives in schools, religious centers and homes with a view to impacting the children with skills and knowledge to help them recognize unsafe situation and prevent sexual abuse such as identifying limit violations, superfluous forms of touching and how to beckon or call for help. Also, there should be concentrated impact of post-disclosure events on victims – the investigation, justice processes and publicity. In addition, government should lead on securing better and more consistent support for victims of child sexual abuse through entire court processes and beyond into therapeutic support for victims of child sexual abuse.

Keywords: child, sexual abuse, strategies, victims, Nigeria

1. INTRODUCTION

Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) is one of the prevalent problems in the global world. It is an all-encompassing communal and collective distress that can affect members of the society directly or indirectly, and particularly, the victims' welfare and efficiency throughout their existence. Even grown-up women are faced

with this hitch of sexual exploitation and gender based violent behaviour while carrying out their daily duties or business (George, 2015). An individual sexually abuses a child when he or she exposes the child to sexual acts or behaviour which the child is not adequately prepared for. The child may experience a range of short and extensive period negative reactions because of that abuse. Many children who experience sexual abuse show different types of signs including physical, emotional, sexual or verbal. These special effects can pilot the way toward long-term trauma and distress for the child well into adulthood, and often be the root concern for parents, teachers and other caretakers. Long-ago, precautionary efforts focused on empowering children to keep themselves safe from abuse. Now, information from communal healthiness and natural models of prevention propose a shift in responsibility from the child to the community. Sexual abuse of children has become the focus of great community disquiet and the focal point of many legislative and professional initiatives. This is evidenced by the intensifying body of journalism on sexual abuse, unrestricted declarations by adult survivors and amplified media exposure of sexual abuse issues (National Sexual Violence Resource Center, 2016).

Child sexual abuse is an insidious communal and collective crisis that affects all members of the general public directly or indirectly. Though victims of sexual abuse have no age limit as babies, and the matured are susceptible to this peril (Chiazor, Ozoya, Udume, & Egharevba, 2016). Research has revealed that child sexual abuse is capable of many short- and enduring struggles for victims, offenders, families, communities, and larger public systems (NSVRC, 2016). Studies are keen about the fact that child sexual abuse is a severely underreported misdemeanour and that individuals who sexually abuse children are trusted by the children they hurt, and are often trusted and respected members of their communities (AuCoin, 2011 & Salter, 2013). Research suggests that offenders commonly use “grooming” strategy to construct a relationship with children. Grooming can include giving children gifts or rewards, taking them on special outings, or simply giving children attention and affection they may desire (NSVRC, 2016 & Salter, 2013). Research also indicates that as many as 1 out of 4 girls and 1 out of 6 boys will experience some form of sexual abuse before the age of 18 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009).

The populace of Lagos State has been on the increase. As at the 2006 census, Lagos State population was 9,013,534 and in 2016, the population had increased to 17.5 million (Lagos State Government, 2016). Data shows that there is a level of child sexual abuse in the State as the Lagos State government in 2018 alone handled a total of 6, 156 rape and child abuse cases (Lagos State Government, 2018). Research suggests that with low educational achievement comes the likelihood of low earnings and incapability to meet the expense of safe and sound environments (Butler, 2013). Also, lower family unit earnings (lack) and living within communities (setting) with far above the ground rates of violent behaviour comprise as risk factors for the perpetration of child sexual abuse in Lagos State (Black, Heyman & Smith Slep, 2011). Parental/matrimonial conflicts have been recognized as a risk factor for sexual abuse victimization. Child sexual abuse will, therefore, contribute hugely to poor school performance, substance abuse, misbehavior, prostitution, sexual dysfunction, psychological illness, suicide and conduction of violent behaviour to succeeding generations (Goodwin, 2013). Child sexual abuse, particularly against adolescent girls, has been one of the chief factors that contributes to HIV infections, in addition to the increase of other Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs).

Against this background, this study investigated the socio-cultural context of child sexual abuse and identified the coping strategies adopted by the victims of child sexual abuse in the study area.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Relevant theories which explain the concept of child sexual abuse are examined with a view to guiding and providing deeper insights into the subject matter of this inquiry. Thus, Feminist theory of sexual coercion and Intersectional theory serve as the guiding theoretical framework for this study.

2.1 Feminist Theory of Sexual Coercion

Radical feminists developed this theory of sexual coercion and blames the exploitation (sexual exploitation/abuse) of females (in this case, children) on men. Radical feminists see men as primary beneficiaries from the sexual exploitation of young children. Children are the oppressed groups who have to struggle for their own liberation from their abusers. Radical feminists are concerned with rights rather than gender equality and it is a child's right not to be sexually abused. In its broadest sense, radical feminism believes that there is a female/feminine nature that has been distorted throughout history; one that needs to be liberated and revalued (Abbot, Wallace & Tyler, 2005). Radical feminism sees society as patriarchal – that is, ruled and dominated by men. In this sense, society is the family setting where some children are sexually exploited by more powerful adults and older children. Feminist theory of sexual coercion holds that men use

sexual abuse as a process of intimidation and domination by which children who are their victims are kept in a state of fear (Malamuth, 1996; Brownmiller, 1975). According to Brownmiller (1975), "Man's discovery that his genitalia could serve as a weapon to generate fear must rank as one of the most important discoveries of prehistoric times along with the use of fire and the first crude stone axe. This theory views child sexual abuse as emerging from a social framework that emphasizes group conflict. That is, since males have constructed a patriarchal society in which men are holders of wealth and power, they engage in sexual abuse behaviours that maintain this control, whether consciously or unconsciously. This is coupled with the fact that physically, men are stronger and have sexual anatomy that makes sexual abuse of a child possible. Men over time have learnt that young children could be controlled and traumatized by dominating them using forced sex (Malamuth, 1996; Brownmiller, 1975; Meulenhart, Danoff-Burg, & Powch, 1996). Furthermore, according to this theory, power struggle is inherent in the manner by which the sexes (male and female) are socialized. Female children are taught to be submissive; male children are instructed to be active and dominant. Tenderness, sensitivity, and empathy are encouraged for females and discouraged in males. Because of this, men are socialized to develop masculine self-concepts. This power structure exists to maintain a hierarchical structure in which violence is available and even necessary. Hence, different socialization accounts for individual differences among men (Brownmiller, 1975; Malamuth, 1996). Children's weaker physical strength and size disparity makes them further vulnerable to sexual coercion and abuse either by adult men or older children, and this is both a physical and psychological disadvantage. Whether men sexually abuse children or not, they are subject to the political, economic, and social advantages of a patriarchal society. Men also benefit from the preservation of a power structure that may negatively impact on the rights of children, and as a result, they (men) may neglect to take the crime of sexual abuse seriously or fight on children's behalf (Brownmiller, 1975; Meulenhart, Danoff-Burg, & Powch, 1996). This theory, therefore, agrees with other feminist theories that child sexual abuse is violence from the victim's point of view, notwithstanding the motivations of the abuser. Sex may be the goal of the child abuser, but coercion, intimidation, domination and violence are often the means of achieving this goal that puts the child victim in constant pressure, fear and duress. Feminist theory of sexual coercion further asserts that any female child may be a victim of sexual abuse due to her age, stage of development, family orientation notwithstanding. This, therefore, makes female children natural targets for sexual abusers simply because they are females (Brownmiller, 1992). The feminist theory of sexual coercion is useful for this study as it explains the sexual abuse of children in the sense that it proves that men use sexual abuse as a process of intimidation and domination by which children are kept in a state of fear and powerlessness in the study area. This theory further explains this study in relation to the study area as it gives explanations for the motivation for child sexual abuse which is, to exert control over the children and not necessarily out of lust. This theory views child sexual abuse as emerging from a social framework that emphasizes group conflict. It asserts that, males have constructed a patriarchal society in which they are holders of wealth and power and so engage in sexual abuse behaviours that maintain this control. Thus, through sexual abuse, young children could be controlled and traumatized.

2.1.1 Intersectional Theory

Intersectional theory was propounded by Patricia Hill Collins who was born in 1948. This theory represents a community-based social theory that articulates a particular group's understanding of its oppression by intersections of race, gender and class and the struggle against that oppression. The central issue for intersectional theory is the understanding that children experience oppression in varying configurations and in varying degrees of intensity (Anzaldúa, 1990). Against this premise, feminist theory of intersection is very relevant in explaining the various determinants of child sexual abuse in the study area.

The oppression in this sense is child sexual abuse which can be acute (always happening) or mild for individual victims in the study area depending on configurations such as family setting, level of poverty, residential area, family orientation, birth order, among others (Aptheker, 1989). The explanation for this variation is that children may potentially experience oppression on the basis of gender; female children are, nevertheless, differentially oppressed by the varied intersections of other arrangements of social inequality such as wealth, access to public goods, among others.

Children from rich homes may participate mildly in the act not as a result of poverty, but due to threat or pressure which may be the opposite reason for why children from poor homes may participate. These vectors of oppression and privilege include not only gender but also class, race, global location, sexual abuser's authority over the child, sexual preference, and age.

Intersectional theory is useful for the evaluation of this study as it explains various determinants of child sexual abuse in society such as the age of the child, sex, stage of development, single parents home, war

and conflict, parental/marital discord, residential area, unaccompanied children among others. If these factors are not present or are dealt with, the prevalence of child sexual abuse will be low.

Furthermore, in consonance with this study the theory, argues for the need for parents/guardians and institutions to set up prevention strategies to protect children from the claws of the abusers as well as the coping mechanisms for children who have been victims of sexual abuse. This will bring about the eventual triumph of justice for every sexually abused child in Lagos State.

However, this theory has been criticized on the basis of how to conceptualize and empirically observe the interplay of multiple vectors of sexual abuse of children. Similarly, questions are raised as to how these intersectional factors co-exist in balance and hierarchy.

The strengths of this feminist theory of sexual coercion are that:

1. It shifts blame from victim/survivor to perpetrator;
2. It moves from individual blame/cause to societal factors such as the political, economic, and social advantages embedded in the patriarchal society; and
3. It emphasizes harm to victim/survivor in that the victim can be left in a state of constant fear and pressure from the opposite sex.

However, it has been criticized in a number of ways:

1. The belief that all men have power over all women is an oversimplification
2. The belief that patriarchy privileges all men is not correct because there is diversity among men
3. The theory focuses on broad cultural causes and does not provide solutions at individual levels especially for the child victim(s);
4. This theory also does not explain the sexual abuse of male children.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted triangulation of methods in investigating the proposed subject matter. The study adopted both quantitative and qualitative research methods. This involves the use of structured questionnaire with close-ended questions and few open-ended questions. Additionally, the In-depth interview method was utilized to gather qualitative data on the subject of interest from a selected Non-Governmental Organization, police officers and hospital.

3.1.1 Study Population

Based on figures from the National Population Commission of 2010, the study population was estimated to be within the region of **1,813,159**. The populations of interest are adolescent boys and girls in selected Local Government Areas of Lagos State. This study was limited to adolescents of 11-18 years and some adult police officers, non-governmental organization workers and health professionals in the study area. Although findings from literature suggest that child sexual abuse is common to children of all ages, but in order to elicit quality information from respondents, this study was limited to this age group. This study ensured to obtain ethical approval from the Covenant Health Research Ethics Committee and obtained permission from the parents of the respondents and the respondents themselves before proceeding with the study. Also, this study is strictly for academic and research purposes. Fig 1. Shows the total population of the Local Government Areas selected for this study.

Table 1.1 Population Distribution by Selected LGAs

S/N	LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA	TOTAL POPULATION
1	Ikeja	313,196
2	Shomolu	402,763
3	Lagos Mainland	317,720
4	Ojo	598,071
5	Epe	181,409
	Total	1,813,159

Source: National Population Commission, 2010

4 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This study made use of both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data is obtained by adopted questionnaire and the information analyzed using both descriptive and inferential methods. The qualitative data is collected through in-depth interview. Out of the questionnaire administered, 1012 questionnaire were retrieved and analyzed. In this section, fig 4.1 presents the socio-demographic distribution of the respondents is presented, while other sections presented the results of the analysis.

4.1 Socio-Demographic Distribution of Respondents

Characteristics	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	408	40.3
	Female	604	59.7
	Total	1012	100.0
Age in Group	(11 - 12)	278	27.5
	(13 - 14)	564	55.7
	(15 - 16)	145	14.3
	(17 - 18)	25	2.5
	Total	1012	100
Religion	Christianity	639	63.1
	Islam	334	33.0
	Traditional	25	2.5
	Other	14	1.4
	Total	1012	100.0
Education (Class)	SS1	385	38.0
	SS2	382	37.7
	SS3	245	24.3
	Total	1012	100.0
Number of Children that the mother has	1-4	753	74.4
	5-8	247	24.4
	9-14	12	1.2
	Total	1012	100.0
The Person(s) Lived with	Both Parents	697	68.9
	Father Alone	83	8.2
	Mother Alone	144	14.2
	Other	88	8.7
	Total	1012	100.0
Parents still together as husband and wife	Yes	780	77.1
	No	232	22.9
	Total	1012	100.0
Do you live in the same apartment?	Yes	790	78.1
	No	222	21.9
	Total	1012	100.0
Number of Wives of the father	1	733	72.4
	2	222	21.9
	3	40	4.0
	4 and Above	17	1.7
	Total	1012	100.0

4.1.1 Socio-Cultural Context of Child Sexual Abuse

The perception of the respondents about the socio-cultural context of child sexual abuse is investigated and reported in this section. The findings are reported below.

In fig 4.2, 85.3% of the respondents stated that their culture does not allow/permit child marriage. Also, 69.6% of the respondents affirmed that their culture allows the practice of polygamy family system. However, 15.3% of the respondents stated that polygamy is not fostered by their culture. Also, from the table, the majority of the respondents going by 65.7% stated that their culture frown at child marriage, while another majority going by 89.7 % stated that their culture allows/permit premarital sex. On the other hand, more than

one-third (34.3%) of the respondents confirm that their culture does not frown at child sexual abuse, while only 10.3% affirm that their culture does not allow pre-marital sex.

Considering if the respondents' culture fosters sexual rights of children, only 15.9% of the respondents' confirm that their culture does fosters sexual rights of children and 12.5% of the respondents' stated that the lack of proper feeding has exposed them to sexual abuse, While 84.1% of the respondents' affirmed that their culture does not in any way foster sexual rights of children and 87.5% of the respondents' confirmed that despite the lack of proper feeding, they have not been exposed to sexual abuse.

Table 4.2: Distribution on Socio-Cultural Context of Child Abuse

S/N	Categories	Options	Frequency	Percent
1	Does your culture allow/permit child marriage?	Yes	149	14.7
		No	863	85.3
		Total	1012	100.0
2	Is polygamy fostered by your culture?	Yes	704	69.6
		No	155	15.3
		Sometimes	153	15.1
		Total	1012	100.0
3	Does your culture frown at child sexual abuse?	Yes	665	65.7
		No	347	34.3
		Total	1012	100.0
4	Does your culture allow pre-marital sex?	Yes	908	89.7
		No	104	10.3
		Total	1012	100.0
5	Does your culture foster sexual rights of children?	Yes	161	15.9
		No	851	84.1
		Total	1012	100.0
6	Does your lack of proper feeding expose you to sexual abuse?	Yes	127	12.5
		No	885	87.5
		Total	1012	100.0

Findings from the in-depth interview of some respondents corroborated and gave further explanation on the results of the analysis above. Their views are reported below:

'Some of the sexually abused children we attend to here actually come from homes and communities where there is a lot of dysfunction. Dysfunction in character, speech and behaviour. For example, one of the abused girls we attended to comes from a community where the individuals do not see any wrong in child sex. That is, involving children in sexual activities that they do not fully comprehend. Not only was she sexually abused by one of the neighbour, about two other men were involved in the act. They are presently in police custody' (Medical Doctor).

'Our communities, societies and homes have a lot to do and a major role to play if child sexual abuse must stop. If children are continually brought up in areas where the morals, values and norms are low, where harmful cultural practices are upheld, where there are individuals with questionable characters what do you expect?' (Non-Governmental Organization Welfare Officer).

Child sexual abuse has become a wide problem, even in developed countries. Most of the abusers we have come across are not total strangers to the abused. They live in the same area, communities and home. However, emphasis is on the importance of bringing up children in healthy areas and homes where they can grow well and be useful to themselves and the society at large, and not in questionable communities and homes. Parents and guardians need to pay the price and ensure they do not uphold cultural practices that will end up harming their children (medical doctor).

If our homes are well secured from harmful societal and cultural practices such as pre-marital sex, child marriage, child sexual abuse (which is the subject under discussion) among others then child sexual

abuse occurrence will gradually decrease. Imagine a home where different persons come in and go out without the parent or guardian taking note and speaking up; where polygamy is the order of the day; or where the parent is not even available to see all that is happening in the home. Those children will likely be abused, delinquent or drawn into one mischief or the other' (Non-Governmental Organization Administrator)

4.1.2 The Coping Strategies Adopted by Victims of Child Sexual Abuse

The section reports the coping strategies adopted by the victims of child of sexual abuse. Out of the 1012 respondents to the questionnaire, 517 stated that they have experienced child sexual abuse. The findings on the coping strategies adopted by the respondents who have experienced child sexual abuse are reported in fig 4.3

From the fig 4.3, after the abuse, 44.7% of the respondents stated that their parent/guardian took them to a child support institution/hospital/rehabilitation center, 55.3% were not. Also, from the table, the majority (67.5%) of the respondents claimed to have received one form of counseling or another, while the rest (32.5%) did not receive any counseling after the abuse. Furthermore, 61.1% of the respondents affirmed that the counseling was done by their parent/guardian or the child support institution.

After the counseling, more than average (57.3%) of the affected respondents have being coping well after the abuse, while the remaining 42.7% have been finding it difficult to cope after the sexual abuse. Also, 41% of the sexually abused respondents felt that their self-esteem has been negatively affected, while about 27% of them have felt like involving themselves in negative activities such as drug addiction or suicide after the abuse. Thus, there is the need to improve on the coping strategies for the victims of child sexual abuse.

Table 4.3: Analysis of Coping Strategies of the Victims of Child Sexual Abuse

S/N	Categories	Options	Frequency	Percent
1	After the abuse, did your parent/guardian take you to a child support institution/hospital/rehabilitation center?	Yes	231	44.7
		No	286	55.3
		Total	517	100.0
2	Was there any form of counseling for you?	Yes	349	67.5
		No	168	32.5
		Total	517	100.0
3	Was the counseling done by your parent/guardian? or the child support institution?	Yes	215	61.6
		No	134	38.4
		Total	349	100.0
4	Have you been coping well after the abuse?	Yes	295	57.3
		No	222	42.7
		Total	517	100.0
5	Do you feel your self-esteem has been negatively affected?	Yes	212	41.0
		No	305	59.0
		Total	517	100.0
6	Have you felt like involving yourself in negative activities such as drug addiction or suicide after the abuse?	Yes	141	27.3
		No	376	72.7
		Total	517	100.0

Using in-depth interview, the majority of the interviewees sampled stated that child sexual abuse is a traumatic experience for all ages. Thus, coping strategies varies. This view is captured in the following statements:

'Some of these sexually abused children find it very difficult to adjust and move on. They find it challenging to see ahead of themselves especially if the abuse happened early in their life and involved some form of violence. Just like the girl I mentioned earlier who was abused when she was in primary six. Till date her parents still bring her for counseling and routine checkups to enable her forge ahead successfully in life' (NGO Administrative Officer).

'Sexual abuse can be very traumatizing for these innocent children. They hardly seem to understand what happened to them and why it had to be them. Even when they seem to be coping, it is at a very slow rate. Over and again, we have to talk to them, counsel and encourage them and much more. They become really afraid of people but we keeping encouraging them. Infact, most of these sexually abused children are very reluctant to talk about the experience which will not help them. This is because if the trauma is not treated with immediately, it can develop into delinquent behaviour. We have had cases like this and we had to commence rehabilitation to save them' (NGO Welfare Officer).

'There are some health challenges sexually abused children experience as young as they are. These challenges include genital injuries, infection, pelvic inflammatory infection (PID) among others. They may also suffer other things such as depression, insomnia, fear etc. As a result of these they become so

withdrawn that getting them to speak up is challenging. We had a case of a five year old girl who began to suffer vaginal infections. When it was investigated, it was found out that it was the driver who usually takes her to school that was responsible for such occurrence. He would stop on the way and sexually abuse her either when taking her to school or while bringing her back home. It is really terrible. So coping strategies for these ones is difficult. It may drag, but it is sure they would overcome it with counseling, physical and emotional support from their various homes' (Medical Doctor).

'I was abused six months ago and it continued for some time. Coping afterwards has proved difficult. Since then I find it difficult to fall asleep and when I do, I have bad dreams. When I am left alone at home I am very afraid thinking the abuse would start all over again. I have lost my appetite and I feel very ashamed when I am in public that is why I prefer to stay away from people because I don't know if someone will do that to me again' (Child sexual abuse victim).

5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY

Sexual abuse is a challenge, different in many of its dimension from other types of child maltreatment, crime and child welfare problems. But enormous strides have been made to understand the problem, educate the public and mobilize resources to address it. With additional research and programme development, there is every reason to believe much more can be accomplished. It is worth noting that support for victims is critical in ensuring that those who have experienced sexual abuse do not suffer any more than they already have.

Therefore, this study investigated the socio-cultural context of child sexual abuse, and identified the coping strategies adopted by the victims of child sexual abuse in five Local Government Areas, namely Ikeja, Shomolu, Lagos Mainland, Ojo and Epe of Lagos State. The study focused on child sexual abuse in Lagos State, Nigeria: the socio-cultural context, prevalence and coping strategies. Senior secondary school students aged 11-18 years together with Non-Governmental Organization workers, doctors and police officers in the study area constituted the study population. The study was anchored on two theoretical platforms: Feminist Theory of Sexual Coercion and Intersectional Theory. Multiple methods of data collection were employed which include questionnaire and In-depth Interview guide, using a purposive sampling technique. The study areas were systematically selected in order to elicit information that can be representative. A total of fifteen In-depth interviews sessions were held. This was made up of doctors, nurses, welfare officers, police officers among others in the study area.

The findings revealed that whether it is a girl or boy, child sexual abuse can be experienced by them. It does not necessarily have to be a girl child which is usually talked and written about. Also, it was found that the level of education of both parents and either one of the parent can go a long way to protect the children against child sexual abuse or either put them (the children) at risk of the criminals. Whether both parents are living together or are separated, single or divorced, it does not necessarily keep the children from being abused or not. It all depends on the proper execution of parental duties and responsibilities to the child or children as the case may be. A parent can be living together and under their very nose, their children are being sexually abused and vice versa.

It is also found that the family structure significantly matters for child sexual abuse when considering whether the parents of the respondent still live together as husband and wife, and the number wives the father of the respondent has. Furthermore this study found that the parental and institutional support and coping strategies of victims of child sexual abuse go a long way to assist the victimized children in forging ahead and leading a good life even after such terrible experience.

On the basis of the findings, this study recommends educational initiatives in schools, religious centers and in the home children with a view to impacting them with skills and knowledge to help them identify dangerous situation and prevent sexual abuse such as identifying boundary violations, unwanted forms of touching and contact and other ways in which offenders groom and desensitize victims as well as teach them how to refuse approaches and invitations, how to break off interactions and how to summon or call for help.

Also, there should be reduced impact of post-disclosure events on victims – the investigation, justice processes and publicity. Children's Advocacy Centers offer a model that works to improve investigations and protect children from additional stresses. In addition, the Government should lead on securing better and more consistent support for victims of child sexual abuse through entire court processes and beyond into therapeutic support for those who need it.

Furthermore, the Government should work with professional disciplinary bodies and other expert bodies to report allegations for criminal and sexual abuse committed against children by people working in the institutions. All children who have been sexually abused deserve to be provided with an appropriate

therapeutic intervention. Mental health treatment for sexually abused children should be evidence based and trauma-focused including skill-building to manage emotions and cope with stress, parental or caregiver involvement and direct discussion of the abuse history

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