

# **Psychosocial Impact of Childhood Sexual Abuse: Perspective of Victims**

Syeda Shahida Batool\*, Arham Abtahi

## **Abstract**

The present study aimed at the investigation of psychosocial experiences which victims of child sexual abuse (CSA) experience in Pakistan. There is a lack of sufficient literature on the impact and causes of increasing ratio of CSA. Eight interviews of CSA victims were included in this study. The sample consisted of adolescents of age range between 14 and 17 years who had experienced sexual abuse at the age of 8 to 12 years. The interviews were analyzed by using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The super-ordinate themes after analysis were: experiencing abuse, restrained childhood, transformed self, restricted social interaction and relationships, psychological impact, and impact on learning and future goals. Coping strategies employed by the victims included: dissociation, denial, disconnection from offender, avoiding specific places, distraction, religious beliefs, and rationalization of the incident of abuse.

Limitations and implications are discussed.

*Key words:* sexual abuse, victims, psychosocial experiences, coping, denial.

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## **Introduction**

Child sexual abuse (CSA) is a form of child abuse which involves the exploitation of a child for sexual gratification in multiple ways. It ranges from improper exposure or touching to rape and sodomy. So the effect it casts on victim also varies according to nature of incident including severity of abuse, situation, and pre-existing conditions of child's life. There is a range of factors which can lead to CSA which include unawareness of parents, lack of preventive measures, relationship of child with offender, and a range of circumstances likely to increase vulnerability of a child. Awareness and research on the issue started in western countries almost three decades ago with the conceptualization of sexual abuse and proposed model (Freeman & Morris, 2001).

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- \* Syeda Shahida Batool Chairperson Associate Professor Department of Psychology, GC University Lahore [shahidaphd@yahoo.com](mailto:shahidaphd@yahoo.com) [chairperson.psy@gcu.edu.pk](mailto:chairperson.psy@gcu.edu.pk)

