

**PERCEPTION OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AMONG SCHOOL  
CHILDREN IN AIZAWL DISTRICT, MIZORAM**

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**Social Work Department**

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the Degree of Master  
of Philosophy in Social work of Mizoram University, Aizawl**

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

## **CHAPTER III**

## **METHODOLOGY**

## **CHAPTER IV**

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

## **CHAPTER V**

**CONCLUSION**

## **CERTIFICATE**

**This is to certify that the thesis ‘Perception of Child Sexual Abuse among School Children in Aizawl District, Mizoram’ submitted by Lalrinmawii Pachuau for the award of Master of Philosophy in Social Work is carried out under my guidance and incorporates the student’s bona fide research and this has not been submitted for award in any other university or institute of learning.**

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**Supervisor/Assistant Professor**

**Date : 30<sup>th</sup> October 2015**

**Place: Aizawl, Mizoram**

## **DECLARATION**

I, Lalrinmawii Pachuau, hereby declare that the subject matter of this thesis is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this thesis did not form bias of the award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge, to anybody else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University/Institute.

This is being submitted to the Mizoram University for the degree of Master of Philosophy/Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work Department.

Date : 30<sup>th</sup> October 2015

Place: Aizawl, Mizoram

(LALRINMAWII PACHUAU)

Research Scholar



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## **List of Abbreviations**

<b>1. UNICEF</b>	<b>United Nation’s International Children’s Emergency Fund</b>
<b>2. GOI</b>	<b>Government of India</b>
<b>3. CRC</b>	<b>Convention on the Rights of the Child</b>
<b>4. POCSO</b>	<b>Protection of Children from Sexual Offences</b>
<b>5. CWC</b>	<b>Child Welfare Committee</b>
<b>6. IPC</b>	<b>Indian Penal Code</b>
<b>7. WHO</b>	<b>World Health Organization</b>
<b>8. CSA</b>	<b>Child Sexual Abuse</b>
<b>9. NSVRC</b>	<b>National Sexual Violence Resource Center</b>
<b>10. WHARC</b>	<b>Health and Action Research Centre</b>
<b>11. OCVA</b>	<b>Office of Crime Victims Advocacy</b>
<b>12. NIPCCD</b>	<b>National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development</b>
<b>13. JJB</b>	<b>Juvenile Justice Board</b>
<b>14. APL</b>	<b>Above Poverty Line</b>
<b>15. BPL</b>	<b>Below Poverty Line</b>
<b>16. AAY</b>	<b>Antyodaya Anna Yojana</b>
<b>17. YMA</b>	<b>Young Mizo Association</b>
<b>18. NGO</b>	<b>Non Governmental Organization</b>
<b>19. ICDS</b>	<b>Integrated Child Development Services</b>
<b>20. ICPS</b>	<b>Integrated Child Protection Scheme</b>
<b>21. SSA</b>	<b>Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan</b>
<b>22. NHM</b>	<b>National Health Mission</b>

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## Perception of Child Sexual Abuse among School Children in Aizawl District, Mizoram

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Mizoram University

### Questionnaire

Questionnaire No:

Date:

#### I. Mimal chungchang

1. Hming (ziah loh theih) :
2. Nihna : Mipa/ Hmeichhia
3. Kum :
4. Pawl :
5. Sikul hming :
6. Sikul neitu : Government/ Private
7. Hnam hming :Lusei/Ralte/Hmar/Paihte/Mara/Lai/adang\_\_\_\_\_
8. Sakhua :Kristian/ Hindu / Muslim / Buddhist / Sikh / Jew / Adang
9. Kohhran :Presbyterian/Baptist/SAY/Catholic/UPC/Seventh day/adang
10. Pian leh seilenna hmun :
11. Sikul awmna hmun : Khawlaili/ Khawdai
12. Chhungkaw khawsak dan : Hringtu te leh unau diktak te nena chengho / Hringtu te leh unau diktak te bakah pi leh pute leh chung dangte nena chengho
13. Chhungkaw zia rang : Chhungkaw nghet/ Chhungkaw kehdarh /Chhungkaw inzawmhkawm leh/ adang \_\_\_\_\_

#### II. Chhungkaw eizawna chungchang

14. Ei leh bar lama chhungkaw dinhmun : AAY / BPL / APL
15. Pa/enkawltu hna thawh :
16. Pa/ enkawltu thla khat hlawh zat :
17. Nu/enkawltu hnathawh :
18. Nu/enkawltu thla khat hlawh zat :

#### III Naupang khuaikhem chungchanga hriatdan leh hmuhdan

Sl.No.	Hriatdan leh hmuhdan	Dik	Diklo	Ka hrelo
19	Naupang tih hi kum 18 hnauilam an ni			
20	Naupangte hian chanvo an nei vek a ni.			
21.	Naupang khuaikhem chanchin hi kalo hre ve tawh a ni			
22.	Naupang khuaikhem hi ram tin leh hnam tin ah a thleng a ni.			
23	Mizoram hian naupang khuaikhem case hi kan nei tlem hle ani.			
24.	Naupang Khuaikhemtu hi mipa pawh, hmeichhia pawh an ni thei.			
25.	Naupang khuaikhem tu hi Thiante, thenawmte, zirtirtu te leh hmelhriatloh te an ni thei vek.			
26.	Naupang khiakhem hi mipa leh mipa, hmeichhia leh hmeichhia inkarah pawh a awm thei.			
27.	Naupang khuaikhem tu hi ama chenpui chungte leh lainate ngei pawh an ni thei.			
28.	Naupang khuaikhem lo awmna pakhat chu milem dukdaklo leh naupang laka chetze mawilo hmuhtir atangin a ni thin.			

29.	Naupang kuaikhem hian a kaihnawih chu hurherhna lam kawnga aw-ka, tawng leh chezia naupang hma a lantir hi a ni thei.			
30.	Naupang kuaikhem in a huam chu kuaikhem tumna rilru nena naupang an duhzawng leisak emaw tihsak a, bum thluk hi a ni			
31.	Naupang kuaikhem hian anmahni tum ran a veh thlem a, mipat hmeichhiatna na lam hawi kawk thei zawnga biak emaw biak tum te hi a kawk..			
32.	Naupang kuaikhem hian mipat hmeichhiatna lam hawi zawnga naupang taksa tihlan tir emaw pholan sak te hi a huam tel a ni.			
33.	Naupang kuaikhem in a ken tel chu naupang, zahmawh bu siam nana an taksa pholan sak/pholantir, pawisa siama nana naupang taksa an hmang tangkai hi a ni.			
34.	Naupang kuaikhem hian naupang tiluihna avanga taksa peng hrang hrang inkhawihitir leh anmahni taksa ngei khawihluh tir hi a huam tel a ni			
35.	Naupang pawngsual hi naupang kuaikhem in a huam tel a ni.			
36.	Naupang kuaikhem chungchang ka hriat nachhan chu keimah ngei in kalo tawn ve tawh vang a ni.			

### 37. Khawi atangin nge Naupang Kuaikhem chungchang hi ilo hriat tawh?

Sl.No	Hriatna	Tick rawh
1	Chhungte	
2	Thiante	
3	School	
4	Biakin/kohhran	
5	Thenawmte	
6	Media (print and (or) visual)	
7.	NGO (pawl hrang hrangte)	
8.	Sawrkar (government)	
9.	Lehkhabu	

### IV. Naupang kuaikhem chungchang thlirdan

Sl.No.	Thlirdan/ngaihndan	Pawmlo Lutuk	Pawmlo	Pawm	Pawm Lutuk
38.	Puitlingte hian an fa te bulah mipat hmeichhiatna lam hi sawipui thin ni se.				
39.	Nupui/Pasal neih hmaa thianghlimna vawn hi thil hlu ber a ni.				
40.	Ka nupui/pasal tur chu mipat-hmeichhiatna ah lo inhmang tawh se paw ka ti lovang.				
41.	Hmeichhe tleirawl in kuaikhem an tawh fo na chhan chu an incheidan in a zirloh vang a ni.				
42.	Khuaikhem tawh changin a tuartu thiamloh a ni ve thei tho.				
43.	Khuaikhem lo tawh tawh chu mi in min sawisel ve ka hlau vangin thian ah ka pawm thei tawh lo.				
44.	Naupang kuaikhem lo tawh tawh chuan thuruk angin an vawng tlat tur a ni.				
45.	Naupang kuaikhem tawh kan hriat chu report a tha ber.				
46.	Hmeichhia pawh kuaikhentu anih chuan mipakhuaikhentu ang bawkin a thiamlo ve tho a ni.				
47.	Hmeichhe naupang te hi mipa naupang aian kuaikhem kawngah an dinhmun a derhawng zawk.				
48.	Miin kuaikhem an tawh laia inven/indan tumlo an nih chuan				

	khuai khem nih an paw i tilo tihna.				
49.	Khuai khemtu chu kan ngaidam tur a ni.				
50.	Naupang khuai khem alo thlen nachhan pakhat chu mipat hmeichhiatna lam naupangte hnena sawi hi mawi lova ngaih anih vang ani.				
51.	Naupangin a nu leh pate saruaka a hmuh hi thil paw i a nilo.				

**V. Naupang Khuai khem chungchang ngaihdan kan neih nachhan**

Sl. no	Ngaihdan kan neih chhan	Pawmlo lutuk	Pawmlo	Pawm	Pawm lutuk
52.	Naupang ten khuai khem an tawn fo nachhan chu heti lam hawi inzirtirna emaw inhrilh na kan neih tlem vang.				
53.	Naupang khuai khem thlenna chhan chu nu leh paten an fate an ngaihsak tawkloh vang leh a nachang an hriatloh vang a ni.				
54.	Naupangte hi mahnia rilru siam theilo leh chaklo anga ngaih an nih thin avangin khuai khem an awl bik.				
55.	Naupang khuai khem lo thlen thin nachhan chu naupang ten puitlingte an hlauh vang a ni.				
56.	Naupangten khuai khem an tawh nachhan pakhat chu sum leh pai dinhmun vang te a ni.				
57.	Naupang khuai khem hi khawtlang /hnam nunphung vanga thleng thei a ni				
58.	Media(chanchinbu, t.v, mobile phone leh adangte) avang hian naupang khuai khem hi a awm a ni.				
59.	Chhungkaw mumal lo atang hian naupang khuai khem case hi a tam a ni.				
60.	Naupang khuai khem hi rilru lama rualbanlo leh buaina neite vangin a thleng thei a ni.				

**VI. Naupang Khuai khem tawkte chungah thil thleng thei kan thlirdan**

Slno	A thlen theih chungchanga thlirdan	Pawmlo lutuk	Pawmlo	Pawm	Pawm lutuk
61.	Khuai khem lo taw k tawhte hian anlo puitlin hnu paw h in dan pangngai takin an nun an hmang chho thei in an nun hlawhtling takin an kalpui thei				
62.	Khuai khem taw k thenkhat te hian hetiang vanduaiana an taw k tih hi an lantir kher lo.				
63.	Naupang khuai khemtaw k te hi sualna chi hrang, khawtlang duhloh zawng tih kawngah te an inhmang duh bik				
64.	Khuai khem lo taw k tawh te chu an tun hnu nun in a chhiatpui phah vek thei a ni				
65.	Naupang, khuai khem lo taw k tawh te chuan puitling ah rinnaleh inngahna an nei tawh ngailo thin a ni.				
66.	Naupang khuai khem chuan rilru lama harsatna/rualbanlohna a thlen thei a ni.				
67.	Naupang khuai khem taw k te chungah hian taksa lama harsatna leh hrisellohna a thleng thei a ni.				
68.	Naupang khuai khem hian a naupang chang nilo, ama chhungte zawng zawng a nghawng tel thei a ni.				



## PARTICULARS OF THE CANDIDATE

NAME OF THE CANDIDATE	: Lalrinmawii Pachuau
DEGREE	: M.Phil
DEPARTMENT	: Social Work
TITLE OF DISSERTATION	: Perception of Child Sexual Abuse among School Children in Aizawl District, Mizoram
DATE OF PAYMENT OF ADMISSION	:
COMMENCEMENT OF SECOND SEM	: 18 <sup>th</sup> February 2015
APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL	
1. BPGS	:
2. SCHOOL BOARD	:
REGISTRATION NO. & DATE	:
DUE DATE OF SUBMISSION	:

## BIO-DATA

NAME : Lalrinmawii Pachuau  
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### EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION

Name of Examination	Board/University	Year of Passing	Percentage of Marks	Division
HSLC	MBSE	2006	63.8 %	1 <sup>st</sup>
HSSLC	CBSE	2008	65.2 %	1 <sup>st</sup>
B.A	P.U.C	2012	55.25 %	2 <sup>nd</sup>
M.S.W	M.Z.U	2014	60.44 %	1 <sup>st</sup>

### FIELDWORK EXPERIENCE

#### AIZAWL HOSPITAL

Was placed in a hospital setting in the first semester field work at Aizawl Hospital which was then located in Missionveng Thlang, Saptheihuan. For a period of 28 days.

#### CPD

Was placed in Centre for Peace and Development, under CHILDLINE, where different wings like FCC, Transitional cum Children's Home, Shelter Home were visited. Also attended 5-days workshop on issues relating to Child Sexual Abuse.

#### Block Placement at EFICOR

Went to EFICOR, Delhi for Block Placement and was sent to Hassanpur village in Bihar for community based Natural Disaster Risk Reduction Project from 13<sup>th</sup> January 2014 to & 7<sup>th</sup> February 2014.

### COMMUNITY BASED FIELDWORK AT BAWNGKAWN SOUTH

Was placed for community field work at Bawngkawn South locality for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Semester with a project title "Solid Waste Management".



This study attempts to find out the knowledge and awareness level, the perceived causes and consequences, and the perception of child sexual abuse among school children in Aizawl District, and suggest measures for social work intervention and social policy.

This chapter highlights the issues related to child sexual abuse, legislations pertaining to the subject in India as well as an understanding of the basic concepts. It also presents a brief statement of the problem as well as the objectives of the study.

## **1.1 Children and Child Sexual Abuse**

Children are the future generations of the world. They are responsible for bringing forth new meaning to existence. How we treat and nurture them now is how they will grow up to see the world and face it. Therefore, they are, in many ways more vulnerable than adults.

According to UNICEF (2007), ‘the true measure of a nation’s standing is how well it attends to its children- their health and safety, their material security, their education and socialization and their sense of being loved, valued and included in families and societies to which they are born’ (In Pachuau, 2014).

Child sexual abuse is an issue that has been occurring for centuries, but attention has been paid only until recently. Most social work account that caters specifically to the welfare of children only began towards the 1960’s. There are, therefore, very little written records on child sexual abuse although it is evident that it does exist. Manju Gupta (2001) highlights studies on the history of child abuse in general from various sources. According to her, most historians who viewed childhood as a relatively modern concept consider children in the past to have been callously treated because they were not afforded a protected status. Thus, virtually all children were abused and generally, such abuse was tolerated by society. Disagreeing to this viewpoint, some historians believed that standards of care, particularly for older children, have been low as

compared to what is expected today, but are not necessarily abusive. From this view point, it is argued that within the prevailing standards of each age, there have been cruel and loving parents and those unfortunate children with cruel parents were likely to be abused and society does not necessarily condone or accept such abuse. Particularly, there is still lesser evidences and information of child sexual abuse in antiquity and medieval times which however, did not mean that it was not happening in abundance then. Incest was made illegal in England only from the twentieth century. However, it was a crime punishable by death in Scotland in 1757 and it is clear that there were strong social and religious taboos throughout Europe. This goes to show that lack of legislation does not necessarily mean lack of concern about or acceptance of such behavior during those times.

According to Bolen (2002), “Children of all ages are at risk and vulnerable to sexual abuse, whether in their homes, their community, or even over the Internet. Society’s response to this tragedy has been to develop programs that identify, assess, and treat the victims, treat or punish the offenders, and teach young children how to deflect approaches. Our failure as a society, however, has resulted in programs, however well-meaning, that fail to identify most victims, substantiate most identified abuse, identify most offenders, treat or punish most identified offenders, and prevent the approaches of offenders.”

Ideas can be powerful and mythologies are potentially harmful. Some common social myths have shaped the traditional views that can lead to unfavorable consequences. Schwendinger and Schwendinger (1983) focus on the common myths about rape prior to the 1970’s, which was not only tabooed as an activity but also as a subject of comment and target of social change. Some cynics openly declare that it is impossible to rape a woman without her consent. Many people believed and still believe that as long as a woman does not want it, it is impossible to rape her, and therefore the rape does not exist. Some authors even claim that a man cannot rape a woman who is physically strong and with good health. Another

misconception was based on the fact that the victim was “asking for it”. It is commonly assumed that a female bears the responsibility for rape if she stimulated the male sexually. A male is not put to blame because once aroused, he can no longer control his sexual urge. Under ordinary conditions, female as catalytic agents may typically be seen as wearing something that rapists consider provocative, or their willingness to make a friendly response to a strange man’s conversation is interpreted as an invitation. A popular myth proposed by some seeking a simple solution to the problem concerns the relations between prostitution and sexual attack. It is suggested that the number of sexual attacks would decrease if prostitution were legal and controlled. However, the evidence shows that this is false. Three cities that had allowed open prostitution actually experienced a decline in all sexual crimes, including rape, after prostitution was prohibited. The false notion behind this myth is that violation is essentially a crime of sexual passion which can easily be prevented by commercial forms of sex.

Smith (2008) states that in spite of international and national initiatives taken, children are still vulnerable to sexual abuse. Since the 1970’s, child sexual abuse has received increasing societal attention. Due to the greater recognition of the prevalence and problems associated with sexual abuse, child protection agencies, law enforcement, and the judiciary have instituted a number of reforms designed to aid the identification and successful prosecution of sexual abuse cases. Furthermore, he explains that while most children have been told not to meet, or to get into cars of strangers, assuming that children are much safer at homes rather than going outside, they have a high chance of being sexually abused through the internet without the knowledge of adults or even without their own knowledge. While some children have been told not to divulge personal information on the Internet so as not to fall prey to grownups with evil intentions, a research study reveals that children claim to be anonymous on internet but despite of this most of them still gives their e-mail address and telephone number to people they are chatting with on the Internet. Children also believe that if they can speak to a person from the Chat on the phone,

it will be safer. Despite this there are a number of children who have been sexually abused by grownups that they first met on the Internet. The abuser have managed to develop trust in the child, and then suggested a meeting either at the abusers own home or some other secluded place. Sexual abuse might not only be the grooming of a child, leading on to sexual activities, but also the distributing of what is normally called child pornography. Once a photo of a child being sexually abused is placed on the Internet it will exist in cyberspace forever. It is, therefore, also important to educate both grownups and young people that for every curious click on such material, the abuse continues. He further explains that the victim of child sexual abuse may demonstrate the tendency to force someone else to have sex. Other adverse effects of childhood sexual abuse may include (mental and physical effects) emotional problems such as depression, anxiety, sexualized behavior, binge eating in woman and substance abuse as well as development of guilt, anxiety, depression, feelings of worthlessness and powerlessness, inability to distinguish sexual from affectionate behavior, difficulty in maintaining appropriate personal boundaries and the inability to refuse unwanted sexual advances.

Briere and Eilliot (1992) estimated that about one in three girls and one in seven boys will be sexually abused during childhood. Suttles and Remer (2008) suggests that because of current societal attitudes, including the expectations that they be self reliant, physically tough and able to defend themselves, males often are not perceived to be victims of sexual abuse. The sexual exploitation of children involves dependent, developmentally immature children and adolescents in sexual activities that they do not fully comprehend, are unable to give informed consent to, and that violate the social taboos of family roles (Helfer& Mondale 1976).

Baruah (2003) highlighted that poverty and ignorance are the underlying causes of this worldwide phenomenon. However, she further explains that assuming child rape victims come mainly from the lower socio-economic family is wrong and that family income and social status are both unrelated to child abuse. The only difference is that while a raped victim in a lower

socio-economic home gets exposed to public scrutiny and comments, it is generally hushed and kept silent in an established esteemed family for fear of social shame.

Badhra (1999) highlighted on the apparent and overpowering patriarchy and religion dominated in India that has been going on for a while. Gender inequality cannot be, in reality, differentiated from variety of social, cultural and economic inequalities in the society. Inferior sex roles of women have been established and enforced through customs, mores, religion and laws. Although legally and theoretically, female are now recognized as social equal of male, the institutions of marriage, caste, patriarchal family authority, religion, mores, prevailing value system and ethos are still surcharged with the spirit of male dominance. The neglect and discrimination that the girl child is subjected to are extensive and deep rooted. This often leads them to be mistreated and makes them more vulnerable than boys. Therefore a girl child is very often abused by parents and guardians as she is often already considered a family burden on or even before her birth. It is reported that girls are more victims of sexual abuse than boys (the ratio being 2.3:1). A high proportion of girl child of 14 years and above suffer constant sexual abuse usually by more than one person. The sexual abuse of girl child is generally reported from lower socio-economic families and lower caste groups. The sexual abuse in case of girl child is very often acquaintance related.

Further, she highlighted studies on the issues of girl child prostitution in the society. Prostitution has permeated deep in the society, with far reaching consequences because of it being the oldest profession in the world. The reason for the continuance of prostitution in any civil society is the existence of various socio-economic, cultural, psychological and attitudinal factors which have allowed this phenomenon to continue for ages. However, it has come to be recognized as a serious social and human problem only after 1950s with the setting up of a committee by the Central Social Welfare Board in 1954. Child prostitution is viewed as a factor to dehumanization of future generation because it is detrimental to the child- socially,

physically, emotionally and also deprives the child of his/her right to lead a normal life. Despite this realization, the situation is deteriorating and the number of child prostitutes rapidly increasing. This is because, along with factors like physical attractiveness and vulnerability, there has been no redemption from grinding poverty and ignorance/ illiteracy. Moreover, temptation, greed, desire to have sex with young girls to maintain strength and to secure protection from diseases, like STD/AIDS and need for new kind of sensations, specially by pedophiles are increasing and they are creating demand for child prostitutes.

Although there has been evidences of the prevalence of child sexual abuse within North-east India in the past, there is very little known records of child sexual abuse. This may be due to the fact that programs and legislations regarding the issue has been carried out until recently although it has been implemented long before. GOI (2012) shows recorded cases of sexual abuse within North-east India which shows that in some states there are no recorded cases of child sexual abuse. During this year, Assam had 37 cases of child sexual abuse, Mizoram had 6 cases, Meghalaya had 21 while Nagaland had 5 rape cases and Tripura had 14 cases of child sexual abuse. Arunachal Pradesh had 1 molestation case while Manipur had no recorded cases of child sexual abuse.

In Mizoram, many abused cases are dropped or 'forgiven' solely due to the fact that Mizos are Christians and consider that it is the purpose of a true Christian nature to forgive. In a study conducted by the Ministry of Human Rights and Law Network, more than 10 per cent of respondents agreed to 'forgive' the perpetrators because they are Christians. Another disturbing fact is that many people tend to 'forgive' because the violator is a related or well known to the family, and there are cases where this decision is made against the will of the victim (Rohmingmawii, 2012).

According to Cruise (2004) some of the immediate and long-term consequences a child might experience as a result of being sexually abused include:

**i) Health and Physical Consequences**

- Pregnancy, especially in early adolescence
- Sexually transmitted diseases
- Difficulty walking, sitting, or standing
- Torn, stained, or bloody underclothing
- Vaginal/penile discharge
- Pain during urination or urinary tract infections
- Bruises on the child's mouth, to the hard or soft palate
- Sleep disturbances (difficulty sleeping, nightmares)
- Enuresis or encopresis
- Self-injurious behavior (cutting, burning oneself, suicide attempts)

**ii) Cognitive Development and Academic Achievement**

- Age-inappropriate sexual knowledge
- Sexually explicit drawings (not open to interpretation)
- Sudden changes in academic performance
- Refusal to participate in certain activities (dressing for gym)
- Difficulty concentrating

### **iii) Emotional, Psychosocial, and Behavioral Development**

- Sexualized play (frequent sexual themes with toys or other children)
- Frequent touching of genitals or masturbation
- Inappropriate sexual expression with adults (frequent hugging of a female teacher that produces arousal)
- Aggressive sexual behavior with use of force or verbal threats
- Socially isolated or withdrawn
- Extreme fear reactions
- Dependent or clingy behavior
- Poor social skills
- Substance abuse or delinquency, especially in adolescents
- Difficulty trusting others
- Fire setting
- Cruelty to animals
- Running away

Prevention programs designed for children are an important part of a multifaceted strategy to build community efforts to prevent child sexual abuse. Traditional child sexual abuse prevention programs are of value because they provide information, support and empowerment. However, concerns have been raised that these programs target children and inappropriately place the burden of prevention on the child. Indeed, child sexual abuse occurs as a result of



many factors working together, all of which are beyond the control of the child. Additionally, critics suggest that it may be unrealistic to expect a child to assert power over someone whom they may trust and who is in a position of authority, older and likely stronger than them. In the end, it is the responsibility of individuals to not violate children in any way and for communities to actively engage in the prevention of child sexual abuse and safeguard the well-being of children. Prevention programs designed for children are only one of many components of a successful community effort to prevent child sexual abuse. Changing the behavior of adults and communities, rather than the behavior of children, is the ideal way to prevent child sexual abuse. Generally, child sexual abuse prevention programs that target children have three main goals: to teach children to recognize child sexual abuse, to give them the skills to avoid abuse, and to encourage them to report abuse that they have experienced, are experiencing, or may experience in the future. Teaching children to avoid child sexual abuse may involve teaching them:

i) The concept of ‘private zones’ and what parts of the body are considered ‘private’

ii) The different kinds of appropriate and inappropriate touching that a child can experience

iii) That it is possible that a person whom the child knows and likes may try to hurt them

iv) To trust their intuition about people and situations

v) About healthy sexual development

Giving children the skills to repel child sexual abuse may involve teaching them:

i) That they have the right to decide who can and who cannot touch their body

ii) That in a situation when someone touches them against their will or in a way that makes them uncomfortable, they can say “no” or leave/run away and tell a trusted adult

Encouraging children to report child sexual abuse may involve teaching them:

i) That child sexual abuse is never the fault of the child

ii) That if someone touches them in a way that makes them uncomfortable, they should always tell a trusted adult

iii) They should not keep a secret about someone touching them

iv) To identify trusted adults

v) That a child should keep telling an adult they trust about sexual abuse until the adult does something to protect the child

vi) That they will be believed and still be loved if they tell

vii) The correct names for body parts (e.g., penis, vagina, breasts, buttocks) so children may accurately report what has happened to them. (NSVRC, 2011)

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) lays down the different roles of the state in protecting as well as looking after the welfare of the child. 178 countries including India have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child. There are already so many legislations that are being made but which are not properly being implemented (Baruah, 2003).

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act 2012 regards the best interests and well-being of the child as being of paramount importance at every stage, to ensure the healthy physical, emotional, intellectual and social development of the child. In keeping with the best international child protection standards, the Act also provides for mandatory reporting of sexual offences. This casts a legal duty upon a person who has knowledge that a child has been sexually abused to report the offence; if he fails to do so, he may be punished with six months' imprisonment and/ or a fine. The Act, on the other hand, also prescribes punishment for a person, if he provides false information with the intention to defame any person, including the child. The Act also casts the police in the role of child protectors during the investigative process. The police are also required to bring the matter to the attention of the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) within 24 hours of receiving the report, so the CWC may then proceed

where required to make further arrangements for the safety and security of the child. It also makes provisions for the medical examination of the child designed to cause as little distress as possible. The examination is to be carried out in the presence of the parent or other person whom the child trusts, and in the case of a female child, by a female doctor. The Act further makes provisions for avoiding the re-victimisation of the child at the hands of the judicial system. It provides for special courts that conduct the trial in-camera and without revealing the identity of the child, in a manner that is as child-friendly as possible. Hence, the child may have a parent or other trusted person present at the time of testifying and can call for assistance from an interpreter, special educator, or other professional while giving evidence; further, the child is not to be called repeatedly to testify in court and may testify through video-link rather than in the intimidating environs of a courtroom. Above all, the Act stipulates that a case of child sexual abuse must be disposed of within one year from the date the offence is reported. Another important provision in the Act is that it provides for the Special Court to determine the amount of compensation to be paid to a child who has been sexually abused, so that this money can then be used for the child's medical treatment and rehabilitation. (GOI, 2013)

The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2000 highlights the different sections that are involved in dealing with child sexual abuse. Chapter-1, section 2 (d) under "child in need of care and protection" defines juvenile or child as "a person who has not completed eighteenth year of age" and sexual abuse as one "who is being or likely to be grossly abused, tortured or exploited for the purpose of sexual abuse or illegal acts, "who is found vulnerable and is likely to be inducted into drug abuse or trafficking and "who is being or likely to be abused for unconscionable acts." Chapter 2, section 21 (1) deals with the prohibition of publications of identity and information of the juvenile involved in any proceeding under the Act. Clause 2 states that "any person who contravenes the provision shall be liable to a penalty which may extend to twenty five thousand rupees." Section 23 of the chapter lays down

punishment for cruelty to juvenile or child for whom persons having the actual charge of or control over a juvenile or the child, assaults, abandons, exposes or willfully neglects the juvenile or causes or procures him to be assaulted, abandoned, exposed or neglected in a manner likely to cause such juvenile or the child unnecessary mental or physical suffering shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months, to fine, or with both. Further, an alternative punishment greater in degree is laid under section 28 of the Act. Chapter 3, section 29 talks about the constitution of Child Welfare Committee, for every district for exercising the powers and discharge the duties conferred in relation to child in need of care and protection under this Act.

The Indian Penal Code (IPC) highlights sexual intercourse with or without consent of a child below 16 years amounts to statutory rape including gang rape, punishable with rigorous imprisonment for not less than 10 years and fine. Section 377 covers sexual abuse of a male child including unnatural offences, cases of sodomy and oral intercourse. It also states that consent given under fear, coercion, fraud, misrepresentation or misconception is not to be considered as consent.

## **1.2 Concepts**

### **1.2.1 Child**

In this study a child will be considered as one given by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which defines a child as “a human being below the age of 18 years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier”. This definition is also similar to the one given by POCSO Act 2012 that defines “a child as any person below eighteen years of age”.

### **1.2.2 Child Sexual Abuse**

The WHO (2006) explains “Child sexual abuse is the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent, or that violated the laws or social taboos of the society”

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POSCO) Act, 2012 defines different forms of sexual abuse, including penetrative and non-penetrative assault, as well as sexual harassment and pornography, and deems a sexual assault to be “aggravated” under certain circumstances, such as when the abused child is mentally ill or when the abuse is committed by a person in a position of trust or authority vis-a-vis the child, like a family member, police officer, teacher, or doctor. People who traffic children for sexual purposes are also punishable under the provisions relating to abetment in the Act. The Act prescribes stringent punishment graded as per the gravity of the offence, with a maximum term of rigorous imprisonment for life, and fine.

### **1.2.3 Perception**

According to Joshi K (2004), perception denotes sensory experience which has gained meaning and significance. When as the result of learning experiences, one understands the relationships of objects which were previously raw, undifferentiated sensory experiences, he or she is said to perceive these objects. Perception is thus, the awareness of objects, relationships and events via the senses, including such activities as recognising observing and discriminating. These activities enable us to organise and interpret stimuli we receive into meaningful knowledge of the world.

According to Irvin Rock (1975), "Perception is a unique field of inquiry with a purpose to explain objective facts and events. It is a term used to refer to the awareness of objects, qualities or events, stimulating the sense organs."

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

Many studies report that puberty is related to a rise in parent-child conflict, where parents start to notice that as children enter into adolescence, their bedroom doors start to close, they often resist spending time with the family, and become more argumentative. Thus, there arises a certain disconnection in what was once a close relationship (Berk, 1994). Children in this stage therefore, starts to keep things to themselves, and adults find it more and more difficult to talk to their children. Discussions about sex and sexuality in particular, are a topic rarely discussed.

The issue of child sexual abuse remains hidden in society. Victims are left voiceless with no scope for rehabilitation. As is evident from the literature, child sexual abuse exists not only outside the family but also within the family, among close kins. As such, the reality is often swept under the rug. Adults often take advantage of the vulnerabilities of children. Children are abused sexually and are often subjected to multiple forms of abuse that affects their developmental well-being. As a result of many factors which can have perceived sociological impact on the family and society at large, cases of child sexual abuse remains hidden and is often not reported. Though our attitudes may be against this heinous act we find numerous evidences of the prevalence of child sexual abuse across societies.

Perception to child sexual abuse is an important factor in bringing out the truth. So long as we take it for granted that sexual abuses are not reported as a result of fear of shame, bribery, threats, and belief that convictions will not take place, etc., we leave abundant chance for perpetrators to be still at large thereby increasing the vulnerabilities of children to sexual abuse.

Sexual abuse and child rape has become so common that it is not surprising to know that it has become daily news in India. This is proof to the fact that our perception to child sexual abuse has not helped in decreasing the prevalence of the problem. Similarly, in Mizoram where society is close knit and homogenous, we find evidences of the prevalence of child sexual abuse, however there are very little programs and interventions that provide children with the adequate awareness and knowledge they need to know about child sexual abuse and how to protect or help themselves in cases where the need arises.

This research, as the title suggests, does not focus on the victims of child sexual abuse, but rather on children's perception of sexual abuse. Their perceptions are important because it is what will determine their attitude towards the abuse, the victim and the perpetrator, which will hopefully help us understand what sexual abuse really is from a child's point of view.

In view of the above, research gap exist in Mizoram. There are very limited studies or literature available on the perception of children about Child Sexual Abuse. Although there have been studies related to child sexual abuse, a particular study on children's perception about child sexual abuse is even more scarce in India, and it is hoped that this study will fill the gap. Since the topic of Child Sexual Abuse is a sensitive subject, available literatures cannot provide precise studies or data that distinguishes what child sexual abuse is and what is not. Therefore, what a person perceived as sexual abuse may not necessarily be perceived the same by another. This study will aim to fill the missing link in terms of knowledge and research.

#### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

1. To examine the knowledge and awareness of school children about child sexual abuse.
2. To explore the perception of school children about child sexual abuse across gender.
3. To suggest measures for social work intervention and social policy

## **1.5 Chapter Scheme**

CHAPTER I	:	INTRODUCTION
CHAPTER II	:	REVIEW OF LITERATURE
CHAPTER III	:	METHODOLOGY
CHAPTER IV	:	RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS
CHAPTER V	:	CONCLUSION



Literature justifies the proposed methodology and helps in critically summarizing current knowledge in the area under investigation and to identify data sources and information used from past researches to help in broadening of the researcher's own scope and identify gaps that the research could fill.

This chapter will review previous studies on theories related to child sexual abuse, the prevalence and magnitude of the issue, people's perceptions on child sexual abuse, the causes and consequences of child sexual abuse.

## **2.1 Theories related to Child Sexual Abuse**

Social learning theory posits that learning is a cognitive process that takes place in a social context and can occur purely through observation or direct instruction, even in the absence of motor reproduction or direct reinforcement. One of the earliest theories of the role of cognitions in sexual contact with children proposed by Abel and colleagues in 1984, based on the principles of social learning theory, suggested that sexual offending resulted from a developmental inability in learning how to suppress inappropriate sexual desires. Offense-supportive beliefs served the purpose of helping child-molesters deal with the conflict between their attraction to children and societal norms. Abel's analysis of post-offense statements of men who had committed a sexual offense revealed seven common sexually permissive attitudes including: lack of physical resistance from a child means they are a willing sexual partner, being sexual with a child educates them about sex, children do not tell others about the sexual abuse because they like it, mere fondling of children will not really harm them, children ask about sex because they want to be shown it, having sex with a child brings the adult and child closer together, and society will learn to accept child-adult sexual relationship in the future. These distortions were identified and assessed post offense initially as they were hypothesized to arise

at this time. Abel and colleagues proposed that these views functioned to protect the offender from their unacceptable thoughts and behaviors (Stermac&Dafoe, 2009).

Family systems theory is based on the assumption that all parts of the system are connected to each other, and a true understanding is not possible if considering the parts in isolation. Systems theory focuses on the interactions that occur among members of the system, and the entire family is the unit of analysis. The first formal theory of child sexual abuse, appearing in the professional literature in the 1960s and 1970s, may be family systems theory. This theory, which derived from general systems theory, posited a systemic approach to father-daughter incest. All members of the family, including the mother and victim, were hypothesized not only to be responsible for the initiation of the incest, but also to collude in its maintenance. Since the mid-1970s, several more sophisticated theories of child sexual abuse have been developed. According to attachment theory, the early affectional bond between caregiver and infant is crucial for early development. Infants hold an attachment behavioral system which functions to elicit comfort from and maintain proximity to the caregiver, leading to a consistent sense of security. A secure base can be identified as a caregiver to whom the child turns whenever protection is needed. Through the secure base, a child aims to maintain a balance between exploration and proximity-seeking behaviors. Through repeated interactions, infants learn what to expect and adjust their behavior accordingly. (In Bolen, 2002)

The primary theory that focuses on why certain children are at greater risk of abuse is feminist theory. Gupta's (2001) *Feminist Perspective and Child Abuse* highlights the predominance of male over female and states that abuse in the form of violence against women is a normal feature of patriarchal relations. This notion has been used by men as a major vehicle for controlling women for centuries. The rising incidence of child sexual abuse reveals the extent to which men are prepared to wield sexual violence as a major weapon in asserting their

authority over women. Abuse is seen as an extreme example of institutionalized male power over female.

## **2.2 International Scenario**

Russell (1984) conducted a survey on 930 women upon which 647 cases of child sexual abuse were disclosed and out of which only 30 cases (5 %) were ever reported to the police. Of the 30 reported cases, all of which were male perpetrators, only 7 were known to result in convictions. Out of the total sample, 16 per cent reported to have experienced at least one incident of incestuous abuse and 31 per cent reported to at least one experience of sexual abuse by a non-relative before reaching 18 years of age. He refers to Finkelhor's model for analysis of child sexual abuse on which he developed four factors that are altogether responsible for sexual abuse of children by adults:

- 1) The adult must have sexual feelings for a child or for children in general.
- 2) The adult must overcome his or her internal inhibitions against acting out the sexual feeling(s).
- 3) The adult must overcome the external obstacles to acting out the sexual feeling(s).
- 4) The adult must overcome the resistance or attempts at avoidance by the child, if these occur.

Maynard & Wiederman (1997) refers to Finkelhor's study that suggests that sex and age of the perpetrators were important variables in decisions and attributions about sexual abuse. They found that among under graduate students, a main effect for the child's age in attributions of blame such that when an adolescent was depicted, the interaction was rated as less abusive, and adolescents were blamed more relative to children. Male respondents attributed significantly less responsibility to the adult when the child was male than when the child was female,

whereas female respondents saw adults as similarly responsible regardless of the sex of the child. Other researchers have found that the adult's sex influences people's perceptions of child sexual abuse, typically through an interaction with the child's sex. Overall, results of these studies tend to correspond to cultural stereotypes. Other studies found that college students tended to view an interaction of a male child with a female adult as less representative of child sexual abuse. Furthermore, respondents generally believed that male survivors of female perpetration were relatively unharmed by the experience. Their own study was to examine how sex of the child and the adult and age of the child influence perceptions regarding the abusiveness of adult-child sexual interactions and attributions of blame and responsibility to the adult in such incidents. The relationship of gender-role attitudes to perceptions of child sexual abuse was also investigated. The result of their study concluded that age of the child may influence ratings of abusiveness and attributions of responsibility and blame. Ratings of abusiveness and attributions of blame also appear to be influenced by the sex pairing in the interaction.

Ogunyemi (2000) highlights The Women's Health and Action Research Centre's (WHARC) study on the incidence of child sexual abuse (CSA) in two Nigerian urban centers that focused on low income, non-elite, occupational groups involving 958 respondents. About 38 per cent and 28 per cent of female and male respondents respectively reported being initiated to sex before the age of 18 years. Majority of the respondents condemned Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) acts like rape, date rape, child prostitution and incest. However, evidence of gender-role stereotyping, which puts girl- children at reproductive health risks of these and related acts, seems widespread.

Further, in Nigeria, as in other parts of the world, reports of rape, for instance, do not guarantee redress or punishment of the offenders. This is because sexual socialization perpetuates powerful mythologies incorporated in law or juror understandings which make it

difficult to prosecute sexual criminals without evidence of physical injury from assault, collaborating eye-witnesses or other difficult evidence. It was evident that victims of CSA would hardly want to report their experience to the police or at the hospital because of social stigma. Many opined that no potential husband would marry a lady who was raped as an adolescent or a child. Female respondents also expressed views that stated: “Every man looks at a young lady/woman as if to rape her”; “ Our society does not like anyone talking about sex openly, you are taken as a lose girl;” and “ Western civilization has robbed us of the belief in virginity.”

On why men often initiate sex sometimes to the displeasure of women/girls, some of the respondents said: “It is abnormal for a woman to invite a man/boy for sex because the male is supposed to make the first move”; “It is only loose girls/women and prostitutes that do not first say 'no' to men’s attempt to have affairs with them;” and “Men think women/girls only pretend when they say 'no' to sex.” Among the factors identified by respondents as facilitating Child Sexual Abuse in the community are peer influence, economic difficulties (e.g., hawking to support family income), idleness, and parental neglect or carelessness. Others include crowded living environment, exposure to pornographic materials, ignorance about human sexuality, lack of moral instruction and "provocative dressing". Majority of the respondents tended to be very pessimistic about what action was required.

Research into the impact of sexual abuse on victims seems to be more abundant than into physical abuse and neglect. Browne and Finkelhor states that ‘the most common initial effect noted in empirical studies is fear’. Other studies found that 45 per cent of their most vulnerable group of children (7-13 year olds) was experiencing fearful reactions to what had happened to them within the first six months following the onset of abuse. Friedrich et al (1986) found from a sample of 61 sexually abused females that 46 per cent were experiencing a range of internalized emotions including depression, withdrawal behavior and suicidal thoughts within

two years of being abused. On the other hand, some victims of child sexual abuse respond by directing anger and aggression outwards. This is more common among adolescents. Gomes-Schwartz et al (1990) identified such a response in between 45-50 per cent of the 7 to 13 year olds in their sample. Other effects like low self-esteem, guilt and shame, physical symptoms like subsequent sleeping and eating disorders, running away from home, use of substance abuse are the different consequences prevalent among victims of child sexual abuse. School performance and other activities are relatively low among these victims (In Gupta, 2001).

The Office of Crime Victims Advocacy (OCVA) (2001) carried out a survey which sought to determine the incidence and prevalence of sexual assault in Washington State as well as collect information on the characteristics of assault experiences, reporting rates and access and barriers to services. Their results concluded that sexual victimization is a common experience for women in the state with more than a third of women reporting that they have been victims of rape, attempted rape, forced sexual contact or child sexual abuse at some time in their lives. Close to a third of the experiences involve multiple episodes of sexual abuse and a fifth of women have had more than one sexual assault experience. This translates to half of the victims being sexually assaulted more than one time. About 80 per cent of these women's sexual assault experiences occurred during their childhood. Overall women perceived violent and more gender specific crimes as more of a problem now, with very few reporting that any of these crimes were less of a problem. Comparisons made between victims and non-victims of sexual assault, the former were more likely than the latter to perceive improvements for personal safety for women, and women who had experienced any form of victimization saw more improvements than those who had not. A large majority of women perceived that there was a high level of community awareness; most women reported that they were aware of community services, specialized sexual assault programs and medical services. However, 20-30 per cent did

not know whether their community had such services and victims were more likely to know the availability of these services than those who were not victims.

Cruise (2004) explains that contrary to the myth that most perpetrators are strangers, children typically know and trust their perpetrator. Males perpetrate the majority (80–95%) of sexual abuse, though there are certainly some cases in which female offenders victimize male or female children. Girls are more likely to be sexually abused by someone within their family, such as parent, step parent, grandparent, uncle, cousin, or sibling, while boys are more likely to be sexually abused by someone outside of the family, such as a coach, teacher, neighbor, or babysitter. Adults, adolescents, and even prepubescent children may perpetrate sexual abuse. Unlike other forms of child maltreatment, sexual abuse by definition does not have to involve a parent or caregiver. The Internet is the newest medium that offenders have begun using to reach vulnerable children. A recent study surveying youths 10–17 years old found that 20% of those participants who regularly used the Internet (at least once a month) had received unwanted sexual solicitations and approaches in the last year. In some instances, the solicitor attempted to gain further access to the minor by phone, mail, or in-person meetings. While there is no typical child victim, it is possible to make some assumptions about risk factors for being sexually abused. More girls than boys are sexually abused, although it is believed that boys are less likely to report their abuse than girls. Children who are emotionally needy because of family problems, poor parental supervision, and low self esteem may be most vulnerable to sexual abuse because offenders deliberately target children who are responsive to their attention. Thus, force is frequently not needed. In some cases in which force, threats, or use of strength are involved, the offender is more commonly an adolescent. Sexual abuse often does not result in lasting physical injuries or produce clear observable evidence; however, it can be associated with various psychological and behavioral problems well into adulthood. There is no single child abuse syndrome or single response pattern for children who have been sexually abused.

A child functions in several social settings with his/her family and friends and attends school and participates in leisure activities. Therefore the causes and consequences of sexual abuse will not affect the child alone but with a large group of people that the child associates with directly or indirectly. In addition to the acute damage caused, sexual abuse causes longitudinal damage, although the severity of these effects is questioned. For many of the victims it takes a long time to recover from sexual abuse while some may never recover from it. With the span of time, the consequences of abuse will therefore indirectly constantly affect new people. It may be the employer that will have her or his employee reported sick. It may be the National Insurance Service who will have to cover the sick pay. It may be the child welfare authorities that will have to use resources on the misbehaved adolescent. It may be the psychiatric ward that will have to use resources on treatment for trauma, anxiety and depression. It may be the hospital that will have to treat the woman who suffers from self damaging behavior. It may be the boyfriend who does not understand his girlfriend. It may be the children who have a constantly tired and exhausted mother. Separately, and taken together, all these possibilities indicates that child sexual abuse is a burden that the child should refrain from carrying. The cost to both the individual and society are high (Tennfjord, 2006).

Suttles and Remer (2008) have highlighted several studies on child sexual abuse. Some common characteristics of sexual abuse have been reported, to a degree, in the current professional literature, but tend to include, primarily, the experience of female victims. The characteristics of sexual abuse, in some respects, may be similar for male and female survivors. However, some characteristics of male victimization may be different because of the influence of their socialization process as males. For instance, male victims are more likely to be abused by someone outside the immediate family because boys traditionally allowed more freedom than girls to explore their environments. Boy victims are less likely than girl victims to disclose the abuse because they are taught that they should be self-reliant, because some parents only talk to



their girls about sexual abuse or because some boy victims fear being labelled as 'gay' as a result of their abuse.

Sexual abuse of children and young adolescents is wide spread in all societies. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that overall prevalence is 25 per cent for girls and 8 per cent for boys, although these figures differ with the population studied and definitions used. Finkelhor observed that boys and girls between ages seven and thirteen years are at greatest risk (In Smith, 2008).

Research on child abuse has examined knowledge and understanding of children's responses to adult sexual contact among various community groups. North American studies suggest that up to 72 per cent of the general public believe that children who have been sexually abused will demonstrate overt and negative changes in their general behavioral functioning and display bizarre sexualized behaviors. Many individuals also believe that most child abuse victims will show fear of their perpetrator, resist, cry out or try to escape their abuser or no longer show love if the perpetrator is a parent. These studies highlight that the general public believes that most child abuse victims will respond negatively and overtly to adult sexual contact. Paradoxically, research also shows that some community members believe that sexual contact with an adult is not necessarily harmful and may actually benefit a child, preventing them from having sexual hang-ups in the future. This may also explain why some respondents in Stermac and Segal's (1989) study identified benefits to the child in scenarios in which the child was described to be smiling, as smiling is understood to be an atypical response suggestive of lack of distress. These findings indicate that there is lack of understanding and confusion among the public studied as to what defines and constitutes sexual abuse. Research suggests that many individuals expect children to respond negatively to sexual abuse. When a child's post offense response is of a more ambiguous or contradictory nature, some individuals will question the perceived degree of harm (In Stermac&Dafoe, 2009)

Lubenko (2009) proposed a study to explore the associations between perceived family environments, sense of self-efficacy and internalizing and externalizing behavior problem ratings for 12-14 year old adolescents in Latvia. The study examined which of the perceived family environment and self-efficacy domains are the most predictive of internalizing and externalizing behaviour problems and whether there is the mediational effect of perceived self-efficacy in the relationship between family environment and behavior problems. On the basis of previous findings, it was expected that a more positive family environment characterized by high cohesion, less family conflict, and good organization as perceived by adolescents would be positively associated with adolescents' self-efficacy ratings and negatively associated with behaviour problems. The Research results supported these predictions by demonstrating associations of family environment characteristics with self-efficacy domains and externalizing and internalizing behavior problems. Adolescents who characterized their families as being more cohesive and less conflictual reported a higher sense of self-efficacy and lower internalizing and externalizing behavior problems ratings than adolescents who perceived their families as less cohesive and higher in conflict. Very important is the finding that family cohesion was one of the main variables negatively predicting adolescents' rule breaking behavior in the present sample. Cohesive families are characterized by emotional connectedness, openness, and flexibility and these aspects facilitate the adolescents' ability to cope with developmental challenges. Adolescents in cohesive families may be more likely to use multiple family members as sources of support and feel more comfortable discussing personal issues than adolescents in families characterized by strife, rigidity, and emotional distance. Ratings of family conflict were positively associated to adolescents' behavior problems and appeared to be the main variable predicting adolescents' aggressive behavior and anxiety and depression ratings. It can be proposed that persistent negative social interactions may cause adolescents insecurity and psychological distress and leading to maladjustment and emotional difficulties,

such as anxiety, withdrawal and depression. Conflict within the family can undermine adolescents' self-confidence, increase stress, and distance the adolescent from an important source of social support.

In a study conducted by Yekta, Bagherian&Nezhad (2011), the attitudes and level of knowledge of the physicians in the Eastern Anatolia cities were examined. According to the results of the study, although awareness in child abuse and neglect cases increase, physicians in Eastern Anatolia did not have adequate knowledge and proper attitudes towards diagnosing and reporting child physical abuse. It has been argued that it is probably due to the lack of graduate and continuing education that they do not comfortably report child physical case abuses. In another study done with the pediatricians in Kuwait, the knowledge, attitudes, and experience of the pediatricians to the child maltreatment were examined, and similar results were reported. In another study, examining exactly the attitudes of people towards child sexual abuse, it was found that women were more negative to sexual contact between adults and children. The primary aim of this study was to investigate the attitudes of participants towards child abuse behaviors with respect to their gender, age, educational level and other demographical variables.

Muridzo (2014) observes that child sexual abuse is a worldwide and serious problem, and the social ill is seen to be on an increase. He also stated that the impact of sexual abuse may range from no apparent effects to severe cases whether physical, psychological, behavioral or emotional. The effects of abuse are determined by child's personality, the nature of support system available, duration of the abuse, frequency of the abuse, age of the child, degree of force imposed upon by the perpetrator, the child's relationship with the perpetrator, intrusiveness and the severity of the abuse. The scars of child sexual abuse are often buried or hidden and unseen on the surface. The effects therefore have the propensity to influence behavior in childhood. Further, he highlighted the implications of social work intervention to child sexual abuse; firstly, the proactive and preventive roles where social workers will have to assume the advocate,

lobbyist, educator and social activist role to influence cultural beliefs, and increase the awareness and knowledge of the social ill thereby support the enactment of statutes that closes legal loopholes and provide for inclusive legislative and policy framework. Second, he stated that social workers should take up the role of an educator by creating robust awareness raising programs for different communities wherein they may educate and empower children and communities on the effects of child abuse, factors that predispose children to child sexual abuse. In this way social work can play a proactive role in the prevention of child sexual abuse. Thirdly, the clinical or remedial role where social workers are trained in psychotherapy to help individuals deal with a variety of mental health and daily living problems to improve their overall social functioning. They are skilled in evaluation, diagnosis, treatment and prevention of mental, behavioral and emotional disorders that may result from abuse. Lastly, child sexual abuse is a medical, psychological, political and cultural issue that requires a multi-sectoral approach. Here, the social workers are required to have the ability to work cooperatively with other members of the multidisciplinary treatment team who are directly involved in the child survivor's care. Collaborative social work is evident in fields such as health, education, rehabilitation, mental health, media, juvenile justice, and so on. The media plays an important role by reporting cases of child sexual abuse, legal proceedings, statutory gaps, prevention and community initiatives. In this regard, social workers can collaborate with the media to raise awareness, to prevent, to influence policy and social change among other initiatives so as to channel social ill and in turn influence change and government intervention.

### **2.3 National Scenario**

The subject of child sexual abuse is still considered a taboo in India. Despite it being prevalent in the country, many choose to believe that it is largely a western problem and does not happen in India. Due to this among many other causes, a typical traditional conservative family and community structure does not discuss about sex and sexuality at all. Parents do not

speak to children about sexuality as well as physical and emotional changes that take place during their growing years. As a result of this, all forms of sexual abuse that a child faces do not get reported to anyone. This silence encourages the abuser so that he is emboldened to continue the abuse and to press his advantage to subject the child to more severe forms of sexual abuse. Very often children do not even realize that they are being abused (GOI, 2007).

In India, children who talk about or disclose their sexual abuse are frequently met with denial, minimization or blame. They are often made shameful and this becomes a form of protection for the offender. This response is the single largest culprit responsible for perpetuating child sexual abuse in the society (NIPCCD 2002).

Jaswal (2005) highlighted the history of Child Sexual Abuse and its issues and explains why the magnitude of this problem is hard to assess. She stated that although the subject is receiving increasing attention in recent times, especially in the print media, there is no specific state or national statistics for CSA in India. It is in fact one of the most under reported crimes in the nation. The actual cases reported is merely 'the tip of the iceberg' of the entire incidence that occurs on a daily basis. She refers to the National Crime Records Bureau which reported that children account for 19 per cent of the total rapes and the incidence of rape of children below 10 years has increased rapidly. "Children have considerable anxiety about the response of adults towards their abused status. They fear for themselves, including being punished and ostracized. They may worry that they will not be believed and be branded as 'telling lies' in case they were totally forced upon by a stranger or older peer members. Sexual abuse involves parts of the body that are associated with a degree of shame and embarrassment. The cultural norms of the society label any activity related to the private parts as something dirty, whether it is mastering bladder and sphincter control or masturbating. Thus, children harboring a guilty secret feel embarrassed to disclose to their elders about these activities/experiences."

According to Deb (2006), in India, cases of child abuse are not reported owing to negligence, perceived harassment, in the police department and in the court, social boycott and threat from the perpetrators. Fear of social discrimination and boycott also inhibit victims to report the case to the police. This attitude has led many perpetrators to commit the crime multiple times knowing he/she will easily get away with it. He further refers to Pagare's study in an observation home in Delhi covering 189 boys. In this study it was found that 38.1 per cent of the children reported sexual abuse. Sexual abuse was significantly associated with domestic violence, solvent/inhalant use and working status. He further refers Deb and Mitra's study in South Kolkata in 2002. In this study, 11 per cent of girl child working as maid servants were subjected to sexual assault and harassment. Deb, in his study highlights the general misconceptions or perceptions concerned with child sexual abuse. Some of these perceptions include:

- i) Child sexual abuse occurs mostly in poor, illiterate families.
- ii) Generally servants, drivers or strangers abuse children.
- iii) Often precocious children provoke abuse by their seductive behavior.
- iv) Usually the mother is aware of the fact that her child is sexually abused.
- v) If a child 'consents' he/she must have liked it, if they don't say 'no' it is not abuse.
- vi) Child sexual abuse is usually a one- time violent act that involves intercourse.
- vi) Child sexual abuse is a result of western influences/media.
- vii) Girls are sexually abused, not boys.
- viii) Child marriage protects children from sexual abuse.
- ix) Infants are not sexually abused.

x) Sex with a virgin can cure sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

According to Bhattacharya and Nair (2014), the vulnerability of a girl living on the streets to sexual abuse stems not just from her being a woman on the street without adequate protection, but also because all through the history, she has been socialized into believing that she is sexually subservient to men. Camouflaging childhood experiences of girls and boys under one common category of 'child' is overlooking the fact that life experiences of children are greatly shaped and influenced by the social structures in which these children live. In societies shaped by patriarchal norms, girls from a young age are socialized into believing that they are inferior to boys; they are therefore more vulnerable to situations around them.

Yadav (2006) states that India has the world's largest number of sexually abused children; with a child below 16 years raped every 155<sup>th</sup> minute, a child below 10 years every 13<sup>th</sup> hour and one in every 10 children sexually abused at any point of time. According to NIPCCD (2002) there are 3 lakh child prostitutes in India (In Pachuau, 2014)

During the year 2002, there were little recorded evidences of cases of child sexual abuse in the region; however, this did not indicate that it was not present. While Sikkim had 4 recorded rape cases, both Arunachal Pradesh and Assam had 3 cases. While Meghalaya had 1 reported rape case, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura had no recorded cases of child sexual abuse during this period (NIPCCD, 2006)

In a study conducted by GOI (2007), covering 13 states (Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Delhi, Goa, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Mizoram, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal) across India which included Assam and Mizoram, out of a total of 12447 respondents, Assam accounted for the highest number (57.27 %) of those children who faced one or more severe forms of sexual abuse while Mizoram came seventh (16.20 %) of the total population. In India, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar and Delhi reported the highest percentage of

sexual abuse among both boys and girls. 21.90 per cent child respondents reported facing severe forms of sexual abuse and 50.76 per cent other forms of sexual abuse. Children in Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar and Delhi reported the highest incidence of sexual assault while Children on street, children at work and children in institutional care reported the highest incidence of sexual assault. Fifty per cent of the abuses are persons known to the child or in a position of trust and responsibility. Most children did not report the matter to anyone. The Ministry of Women and Child Development, GOI in its study, ranked Mizoram second in child abuse and 8<sup>th</sup> in child sexual abuse among 13 states (Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Delhi, Goa, Gujarat, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Mizoram, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal) covered in the study. There are reported 360 cases of Child Sexual Abuse in Mizoram in between 2003-2009. Further in their study, a questionnaire in order to examine the incidence of sexual abuse among child respondents was administered. Here, out of a total of 12,447 children, 53.22 per cent reported having faced one or more forms of sexual abuse that included severe and other forms. Among them 52.94 per cent were boys and 47.06 per cent were girls (GOI, 2007).

According to Awia (2005) the Mizo Customary Law included different laws and regulations related to Child Sexual Abuse where it stated that touching of female breasts, laying with or attempting to lay with a female without her consent, laying with a mentally challenged person as well as rape and child rape are all punishable under this law.

Cases of child sexual abuse registered under Child welfare Committee shows that between the year 2010- 2014 there is a steady increase in the prevalence of child sexual abuse in Aizawl District. It is also seen that sexual abuse among children is more common among girls than boys. During the year 2014, out of a total of 723 cases, 37 (5.11 %) cases were registered as child sexual abuse.



The Juvenile Justice Board (JJB) shows that during the year 2014, out of a total of 160 cases registered, a tenth (16) of the perpetrators were apprehended because of sexually abusing their fellow children. Among children who sexually abuse children, boys (14) are more common than girls (2).

The number of reported cases of registered under Women's Cell, Police Station during 2013 to February 2015 shows that half (50.67 %) of all the cases registered (148) are sexual abuse against children. This reveals the prevalence of child sexual abuse in Mizoram.

From the results, we see evidences of the prevalence of child sexual abuse in Mizoram. The Human Rights and Law Network (2012) Mizoram, in their interview and questionnaire, asked the respondents if they knew of unreported cases of sexual abuse. 80 respondents among adults and 48 among children admitted that they had in fact known and are a part of such unreported cases. The main reasons for these cases being unreported are:

1. Failure to disclose
2. Bribery
3. Fear of stigmatization from society
4. Belief that the violators do not get the punishment they deserve
5. Fear that it would destroy relationship among families in family related cases and fear that they would not get a share of the family properties.
6. Neglect both from the families and the victim
7. Poverty
8. Threats and fear that the victims would lose anyway.

Lalzarliana (2008) in his study found that out of a total number of 1126 children who were placed in various homes/institutions throughout the state, 1.68 per cent (19 children) were victims of sexual abuse.

In a study conducted by the Ministry of Women and Child Development children between the age group 6-12 years constitute the highest number of being sexually abused. Majority of the victims of abuse are girls and 90 per cent of the children know the person who abused them. It is found that the victims of abuse suffer from mental illness which affects their lives tremendously. The highest number of perpetrators belongs to the age group 19-25 years and most of them belong to poor families. In this study on child sexual abuse, 20.28 per cent male and 11.76 per cent female respondents were victims of severe forms of sexual abuse while 54.75 per cent of respondents suffered from other forms of sexual abuse. (Rohmingmawii 2012)

Children constitute 17.34 per cent of Mizoram's total population (Asian Centre for Human Rights, 2013). Pachuau (2014) refers to a study conducted by the GOI on child abuse in Mizoram where 16.20 per cent of children interviewed reported as having experienced one or more forms of sexual abuse out of which 59.96 per cent are boys and 40.04 per cent are girls. According to the study, Mizoram was also highest in forceful kissing with as many as 86.18 per cent of its female children having been subjected to this abuse. Teenage girls were also found to be very vulnerable to sexual advances during travel situation, with 57.58 per cent, the highest in India. In sexual advances during marriage ceremonies and exposing children to pornographic materials, Mizoram was also at the top.

The study is exploratory in nature. Both quantitative and qualitative method of research was used to gather data. The research was conducted in Aizawl District, Mizoram.

### **3.1 Method of Sampling**

The study was conducted in Aizawl District. Two communities, Chaltlang and Sihphir were identified based upon their core and peripheral location from the city. Two middle schools with the highest population of children from these two localities were selected out of which 104 children were given questionnaires. 52 children (26 boys and 26 girls) were selected from each school taking into consideration equal gender representation. In all there were 52 Girls and 52 Boys representing the sample.

### **3.2 Source of Data Collection**

The data was collected from both primary as well as secondary source. The primary sources include data collected through a structured questionnaire conducted during the study and information gathered from case studies, focus group discussions and participatory techniques. Secondary sources include data and information collected from published and unpublished reports, statistics, books, etc. from government and non-government sources.

### **3.3 Tools of Data Collection**

A structured questionnaire was constructed to form the tool for data collection. The tool was used to collect the socio-economic profile of the children, their knowledge and awareness about child sexual abuse, perception about child sexual abuse and perceived causes and consequences of child sexual abuse based on four point scales namely Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree and Strongly Agree. A pilot study was also conducted to validate the efficiency of the tool. Accordingly, changes were made to make the tool more child-centric. Qualitative methods such as case studies, Focus group Discussion and Participatory methods were also

used to generate participation of the children in the research process and understand the lived experience of the children with regards the issues about child sexual abuse.

### **3.4 Data Analysis**

The data was analyzed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS package. Descriptive statistics and findings from the qualitative method are presented to understand the perception of child sexual in Mizoram. The major findings shall be summarized in the concluding chapter.

### **3.5 Ethical Considerations**

Concerned governments and non-government departments were visited in order to find out the feasibility of the research. Informed consent from the authority i.e. School Education Department, Govt. of Mizoram was acquired with consent from the school and the children. Further, younger children were excluded from the sample to take into consideration sampling of age appropriate groups among the children. Children who did not give consent were excluded from the sample.

This chapter highlights the main findings of the study based on data collected through the use of both quantitative and qualitative techniques.

#### 4.1. Socio- Economic Characteristics of the Children

This section will focus on the socio-economic profile of the children such as their age distribution, their sub-tribe, religion, denomination, type of family, form of family and socio-economic characteristics.

**Table 1: Age**

Sl.No.	Age	Frequency	Percent
1	13 Years	56	53.8
2	14 Years	44	42.3
3	15 Years	4	3.8
	Total	104	100.0
<b>Mean Age</b>		<b>14 Years</b>	

Source: Computed

Table 1 represents the age distribution of the children. From the table, we see that more than half (53.8%) of the children are 13 year olds followed by less than half (42.3%) of children who are 14 year olds. Less than a tenth (3.8%) of the children is 15 years old. The mean age of the children is 14 years.

**Table 2: Sub- Tribe.**

Sl.No.	Sub-tribe	Frequency	Percent
1	Lusei	51	49.0
2	Don't Know	21	20.2
3	Ralte	16	15.4
4	Hmar	8	7.7
5	Paihte	7	6.7
6	Mara	1	1.0

	Total	104	100.0
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Source: Computed

Table 2 shows the distribution of the children according to their sub-tribe. From the table, we see that almost half (49 %) of the children belong to the Lusei sub-tribe. A fifth of the children do not know which sub-tribe they belong to. More than a tenth (15.4%) of the children belongs to the Ralte sub-tribe followed by less than a tenth (7.7%) of the children who belong to the Hmar sub-tribe. Similarly those children who belong to the Paihte sub-tribe constitute less than a tenth (6.7%) of the children and very few (1 %) of the children belong to the Mara sub-tribe.

**Table 3: Religion**

Sl.No.	Religion	Frequency	Percent
1	Christianity	103	99.0
2	Hindu	1	1.0
	Total	104	100.0

Source: Computed

Table 3 shows the distribution of children according to their religion. The table shows that almost all (99%) of the children are Christians and only 1 child is a Hindu.

**Table 4: Denomination**

Sl.No.	Denomination	Frequency	Percent
1	Presbyterian	84	80.8
2	Catholic	11	10.6
3	Baptist	3	2.9
4	Salvation Army	3	2.9
5	Others	3	2.9
	Total	104	100.0

Source: Computed

Table 4 highlights the distribution of children according to their denomination. From the table, we find that majority (80.8 %) of the children belong to the Presbyterian denomination followed by a tenth (10.6%) of the children who belong to the Catholic denomination. Very few (2.9%) of the children each belong to the Baptist denomination, the Salvation Army and Others category.

**Table 5: Type of Family**

Sl.No.	Type of family	Frequency	Percent
1	Joint	73	70.2
2	Nuclear	31	29.8
	Total	104	100.0

Source: Computed

Table 5 represents the distribution of children according to their type of family. The table shows that majority of the children (70.2%) of the children live in a joint family while less than a third (29.8%) of the children are from a nuclear family.

**Table 6: Form of Family**

Sl.No.	Form of Family	Frequency	Percent
1	Stable family	99	95.2
2	Reconstituted Family	3	2.9
3	Broken Family	2	1.9
	Total	104	100.0

Source: Computed

Table 6 shows the distribution of children according to the form of family. The table reveals that almost all (95.2%) of the children belong to a stable family. Few (2.9%) of the children are from a reconstituted family and very few (1.9%) of the children comes from a broken family.

**Table 7: Socio- Economic Category.**

Sl.No.	Category	Frequency	Percent
1	Don't Know	77	74.0
2	APL	17	16.3
3	BPL	6	5.8
4	AAV	4	3.8
	Total	104	100.0

Source: Computed

Table 7 highlights the distribution of children according to their socio-economic category. From the table, we see that majority (74%) do not know their category. Among those who know, more than a tenth (16.3%) belongs to the APL category while only a few (5.8%) belong to the BPL category and another few (3.8 %) belong to the AAY category.

#### **4.2 Knowledge and Awareness of Child Sexual Abuse.**

This section discusses the findings related to the knowledge and awareness level of the children about child sexual abuse. It also discusses the findings related to the source of knowledge and awareness about child sexual abuse. The level of knowledge and awareness were measured based upon whether the children consider 17 statements as right or wrong. These statements cover concepts related to children and their rights and on the different understanding of child sexual abuse as defined by the POCSO Act.

**Table 8: Knowledge and Awareness**

Sl.No.	Knowledge and Awareness	Gender		Total N=104
		Male n=52	Female n=52	
1	Perpetrators can be strangers or known persons	50 (96.0)	51 (98.0)	101 (97.0)
2	Children have Rights against abuse	50 (96.0)	50 (96.0)	100 (96.0)
3	Perpetrator of CSA can be Male or Female	44 (51.0)	51 (48.0)	95 (91.0)



4	Perpetrator can be family and relatives	45 (40.0)	49 (47.0)	94 (90.0)
5	Age of children is 18 years below	47 (46.0)	46 (47.0)	93 (89.0)
6	CSA involves tricking children to do sexual activities	41 (48.0)	48 (45.0)	89 (86.0)
7	Rape is CSA	44 (45.0)	45 (45.0)	89 (86.0)
8	Know about CSA	40 (48.0)	48 (44.0)	88 (85.0)
9	CSA is a global problem	41 (43.0)	43 (42.0)	84 (81.0)
10	CSA involves exhibitionism	36 (44.0)	44 (40.0)	80 (77.0)
11	Same sex can be the perpetrator	34 (38.0)	38 (36.0)	72 (69.0)
12	CSA involves threatening child for pornographic purposes	29 (40.0)	40 (35.0)	69 (66.0)
13	CSA involves showing sexual pictures and activities	32 (33.0)	33 (33.0)	65 (63.0)
14	CSA involves touching and forcing to Touch	36 (29.0)	29 (33.0)	65 (63.0)
15	CSA involves creating sexual sounds and actions	36 (26.0)	26 (31.0)	62 (60.0)
16	CSA involves stalking and attempting to contact the child with sexual intent	27 (27.0)	27 (27.0)	54 (52.0)
17	Awareness and knowledge of CSA due to experience	3 (3.0)	3 (3.0)	6 (6.0)

Source: Computed                      Figures in parenthesis indicates percentages

Table 8 represents the distribution of children according to their knowledge and awareness level about child sexual abuse. What we can see from the table is that the children's awareness and knowledge on child sexual abuse is quite high although on some, it is fairly above average. The result shows that 97 per cent of the respondents are aware/know that the perpetrators can either be strangers or known persons. Another 96 per cent of the children are

aware/ know that they have their own rights against sexual abuse. Again, 90 per cent of the children understand that the perpetrators can either be male or female and that perpetrators of child sexual abuse can be family member or relatives. Then, there were those children (89%) who are aware/know about the age children cover. In addition, 86 per cent of the children are aware and know about child sexual abuse as involving tricking children with the help of various methods to participate in sexual activities and rape as a form of child sexual abuse. Children who have known or heard about child sexual abuse constitutes 85 per cent and 81 per cent of the children are aware/know about child sexual abuse as a global problem. Further, those children who are aware/know about exhibitionism or portraying of the body for sexual purposes as part of child sexual abuse constitute 77 per cent of the sample. There were 69 per cent of the children who are aware/know that same sex of the child can be the perpetrator. The result also reveals that 66 per cent are aware/know about threats for sexual purposes as a form of child sexual abuse. Those children who are aware/know that showing sexual pictures and activities to a child as well as touching the body of a child or forcing them to touch themselves as a form of child sexual abuse constitute 63 per cent each. Then, children who are aware/know about child sexual abuse as also involving creating sexual sounds and actions constitute 60 per cent of the children. More than half (52%) of the children are aware/know about stalking and attempting to contact the child with sexual intent as a form of sexual abuse. Last but not the least, less than a tenth (6%) of the children are aware/know about child sexual abuse because they have experienced the abuse.

These findings are consistent with some studies such as the GOI (2007) which reveals that fifty per cent of sexual abuses are persons known to the child or in a position of trust and responsibility. Also, The Ministry of Ministry of Women and Child Development also show similar results where, in their study, majority of the victims of abuse are girls and 90 per cent of the children know the person who abused them. (Romangmawii 2012)

With regard to the gender distribution, there are very few differentiation found in the study. However, in the knowledge and awareness of one particular statement about child sexual abuse as involving threatening child for pornographic purposes, we find gender differentiation.

**Table 9: Source of Knowledge and Awareness**

Sl. No.	Source	Gender		Total N=104
		Boys n=52	Girls n=52	
1	Media	49 (94.0)	46 (88.0)	95 (91.0)
2	Family	30 (58.0)	44 (85.0)	74 (71.0)
3	School	35 (67.0)	34 (65.0)	69 (66.0)
4	Books	30 (58.0)	32 (62.0)	62 (60.0)
5	Friends	25 (48.0)	36 (69.0)	61 (59.0)
6	Government	18 (35.0)	14 (27.0)	32 (31.0)
7	Church	14 (27.0)	15 (29.0)	29 (28.0)
8	NGO's	13 (25.0)	16 (31.0)	29 (28.0)
9	Neighbors	12 (23.0)	13 (25.0)	25 (24.0)

Source: Computed Figures in parenthesis indicates percentages

Table 9 highlights the distribution of children according to the source of knowledge and awareness about child sexual abuse. The table reveals that majority (91%) of the children report their source as being from the media. Those children who reported that their source of information was from the family constitute 71 per cent of the children and we find wide gender differentiation in this category. Two-third (66%) of the children reported that they are aware /know about child sexual abuse from school and 60 per cent of the children reported that their source of information about child sexual abuse was from books. There were more than half

(59%) of the children who were informed about child sexual abuse by their friends. We find a wide gender differentiation found in this category also. Less than a third (31 %) acquire information from the government and more than a fourth (28%) of the children each received information from the church and NGOs. Less than a fourth (24%), acquire information from their neighbors.

Smith (2008) stated that children have a high chance of being sexually abused through the internet without the knowledge of adults or even without their own knowledge as no physical or direct contacts were made and therefore consider it to be safer but can unfortunately lead to child pornography.

#### 4.3 Perception on Child Sexual Abuse

Children’s perception on child sexual abuse depends upon how it is interpreted to them. Perception is personal and opinionated. Therefore, getting the general opinion of children on their perception about child sexual abuse will determine if society has succeeded or failed to steer children in the right path about such issues. This section discusses the findings related to the perception of children on child sexual abuse. It focuses on 14 negative and positive statements about attitudes on issues relating to child sexual abuse, 9 statements on causes of child sexual abuse and 8 statements on its consequences. The perception is measured according to 4-point scale namely Strongly Disagree: 1, Disagree: 2, Agree: 3 and Strongly Agree: 4. The mean scale of all children are taken to measure the overall level of perception of the children.

**Table 10: Children’s Perception**

Sl.No.	Perception	Gender		Total Mean Average
		Boys n=52	Girls n=52	
1	Adults should discuss about sex and sexuality	4	4	4

	to their children			
2	Virginity is the most valuable possession	3	3	3
3	I would not mind if the person I'm going to marry were not a virgin	3	3	3
4	Girls are often sexually abused because of their attire	3	3	3
5	It is sometimes the fault of the victim	3	3	3
6	I don't want to be friends with a victim of CSA because people would judge me	3	3	3
7	Victims of CSA must keep the abuse a secret	3	2	3
8	It is best to report if we know someone who has been sexually abused	3	3	3
9	A female perpetrator is as equally guilty as a male perpetrator	2	2	2
10	Girls are more vulnerable to CSA than boys	2	2	2
11	If the victim does not defend him/herself then he/she is allowing the abuse	2	2	2
12	The perpetrator of CSA must be forgiven	2	2	2
13	CSA occurs because discussions about it is considered a taboo	2	2	2
14	It is alright for children to see their parents naked	2	2	2

Source: Computed

Table 10 shows the mean average of perception of all children related to child sexual abuse. From the table, we can see that the children strongly agree that adults should discuss sex and sexuality with their children. They agree to the different statements related to virginity as the most valuable possession and to virginity as not important in determining decision to marry and to the occurrence of sexual abuse because of female attire. The children also agree to the statement that the victims can also be at fault and that they would not want to be friends with a victim of child sexual abuse for fear that people would judge them for their friendship. The children also agree that victims of child sexual abuse must keep their abuse a secret and not tell anyone although the girls disagree. In addition, the children also agree that as witnesses of child sexual abuse one must always report the abuse to the concerned authorities. However, the children disagree that female perpetrators are as equally guilty as male perpetrators. They also

disagree that girls are more vulnerable to child sexual abuse than boys. The children also disagree that when one does nothing to defend himself/herself during an abuse then he/she is allowing the act of sexual abuse. The children also disagree to forgiving perpetrators of child sexual abuse. They also disagree that one of the reasons for the occurrence of child sexual abuse is because society still considers discussions about it a taboo. The children also agree that it is not right for children to see their parents naked.

Though we find variation in the perceptions on child sexual abuse across the statements, except for one differentiation in gender relating to keeping child sexual abuse as a secret, we find no gender differentiation in the perception of child sexual abuse among children.

Schwendinger and Schwendinger (1983) had similar studies on different perceptions of people regarding child sexual abuse where during the 1970's it was perceived that rape was not possible unless the victims asked for it, or without their consent. A study conducted by Deb (2006) where some of the perceptions state, " If a child 'consents' he/she must have liked it, if they don't say 'no' it is not abuse." Rohmingmawii (2012) refers to the Human Rights and Law Network's study where many of the respondents feel that it is 'right' to forgive the perpetrators as a Christian.

**Table 11: Perceived causes of child sexual abuse**

Sl.No.	Perceived Causes	Gender		Total Mean Average
		Boys n=52	Girls n=52	
1	Children face Sexual Abuse because discussions about it is few	3	3	3
2	CSA occurs because parents are negligent to their children	3	3	3
3	CSA occurs because children are considered weak and incapable of decision making	3	3	3
4	CSA occurs because children are afraid of adults	3	3	3
5	CSA occurs due to economic conditions	3	3	3

6	CSA occurs due to socio-economic factors	3	3	3
7	Media causes CSA	3	3	3
8	CSA occurs among broken families	3	3	3
9	CSA can occur because of mental illness	2	2	2

Source: Computed

Table 11 shows the results of the mean average of the children's perceived causes of child sexual abuse. From the table, it can be seen that the children agree that child sexual abuse occurs because discussions about the issue to children is few and because parents are negligent to their children. The children also agree that it occurs because children are considered weak and unable to make their own decisions. They also agree that children's fear of adults is also considered another cause of child sexual abuse. The table also shows that the children agree that economic conditions as well as socio-economic factors are one of the reasons for child sexual abuse. The children also agree that media causes child sexual abuse. They also agree that child sexual abuse is prevalent among broken families. The children however, disagree that it can occur due to mental illness.

These findings which are consistent to the works of Ogunyemi (2000) where Child Sexual Abuse is influenced by economic difficulties (e.g., hawking to support family income), parental neglect or carelessness, exposure to pornographic materials, ignorance about human sexuality, lack of moral instruction and "provocative dressing" amongst many others. Other studies like the GOI (2007) which highlights that the subject of child sexual abuse is still considered a taboo in India as parents do not speak to children about sexuality as well as physical and emotional changes that take place during their growing years are also similar to the results of these findings.

From the table, we find only one variation on the perceived causes of child sexual abuse across the statements and find no gender differentiation among the children.

**Table 12: Perceived Consequences of Child Sexual Abuse**

Sl.No	Perceived Consequences	Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
1	Victims of CSA can lead a normal life when they grow up	3	3	3
2	Victims of CSA do not show signs of abuse	3	3	3
3	CSA lead to delinquency	3	3	3
4	CSA completely destroys the victims future	3	3	3
5	Victims of CSA lose trust in adults	3	3	3
6	CSA can lead to mental disabilities	3	3	3
7	CSA can lead to physical disabilities	3	3	3
8	CSA affects not only the child but the victim's family as well	2	2	2

Source: Computed

Table 12 reveals the mean average of the perceived consequences of children on child sexual abuse. The table reveals that the children agree that victims of child sexual abuse can grow up to lead a normal life. They also agree that victims do not always show signs of their abuse in their actions and behavior. The children also agree that child sexual abuse leads to delinquency and that it can also completely destroy their future. The children also agree that victims can lose their trust on adults and that it can lead to mental as well as physical disabilities. The children however, disagree that child sexual abuse affects not just the victims but also the victim's family as well. From the above table, we find one variation on the perceived consequences of child sexual abuse across the statements and no gender differentiation.

The findings from the table are consistent with the studies of Stermac & Dafoe (2009) who stated that 72 per cent the general public perceived that children who have been sexually abused will demonstrate overt and negative changes in their general behavioral functioning and



display bizarre sexualized behaviors. Many individuals also believe that most child abuse victims will no longer show love if the perpetrator is well known to the child. Cruise (2004) also revealed in his study that sexual abuse often does not result in lasting physical injuries or produce clear observable evidence.

#### **4.4 Case Vignettes**

In-depth interview was conducted with 4 children (2 boys and two girls) from both the core and peripheral community to augment information about the children's perception of child sexual abuse. The cases are as follows:

##### **Case 1**

Mami (Fictitious), aged 13, is a female studying in class 8. She is the youngest of 3 sibling sisters and her sisters had been married off. Since there is a large age gap between her and her sisters, she is still treated like a little girl around the house, which she enjoys. But also at the same time, she feels that her opinions mattered very little. She said that although her mother would discuss about boys, she never discussed to her about sex or sexuality but only warned that she should be careful around boys. Her father would occasionally tease her about her friendship with some boys. He never talks to her about sex and sexuality. She came to know about rape and other sexual abuses through adult conversations. She did not feel that she should enquire much about it since the topic was never discussed separately to her and felt a feeling of "shyness" about such topic. She fears that she would be laughed at or scolded for wanting to know about it. She said that she has not experienced any form of sexual abuse but feels uncomfortable when adults (both male and female) comments on her physical appearance. She once had an incident when she and her friend were going to a shop and a stranger stopped them and told them they were very pretty and gave her friend a peck on her cheek. Her friend froze and she grabbed her hand and ran home with her. When they reached home, they washed her friend's cheek and both

prayed. When asked why she didn't tell any adults, she thought that they would consider it silly since it was just a peck on the cheek and would not matter much. She also said that unlike other girls her age, she liked a much older boy who is 11 years older than her. She said that they have only met once in public and occasionally communicate through social media. When asked why she liked someone much older, she said that they are more mature and would make good boyfriend material in the future. She also adds that they haven't had any physical contact and would know how to protect herself if he tries to touch her in ways that she doesn't want him to.

### **Case analysis:**

This is an example of a typical 13 year old female, with a well- to-do family background. With the status of being the youngest and the 'baby' of the family, she is left with very little responsibility and her opinions are not taken seriously. Her only ideas about child sexual abuse come from her interpretation of the teases and brief 'small talks' about boys in general. Therefore, with this kind of attitude upon her, she has already developed a sense of intimidation to discuss serious matters with her parents, or any adult, for that matter. Further, her intimacy with a male much older to her through social media reveals the lack of knowledge she has on intent of sexual abuse.

### **Case 2**

Mama (Fictitious), aged 13 is a boy studying in class 7. He is the second eldest of four siblings and their mother has passed away when he was 10 years old. Theirs is a joint family and although their father works most of the time, he claimed he was a good father to them. He does not know the occupation of his father. He said that his grandmother would tell them a lot about being careful as boys to respect girls and not to lay a finger on them. Other than that he wasn't told much about sex or sexuality. When asked if he had watched pornography he admitted that he has and that most boys his age have had. He said that he hasn't had a girlfriend although he

likes someone from his class. However, he would rather play games with his friends than worry about girlfriends. He aims to become an IAS Officer one day and only then would he find himself a wife. He was mostly unresponsive when asked about his opinion on sexual abuse and would simply smile and shy away from the subject matter. However, he said that girls should act respectable and not laugh too loudly in public so that a man can respect her and he would be afraid to abuse her sexually. When asked, he also said that if any of his friends, male or female, had been abused, he would do his best to protect him/her and give his best support without judging them.

### **Case analysis**

With his mother no longer with them and his father constantly away from home, Mama finds care and protection under his grandmother. His grandmother is found to be the only source he has in learning about gender sensitive behavior. Like any other boy of his age, he is shy and uncomfortable to talk about his ideas and opinion about girls and matters about sex and sexuality. He had a lot of respect for the opposite sex and already developed a sense of protective notion towards them; however, we also see in this case that, girls have to have a condition to be risk free from sexual abuse. This case shows that with good guidance, children's perception can change.

### **Case 3**

Dini (Fictitious) is a girl of 14 years who studies in class 8. She has a younger brother aged 10 and her father is a teacher while her mother is a vegetable vendor. Dini's father is also a leader of the local social organization and she commented on how strict he is with the family. According to her, as an only daughter and an elder sister, her father would impose heavy responsibilities for her and he would often tell her she is still too young to think about boys or like boys and that their education was top priority. Her father teaches her and her brother

manners and set rules for them. When she first had her menstruation at age 13, her father commented that she was too young to menstruate and teased her saying she was too flirty. Her mother would tell her that her father only meant to protect her and it is her duty to obey him. She also claims that she is the only one among her group of friends who has not applied make-up or dress up like them, although she does not see the harm and believes she is of age. She also complains that while her brother was allowed to go out and play after school she was expected to stay at home and look after the house. She said that she does not share a close relationship with her father while she and her mother are close. She wishes to become a nurse one day but never a teacher.

### **Case analysis**

This case illustrates the power of patriarchy in determining certain rules that may seem offensive in terms of sexuality. At a young age, Dini is imposed to do household chores much to her dislike and her father's overpowering nature has created a drift in their relationship. Her father's expectation and her mother's support to this expectation reveal her disinterest in beauty and fashion. We also see in this case that derogatory words such as 'flirty' used by her father increases her indignation towards her father.

The case analysis here is consistent to that of Bhattacharya and Nair's (2014) study where, the vulnerability of female all throughout history is that she has been socialized into believing that she is sexually subservient to men. In societies shaped by patriarchal norms, girls from a young age are socialized into believing that they are inferior to boys; they are therefore more vulnerable to situations around them. Girls are expected to be home-makers the moment their sex is known in a patriarchal society.

**Case 4:**

Kima (Fictitious) is 13 years old boy reading in class 7. Both his mother and father are farmers and he is the middle among 5 siblings. Kima's uncle, who was an alcoholic, also lives with them. He said that his father is very different from his uncle. He is very protective of his three sisters. He believes that girls should be protected all the time as they are physically weaker than boys else they would be taken advantage of. He was very shy when the topic of relationships was brought up but later admitted that he likes someone from his locality but does not plan on approaching her. Kima does not have much source of information regarding sexuality or child sexual abuse, and has very little to comment on it. He says that he has only come to hear of the term 'child sexual abuse' from when this study was conducted. Before, he had never given much thought about it, although he considers rape to be one of the most sinful acts. He claims that he has watched movies with explicit contents or scenes on television even with the presence of his family but was never told not to watch them or never heard adults comment about them. Although he understands that males also be victims of child sexual abuse, he says that he had never believed it to actually happen. He however, comments that it is the duty of a boy to protect and respect a girl from harm and even if she is a victim of abuse, she should not be judged.

**Case analysis**

This case illustrates a boy's understanding of a female's vulnerability and sensitivity to abuse. However, this case also illustrates how children feel inhibited to talk about issues of sex and also how little information are provided to children about sex, sexuality and child sexual abuse. This lack of information makes him ignorant as to what he should know about such issues for a boy of his age.

Here we can see that this case is similar to the studies of Suttles and Remer (2008) where because of societal attitudes and expectations that boys should be self reliant, physically tough and able to defend themselves, they often are not perceived to be victims of sexual abuse.

#### **4.5 Participatory Technique: Cause and Effect Exercise**

Cause and effect diagram was administered to understand the causes and effect of child sexual abuse from children's point of view. The findings are as follows:

a) The causes of Child Sexual abuse are delinquency, mental illness, perversion, female attire (i.e. the inappropriate or indecent dressing of female that could attract male attention) attention seekers (where they want to draw peoples' attention and gain popularity) and abusive parents or relatives.

b) The effects of child sexual abuse are depression, stigmatization from the society, physical and mental health, and delinquency.

#### **4.6 Focus Group Discussions**

Focus Group Discussion was conducted on various topics pertaining to child sexual abuse. The findings are as follows:

a) The source of information about child sexual abuse was the television and mainly from the local television serial, 'Savdhaan India'. Some knew about it from adult discussions about the issue.

b) Adults rarely discussed the topic of child sexual abuse with them. However, children know about it from adult's discussion with other adults.

c) According to the situation that leads to sexual abuse, majority of the children opined that it can be the victim's fault; fewer children felt that it can be the perpetrators fault and some children opined that it was the family's fault.

- d) Regarding the age of the perpetrator, majority of the children find that an older male perpetrator is guiltier than a younger perpetrator. The reason behind this is that they expect that an older person would have better morals and self discipline than a younger perpetrator who is more naïve and incompetent.

This chapter summarizes the research, focusing on the major findings and suggests measures for social work intervention and policy making.

Children have always been and will always be the vulnerable section of the society. People take advantage of this vulnerability and hence they become accessible targets to different forms of abuse. The way they are treated or mistreated is what will determine how they continue to live their lives and see the world from their own perspectives.

With the course of time, people have turned to protecting these children and a number laws and legislations have even been implemented to ensure safety of these children. But in spite of the laws implemented, or acts passed or amended, some unfortunate child will never be fully protected when he/she is unsafe at his/her own home. When a father, or an uncle, or even a mother, to whom a child is supposed to look up to for love, care and support, cannot protect the child, but instead brings fear to the child, it could possibly crush everything that the child was meant to be. The magnitude and incidence of various studies of child sexual abuse all over the world proved its prevalence and severity. These studies go to show the vulnerability of children and how much their vulnerability has been violated and misused.

A child adapts and develops according to the environment he/she is associated with most. As a result of this, children vulnerability increases. Child sexual abuse is a social problem that exists as a result of the environment among many others. Children's awareness, knowledge and perceptions are important in solving the problems of child sexual abuse. This study, therefore, attempts to find out the awareness, knowledge and perception of child sexual abuse among school children in Aizawl district, Mizoram. The main objectives of the study are to examine the knowledge and awareness of school children about child sexual abuse, to explore the perception of school children about child sexual abuse across gender and to suggest measures for social work intervention and social policy. For this purpose, both qualitative and quantitative methods



are used. A total of 104 students, 52 each from two schools formed the sample. Primary sources such as focus group discussion, participatory method, case studies and questionnaire as well as secondary sources were used to collect data. The data was then analyzed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS package.

From the results we can see that children's awareness and attitude towards child sexual abuse or the lack of it, is highly determined by the environment that they are brought up into whether in their homes or their schools, among their friends or at church, the television channels they watch or the social media they are active in and most importantly the people they associate with. While most children developed a high sense of knowledge about the issues of child sexual abuse and their attitude towards it is mostly favorable, some children do not possess as much awareness on the issue and the study has also produced some unfavorable results as well. This lack of knowledge and negative perceptions from the children may be caused by adult's negligence of their children, lack of awareness at homes or at school or even at the community level about the importance of understanding the issue as well as people's ignorance about the available services as well as prevention programs that cater to issues of child sexual abuse.

## **5.1 Findings**

- The mean age for both boys and girls was 14years.
- Almost half of the respondents are from the Lusei sub-tribe. A fifth of the children did not know which sub-tribe they belonged to.
- Almost all the respondents are Christians. A large number of the children belong to the Presbyterian denomination while a fifth of the total respondents belong to other denominations.
- Majority of the children belongs to a joint family and almost all of the children are from a stable background.

- While most of the children do not know which Socio-economic category they belong to, a majority of those who know belongs to Above Poverty Line (APL).
- The overall knowledge and awareness level of the children regarding child sexual abuse is high. A majority of the children know and understand that perpetrators of child sexual abuse can be any person, male or female, known or unknown, related or unrelated to the child. They are also well aware that as children, they have their own rights against any form of abuse. A majority of the children have known or heard about child sexual abuse and some of its forms like rape, tricking children into performing sexual activities and exhibitionism. However, threatening children for pornographic purposes, touching for forcing them to touch their body parts, creating sexual sounds and movements in front of a child, stalking and attempted contact with sexual intent are lesser known forms of child sexual abuse to the children. Majority are aware that child sexual abuse is an international problem while almost a third, are not aware that sexual abuse can occur among the same sex. Some response even stated that their knowledge of child sexual abuse comes from their personal experiences.
- While a majority of the children claim that, their information is acquired from the media, mostly from social network sites and television. Family is also highly considered to provide these information, while about two-thirds claim that their sources of information also comes from school, books and their friends while about a third acquire parts of their information from the government, church, NGOs and their neighbors.
- The children's perception on child sexual abuse is also on the favorable side. The mean result indicate that majority of the children agree that adults should have discussions about sex and sexuality to their children. While majority agree that virginity is considered to be the most valuable possession, ironically, most claim that they would not mind if the person they are to marry were not virgins.

- Most children perceive that female attire triggers male attention and it is one of the reasons that they are sexually abused, and also perceive that sometimes the victims are also at fault on the act that leads to abuse.
- Oddly, the children claimed that they would not judge victims of child sexual abuse but results show that they would be afraid to be friends with victims of child sexual abuse for fear that people would judge them.
- Boys and girls have different opinions in victims keeping their abuse a secret. While boys agree that the victims should keep silent when or if they are being abused, while girls disagree. However, in contrary, they consider that reporting an incident of child sexual abuse as witnesses is a must.
- The children disagree that female perpetrators are equally guilty as male perpetrators. They however, disagree that girls are more vulnerable to sexual abuse than boys.
- They also perceive that being unable to defend themselves during sexual abuse does not mean that they are allowing the abuse to happen, and that under no circumstances the perpetrators should be forgiven.
- The children disagree that discussions about the issues of child sexual abuse is still considered to be a taboo and unaccepted by the society, which causes the abuse to happen. However, in contrary, they agree that such issues are hardly discussed and this ignorance can lead to the prevalence of child sexual abuse.
- The children do not find it acceptable for children to see their parents naked under any circumstances. They perceive that neglect of children is one of the causes of child sexual abuse.
- The children also perceive that children's fear of adults as their superiority and children's inferior status and incapability of making decisions for themselves are some of the reasons why child sexual abuse occurs.

- They also consider poor economic conditions and other socio economic factors as well as families from a broken and unstable background to be some reasons of child sexual abuse.
- The perceived cause of child sexual abuse of these children is the media. They agree to the fact that media is responsible in influencing people to indulge in activities relating to child sexual abuse.
- The children do not agree that people with mental disabilities can sexually abuse a child.
- Most of the children perceive some victims of child sexual abuse can even go on living normal and happy lives.
- There is no significant gender differentiation found in the perception of children on child sexual abuse. However, perception regarding to certain statements vary and in few cases perception is low.
- The children suggest that the causes of Child Sexual abuse are delinquency, mental illness, perversion, female attire, attention seekers and abusive parents and/or relatives.
- According to them, the effects of child sexual abuse are depression, stigmatization from the society, physical and mental health, and delinquency.
- Their source of information about child sexual abuse mainly from the local television serials and adult discussions about the issue.
- Discussions about sex or sexuality are rare among children although they have heard about it indirectly through adult discussions.
- Majority of the children opined that CSA can be the victim's fault; others blamed the perpetrators and some blamed the family as well.
- Regarding the age of the perpetrator, majority of the children find that an older male perpetrator is guiltier than a younger perpetrator.

## 5.2 Suggestions

- Parenting skills on child care and protection is needed in order to improve the knowledge and awareness of children on child sexual abuse. This can be initiated through parenting skill training programs across communities through coordinated efforts of the concerned authorities. This will indirectly reduce parental neglect, increase bond between children and their parents and improve communication between the two in terms of sex education and other family related matters that affects the child.
- Television shows, internet sites and other sources of media that can influence or encourage sexual abuse should be filtered or even banned for children's view. Initiative steps and measures should be taken so that these kinds of entertainment do not lead children in the wrong direction. Adults should take such measures to restrict children from watching or listening to these kinds of activities and programs. Censorship Boards should monitor local television channels that show explicit contents.
- Awareness programs about child sexual abuse as well as the laws and rules that exist in our society should be encouraged more at schools or at church services. Government and NGOs should make projects regarding these programs to cover every school and every church in the state to ensure that every child understands what child sexual abuse is and how to prevent themselves from such abuse or how to take care of themselves when they fall victims to it. These programs should be child-centric and basic so that even the younger children will be able to understand and learn to make use of what they are taught. Child Protection Cell or School Social Work can be established in schools to look into matters relating to child sexual abuse. These programs should not be limited to only children but adults as well. Adults also need to be educated about child sexual abuse and issues related to it. They have to be taught and trained how to respond and take necessary measures when a victim discloses their abuse to them. They should also

be told about services available that cater to the needs of their children. Parents, school teachers, older siblings, church service teachers and local leaders are important adults that children are closest to and are most likely to trust. These programs should be targeted especially among them. This can be done by initiating community based training programs either by the concerned government departments or by NGO's working in the field.

- NGOs and Government Organizations that provide services and facilities of child protection such as ICDS, ICPS, SSA and NHM needs to be strengthened and improved. Most people, especially children do not know that there are such services that can protect them or defend them when they need help. These services should make themselves available so that children who are not necessarily victims but witnesses of child sexual abuse know that they can report what they have seen or know and help prevent an abuse from happening further. Child-line services as well as protection mechanisms that exist must be ensured at all grassroots level.
- The scope of social work intervention in the area of child sexual abuse is large. The methods of Social Work Practice can be utilized at all levels of prevention – primary, secondary and tertiary. Case work and Group work method must be used more often among children and their families. Child and family centric techniques can be utilized to garner interest from the children and their families. These methods can also give inputs on increasing knowledge about child sexual abuse and create the right kind of perception on child sexual abuse. Community organization method can also be utilized to cater to macro level problems relating to child sexual abuse. Community efforts can be improved through this method and can help improve societal perception on child sexual abuse. The neighborhood model and social action model of intervention can be utilized. Further, more social work research can be undertaken to study the victims and their families and

also studies can be concentrated upon the perpetrators. Research on adults who have experienced child sexual abuse can also be undertaken and these will reveal concrete data on the dynamics of this ever increasing violence against children.

**Perception of Child Sexual Abuse among School Children in Aizawl District, Mizoram**

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**Questionnaire**

**Questionnaire No:**

**Date:**

**School:**

**I. Personal Characteristics**

1. Name (Optional) :
2. Gender : Male/ Female
3. Age :
4. Class Studying :
5. Name of School :
6. Type of School : Government/ Private
7. Sub Tribe :Lusei/Ralte/Hmar/Paihte/Mara/Lai/Other(specify)
8. Religion : Christianity / Hindu / Muslim / Buddhist / Sikh / Jewish / Any other \_\_\_\_\_
9. Denomination : Presbyterian/Baptist/ SAY/Catholic/UPC/Any other \_\_\_\_\_
10. Native Place :
11. Location of school : Core/ Periphery
12. Type of Family : Nuclear/ Joint
13. Form of Family : Stable/ Broken /Reconstituted/ any other (Specify \_\_\_\_\_)

**II. Economic Characteristics of Family**

14. Socio-Economic Category of Family : AAY / BPL / APL
15. Occupation of father/Guardian :
16. Monthly Income of father/ Guardian :
17. Occupation of Mother/Guardian :
18. Monthly Income of mother Guardian :

**III Awareness and Knowledge about Child Sexual Abuse**

Sl.No.	Awareness and Knowledge	Yes	No	Don't Know
19	A child is below 18 years of age			
20	A child has rights against all forms of abuse.			
21.	I have heard about child sexual abuse			
22.	Child sexual abuse occurs across all socio-economic categories.			
23	Mizoram has very few cases of child sexual abuse.			
24.	Both male and female can be perpetrators of child sexual abuse.			
25.	Friends, neighbors, teachers and strangers can sexually abuse children.			
26.	Child sexual abuse can occur between the same sex.			
27.	A child can be sexually abused by his/her own family and relatives			
28.	Child Sexual Abuse involves showing sexual pictures and activities to a child.			
29.	Child sexual abuse includes making sounds or actions with sexual intent in front of a child			
30.	Child sexual abuse involves tricking children into sexual activity through different methods.			
31.	Child sexual abuse involves stalking, directly or indirectly attempting to contact the child with sexual intent.			
32.	Child sexual abuse can also include exhibitionism, portraying or exposing a child to sexual acts.			
33.	Child sexual abuse also includes threatening of a child to show any part of his/her body through media, or for pornographic purposes			
34.	Child sexual abuse involves touching or forcing the child to touch the private parts of the body with sexual intent.			
35.	Rape is considered to be a form of child sexual abuse.			
36.	I know about child sexual abuse because I have experienced it.			

**37. Source of Awareness about Child Sexual Abuse**

Sl.No	Source	Please Tick
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1	Family	
2	Friends	
3	School	
4	Church	
5	Neighbors	
6	Media (print and (or) visual)	
7.	NGOs	
8.	Governments	
9.	Books	

**IV. Perception on Child Sexual Abuse**

Sl.No.	Perception	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
38..	Adults should discuss about sex with their children.				
39.	Virginity before marriage is a most valuable possession				
40.	It wouldn't bother me if the boy/girl I marry were not a virgin.				
41.	Sexual abuse among girls is common because they do not dress appropriately/respectfully				
42.	It is sometimes the victim's fault when sexual abuse occurs				
43.	I would stay away from a friend who has been a victim of sexual abuse because people would then judge me				
44	Anyone who has experienced child sexual abuse must keep it a secret				
45.	Reporting a case of child sexual abuse is a must.				
46.	A female perpetrator is as equally guilty as a male perpetrator				
47.	Girls are more vulnerable to sexual abuse than boys				
48.	If the victim does not fight back during the abuse then he/she is allowing the abuse to happen				
49.	We should forgive the perpetrators.				
50.	Child sexual abuse occurs because discussions about sex and sexuality to children are still considered a taboo.				
51.	It is alright for children to see their parents naked.				

**V. Perceived causes of Child sexual Abuse**

Sl. no	Perceived causes	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
52.	Children are sexually abused because of lack of awareness about such issues.				
53.	Child sexual abuse occurs because of parent's negligence of their children.				
54.	Children are 'easy targets' to sexual abuse because they are considered weak.				
55.	Child sexual abuse occurs because of children's fear of adults.				
56.	Child sexual abuse occurs because of Economic factors.				
57.	Child sexual abuse occurs because of socio-cultural factors.				
58	Media causes child sexual abuse.				
59.	There are several cases of child sexual abuse from homes of broken family.				
60.	Mental illness can cause a person to commit sexual abuse.				

**VI. Perceived consequences of Child Sexual Abuse**

Sl.no	Perceived consequences	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly disagree
61.	A victim of child sexual abuse can grow up to live a normal life.				
62.	Some victims will not show any signs of child sexual abuse.				
63.	Child sexual abuse leads to anti-social behavior.				
64.	If someone has been a victim of sexual abuse				

	then their entire future is completely destroyed				
65.	Children who are victims of sexual abuse can lose all forms of trust on adults				
66.	Child sexual abuse causes mental health problems.				
67	Child sexual abuse also causes physical health problems				
68	A case of child sexual abuse can affect the whole family and not just the victim.				

**PERCEPTION OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AMONG SCHOOL  
CHILDREN IN AIZAWL DISTRICT, MIZORAM**

**ABSTRACT**

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**PERCEPTION OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AMONG SCHOOL CHILDREN IN  
AIZAWL DISTRICT, MIZORAM**

**ABSTRACT**

Children are the future generations of the world. They are responsible for bringing forth new meaning to existence. How we treat and nurture them now is how they will grow up to see the world and face it. Therefore, they are, in many ways more vulnerable than adults. According to UNICEF (2007), ‘the true measure of a nation’s standing is how well it attends to its children- their health and safety, their material security, their education and socialization and their sense of being loved, valued and included in families and societies to which they are born’ (In Pachuau, 2014). The WHO (2006) explains “Child sexual abuse is the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent, or that violated the laws or social taboos of the society”

Child sexual abuse is an issue that has been occurring for centuries, but attention has been paid only until recently. Most social work accounts that cater specifically to the welfare of children only began towards the 1960’s. Child Sexual Abuse is a very sensitive subject, and is in fact, one of the most difficult crimes to be recorded as many victims refuse to ‘come out’ and report their mishaps mostly due to fear of stigmatization from society, shame, threats and bribery. As such there are very little records about the issue, much to the advantage of the perpetrator. In a close-knit and conservative society like India, this issue is further kept silent and discussions about it are even considered a taboo. Likewise, in Mizoram as well, only a few incidences of child sexual abuse have been reported.

With the issue swept under the rug and discussions about sex, sexuality and sexual abuse considered inappropriate, there has been different myths and misperceptions about child sexual abuse. Children are even more confused and unaware of the issue, while being most vulnerable to it. Many children therefore, do not know or understand that they are being sexually abused until it is too late. They do not know how to protect or fend for themselves when someone tries to abuse them. They do not know how to describe what is being done to them because they have never been taught how to. Because of these reasons and many more, it is important to know the perceptions of child sexual abuse from a child's perception.

Although there is copious literature on child sexual abuse, literature on people's perception of the issue, especially children's perception is scarce and this particular study may be the first of its kind in Mizoram. Also, since the topic of Child Sexual Abuse is a sensitive subject, available literatures cannot provide precise studies or data that distinguishes what child sexual abuse is and what is not. Therefore, what a person perceived as sexual abuse may not necessarily be perceived the same by another. This study will aim to fill the missing gap on previous studies.

## **Objectives**

Following are the objectives of the present study:

1. To examine the knowledge and awareness of school children about child sexual abuse.
2. To explore the perception of school children about child sexual abuse across gender.
3. To suggest measures for social work intervention and social policy

## **Methodology:**

The study is exploratory in nature. Both quantitative and qualitative method of research was used to gather data. The research was conducted in Aizawl District, Mizoram. Two communities, Chaltlang and Sihphir were identified based upon their core and peripheral location from the city. Two middle schools with the highest population of children from these two localities were selected out of which a total of 104 children were given questionnaires. 52 children (26 boys and 26 girls) were selected from each school taking into consideration equal gender representation. In all there were 52 Girls and 52 Boys representing the sample. The data was collected from both primary as well as secondary source. The primary sources include data collected through a structured questionnaire conducted during the study and information gathered from case studies, focus group discussions and participatory techniques. Secondary sources include data and information collected from published and unpublished reports, statistics, books, etc. from government and non-government sources.

A structured questionnaire was constructed to form the tool for data collection. The tool was used to collect the socio-economic profile of the children, their knowledge and awareness about child sexual abuse, perception about child sexual abuse and perceived causes and consequences of child sexual abuse based on four point scales namely Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree and Strongly Agree. A pilot study was also conducted to validate the efficiency of the tool. Accordingly, changes were made to make the tool more child-centric. Qualitative methods such as case studies, Focus group Discussion and Participatory methods were also used to generate participation of the children in the research process and understand the lived experience of the children with regards the issues about child sexual abuse.

The data was analyzed through using Microsoft Excel and SPSS package. Descriptive statistics and findings from the qualitative method are presented to understand the perception of child sexual in Mizoram.

## **Results and discussions**

The overall knowledge and awareness level of the children regarding child sexual abuse is high. A majority of the children know and understand that perpetrators of child sexual abuse can be any person, male or female, known or unknown, related or unrelated to the child. They are also well aware that as children, they have their own rights against any form of abuse. A majority of the children have known or heard about child sexual abuse and some of its forms while some are still unknown to them. Some response even stated that their knowledge of child sexual abuse comes from their personal experiences. While a majority of the children claims that, their information is acquired from the media, mostly from social network sites and television. The children's perception on child sexual abuse is also on the favorable side. The mean result indicate that majority of the children agree that discussions about sex and sexuality are hardly made and adults should have discussions about it to their children. While majority agree that virginity is considered to be the most valuable possession, ironically, most claim that they would not mind if the person they are to marry were not virgins. Most children perceive that female attire triggers male attention and it is one of the reasons that they are sexually abused, and also perceive that sometimes the victims are also at fault on the act that leads to abuse. Oddly, the children claimed that they would not judge victims of child sexual abuse but results show that they would be afraid to be friends with victims of child sexual abuse for fear that people would judge them. Boys and girls have different opinions in victims keeping their abuse a secret. The children disagree that female perpetrators are equally guilty as male perpetrators. They however,

disagree that girls are more vulnerable to sexual abuse than boys. It is disagreed that discussions about the issues of child sexual abuse is still considered to be a taboo and unaccepted by the society, which causes the abuse to happen. They perceive that ignorance, neglect of children, fear of adults as their superior and their incapability of making decisions for themselves are some of the reasons why child sexual abuse occur. They also consider media, poor economic conditions and other socio economic factors as well as families from a broken and unstable background to be some reasons of child sexual abuse. The children do not agree that people with mental disabilities can sexually abuse a child. Most of the children perceive some victims of child sexual abuse can even go on living normal and happy lives.

There is no significant gender differentiation found in the perception of children on child sexual abuse. However, perception regarding to certain statements vary and in few cases perception is low.

## **Conclusion**

A child adapts and develops according to the environment he/she is associated with most. This study attempts to find out the perception of child sexual abuse among school children in Aizawl district, Mizoram. From the results we can see that children's awareness and attitude towards child sexual abuse or the lack of it, is highly determined by the environment that they are brought up into whether in their homes or their schools, among their friends or at church, the television channels they watch or the social media they are active in and most importantly the people they associate with. While most children developed a high sense of knowledge about the issues of child sexual abuse and their attitude towards it is mostly favorable, some children do not possess as much awareness on the issue and the study has also produced some unfavorable



results as well. This lack of knowledge and negative perceptions from the children may be caused by adult's negligence of their children, lack of awareness at homes or at school or even at the community level about the importance of understanding the issue as well as people's ignorance about the available services as well as prevention programs that cater to issues of child sexual abuse.

### **Suggestions**

- Family level - improving parenting skills through training programs and awareness.
- Media level – censorship and restrictions of explicit channels and sites for children under the age of 18 years.
- Community level – strengthening community awareness about child sexual abuse and encouraging local NGOs to spread the awareness.
- Institutional level – encouraging schools and churches to learn and teach about child sexual abuse and its prevention programs.
- Government and NGO level- strengthening of available programs and services so that they are more easily accessible to the people.
- Social work level (social work practice) : Primary, secondary and tertiary prevention.