COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS OF MALE CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE IN NORTH WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE, PAKISTAN.

NGO's COALITION ON CHILD RIGHTS – NWFP

Supported by UNICEF Pakistan

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Prof.M.Ismail
General Secretary NCCR.

INTRODUCTION

Child Sexual Abuse is the least explored and least acknowledged form of child abuse in Pakistan. The limited research by the NGOs shows that sexual abuse is quite prevalent in the Country. In early 1997, NCCR and UNICEF Peshawar, started a collaborative effort to actively involve NWFP based CBOs in Child Rights related activities. In order to prioritize the areas of intervention, it was decided to scan local newspapers for a three months period. The results showed 46 cases of child sexual abuse, besides other types of abuse and crimes against children in NWFP. The youngest victim was only 4 years old. These cases included individual sexual assaults, gangrapes, incest and exposing children to pornography by clandestine mafias. The vast majority of victims were boys.

In the 2nd phase the NCCR conducted a community based study to find out the dynamics and perceptions of male child sexual abuse in NWFP.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The **North West Frontier Province** of Pakistan is the home of *Pukhtuns*, who follow their own code of life and honor called "*Pukhtoonwali*" or "*Pukhto*". Despite strong modernizing influences (e.g. urbanization, increased access to education and media etc), the code is strictly adhered to and is written in the hearts of all Pukhtuns. The centuries old Pushtu saying, "*Mulk da Pukhtu dey*" (It is the land of Pukhtu or Pukhtunwali) is still a dominant factor in the social discourse. It is not easy to explain this unwritten code but in a nutshell, it explains what is honorable behaviour for a Pukhtun. Pukhtunwali requires that hospitality be extended to all strangers and guests; it assures asylum even for enemies; it demands that chastity of women be protected and above all it insists on revenge for injury or insult, irrespective of consequences.

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The Pukhtun world is a world dominated by men and masculinity is constantly praised. The Pukhtun male is the member of a very chauvinistic society, which

revolves around the concept of manliness (Saritob). The greatest compliment you can pay a Pukhtoon is "Saray dey" or "Zwan dey" (he is a man). Even a woman is praised through compliments like "Nara khaza da" (She is a very manly woman). The highest asset of a Pukhtoon has always been his sons and this is proved by the gunfire and merry making that follows the birth of a son. Culturally the code of honor requires a Pukthoon to adopt a protective role towards his women folk. The easiest and most convenient means of achieving this is by segregating females (purdah) so that they are least visible to strangers.

The construction of 'sex' and 'sexuality' is very complex and least researched in NWFP. What we have is gender segregation of social space and male control of social spaces and economic resources. Gender roles and rules are strictly defined, not only in terms of physical body but also in terms of social duties and obligations. Transgression of these rules can be severely punished through stigm atization, social exclusion, physical abuse and even death. Post pubescent boys on the other hand are not men, not adults, a state defined by marriage. In that sense they are the "beardless youths", sexually available to men. "Balkay" is a common word used for such boys. Male homosociobility and homoaffectionalism exist and is socially tolerated. Physical affection between men and women in public is not socially acceptable and often can be dangerous for both. For many men, because women are just not accessible, romantic longings are at a distance, unfulfilled and often filled with sexual urgency. All this emotional and sexual energy, the affectional needs and desires have very few socially acceptable outlets. However, intense male friendships are formed within homoaffectionalist framework, which include extensive touching, body contact and even sharing of beds.

STUDY DESIGN

The study was conducted with the help of a specially designed questionnaire (Annex-I). The questionnaire was pre-tested and slightly modified in the light of feedback from some selected communities.

1800 adult male respondents were interviewed. The respondents were from all walks of life across 60 communities in 11 districts of the North West Frontier Province.

The interviewers were members of local community based organizations (CBOs). (Annexure – II). They were given 2 days training in administering interviews and filling the questionnaire. The filled questionnaires were checked for accuracy and quality by the local co-ordinators and NCCR researchers. The incomplete/low quality questionnaires were discarded and further interviews conducted in the target area.

The researchers at the NCCR's Peshawar Office did the data compilation, analysis and report writing.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1800 respondents from 60 communities of the province, were interviewed. 90 questionnaires were discarded in the final analysis due to incomplete information. The district-wise distribution of respondents is given in Table – I.

TABLE – I

Distribution of respondents according to the district of residence.

DISTRICT	NUMBER OF
	RESPONDENTS
Swabi	297
Mardan	279
Peshawar	58
Nowshehra	227
Bannu	150
Lakki marwat	56
D.I.Khan	81
Haripur	270
Dir	208
Swat	57
Malakand Agency	27
TOTAL	1710

PROFESSION OF THE RESPONDENTS

The Professions of respondents are mentioned in Table - II

TABLE - II

PROFESSION	NUMBER OF	% age
	RESPONDENTS	
Agriculture	189	11.05
Businessmen	317	18.54
Professionals (doctors,	28	1.64
engineers, lawyers)		
Skilled workers	401	23.45
Unskilled workers	66	3.86
Salaried employees	447	26.14
Students	52	3.04
Religious leaders/students	93	5.44
Others	42	2.46
Jobless	75	4.38
TOTAL	1710	100

The interviewers were given specific instructions to include people from all walks of life in the research. The decision about the number of respondents from different professions / trades was made by the local district co-ordinates of the Survey in consultation with the field interviewers.

EDUCATIONAL STATUS

The educational status of respondents is given in Table - III

TABLE - III

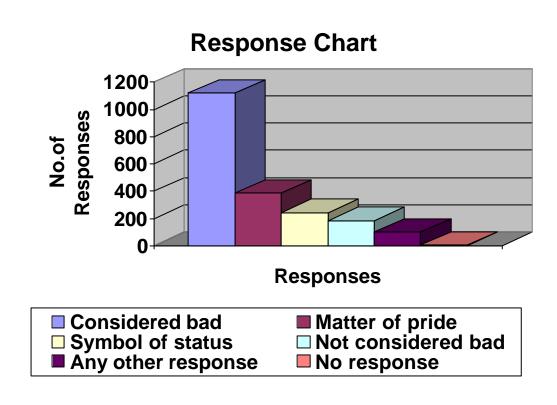
LEVEL OF EDUCATION	NUMBER OF	% age
	RESPONDENTS	
No Schooling	343	20.06
Primary	139	8013
Middle	227	13.27
Matric	447	26.14
Inter	168	9.83
Graduate & above	353	20.64
Religious education only	33	1.93
TOTAL	1710	100

COMMUNITY FEELINGS ABOUT CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

The respondents were asked that how people in general in their communities' feel about adults having sex with boys. The responses are given in Table-4. Some of the respondents gave more than one response.

TABLE - IV

RESPONSE	NUMBER	% age
Considered bad	1119	65.43
Matter of pride	386	22.57
Symbol of status	240	14.04
Not considered bad	184	10.76
Any other response	98	5.73
No response	4	0.23



It is important to note that almost one third of the people don't consider child sexual abuse bad, let alone a crime or sin. For many people it is a matter of pride, and a symbol of power and status.

Some other responses lumped under "Any other response" are given in Box-1.

BOX. 1

- Homosexuality is a mental disease.
- Keeping boys is a fashion.
- Keeping boys is an absolute addiction.
- It is the only way to enjoy life in our dull society.
- One can enjoy real sex only with boys.
- The real sex is hot and dry. You can have it only with a boy.
- I never enjoy sex with my wife. I am attracted to boys by nature.
- I know that it is bad, but I can't control myself.
- It is safe to have sex with boys. They never get pregnant.
- My teacher abused me. Now it is my turn to have sex with my students.
- People hate homosexuals but no body stops them.
- Boys are easily available.
- I have employed a handsome boy in my tea shop. He attracts a lot of customers.

Homosexuality is a mental disease

These findings are significant in the context of Pukhtoon Society where social control is constructed by traditional concepts of Honor (*Izzat*) and Shame (*Sharram*). Honor, not so much as what is honorable, but in terms of community standing. Shame, not so much as what may be deemed as wrongful (or even sinful), but by behaviour and conduct which brings shame to the family and community as a whole. These precepts are defined by traditions, customs and values. These two frameworks arise out of understandings of concepts around PUBLIC and PRIVATE. It needs to be noted that these concepts have no firm boundaries. The boundaries will shift and change according to 'visibility'.

Honor or "Izzat" is a possession, not a quality. Shame is an expression of honor being removed. Both of these elements are an expression of 'publicness'. They are public events. Public behaviour, behaviour that is visible, is within a sense of community duty, honor and obligation. In this context, behaviour, which is visible to the community, falls within the scope of public behaviour and therefore falls within concepts of honor and shame. If the behaviour is not visible, then it doesn't exist. Community honor is maintained. Shame does not exist and all is well with the Pukhtoon world!

"PAT GHAL BACHA DEY" – Pushto saying (A hidden thief is just like a King)

Such systems of public and private lead to denial of socially unacceptable behaviors including child sexual abuse. In some cultures, a sense of guilt plays a central role in controlling personal behaviors. In Pukhtoon culture, while a measure of guilt does exist, it is shame that is a much stronger factor. This leads to construction of personal behaviors that are often not ruled by a sense of guilt, but by a sense of shame. And for the shame to exist, the behaviour must be public. Such behaviors are acceptable, as long as they remain invisible and there is no discussion about them. A well known Pukhtu wish "Bey parday ma shey" (may you never be uncovered), clearly testifies this perception. The wish implies that God should always keep your honor intact and anything or act, which may jeopardize your honor, should never happen and even if happens, it should remain hidden from public eye.

BACHABAZI ==

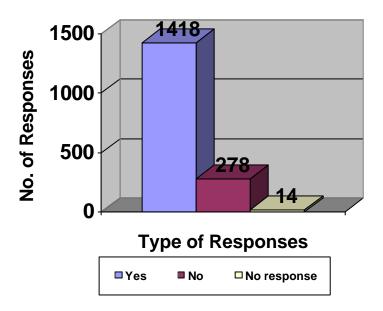
KEEPING BOYS FOR SEXUAL SERVICES)

The respondents were asked, "Do you know that some adults keep boys for sexual services in your area?" The responses are given in Table -V.

TABLE - V
Knowledge of respondents about Adults keeping boys for Sexual Services

RESPONSE	NUMBER	% age
Yes	1418	82.92
No	278	16.26
No response	14	0.82
TOTAL	1710	100

RESPONSE CHART



The results show that the practice of keeping boys (called "Bachabazi" locally) is a highly prevalent practice. Despite the fact that the majority of people consider it bad, the practice is by and large tolerated and accepted. There is again a double societal standard vis-a-vis "Bachabazi" and male homosexuality. While it is quite shameful and disgracing to be a passive agent (receptive partner), it is a matter of pride and power to be an active agent (insertive partner) in a homosexual relationship.

PREVALENCE OF THE PRACTICE

The respondents who said "Yes" to the question whether they knew that some adults keep boys for sexual services were asked, "How much common is this practice, according to your judgement?" The results are mentioned in Table – VI.

TABLE - VI

PREVALENCE OF THE	NUMBER OF	% age
BOYS KEEPING	RESPONSES	
PRACTICE		
Very common	227	16.01
Common	439	30.96
Rare	469	33.07
Very rare	240	16.93
Not sure	43	3.03
TOTAL	1418	100

The results show that almost 47% respondents think that the practice of keeping boys is either very common or common in their communities.

BOYS SELLING SEX FOR MONEY

The respondents were asked, whether they knew that some boys (in their own communities) sell sex for money. The responses are mentioned in Table – VII.

TABLE - VII

RESPONSE	NUMBER OF	% age
	RESPONDENTS	
Yes	1378	80.59
No	295	17.25
Not sure	37	2.16
TOTAL	1710	100

It is painful to note that commercial sexual exploitation of children is very common all over NWFP. It is unbelievable that in a conservative tribal culture, children are so commonly exploited by adults to satisfy their morbid sexual appetite. But unfortunately, that is the reality of life in this part of the World.

PLACES FROM WHERE BOYS ARE PROCURED FOR SEXUAL SERVICES

The respondents were asked if they knew the places * (in their own communities), from where adults procure boys for sexual purposes. The responses are mentioned in Table – VIII. Some of the respondents mentioned more tan one place/s.

TABLE - VIII

PLACE	NUMBER OF RESPONSES
Hotels / Sarais	586
Schools	377
Workplace	331
Markets	319
Bus adda / station	280
Video shops	145
Snooker clubs	34
Cinema halls	17
Any other place	122

The Table shows that child prostitution thrives in a variety of establishments / places in the community. Poverty is the common factor, which exposes these children to abuse and violation. While the streets (markets, bus terminals, hotels, restaurants etc) present opportunities for work, they also violate a child's dignity

and adversely affect his physical, mental emotional and overall well being. These children are especially vulnerable to smoking, gambling, prostitution, pickpocketting and other crimes. Sex trading satisfies multiple desires for these children. Sex is often unprotected and consequently these children are at increasing risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS.

A recent phenomenon is the mushrooming of video games centres and snooker clubs in all nooks and corners of the province, including far-flung rural areas. Children become addicted to these games very soon. In order to meet the costs of these games, they may exchange sex for money. Consequently such establishments have become very popular amongst the pedophiles, where they can easily procure children for sex in exchange for money.

Regrettably, even schools are not safe places for children. The pedophiles constantly hover around educational institutions in search of opportunities to engage children in sex by various means. There were reports that even teachers are involved in this sordid practice.

* (The respondents even mentioned the actual names and addresses of the establishments in their communities. These are not mentioned in the report for the sake of secrecy and confidentiality).

SEXUAL ABUSE BY FORCE

The respondents were asked "Do you know about any incident in your community / village (in the last one year) in which a boy was sexually abused by force?" The results are given in Table – IX.

TABLE – IX
Sexual abuse by force

RESPONSE	NUMBER	% AGE
Yes	539	31.52
No	1141	66.73
No response	30	1.75

The results show that 31.52 % respondents knew of at least one incident of sexual abuse by force. 321 volunteered to give details of these incidents. Some examples are mentioned in Box 2.

- A 12 years old boy, selling berries in market, was tricked by a man to a video center. He was sexually abused. Police registered a case against the abuser (Distt. D.I.Khan).
- A 12 years old boy was sexually abused by his teacher in a religious madrassa. Few days latter the child killed the abuser during sleep. (Distt. Bannu).
- Five men abused a minor boy in village Bego Khel (Distt. Bannu).
- A constable of police station Lund Khwar abused a 16 years old boy (Distt. Mardan).
- A minor boy was gangraped by the owner and servants of a hotel in Talash (Distt. Dir).
- A primary school teacher abused a student of 4th class (Distt. Huripur).
- A man abused a seven years old primary school student during school interval at village Sodher (Distt. Swabi).
- Five rascals abused a poor boy in our village. The abusers are very influential. (Distt. Swabi).
- A minor boy living with his parents in Railway Colony was raped on gunpoint by some men (Peshawar).

CONCLUSIONS:

The following general conclusions are derived from this study;

- * There is a high prevalence of male child sexual abuse including commercial sexual exploitation of children in North West Frontier Province.
- * Children are being sexually abused and exploited at workplaces, in markets, hotels, bus stations, video shops, snooker clubs, schools and other community places.
- * Keeping young boys for sexual services by adults is by and large tolerated and accepted by the Society. The issue is further complicated due to double societal standards vis-a-vis homosexuality and 'bachabazi' and other social norms which perpetuate these practices.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Child Sexual Abuse including commercial sexual exploitation of children is a complex problem and it would be naïve to think that there is a simple answer. The following general suggestions are made;

- The Government, Institutions, NGOs, media and Society at large should recognize that child sexual abuse is a serious problem; that its continued existence is intolerable and that it will be a national priority to address this problem.
- The widespread Child Sexual Abuse in NWFP is the product of moral, spiritual, political and socio-economic crisis. The challenge is to seriously review and address societal values and moral standards, which allow,

- perpetuate and even promote social crimes like the sexual exploitation of children.
- The Sexual exploitation of children is a gross violation of their basic rights to survival, development, protection and participation. It results in serious lifelong threatening consequences for the physical, psychological, spiritual, moral and social development of children including injury, retarded development and sexually transmitted diseases. Unfortunately the sex abusers / exploiters always escape from the web of law. There is a need for stringent laws on child sexual abuse and their strict implementation at all levels.
- To reduce the vulnerability of children, a great deal of education and information is needed. Changing behaviour of people is a long and involved process. Extensive work at the grass roots is necessary to change ideas about what is acceptable and what is not. The sexual exploitation of children is a sad testament to a decline of values, a violation of children's rights and the spread of criminal behaviour. There is a need to raise awareness and educate people about Child Rights and the illegality and harmful impact of the Sexual exploitation of children, and promote responsible sexual attitudes and behaviors in society.
- The role of community, religious leaders and school teachers is key to countering the sexual exploitation of children. But unfortunately, there is ambivalence at times. There are members of these groups who contribute to or participate in the sexual exploitation of children. There is a need to sensitize parents and teachers on the crucial issues around child sexual abuse and mobilize them to form networks to protect children. With regard to religious leaders, there is much room for re-inforcing the Convention on the Rights of the Child on non-sectarian terms with the understanding of the child as an ultimate value.
- It is only through children that the Child's Right to survival, protection and development will be realized. To this may be added the maxim that it is only through community and family participation that child sexual abuse will be

prevented and children will be protected from harm. Intervention should be based on the perceived needs of children and they should be involved in all stages. There should be school and community based training programs to promote protective behaviour amongst children. This process of empowerment is essential to prevent sexual abuse and exploitation of children. For centuries, our culture has conditioned children to be silent, to be subservient and to accept abuse as their fate. It is high time for them to speak out, speak up and act on the premise of their rights.

ANNEX - II

SWABI

1 CBO: Tanzeem Samajee Behbood Chota Yar Hussain. Usman Sher. Interviewer 2 CBO: Tanzeem Nojawaanan Topi. Interviewer Ishtiaq Ahmad. 3 CBO: Rashaki Social Welfare Organization Interviewer Ghulam Haqqani 4 CBO: Baidar Zalmay Shah Mansoor Mazhar Ali / Zar Mohammad Interviewer 5 CBO: Khadokhel Welfare Association Baja Interviewer Rangiz Ahmad CBO: 6 Anjoman Nojawaanan Khigarha Swabi Interviewer Liaqat Ali. 7 CBO: Anjoman Nojawaanan Serai Interviewer Samad Khan. 8 CBO: Youth Welfare Society Sheikh Jana Interviewer Abdul Hakim

9 CBO: Qami Zawanaan Maniri

Interviewer Zabit Khan

10 CBO: Social Welfare Organization Marghuz

Interviewer Rashid Suhail

SOUTHERN DISTRICTS

11 CBO: Human Welfare Society Bannu

Interviewer Pir Umar Nawaz

12 CBO: Community Development Committee Lakki

Interviewer Bashir Ahmad

13 CBO: Social Welfare Society Bannu

Interviewer Falak Naz, Social Welfare Officer Bannu

14 CBO: Hamdam Welfare Society D.I.Khan **Abdul Ghaffor** Interviewer Young Welfare Society Punyala D.I.Khan Mohammad Munir Khan 15 CBO: Interviewer 16 CBO: Social Education Platform Bannu Interviewer Asif Ali Baig 17 CBO: Hayat Welfare Association Hayat Khel - Lakki Abdul Manan Interviewer CBO: Gul Welfare Society Shidi Nagar Rangpur Amali- D.I.Khan 18 Interviewer Mohammad Ismail 19 CBO: Miryan Youth Council Bannu Mir Mohammad Hayat Interviewer 20 CBO: Boza Khel Welfare Society Bannu Interviewer

PESHAWAR

21	CBO: Interviewer	Village Development Organization Khishki Payan Farman ullah
22	CBO: Interviewer	Anjoman Samajee Behbooddagi Jadeed Noorul Wadood
23	CBO: Interviewer	Ittehad Social Welfare Society Aza Khel Payan Mehboob Ali
24	CBO: Interviewer	Marhaba Welfare Society Amangarh Shah Nawaz
25	CBO: Interviewer	Tanzeem Islahi Muashira Pir Pai Suhail Akhtar
26	CBO: Interviewer	APC Welfare Society Akora Khattak Fakhar Zaman Toofan
27	CBO: Interviewer	Young Welfare Society Khat Kalay Nowshera Khurd Nadar Khan Niaz

1- Mian Saleem ur Rehman,

2 Umar Nawaz

28 CBO: Health & Sports Society Peshawar

Interviewer Syed Mudassir Shah

29 CBO: Social Welfare Organisation Peshawar City

Interviewer Ajmal Khan

30 CBO: Khatak Islahi Tanzeem Spin Kana

Interviewer Musarrat Shah

MALAKAND DIVISSION

31 CBO: Dehi Ijtimaee Taraqqiati Council Timergara

Interviewer Akbar Khan

0 CBO: Idara Khidmati Khalaq Ziarat

Interviewer Mohammad Haleem Asad

1 CBO: Tanzeem Nojawanaan Talash Dir

Interviewer Hameed ullah

2 CBO: Working Child Protection Committee Swat

Interviewer Shokat Saleem

3 CBO: Paigham Social Welfare Society Thana

Interviewer Javed Ahmed

36 CBO: Social & Environment Society Monda Dir

Interviewer Asdandiyar

37 CBO: Wolasee Khair Khigaraha Tanzeem Blambat Dir

Interviewer Mohammad Ibrahim

38 Azad Falahee Tanzeem Banda Timergara

Interviewer Raza Khan

39 CBO: Falahee Tanzeem Shagai Swat

Interviewer Amjad Ali Shad

40 CBO: Dehi Taraqqiati Tanzeem Nora Khel

Interviewer Mohammad Nabi

MARDAN

41 CBO: Anjoman Nojawanaan Mazdoor Abad

Interviewer Syed Motahir Shah

42. CBO: Tanzeem Khidmati Khalaq Hathian

Interviewer Mohammad Ayaz

43 CBO: Anjoman Nojawanaan Kot

Interviewer Fazal Akbar

44 CBO: Social League Safi Abad

Interviewer Mohammad Imran

45. CBO: Young Welfare Organisation Madi Baba

Interviewer Shaukat Ali

46. CBO: Darul Falah Tekht Bhai

Interviewer Zahir Khan

47. CBO: Social Welfare Association Jalala

Interviewer Waris Khan

48. CBO: Salik Social Welfare Society

Interviewer Falak Sher

49. CBO: Alhamra Welfare Organisation Qala Jamal Garhi

Interviewer Mir Mohammad

50. CBO: Islahee Committee Sher Garh

Interviewer Sardar Mohammed

HAZARA

51. CBO: Welfare Society Shadi

Interviewer Khalid Meboob

52. CBO: Tanzeem Alfalah Nojawanaan Barili

Interviewer Amjad Hussain Shah

53. CBO: Friends Society Ghazi

Interviewer Naeem ur Rehman

54. CBO: Roshan Mustaqbil Welfare Society Hari Pur Interviewer Mohammad Fayaz Ittehad Welfare Society Sarai Saleh CBO: 55. Malik Naveed Ahmad Interviewer Faisal Welfare Society Faisal Colony 56. CBO: Mohammad Sadiq Interviewer Young Welfare Society Kali Tararh 57. CBO: Khalid Mehmood Interviewer 58 CBO: Progressive Welfare Society Hari Pur Camp Interviewer Kashmir Khan Rural Development Project Hattar Hari Pur 59. CBO: Interviewer Syed Ibrar Hussian Shah 60. CBO: Islahi Taraqqiati Committee Ali Khan Hari Pur

Abdul Waheed

Interviewer