

Prevalence, Effects and Coping Strategies of non-reported Adult Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse

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BY:

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Session 2013-2017

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Research Project:

Prevalence, Effects and Coping Strategies of non-reported Adult Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse

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## Declaration

I, Ms. Kanwal Shoukat, Student No: 13003141002, student of BS in the subject of psychology, session of 2013 - 2017, hereby declare that the material printed in this thesis, titled **“Prevalence, Effects and Coping Strategies of non-reported Adult Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse”** is original work and has not been printed, published or submitted as research work or thesis in any university or research institution in Pakistan or abroad.

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of Declarer

## **Research Completion Certificate**

It is certified that the research work contained in this thesis titled “**Prevalence, Effects and Coping Strategies of non-reported Adult Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse**” has been carried out and completed by **Ms. Kanwal Shoukat, Student No: 13003141002**; Student of BS Psychology, session 2013 - 2017, under my supervision. This study is an independent research work and carried out under given instruction and consideration.

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Abstract**

Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) occurs when an older adolescent or adult uses a child for sexual pleasure or gratification. It is a known fact that child sexual abuse has severe impact on child's life and the violation can affect the survivors for the rest of their lives. Prevalence of child sexual abuse (CSA) is hard to assess because it is often not reported, and it is believed that the number of actual cases is far more than the reported. The Study 1 aimed at exploring the prevalence of CSA in Pakistani general population. Sample consisted of 762 undergraduate and postgraduate students from six institutes of five cities of Punjab (ages 18-38, 368 males and 394 females), recruited using convenient sampling. Retrospective Childhood Adversity Measure, that consists of six items, first two items assessing physical abuse, third incest abuse and following three different forms of CSA, was used. The results of total 765 cases revealed 52.3 % CSA prevalence (52.6 % females & 52.2 % males), 59.1 % Physical abuse (56.2 % females & 62.3 % males) and 23.1 % incest abuse (25.1 % females & 21.4 % males).

The Study 2 was conducted to explore the psychological impact of child sexual abuse and coping behavior used by the non-reported adult survivor of CSA in Pakistan. Semi-structured interviews were used within qualitative method for in-depth exploration of the same. Purposive sampling was used to collect data from 8 non-reported adult survivors of CSA including 4 males and 4 females. Analysis of in-depth interviews using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, indicated a number of cultural barriers for not disclosing abuse to any authorities and not seeking any legal or therapeutic assistance. Participants reported self-harming behaviors leading to suicidal ideation and attempts. It was revealed that childhood sexual abuse had critical emotional and psychological impact on varied domains of survivors' life causing trust issues and suppression of emotions, thereby leading to further problems. Use of adaptive coping strategies such as positive

reframing, positive growth and support seeking also at times got overshadowed by the traumatic impact of CSA. The study concluded that there is a dire need of awareness in order to manage and prevent Child Sexual Abuse at country level.

*Keywords: Child Sexual Abuse, Prevalence, Coping, Psychological Effects, Punjab, Pakistan*

## **Chapter I**

### **Introduction**

#### **1.1 Prevalence of Child Sexual Abuse in Pakistan**

Prevalence signifies the quantity of a population that has experienced a behavior or particular event. One of the aims of this research is to shed light on the high prevalence of child sexual abuse (CSA) in general population. The prevalence of CSA is hard to assess because it is often not reported, and it is believed that the number of actual cases is far more than the number of cases being reported. A number of published investigational studies showed a consensus on major number of CSA going unreported.

A common published statistic says that one in four girls and one in six boys has chances to be sexually abused during their course of childhood. There is no clear and comprehensive data obtained over the extent of the problem. Though, there are clear indications of this problem spread in all domains of life: schools, workplaces, communities and families. It is a known fact that child sexual abuse has severe effects on child's life and the violation can affect them for the rest of their lives. It was observed that incest abuse was really hard to assess in terms of prevalence and counseling. Many organizations worked on CSA, challenging these obstacles such as "breaking the silence" was the organization of Bangladesh, "Rozen" and "Sahil" were working in Pakistan by giving the anonymous help in different school areas and trying to reach out to children in homes (Slugget, 2003, pp. 5-6).