

Chapter 50

Unveiling the Concepts of Sexual Abuse Among Boys

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ABSTRACT

The chapter focuses on the concepts of sexual abuse among boys, the vulnerability, consequences and aftereffect in their life, it also attempted to put light on the prevention and measures that can be adopted.

INTRODUCTION

Sexual assault can happen to anyone, irrespective of your age, sexual orientation, or your gender identity. Boys who have been sexually assaulted or abused may have many of the same feelings and reactions as other survivors of sexual assault, but they may also face some additional challenges because of social attitudes and stereotypes (Holmes & Slap, 1998).

Sexual abuse of boys is common, but most are unreported, unrecognized, and untreated. Girls sexual abuse has been widely studied, which is leading to the awareness of the risk factors and prevalence. Unfortunately, there have been comparatively very fewer studies on boy's sexual abuse, which is leading to inadequate knowledge about the facts to this topic (Holmes & Slap, 1998).

Many issues related are the result of underreporting. Boys are less likely than girls to report sexual abuse because of fear, the desire to appear self-reliant (boys grow up believing that they should not allow themselves to be harmed or talk about painful experiences), the social stigma against homosexual behavior (Godfrey et al., 1997), and the concern for loss of independence (Holmes et al., 1998). Moreover, evidence suggests that one in every three incidents of child sexual abuse are not remembered by the adults who have experienced them, and that the younger the child was at the time of the abuse, and the closer the relationship to the abuser, the more likely one is that the child will not be able to recall the event (Hopper et al., 1998).

While we talk about how wrongly feminism is portrayed across the world, and how the safety measures taken to safeguard the women of our country are just not adequate, some light needs to be shed on how the scenario is equally scary on the other end of the spectrum as well.

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In a study conducted by M.A. Straus in 1977, a professor at University of New Hampshire, a man is assaulted by his wife/girlfriend every 14.6 seconds. Sexual harassment of men, even though shoved under a dirty carpet, is a serious problem. No denying the fact that the number of incidents might not be close as to the numbers of the fairer sex, but it is still common. Call it dark comedy, but the Indian legislation completely negates the fact that men can be victims too. In fact, IPC section 354A, 354B, 354C, 354D, deal with sexual harassment, disrobing, stalking and voyeurism, and clearly state a man being the perpetrator, and the woman being the victim. Even sections 376 and 509 speak about rape of a woman, and outraging the modesty of a woman. Of a woman. The question of modesty, if at all, only exists in women. We are talking about a country with over 1.5 billion people. A country that's apparently on its way to becoming a superpower in the coming years. You must also know that this is a country where the only form of any recognized sexual wrongdoing towards a man is sodomy, under section 377 of the IPC. So basically, a man needs to be sodomised for the government to take notice. It's called the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act of 2013. The complete ignorance of men makes it much more of a problem in our society.

At the risk of inviting unwarranted comments on how India doesn't need western influence, here's the legal definition of sexual harassment according to the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), "unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature" is deemed as sexual harassment. Completely gender neutral, it fits perfectly for any gender.

Around the World

During 2009, 16% of all sexual harassment cases were filed by men in the US (and more than 2,200 men filed complaints in 2008).

According to a 2006 government study in the United Kingdom, two out of five sexual harassment victims in the UK were male, with 8% percent of all sexual harassment complaints to the Equal Opportunities Commission (Britain's EEOC), coming from men.

Some cases in the society:

Anonymous: *"She grabbed me; I wanted to slap her, but couldn't, as I've been taught to respect women."*

"I started working as a trainee accountant with my firm in 2008 and through the years, I've managed to gain the respect of my colleagues and my seniors. Sheena (name changed) joined my firm in 2009 and from the beginning, everyone knew she was the flirtatious type. We all took it in good humour and she was fun to be around at first, but things weren't the same when she started openly flirting with me. It seemed like I had become her target in office, and it was very embarrassing. Once, she spread her legs in front of me and I could see that she was wearing a thong. This happened in my cubicle, and as much as I would like to believe it, it wasn't a mistake. She sat like that for a long time, and kept flirting with me. She would make excuses to take coffee breaks right when I'd have to step out for a smoke.

All of this was fine, up until one day she grabbed my butt. I was speechless. She was fishing for compliments and I told her she was hot, so she replied by saying I was pretty hot myself, and grabbed me from behind. I could only smile at her in embarrassment, but somewhere deep inside, I just wanted to slap her. Being brought up in a household that respects women, I didn't react. I am just looking to out her in front of my other colleagues one day, as I'm sure she will try one of her tricks on me." (web)

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