



Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences  
Review (JISSR) ISSN: 3078-8358  
Vol. 2, Issue 1:2025



Breaking the Silence of the untold stories of a Child: Awareness on Mental Health  
impact of Child sexual abuse

Anamika Barua

BRAC University, Dhaka-Bangladesh,

**Abstract:**

In the verge of rising rates of suicides and unnatural deaths of the children in recent years, the alarming situation of child abuse specially sexual abuse has been more prominent than before. Where a large number of children are being deprived of basic rights due to unacceptable conditions of poverty and social-environmental conditions as well as lack of family bonding, child abusers often get fair chances to do their heinous act of abuse by taking the opportunity of child's interaction periphery and circumstances. With the increase of child sexual abuse whether commercially or non-commercially, the awareness level of the society and close acquaintances on the mental health effects on the victim child's development are becoming a vital issue. This study is aimed to focus on the social perception state and awareness level of the people of Bangladesh regarding the mental health impact of child sexual abuse in the development of the victim child. Primarily through real life case studies and supporting it with different journals, newspaper articles and theories as secondary resources the study has tried to shed a light on the real scenario of Bangladesh here.

**Keywords:** Child Sexual Abuse, Mental Health Awareness, Childhood Trauma, Psychological Impact, Child Protection, Emotional Abuse, Trauma Recovery, Child Victims

**ARTICLE INFO:** Received: 18.10.2025 Accepted: 25.11.2025 Published: 15.12.2025

© The Author(s) 2025. Open Access This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons licence, and indicate if changes were made. The images or other third party material in this article are included in the article's Creative Commons licence, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the article's Creative Commons licence and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **1.1: Overall Goal of the study:**

The main goal of the study is to identify the root causes and broader scenario of child sexual abuse in the Bangladeshi society and assess the mental impact of a child due to abusing in his or her growth development. The study will help the families, society and national institutions to understand what a child endures and make them aware of the severe consequences of it on a child's overall development regarding mental health.

### **1.2: Background of the study:**

In the alarming state of world's increasing mental issues among the young people, Suicide is the second leading cause of death among people who fall within the (15 – 29) age bracket and depression in adolescents is a major risk factor for this increasing suicide, the second leading cause of death in this demographic. Globally, it is estimated that 10-20% of adolescents experience mental health conditions among which half of all mental health conditions start by 14 years of age or earlier, due to prior experiences but stays mostly undetected and untreated. Also in the Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital in Laos, 22, 793 patients were treated as mental health patients who were either children or adolescents between 2013- 2017(The Guardian, 2018). Mental health issue is a burning question for the global context and maximum young bloods who commit suicide at young age faces some kind of abuse in their childhood. In Bangladesh, approximately 1,036 children had unnatural deaths among which 170 children have committed suicide between January to June 2018 according to Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum report of 2018 and they also stated that a total of 2,033 children were reportedly subjected to different forms of violence between January to June 2018 where 477 children were victims of sexual abuse and among them, 351 were raped in the past six months, which is about 15% more than 2017 and it is one of the major causes of this unnatural deaths of this year of children (Dhaka Tribune, July, 2018).

According to the data by Local Education and Economic Development Organization (LEEDO), a child rights organisation, child rape cases increased by nearly 75 percent in the first seven months of 2025 compared to the same period last year. From January to July, 306 children were victims of rape, up from 175 during the same period in 2024. Furthermore, between January and October 2024, at least 482 children were murdered, and 580 faced various forms of abuse, including physical assault, sexual violence, and corporal punishment by teachers (Daily Star, 2025)

Child abuse, whether it is sexual or any other form is a silent crime that is prevalent in all strata of the society. Children being the most vulnerable member of the society endures this brutal trauma of sexual abuse not only in Bangladesh, but in the worldwide context. It has become a global issue with the increasing

rate of psychological problems and suicidal ratios of the worldwide children and youths. According to WHO, Child Sexual Abuse is a universal problem with grave life-long outcomes and CSA or Child Sexual Abuse is defined as “the involvement of a child in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend and is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child is not developmentally prepared, or else that violate the laws or social taboos of society.” In a research of Save the Children research center on Mapping of Psychological support for the sexually abused children of the South Asian Countries, child sexual abuse has been addressed in Bangladesh since the early 1990s. Due to different theories, Child Sexual Abuse or CSA in Bangladesh context have been split into two major categories, one is Non-commercial sexual abuse and another one is Commercial sexual abuse. Non-commercial sexual abuse is basically the kind of abuse that any children face from their families, acquaintances, or by any other strangers and most importantly which has no relation with any kind of commercial transaction. Commercial sexual abuse is a commercial transaction that involves the sexual exploitation of a child by involving him/her in unethical activities like prostitution, child pornography etc.. A meta-analysis study in 2009 by the US department of justice stated that an estimated 7.9% of males and 19.7% of females universally faced sexual abuse before the age of 18 years. In Bangladesh, in a survey of the renowned NGO Breaking the Silence in 2013 stated that the proportion of the girl victims were a lot higher than the boy victims and 56% of the total respondents reported the abuser to be the neighbors, 12% were male relatives, 8% were elder male peer group and 55% reported in case of boys, the abuser was female neighbor.

The effects of child sexual abuse leave a horrific imprint in the minds of the children which has a significant effect in their future development. In a published news of the Daily Star international in October 2018 stated about research that is done by University of British Columbia. The researchers found out that the children subjected to abuse may carry the physical hallmark of that trauma in their cells and the imprints may also shed on light that whether the trauma can be passed on to the coming generations or not. The research was conducted on adult men who suffered from child abuse in their early childhood and was found out that the effects of the trauma were permanently printed in 12 regions of the DNA of those men who had experienced varying levels of emotional, physical or sexual abuse (The Daily Star, October 2018). Though there are many studies that shows the significance of the mental health issues about a child faces due to sexual abuse in international arena, very few researches have taken place in Bangladesh that talks about the impact on the mental health of a sexually abused child. In Bangladesh, due to the social structure, despite making the people aware that children are being sexually abused by community and family members alike, this sensitive matter specially the domestic sexual abuse is still denied and glossed over by the families to “keep the family ties safe”. There is still a stigma among the people that if these “problems” or sexual abuse events are talked about openly then it will create severe issues in the victimized children’s future married lives.

When the sexual abuse is considered as a less important issue to talk about then it is a stupidity to think that these people will understand the mental health impact of the post-partum trauma that the child faces. Though in recent years, with the increasing sexual violence highlights and rape cases, a certain percentage of people are alert of the whole issue of child sexual abuse and its physical and psychological effects; but still the significance of understanding the mental health impact of a sexually abused child is less. This study will explore the current scenario of child sexual abuse prevalent in Bangladesh to understand the perceptions of the society towards the victims as well as assessing the awareness level of them regarding the mental health impacts a victim child has during the period. To reach towards the goal, the study will also focus the on the areas of the influencing factors of child sexual abuse in Bangladesh, the mental health effects of the victimized children of sexual abuse and how prevalent the effects remain on the children's development.

### **1.3: Significance of the Study:**

Whether in home or outside, among school teachers or close family members no child can be considered "safe" now. In global and national context, the rising child sexual abuse and unnatural death events have become a burning concern for all. This worldwide phenomenon is the prime reason of this study so that we can aware the people about the severity of the trauma levels of a child who have endured any kind of attempt of sexual abuse or have been victimized by abuse for a time period in Bangladesh. This study will dig a bit deeper to find out the factors that triggers child sexual abuse in Bangladesh as well as shed a light on the post effects of mental health of a victimized child to show the real scenario and how it affects the development of a child if not given attention sooner. The study will try to learn about the social perception or awareness level of child sexual abuse and about the mental health effects of the victim children. This study will hopefully be able to make the so called "cultured silent society" awake to break this silence and help the future generation by convincing them to "Speak Up" for any abuse events to them.

### **1.4: Research Objectives:**

- ⇒ To find out the social perception about the child sexual abuse and to understand the significance level the society gives about the mental health issues that a child subjected to sexual abuse faces.
- ⇒ To find out the importance of mental impact of sexual abuse of the victims in their future development.
- ⇒ To learn about the factors that influence a child sexual abuse in Bangladesh.

- ⇒ To reach to the point by assessing that how we can have an impact to change the scenario by creating awareness and finding out possible measurements to help the victims.

### **1.5: Research Questions:**

- ✓ What are the factors that influence a child sexual abuse in Bangladesh?
- ✓ What is the current social perspective state/awareness level about the sexually abused children and their mental health issues in the society of Bangladesh?

### **Sub Question:**

- Do family ties of the child have an influence in the abuse?
- Do social-environmental factors have an influence in the abuse?
- Are the close persons/acquaintances of victim child able to recognize the sexual abuse that he/she is facing through their changed behaviors?
- Is mental health treatment for an abused child is a stigma in the society of Bangladesh?

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review:**

### **2.1: Conceptual Framework and analysis:**

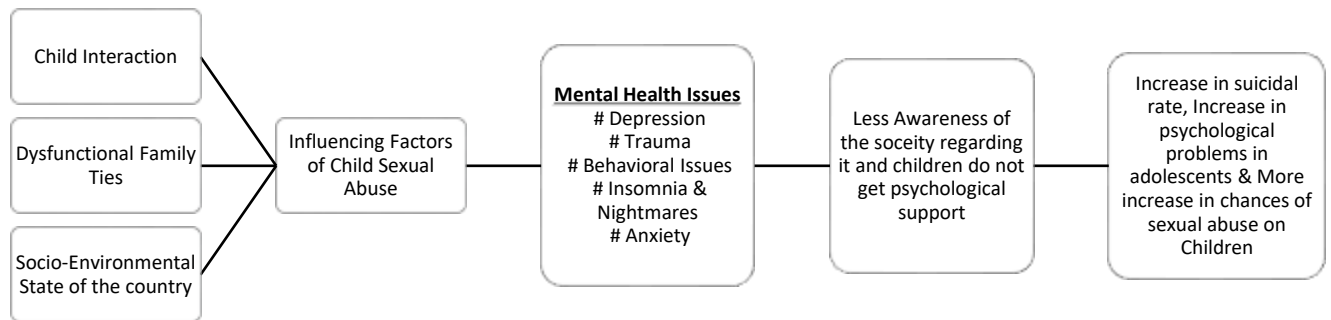
In the social structure of Bangladesh, Child sexual abuse has become a burning question which is not preferred to disclose as it may affect the family ties or the future life of the victim child. In the research of the Save the Children research center on Mapping of Psychological support for the sexually abused children of the South Asian Countries, Child sexual abuse is viewed as kind of taboo that should not be talked about. They mentioned that it was a massive barrier for them to reach with psychological support to victim from their own families. Even if the child expresses any discomfort about any family member or close acquaintance, the discomfort is mostly overlooked. This “sensitivity” of the society or families, gives the abusers more access or chances to carry on his/her acts accordingly. Save the Children had also mentioned non participation of the children in the family regarding opinion giving or any decision-making process is one of the major factors that affects this kind of Sexual abuse. In a social structure of the society where uncles, aunties and grandparents are equally entrusted as “guardians” of the children and given full access to their lives. So, even if any of these family members abuses these children by touching appropriately or

saying inappropriate things in the name of “adoring the child” or “just having fun”, the victims are not taken seriously by thinking “he/she is just a child”.

With the growth of modernization and fast pacing globalization, people are also running after more resources and more freedom or luxury for their own selves and now social media world or online world seems to be more important than the offline ties with families. In the growing phase, emotional attachments are getting loose and conflicts between the families especially between spouses are increasing rapidly. These dysfunctional family ties are one of the major contributors to the child abuse as well as mental health issues among children from an early age. In many researches, it is proven that children of broken families face difficulties more to lead a healthy social life and gets more prone to mental health issues. This dysfunctional tie gives the abusers who can be a teacher or close neighbor or family friend or even step parents, a fair chance to continue their abuse with the victim child and these children suffers the most as they cannot even reach for help to their families.

Not only the family situations, but the social environment also plays a crucial role as an influencing factor for child sexual abuse. Though Bangladesh has been declared as lower-middle income country as per the World Bank’s classification (World Bank, 2015), still 21.4% in 2025 due to inflation, slower economic growth, and economic vulnerabilities (World Bank, 2025, Bangladesh Overview). In this situation, whether, a commercial sexual abuse or non-commercial sexual abuse, both can happen due to the unstable situation. Citing Unicef data, LEEDO, a child rights organisation, also said nine out of 10 Bangladeshi children aged 1–14 experience violent discipline at home at least once a month (The Daily Star, 2025). There are many teenage girls (under 18) who come from poor families have reported in different documentary videos or tv news that they have been often cheated by the human trafficker who promised them to give work in the garments factory but made them to work as sex workers or slaves. The irony is no authentic and specific data is available to portray the scenario of these sufferers of commercial abuse in Bangladesh. The socio-economic or socio-environmental facts can also contribute to the child sexual abuse of any form and there is even no hope of awareness of the mental health issues in these social dynamics due to the fact denial.

Regarding this study, the conceptual framework that can be drawn from different factors is given below:



According to Dr Islam in her paper on Child Abuse in Bangladesh, the early experience of child abuse can trigger many changes in child's behavior including discipline problems, insomnia, nightmares, depression and many more. In the paper she also mentioned that the children who face abuse for a longer period of time can deeply affect their mental development causing interventions in the process of emotional intelligence. Though repeatedly from many years, Child sexual abuse is made recognized to the people of Bangladesh but still there is less awareness of these facts in here and according to the Save the children report's search, they found a report by BNWLA on violence against women in the year 2000 that revealed that the largest number of rape victims fell into the 13 to 18 age group – immediately after girls attain puberty and the so-called 'lesser' forms (as per international definitions) of CSA are not taken seriously by the court, law-enforcement agencies, parents or other caregivers. When the boys and girls try to report abuse, they are often not believed, and can even face hostility when they express themselves to an elder. Moreover, children convey uncertainty over what they constitute to be sexual abuse, and are often confused over whether what happened was 'affectionate touch' or a violation of their body.

This small negligence is turning it to massive issues and giving more opportunities to the abusers to make crimes. With the increasing rate of violence, suicidal rates and unnatural deaths among children and adolescents, child rape is also a prominent evident to this negligence of the social infrastructure of Bangladesh. It is high time people recognize the importance of the awareness of child sexual abuse factors and try to help the children who shows any symptoms of mental health issues through abnormal behavior; otherwise, the ratios will get more up rather than declining.

## 2.2: Theoretical analysis:

This study has focused more on the social awareness level of the impact of the mental health of a child due to child abuse or sexual abuse and the triggering points of happening it. To support the claims of this study mentioned above, Brian Corby's Social Psychological theories will be a great help. Brian Corby, one of the

foremost experts on child protection and the late professor of social work at University of Central Lancashire in Preston had written 7 editions of books on Child abuse. One of his famous theories was Social Psychological Theories that included three perspectives or approaches that fall between focusing on the individual and the broader social factors, concentrating on the dynamics of the interaction between abuser, child and immediate environment (Corby 2000).

The Social Psychological theories: it considers the behavior in three perspectives-

- Individual interactionist perspectives
- Family Dysfunction perspectives
- Social ecological perspectives

***Individual interactionist perspectives:***

The key factor of this perspective is that “behavior” is determined by the interactions between people. Interactionists place a greater attention on the dynamics of current relationships of the child and take the child’s contribution to situations of abuse much more into account.

As the study claims, Child’s interaction is an important factor to trigger child sexual abuse due to the social structure of Bangladesh, the Individual interactionist supports it fully. This perspective states that a child’s current relationship and interactions with the people can be an influencer to create the climate of abuse and they take the child’s contribution into account. In a society structure of Bangladesh, children are exposed to their close relatives whether it is cousins, uncles-aunties, grandparents with equal trust. Even the neighborhoods stay in a very close relation to each other here. In this situation the interaction level stays very high between the children and the close relatives and neighbors that often in the absence of the child’s parents or guardians, a psycho mind can abuse the child. The social structure of Bangladesh does not give a child that assurance that even if they say about their abusing, they will be believed. So maximum time, the child gives the culprit fair chances to do his or her audacity to the child and the child stays under the culprit’s suppression and dominance during the period which affects his or her mind very brutally.

***Family Dysfunction perspectives:***

Family Dysfunction theory broadens the impact of the family dynamics on the behavior of its members. It states that family dynamics contribute to abuse occurrence because the “normal” boundaries, hierarchies and relationships have broken. The theorists mention, in the broken families’ children often becomes a subject to violence or abuse due to the parents’ mental stress and family tensions. This theory also adds that

this type of situation more impacts the sexual abuse of a child by the family members and sometimes in a very bad circumstance, even by their own parents or step parents!

So, in this study, the claim that stated if family ties of the child have an influence in the abuse or not, now has a clear answer to that. Children from the broken families suffers most in this type of situations as they do not get any support from their families. Broken family ties, divorced parental relations, extensive families of divorced parents have a significant impact to the child's mental health and also on the dealing procedures of post trauma of sexual abuse. These children often face extreme trust issues and dilemmas of whom they should talk to and they remain more prone to the abusers and under suppression being a "scapegoat" due to their family situations more than the other children.

### ***Social ecological perspectives:***

Social ecological approach basically states that where the environmental conditions are not favorable to families or the humans that they live in, the incidents of abuse is likely to be higher. Due to stress because of living in an unhygienic and unstable environment that do not contribute in the psychological health or development is seen to be the major contributory factor to child maltreatment. This is more community-based approach than individual level. Whether in urban or rural arenas, the reported abuse was found to be higher in the places where the communities lived in a place where the poverty, social stress and isolation of support systems were prevalent. Even many parents due to the response to social stress lost their ability to provide adequate parenting.

So, the claim of this study that mentioned that if the social-environmental factors have an influence in the abuse or not now can be answered in a proper way. In Bangladesh the increased rate of commercial sexual abuse or child trafficking is getting higher where the poor children are made to work at a very young age whether as house-maids or in any hotel. Social-environmental factors shapes a person's mind from a very young age and makes him see the world as cruel as ever and also the families living in this situation do not have children for emotional causes rather in expectation to utilize them to eliminate the poverty. Rather than education, working in young age is more important to the parents of poorer family and all of this happens due to the higher poverty line of urban and rural areas here. In this process, some children are even trafficked and exposed to unethical activities like sex-works at a very young age. They do not even make aware of the facts that they are getting abused every time whether it is sexual or any other forms. Social ecological approach shows the real factors of child abuse in a broader community-based ways and proves the claim.

The above-mentioned approaches clearly prove the claims of the conceptual analysis and the studies in a broader view. It has shown the factors that influences a psycho-minded abuser to go for the child sexual abuse and also sheds a little light why people do not acknowledge the facts of the mental impact of child sexual abuse on a child's mental health and development. Through the overall study we are hopeful to understand the reasons of less awareness social state of Bangladesh and to get an overview of the social perspective how they are viewing the victim's mental situation as well as how they are willing to help them or feel the need to help them out or not.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology & procedures:**

This explanatory research will try to focus on the condition of the variables and relationships among them in a closer view to find out the real scenario. Only Qualitative data will be used in this process. This research will focus more on the perceptions of the victims (age group 0-18) and their close ones as well as possible social people of different age group, class status and professions who have known any victims of child sexual abuse. It will be real Case study based research.

The case studies and perceptions collected from the survey will serve as mostly the Primary data. For the secondary data, sources as journal, newspaper and previous reports will be used as reference to take on the study further. Considering the research objectives, different fields of respondents, various authentic data sources and proper research method including perception based qualitative data will be applied to ensure the success of the study by making it a better reference for future research studies of Bangladesh for child mental health.

**Chapter 4: Result & Analysis:**

This explanatory research has tried to portray the scenario and significance of the study appropriately. In this study, 5 case studies have been taken for the analysis and to portray the outcomes. All of the case studies come up with one fact that is people of Bangladesh do not count the mental health effects important at all. Even though there have been many active NGOs or other institution who are working to ensure psychological help to mental patients in Bangladesh, specially to any trauma victim of any kind of abuse; still many people of different stratus in the society especially the close ones of victims think it unnecessary and invasion of “their privacy”.

In the first case, a female being assaulted by the male teacher in her own house in class 6, tried to seek help by reporting about the assault to her working parents. When the parents asked the teacher, he told them he “punished” the girl for not completing her home-works and she told them it as an assault. Hearing it, the parents got angry on their own daughter rather than investigating things more which initially made her lost faith on her own family. Then to resolve it by own, she failed in that class which might help her to get rid of the male teacher but her parents, school teachers started demeaning her and friends started avoiding her too as she became “the failed girl”. Initially she got more into depression and her relative told that she even tried to attempt suicide by having pills in a big number of doses which was not suitable for her age. The situation could have been different if the parents had trusted the words of the girl and gave her that assurance that whatever happens they are there with her. Instead of it, when she reported about the abuse the parents scolded her, disbelieved her and at young age she started walking to the path of depression. In the collected case studies, some factors that will be a good evident to the fact or the research questions that, family ties and social-environmental state have a vital role to influence the child sexual abuse. More deeply, Children’s interaction level or the periphery they are made open to triggers these unfortunate events to some extent as abusers cannot be identified so easily.

The first step is to recognize the abuse a child is facing so that he or she can be protected from it. Often, till today, the close ones refuse to acknowledge the fact that the victim children are getting abused and they need help. Even if they recognize it, they tend to gloss it over so that “the social prestige” should be there and people should not know about it. Where social status or prestige is given more priority than their own children’s abuse incident, to expect them to understand the victim’s mindset or their need of mental health treatment is pure absurdity. In another case, it has been observed that a male child of a renowned English medium school was abused by his own uncle in the absence of his parents. His teacher reported it first by noticing the behavioral changes in him to his parents but at first to her utter surprise, the parents denied to believe the teacher. When the actual revelation came out to be true, the teacher requested them to send the

victim child for psychological counselling and they should also join them. In the fear of spreading the news they refused to do it and the words of them were *“We can take care of him on our own! Why should we involve any third person to this matter? It is a family matter and it should stay like it. And he is just a child, he will gradually forget it.”* The teacher’s request was not taken into account and in her perspective that extrovert boy has become introvert ever since the incident and refuses to take part any of the school activities after that. In the fast-paced urban life, children are often entrusted with nannies or any kind of close relatives in the absence of the working parents and the psycho abusers take this opportunity to do the crime and makes the child threatened because in most cases the victims are not believed as taken to be “child”. A doctor who deals with gynecological issues and children health issues, when asked about her experience to this type of abuse cases mentioned that many times these victim children suffer different psychological conditions that affects their mental growth. This type of events creates disbelief, lack of empathy or sympathy towards other, less sharing tendencies in them. Sometimes from chronic depression and trauma it can make the children very disturbed from inside that might affect their future lives and demographics of their relationships with others. They even can get tempted to choose wrong paths like smoking or drug addictions too. Another feature that she personally thinks happens in them is less accountability for their deeds to others, whether it’s their families or friends or anyone and the reason she mentions is due to the negligence and less support they get from their family or surrounding at their abuse incidence, they tend to adapt this factor in them. Initially to recognize a victim child, the first behavioral syndromes comes as anxiety, abnormal fearful natures, rudeness in behavior, indiscipline, continuous tiredness or reporting of physical pain(if physically abused or raped), not trying to socialize with friends or relatives like before and most commonly depression in early age. From her sayings it is also clear that the surrounding people are not that much aware of the mental health issues the child faces for the abuse incidence and that he might need help regarding it. Most of the family members for their social status or in fear of bad reputation ignores and glosses over the psychological support to the victim child.

In context of the poverty-stricken families, the scenarios are even worse. A speech of a female sex worker, described by a photographer friend, is narrated here, *“Being a daughter of a sex worker, I had no choice rather than choosing it as my occupation. I heard my father sold my mother here for money and when she found out she was pregnant it was late. My mother tried by crying and pleading many times to our AMMA(the head of brothel) so that she could send me out of this business and give me a decent life but the rule is applicable for all. Due to high demand, I was forced to join here when I was 10 and they gave me some kind of medicine so that my body looks bigger than my age. I sometime feel very hungry and sleepy but they slap me and punishes me if I refuse to attend clients sometimes or request them to give me a day off.”* In this scenario, when leading life is equal to living in hell, mental health or psychological help becomes a foreign term to think. In poverty and urge to lead a good life, people forget their humanity and

duties to their families sometimes and only money remains more important to them. Even if the children of young age refuses to go to work or reports some kind of abuse, it is not given the slightest interest and the victim children are forced to work again in the situation. Where basic rights of a child stay on a questionable state, expecting their mental development in healthy way by helping them giving psychological support seems merely impossible. Even being raped by the house master while working as maid also, the parents send their daughter just to survive and ignoring the facts what has happened to her. Though in urban arena or literate-well off people at least recognizes the facts of child sexual abuse and that it has some mental health issues which needs to be treated before it is too late but the lower middle or poor class people and rural people do not have the slightest ideas of mental health issues and its need of help.

From the data collection through the real-life case studies, a closer view to the facts can be get. Most of the people of Bangladesh are aware of child sexual abuse and its impact of the children but still due to social status, keeping family ties and reputation intact, poverty and livelihood causes; many people do not come forward to acknowledge the mental health problems of the victim children and seek help for them. Another finding was that, though the people want to reduce the violence rate like child rape, suicide rate to lower down but do not want to visit any psychological counselor for their child's betterment.

At last, from the overall analysis and findings, if being asked to rate the social awareness level about the density of mental health issues and the need of psychological support towards the abused children in a scale of 1 to 7, I would rate it 3. To reduce the alarming suicidal rate and unnatural deaths due to violence, awareness of child sexual abuse and its impact has to be acknowledged by all stratus of people in Bangladesh. Though the people are aware of the facts of child sexual abuse and its mental impact on the child, very few of them recognizes the density of it and tries to help the victims with any kind of psychological help. It can be said, treatment of mental health for an abused child is still a stigma in the society of Bangladesh due to its structural infrastructure and though the close acquaintances recognises the abuse happening, very few recognizes the mental effects that the victim goes through as well as are willing to take necessary steps to make the victim feel better and support them to come out of the trauma period.

### **Chapter 5: Conclusion & Recommendation:**

Child sexual abuse is a very sensitive issue till date for the society of Bangladesh. Though from 1990s, it had been addressed by various NGOs and others but still the awareness level of its impact is not very satisfactory. In this study through real life case study as well as theoretical and conceptual analysis, the real scenario of the social perspective state towards Child sexual abuse and the victims, in addition to their

mental issues that can impact their future development is justified. Only acknowledging the triggering factors that influence child sexual abuse is not enough if the victims do not get proper attention or support, specifically psychological treatment and support from their close ones. By glossing over the reported incidents of abuse by the child, will only contribute to the psycho abusers to continue their heinous crimes to the victims. To make a better tomorrow for all the children, taking steps from today is very necessary in all stratus of the society of Bangladesh. Families and close acquaintances of the children or victim children should be aware of their problems and understand their sayings always. Children must be included as participatory in the decision-making process or family opinion process in every family. Strong family ties between parents and children should be prioritized in a friendly way so that children can have that assurance and secure feeling to share everything of their lives to their families. Every school and college must keep track of every child's behavior and a separate counselling unit should be present there as well as children should also be made aware of behavior of abusers and the terms of sexual abuse so that they can have basic idea. It is high time people should realize the effects of abuse on a child's overall development and focus more on the fact how to make the victims out of psychological issues rather than thinking "*what will the people say!*". Policy makers should be stricter about the children law and orders on abuse and criminals of child violence should be taken into account with zero tolerance. To make a better future of a country, it is needed to make it safer for the future or the children of the country. Creating mass awareness on the impact of mental health issues in the development of a sexually abused child is one of the main steps that can bring that better future for all.

### **Chapter 6: Limitations:**

Time constraints and sensitivity of the people to talk about it were the main limitations of this study. Limitation to data collection due to sensitivity, shortage of available data on child sexual abuse, no specific data on commercially sexual abuse are also the limitations that created some interruption to this study.

**Reference:**

1. The Daily Star. (2025). Child abuse now a national crisis.
2. World Bank. (2025). Bangladesh overview. [World Bank Bangladesh Overview](#).
3. Salau, T. (2018). Young people's mental health is a ticking time-bomb. *The Guardian*.
4. Dhaka Tribune. (2018). Sharp rise in sexual abuse of children.
5. The Daily Star. (2018). Abused children carry the trauma in their cells: Study.
6. Slugget, C. (2003). Mapping of Psychological support for Girls and Boys affected by Child Sexual Abuse in Four Countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan. *Save The Children Sweden Denmark*.
7. Breaking the silence, NGO Bangladesh (2018). Retrieved from: [breakingthesilencebd.org](http://breakingthesilencebd.org).(2018).
8. World Health Organization. (2003). [GUIDELINES FOR MEDICO-LEGAL CARE FOR VICTIMS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE: Child Sexual abuse](#).
9. Islam, F., & Akhtar, G. (2015). Child Abuse in Bangladesh. *Ibrahim Medical College Journal*, 9(1).
10. Singh, M., Parsekar, S., & Nair, S. (2014). An Epidemiological Overview of Child Sexual Abuse. *J Family Med Prim Care*, 3(4).
11. Tithi, N. (2018). Another Brutal Year for Children. *The Daily Star*.
12. Hasan, K., & Rahman, A. (2018). Examining the alarming suicide trends in Bangladesh. Dhaka Tribune.
13. Corby, B. (2000). *Child Abuse Towards A Knowledge Base* (2nd ed.). Buckingham: Open University Press.
14. Ministry of LGRD & Cooperatives Rural Development and Cooperative Division. (2016). *One House One Farm Project-3rd revision*. Dhaka.

**Annex.:**

All the personal profiles of relating these case studies are kept secret due to their will and confidentiality.

**Case Study 1:**

This case study is taken from close neighbor of the Victim's family. This is a case of a school girl from a renowned Bengali medium school whose parents are Government service holders. Due to work purpose they were not able to give time to their daughter and as she got promoted to class 6, a male math teacher was hired to support her math issues. At first she really enjoyed studying with him and got good score in the quizzes. But after 1-2 months, she started behaving a bit strange. One day she told her neighbor that "Aunty, the sir is a bad sir". Hearing this, this close neighbor tried to talk with her but she refused to say anything else about this statement. Then after someday the parents of the girl told that neighbor that the girl told them the teacher has abused her but when they investigated with the teacher about it, he simply refused and told them it was a false accuse. He gave punishment to the girl as she did not complete her home-works and so she misinterpreted this to her parents. Hearing this the parents got really angry and scolded the poor child. This made her so helpless and sad that due to get rid of this abuse she decided to fail in math, her favorite subject. By failing she might get rid of that math teacher but her parents and school teachers were very disappointed with her. The math teacher even called upon her parents and told them that she is a disgrace to her class! Her school friends started bullying and avoiding her after her failing incident. All of this made her so depressed that she became very introvert. Lastly the neighbor reported that she heard the girl even took a high dose of pills which is not suitable for her age and tried to commit suicide out of depression. She still stays at home and refuses to socialize with anyone.

**Case study 2:**

This case study was taken from the teacher of a renowned English medium school and it is about one of her male students. It is a case of a boy who was studying at class 3 when the incident happened. He is the only child of his parents and belonged from a reputed business family. Due to work purpose his parents remained busy and so he used to stay with his uncle who was a cousin of his mother's. He used to take care of the boy. The boy was a very happy child and used to participate in every programs in the school. One day the teacher noticed some unusual behavior of the boy and saw some kind of marks on his hand. When she asked about it, he remained silent and she noticed kind of fear in his attitude. She called his parents by observing his behavior for some days and becoming sure that the boy was being abused by someone. At first the parents refused this fact and got angry on her. Then after someday by encouraging the child, she somehow managed to reveal that the abuser was his own uncle. After this revelation, the parents apologized to her and assured her that they will be careful of him from now. The teacher requested

them to visit a child counselor as she already observed the behavioral changes of her student. But the parents refused the request and told her that they belong from a very reputed family and this type of incident if told in public can ruin their social reputation. The teacher even quoted the exact words, *“We can take care of him on our own! Why should we involve any third person to this matter? It is a family matter and it should stay like it. And he is just a child, he will gradually forget it.”* After the incident the boy felt much trouble in socializing with his friends. He stopped participating any programs of the school as well as stayed terrified if the subject teacher is male. He is now at class 5.

### **Case study 3:**

A reputed gynecologist and child specialist shared some of her experiences of child abuse cases. She mentioned, often this type of cases came as some kind of disease. Many times parents do not really realize the problems their children are facing are not really disease but signs of child abuse. Many cases came up like the parents took the child to her complaining that the child has stopped eating properly and getting sick and stressed for a longer period. The discovery was, the child was being bullied in the school and abused by one of the seniors from his school continuously which made him so terrified that he refused to go to school, stopped eating and got sick. There are many cases like this but due to confidentiality she could not disclose all. But she shed some light on the mental health issues and impact on the victim child's development due to these kinds of incidents. She mentioned that many times these victim children suffer different psychological conditions that affects their mental growth. This type of events creates disbelief, lack of empathy or sympathy towards other, less sharing tendencies in them. Sometimes from chronic depression and trauma it can make the children very disturbed from inside that might affect their future lives and demographics of their relationships with others. They even can get tempted to choose wrong paths like smoking or drug addictions too. Another feature that she personally thinks happens in them is less accountability for their deeds to others, whether it's their families or friends or anyone and the reason she mentions is due to the negligence and less support they get from their family or surrounding at their abuse incidence, they tend to adapt this factor in them. She said that to recognize a victim child, the first behavioral syndromes comes as anxiety, abnormal fearful natures, rudeness in behavior, indiscipline, continuous tiredness or reporting of physical pain(if physically abused or raped), not trying to socialize with friends or relatives like before and most commonly symptoms of depression in early age.

### **Case study 4:**

This story is taken from a photographer friend who works for different photography projects. This case study is one of his project experience with the Child sex workers in a renowned brothel of Dhaka. It is about a child sex worker named Asha, who is now approximately 12-13 years old. She told her story to on her own to the photographer and it is narrated exactly here. "Being a daughter of a sex worker, I had no choice rather than choosing it as my occupation. I heard my father sold my mother here for money and when she found out she was pregnant it was late. My mother tried by crying and pleading many times to our AMMA( the head of brothel) so that she could send me out of this business and give me a decent life but the rule is applicable for all. Due to high demand I was forced to join here when I was 10 and they gave me some kind of medicine so that my body looks bigger than my age. I sometime feel very hungry and sleepy but they slap me and punishes me if I refuse to attend clients sometimes or request them to give me a day off." The photographer said to me that the life is like living in hell there for this children. They don't have an extra minute to sleep or rest or even use the washroom, no outdoor interaction is allowed and as she talked with him she got punishment for it too. These workers were not even provided a full plate of meal every day and if they don't fill up the target customer, they were even kept hungry.

#### **Case study 5:**

It is taken from the housemaid of my house. She narrated a case of her neighbor's daughter. So this girl aged 13, was sent off to a house as permanent housemaid by her parents. After 1-1.5 years, suddenly the Madam of the house sent her back with full payment and told her mother to not to send her again. The mother got angry on her and even beaten her up considering it her fault. Then after some days she recognized some symptoms of her daughter that is not normal and when she asked her what has happened, the girl said that due to this sickness the Madam send her off. The mother got terrified as she recognized the symptoms of this "sickness" but to be sure she consulted with a doctor about her daughter. After some tests, they found that the girl was pregnant. Then after asking in many ways the girl finally told her mother about her forceful rapes conducted by the son of that house and when she fall sick the mistress send her back home. Her mother after learning all of it, still decided to send her off again by managing the mistress or if not there then to any other household after her abortion. But unfortunately the girl did not survived this abortion and died.