

TIMES CITY

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CHILD ABUSE KNOWS NO GENDER

A Study By UK-Based Researchers Among School Students In Thrissur Shows Boys Suffer More Frequent Sexual Abuse Than Girls

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Kochi: A study covering more than 6,500 high school students on abuse in school environment has shown that more boys than girls suffer sexual abuse and that too more frequently. The study by UK-based researchers and doctors from Kerala carried out in schools in Thrissur district was published in Elsevier Journal.

The researchers said that the purpose of this study was to estimate the prevalence of sexual, physical, and emotional abuse in a school environment in a developing country. The abuse history was collected using the child abuse screening tool - children's institutional version (ICAST-CI) of International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPACAN).

The questionnaire was given to 6,882 school-going adolescents in this self-report study. "It showed that about 75-85% of the children suffered physical and emotional abuse while more than 20% suffered sexual abuse in the school frequently," said lead author Dr Manoj Therayil Kumar, St George's Hospital, Stafford, UK.

"What is of concern is more boys reported being victims of abuse 'frequently' rather than 'sometimes'," he said.

Various factors significantly increase the likelihood of abuse - male gender, low socio-economic status, regular use of alcohol and drugs by family member at home, and having other difficulties at school. Children tended to report abuse less frequently if they liked attending school and if they always felt safe at school, the study said.

Dr Manoj said that boys are more abused and their 'lived experiences' are neglected. "Our traditional understanding of abuse is limited to girls. This is because boys/men are not considered vulnerable," he said.

The tradition and stereotypes associated with thinking also plays a role, asking boys to stand up and deal with it as if it's their weakness. "These boys are victims of abuse as well as the burden of expectations. They simply perceive that they were defective," said Manoj.

Research shows that boys subjected to these experiences are more likely to abuse others.

"We need to look at abuse as a violation of principles. Teachers and families need to focus on principles - rights regarding respect, autonomy, dignity and diversity. All violations of principles need to be explored and acted. Our focus need to shift from violent sexual abuse to the general issue of rights violation. Schools need a zero tolerance policy," he said.

The results suggest that if children are



WAYS OF ABUSE

► Around 88.1% of students experienced abuse in the past one year

► 20% of students reported all three types of abuse - physical, emotional and sexual - while more than 50% reported at least two

Physical abuse: Almost 75.5% of students had endured some form of physical abuse in the past year

► "Being hit with closed fist" was the most frequently reported physical abuse by male children

► Females mostly reported "Being slapped on hand or arm"

Emotional abuse: Emotional abuse was the most frequent (84.5%) type of abuse

► The most frequent form of emotional abuse was "others swearing at them" for male students and "others calling hurtful names" for female students

► Sexual abuse in the year was reported by 21% of students

► "Showing sexual picture" was the most reported form of sexual abuse in both genders

► However, females reported "touching in a sexual way" most frequently in the "sometimes" category

Our traditional understanding of abuse is limited to girls. This is because boys/men are not considered vulnerable
—Dr Manoj Therayil Kumar | ST GEORGE'S HOSPITAL, STAFFORD, UK

We have found that the social stigma of reporting abuse among boys is very high. The societal pressure on the boy is such that he is made to feel that he is at fault
—C K Dinesh | DIRECTOR, CHIDLINNE, WYRANAD.



Cases show steady rise in state

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kochi: The number of child abuse cases reported in the state has shown a steady rise with 221 cases reported per month in the state in 2017 compared to 176 cases in the previous year, a monthly increase of 24%.

The number of cases have risen by 100% over the past four years. While in 2013 the number of cases stood at 1,016 it rose to 2,122 in 2016. The number of cases reported in 2014 was 1,402 and 1,583 in 2015.

A total of 1,962 child abuse cases have been registered in the state in 2017 till September, as per the latest records of the state crime records bureau. The number of cases booked in the previous year was 2,122.

Patheer Thomy, director, Childline said that massive campaigns held to create awareness last year could be the reason for the high numbers.

"Awareness in the form of short films, news in media and seminars have made children aware of the nature of these abuses. One of the reason for higher reporting is this. Almost 70% of cases used to go unreported earlier but now at least 60% cases are reported," said Patheer Thomy.

The largest number of case reported in 2017, till September is from Thruvananthapuram (283). Kollam with 206 cases is close behind.

STOP THEM BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE

There's no way that we can prevent these GenNext kids from browsing the internet or using the smartphone. While we can't deny children the use of this technology, we need to acknowledge that the IT and social media world is beckoning the children into the dark cyber world of crimes. How do we equip them to use this technology for good

READERS CAN SEND THEIR SUGGESTIONS TO timesreporters@gmail.com or [WhatsApp them to 9446401168](https://www.whatsapp.com/channel/00299a46401168)

BELOW ARE A FEW SCENARIOS THE PARENTS AND TEACHERS MIGHT ENCOUNTER

1 The other day my son was playing an online game. I realized that he had got into a chat room where other 'children' were also there. I got scared. If I stop him, he will make a huge scene. How do I ensure that he spends less time playing online and also inform me when he gets into unknown domains

2 I came to know that my son and his friends are playing pranks on their friends. They are sharing images, which are otherwise private with comments that border on obscene. I know some of his friends are still doing it. Maybe my son is also involved. What do I do?

3 When my nephews and nieces come home for spending a holiday, they are sitting together and playing online games or each of them takes a parent's mobile and sit together and play with the gadgets. No amount of admonishing seems to have an effect on them? How can I change this habit?

4 I found a nude photo of my son's classmate on his phone. He said it was inadvertent. But this has made me anxious. How do I handle this?

5 My neighbour's son gets into self-harm mode whenever his parents take away the phone because he is not studying. They are helpless and don't know how to control him

Tourism spots face threat from lurking predators

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Thiruvananthapuram: Tourist hotspots like Kovalam and Varkala are always under the watch of law enforcers who keep a tab on child sexual abuse. The last reported case in the district was in 2008, when a Swiss citizen settled in Chovvara near Kovalam beach was accused of sexually abusing several boys. After the incident not even a single case was reported in the district, according to the police.

However, officials and activists say that it would be wrong to assume that child sexual abuse is not there



because no police cases are being registered.

A Childline volunteer, on condition of anonymity told TOI that they were tipped off regarding a possible sexual abuse case around five months ago at Varkala. The information was that two boys aged 12 and 13 were sexually abused by a foreign national. But the police could not register a case as the boys refused to give statements against the alleged offender. The families of the boys too were uncooperative.

"Perhaps it is the money they received that prevented them from cooperating with the cops," the official said. Several survivors of Kovalam sexual abuse turned hostile and withdrew their complaints against the accused, Jacob Spaiti, a Swiss national. It was another Swiss couple,

who alerted an NGO regarding the alleged activities of Spaiti. He was then 82. According to the complaint, he had allegedly abused around 20 boys, all aged around 15. Following the intervention of the NGO, four boys filed police complaints. Later, three of them withdrew their complaints. Spaiti left the country after securing a bail.

Police, Childline and labour department officials constantly conduct inspection drives at resorts, restaurants and shops located near the beaches to keep a check on child labour as it is often children, who are brought as labourers who end up as victims of sex tourism.

GROUND REALITY



RESTRICTED ENTRY: Portion of Parade Ground at Fort Kochi, which was renovated for Fifa U-17 World Cup practice, is still kept under lock and key, forcing children to play in the rocky area. Authorities had earlier said that the public would get access to the ground after the World Cup

46 fibroids removed from uterus of 30-yr-old

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Kochi: A 30-year-old woman who had a three-year history of heavy and painful menstrual bleeding due to multiple fibroids in the uterus, had two surgeries.

We removed 46 fibroids from her uterus after two surgeries. With this, the

especially in cases requiring fertility preservation. Also the procedure is technically challenging and requires prolonged operating time owing to impaired visibility

Three held for abusing minor

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kochi: The north Paravur police on Wednesday arrested three people for allegedly sexually assaulting a minor girl. All the accused were private bus employees and they were arrested on Wednesday for allegedly sexually assaulting a minor girl at North Paravur.

Shitin Kumar (25), Nithin (18) and Tinson (25) are the arrested. Police said that the girl used to travel in the bus which the accused used to work. One among the accused had lured the girl into an affair and took her to a rented flat. The other two joined them and sexually assaulted her, said the police. The

All the accused were private bus employees accused were booked under the relevant sections of the Pocco Act.

Man held for fake marriage: The north police on Wednesday arrested a man who had entered into a sham marriage with a woman when he was 20 years old. He also absconded with her money after living with her over a month. The accused has been identified as Praveen (23), a resident of Kottungalloor. He had made the woman believe that he was over 21-year-old and married her at a temple. The accused had acquainted with the woman who was then working at

a mobile phone shop. After luring her into the marriage, the accused fled with the money and gold ornaments of the victim after sexually exploiting her.

After the accused went missing, the woman had filed a habeas corpus petition with the high court. The incident happened in August 2014 and a case was registered with the Palairvatam police.

Accused in sexual abuse case held: The Nedumbassery police arrested an accused in a sexual abuse case from the Cochin International Airport Ltd (CIAL) on Wednesday. Binish (36) of Kasaragod went into hiding in connection with a sexual abuse case registered in Kasaragod. He reached the airport from R-

yad. He was handed over to the police in Kasaragod.

Woman foils chain-snatching bid: A 61-year-old woman foiled a chain snatching bid after she grabbed the culprit by her hand to stop her from running away with the chain. The incident happened near Kottamangalam Government Hospital on Wednesday morning when Kumari, a resident of Kathukuzhi, stopped Marriamma (45), a Tamil Nadu native, from running away with her chain. The accused was later handed over to the police.

Kumari was in a queue to purchase medicine when the snatching bid happened. Officials said that the accused was a history-sheeter.

'Rise in fishing intensity a cause for concern'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kochi: Dr Ravishankar C N, director of ICAR-CIFT, said that increase in fishing intensity declining stocks of commercial fish species, conflict between fishing sectors, exploitation of marine resources and health and habitat degradation are the major issues faced by the fisheries and aqua sector in the state.

"The increase in fishing intensity has become a major problem these days. It has contributed to depletion of fish stocks in the state. To tackle this, we need to adopt sustainable and eco-friendly practices to preserve and conserve our marine wealth," he said. He added that regulation on destructive gears, promotion of marine sanctuaries and artificial reefs, sea ranching to augment edible fish, sea and effective code of conduct needs to be implemented to protect marine wealth.



Look at the pathetic condition of roads in Kochi! The corporation has proved time and again that they cannot maintain the roads! Despite paying huge road tax and other taxes, we are not getting any benefit from authorities concerned. In Kochi, only a few roads are in motorable condition, thanks to organizers of Fifa U-17 and Kochi Metro. If the corporation cannot handle

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P G Paul DOCTOR

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... this, they should disown these roads and hand it over to public works department or national highways authority of India.

Citizen Reporter Saleem Shakur

on while clicking and sending pictures Describe exactly where and when picture was taken, giving street names and other locators

More photos, videos on timesofindia.com

Confusing signboards

Entrance to the crossroad from the main road at Karuvelpady East in Mattancherry towards Maharata's government hospital has the signboard 'Thakyave Road'. The very next crossroad on the south side has a signboard with the same name. The corporation should remove the wrong signboard.

Citizen Reporter Christopher Anthony

Start feeder service at Vypeen

KMRL is conducting an online survey to access the best possible ways to feed Metro. On an average, Kochi Metro has passenger strength of 15k to 25k daily and it almost double on holidays. As per the new Metro policy, feeder service is a must. One such service can be started from Vypeen sector where around 40,000 people daily commute to the city via Goshree bridges. Passengers here demand extension of 10 buses to the nearest Metro station on trial basis.

Citizen Reporter Ajay Chulikkatt